

South Africa's best team, bar none, is in India

NEW DELHI, MAR 16 (INS INDIA): Alone in her zen garden, Mignon du Preez could bat forever. Before the ball left the bowler's hand, she knew where it would pitch, which stroke she would play, and how many runs she would score. She cut with the precision of a surgeon and the power of a superhero. She didn't find gaps between fielders; she made them.

Lara Goodall batted on the burning deck of a sinking ship. She was going to get out to every delivery she faced. She refused to hit the ball on the ground. She was allergic to convention: everything was a reverse something, an inside out whatever, or still another flavour of outrageousness best hidden from the eyes of impressionable young players.

Not all of the above is true. For instance, Goodall was not dismissed in Lucknow on Sunday. Du Preez was dismissed, but not before they had shared a century stand. It was the second of the innings - Lizelle Lee and Laura Wolvaardt beat them to it. All four passed 50. The team reeled in the biggest target they have yet achieved in an ODI with eight balls to spare to clinch the series.

It was a thoroughly un-South African performance. Where was the usual crippling, inexplicable nervousness in matches that matter? What happened to the fear of opponents who had prevailed over them five times in the seven previous ODIs in these conditions before this series? How dare they show so much self-belief?

Goodall summed it up with bracing directness: "Just because it's not in

South Africa doesn't mean I have to change my approach." Much of the rest of what she told an online press conference sounded like an apology for what had gone before and a promise to deliver a brighter future: "I know I haven't always backed [coach Hilton Moreeng] up, and he's always backed me. A lot of my teammates have always believed in me, and I haven't repaid that faith out on the field. They've seen what I'm capable of in provincial cricket back home and in net sessions, but there was always some kind of disconnect when I went out onto the field."

Before South Africa's white-ball series against Pakistan in Durban in January and February, Goodall was last in the team in India in October 2019. "When I was here two years ago I wasn't really sure about my game and how to play spin; what my options were. I didn't back it. It was half-hearted."

She scored 23 runs in two ODIs and 44 in two T20Is. Consequently, she missed the white-ball tour to New Zealand in January and February last year and the subsequent T20 World Cup in Australia, and she was not selected for Australia's tour to South Africa in March and April, which was cancelled because of Covid-19. It wasn't Goodall's first time out in the international cold: she did not play for South Africa from January 2017 to February 2019. Her form slipped further when she reached 50 only once in 17 innings at the domestic level, from November 2019 to December 2020. Against Pakistan this year she made 27, 26, nought and 11: not conclusive evidence that she had found her way.

But something had changed, thanks to her working "very, very, very hard during the lockdown period". A slow but solid 49 in the second ODI in Lucknow suggested progress. Confirmation came on Sunday in the shape of a career-best 59 not out. "I took a different approach mentally. I've always had good shots and I've always had the ability to bat. But mentally was where I had to make that shift."

The same could be said for the rest of the team. South Africa won five of their six games against Pakistan, but the true test awaited in India - where they had lost six of seven completed matches in 2019 - and at a ground at which they had never played. And without Dane van Niekerk and Chloe Tryon, who are battling back injuries. Their bowlers won the first match handsomely, stifling India to 177/9. But the home side's attack returned the favour two days later, when South Africa were dismissed for 157. Rain complicated matters, as did an injury to Trisha Chetty in the third ODI, but there was no doubt the visitors deserved their Duckworth/Lewis success, which was powered by Lizelle Lee's undefeated 132.

Two matches to play, one win needed to claim the series. Other South Africa teams might have subconsciously seen that equation as a licence to not go for glory. What if they went hard and were hammered? Worse, what if they lost a tight game? What kind of shape would that have left them in for the decider? This South Africa team didn't allow those thoughts into their heads. Or if they did, they dispelled

them. You don't bat like they did on Sunday without knowing exactly what you want to do and how you want to do it, and believe - not think or hope - that you can. Especially in India. For South Africans watching from far away, that might have been some other team out there. Yes, that looked like Lizelle, Laura, Lara and Mignon. But, compared to what we have seen too many times before, their hearts were bigger and their minds sharper.

It's difficult not to do them the disservice of bringing that other South Africa team into the conversation; the side who have become better at losing than winning, who do not need a second invitation to complain about bubble life, whose players seem constantly on the lookout for opportunities to defect to less complicated pastures. None of that is true about South Africa's women's team. Partly that's because they need CSA more than their male counterparts do, and partly because they are not indulged as much as the men are by the suits, the public and the press. But, mostly, it's because they have earned the right to be called the best XI in the country. Bar none. Now what? "To win 4-1 in India is a statement to the rest of the world that we're gunning for that World Cup," Goodall said. You would have to be stupid not to take her seriously.

The last ODI is on Wednesday. The World Cup is in New Zealand in March and April next year. Not all of the above will remain true, but the present is as important as the future. And the truth now is that this moment belongs to a damn fine cricket team.

Rashtriya Lokneeti Party will bring forward new thinking and leadership in a new perspective



New Delhi : Today we envisage a society and nation where even the last person of the society realizes that he also has an important role and stake in every development of the country. The euphoria of democracy and the emancipation of its sweat in the upliftment of the nation, only then the Ram-state of Lokshahi will be established in the true

Sharma was appointed as Mentor and Renu Negi as Convenor Media Relations. The party's National Advisory Board includes renowned Election Technology provider ELECTION AWAAZ's Managing Editor J. P. Singh, Sr. Media Correspondent and Ex Director ALL INDIA CONSUMER COUNCIL Sh. Alok Kumar, IAS Retired

uniform arrangements, fee structure and other facilities in government and private schools are also to be made equal. It is a big truth that India is the largest democratic republic in the world, which we are also proud of. But a country should be considered democratic only when there is good governance established through democracy, otherwise it would be a



sense. A society that guarantees respect for elders, protection of women and golden future of navigators with transparent leadership, modern technology and noble intentions was to said Deepak Pandiya, Rashtriya Lokneeti Party's Convener. He said that where the government is not in the ego of the donor and the public as the petitioner, But the government should discharge its responsibility and ensure that all the necessary facilities are available to the doorstep of every citizen. On the occasion of the launch of the Rashtriya Lokneeti Party, the national officials of the Rashtriya Lokneeti Party were unanimously selected, including Brigadier B. K. Khanna as Chief Convener, Deepak Pandia Convenor Admin, renowned financial expert and former Sr. Public sector banker Sh. M.K. Sharma as Convenor Finance, Dr. L. C.

Gautam Marwah, Padma Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi and Brigadier Vinod Dutta. Brigadier Khanna is an international personality, he has rendered his services to the country by staying in the army. M. K. Sharma said that today's conditions have changed so much that all areas including education, health, administration, agriculture, industry, including individuals, family, society, have become completely new and different. In such a situation, politics based on our age-old administrative structure has proved completely meaningless. The aim of our party is to bring door to door services with new reforms in Health, Agriculture, Horticulture, Education and all other divisions so that people can function with 100 percent capacity in their services, employing 15 people from the same area in each Panchayat. Those who will provide every service at home,

daydream. J. P. Singh said that if the system is changing then why should we not change, along with the leaders, the rating of citizens should also be fixed, when other countries can do it, why should we not. The party's agenda is absolutely right, it is going to set a new direction. He gave the example of Prashant Manti Bhartoya Janaushdhi Pariyojana which is lacking mass acceptance in the country due to doctors not prescribing Generic drugs due to large multi-national drug companies mafia like hold and inducements prevalent through their system. This is gross violation of Supreme Court directions to Medical Council of India, the regulator of doctor's practicing certificate. JP Singh further stressed on the usage of IT and artificial intelligence methods to be implemented right from the beginning as effective utilization of data which is already existing with the govt.

Sarah Taylor joins Sussex coaching team

NEW DELHI, MAR 16 (INS INDIA): Former England wicketkeeper Sarah Taylor has joined the coaching staff at Sussex and will work part-time with the men's squad as well as Sussex Cricket Pathway in the upcoming season.

Taylor, widely regarded as among the best wicketkeepers of all time, retired at the age of 30, in 2019, owing to long-term struggles with her anxiety issues. In her new role, Taylor will focus on working with the club's wicketkeepers.

"From Ben Brown and Phil Salt in the professional squad and down through the pathway, we have a really talented group of keepers at Sussex who I am looking forward to working with immensely," Taylor said on Monday (March 15). "I want to share my experience and expertise to help them get the most out of their game. I'm a big believer in keeping things simple and perfecting the basics so that players can enjoy and express themselves with the gloves."

Taylor earned 226 England caps in her decorated 13-year international career and hung up her boots with the record of most wicketkeeping dismissals, 227, in the history of

women's international cricket. She also has scored over 6,500 international runs for England across formats. Her last professional outing was for Surrey Stars at the 2019 edition of the Women's Cricket Super League.

James Kirtley, joint Sussex head coach with Ian Salisbury, welcomed Taylor's addition to the backroom staff. "Sarah has so much to offer our players, but also our environment. She is hugely skilled in the world of wicketkeeping, but she will also bring so much good as a person around our group. She adds great perspective to a situation and as a coach she provides an excellent sounding board for ideas and is a fantastic communicator. I am certain she will become a huge asset to our setup."

Additionally, Sussex have also added Ashley Wright to the coaching ranks who will assist the county's lead batting coach, Jason Swift. The former Leicestershire player is a Level 4 coach, specialising in human movement and biomechanics. He has previously worked with Surrey and Rajshahi Kings in the Bangladesh Premier League side. Wright was also the national head coach of Guernsey for four years. "With his slightly

different skill set, Ash will add tremendous value to the work we do with our batters." Kirtley said of Wright appointment. "His knowledge of human movement coupled with his experience of playing is an exciting combination. He has already built some solid relationships with our players and we are seeing them incorporate some of his ideas into their games. I am particularly looking forward to seeing the work he does when it comes to hitting in limited-overs cricket."

"As with everything we do, the decision to add Sarah and Ash to our coaching staff is based on our strategic aim to produce homegrown or 'Sussex-fied' players who will ensure the club is competing in all formats and providing as many players for England as possible in the future," Ian Salisbury, Sussex's joint men's head coach, said. "They both bring a huge amount of cricketing knowledge, skill and experience, as well as a fantastic work ethic, to the entirety of our player pathway. Equally as important, Sarah and Ash both fit our mantra of coaching the whole person, not just the cricketer very well."

Ronaldo winner keeps Madrid on track in Malaga

MADRID, MAY 16 (INS INDIA): Real Madrid moved six points clear at the top of La Liga as Cristiano Ronaldo's 39th goal of the season handed them a hard-fought 1-0 win away to Malaga.

Ronaldo made the breakthrough with a resounding finish from the edge of the area midway through the first-half and was only denied from adding to his tally by a series of saves from Willy Caballero. Malaga pushed hard for an equaliser in the final.

UAE cricketers Naveed, Anwar banned from all cricket for 8 years

NEW DELHI, MAR 16 (INS INDIA): Former UAE captain Mohammad Naveed and opening batsman Shaiman Anwar Butt have been banned from all cricket for eight years by the International Cricket Council (ICC). The ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal had found them guilty of breaching the Anti-Corruption Code in January 2021.

Their eight-year bans have been backdated to 16 October, 2019 - when the duo was charged and provisionally suspended for attempting to corrupt matches during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019 in

the UAE. "Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar represented their adopted country, the UAE at the highest level in cricket," Alex Marshall, ICC General Manager - Integrity Unit, said. "Both had long international careers and were well versed in the threat from match fixers. That they both chose to engage with this corrupt activity was a cynical betrayal of their positions, their teammates, and all supporters of UAE cricket."

"I am pleased that the independent Tribunal has imposed significant bans from all forms of cricket and

this should serve as a warning to any cricketer who considers taking the wrong path." Naveed and Shaiman were found guilty of: Article 2.1.1 - for being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match or matches at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019.

Article 2.4.4 - Failing to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in corrupt conduct under the Code at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019.

Naveed has also been found guilty of breaching the following two counts of the Emirates Cricket Board Anti-Corruption Code for Participants of the T10 League 2019:

Article 2.1.1 - for being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match or matches at the T10 League 2019. Article 2.4.4 - Failing to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in corrupt conduct under the Code at the T10 League 2019.

Sports Brief

Nico Rosberg wins Australian Formula One Grand Prix for Mercedes

MELBOURNE : Germany's Nico Rosberg led from start to finish to win an eventful season-opening Australian Grand Prix on Sunday as world champion Sebastian Vettel and pole-sitter Lewis Hamilton were both early casualties. Mercedes' Rosberg beat Australian Daniel Ricciardo, who placed second in his first drive for Red Bull, with McLaren debutant Kevin Magnussen impressively taking third in an exhilarating race in Melbourne. But there was no joy for Vettel, the four-time defending world champion, and Mercedes' Hamilton who both dropped out early with mechanical problems. At the start, Rosberg swept to the front from third on the grid and he safely held Ricciardo at bay by 24.5 seconds to give Mercedes, who are already looking dominant, the first win of the season. It was Rosberg's fourth GP win and his first since Silverstone last year. But while Mercedes were celebrating Rosberg's triumph, they lost Hamilton on the fourth lap with mechanical problems. Vettel also went out early, his first retirement since last year's British GP. McLaren's Jenson Button was fourth with Ferrari's Fernando Alonso fifth and Valtteri Bottas sixth for Williams. Fourteen cars of the 22 finished the race, which had its hair-raising moments on the opening lap. Felipe Massa and Kamui Kobayashi came off together at the first bend and were out of the race, while Vettel struck trouble at the rear of the field. Stewards said they would be launching an investigation into the Massa-Kobayashi collision. The Mercedes team told Hamilton he needed to retire on the second lap, but quickly amended the message to "stay out" on the track. But Hamilton only lasted another lap before he came into the pits and his under-powered car was taken into the team garage. Vettel followed Hamilton out of the race, retiring on lap six with mechanical problems. Finland's Bottas scraped the wall and lost his right rear wheel on the 10th lap and forced the safety car out on to the track. Bottas pitted for new tyres and rejoined the race and finished sixth.