



AUSTRALIA BEAT NEW ZEALAND BY 5 RUNS

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

Travis Head's bulldozing hundred and game awareness in crunch moments helped Australia negate a marvellous century by Rachin Ravindra to register a thrilling five-run victory over New Zealand in their World Cup match here on Saturday.



The destruction of Head (109 off 67 balls) and his opening partner David Warner (81 off 65 balls) during their 175-run alliance upfront gelled well with some late-order biffing as Aussies overcame a middle-order meltdown to post 388 all out, after they were put into bat. Ravindra made a sparkling 116 off 89 balls and James Neesham a manic 39-ball 58 but the Kiwis could only manage 383 to suffer their second successive defeat in the tournament.

his own bowling when the batter was on 70. Five runs later, Glenn Phillips at covers allowed the ball whizz through his hands as Head tried to clatter spinner Ravindra. But those blips apart, Head and Warner were super smooth, pulling, cutting and driving at will to make runs around the field.

But the Kiwis bowlers, normally a frugal unit under Trent Boult, could not hit the right lines and their fielders too were butterfingers, dropping five catches.

New Zealand were also not helped by the absence of pacer Lockie Ferguson, who conceded 38 runs in three overs, as he left the field with pain in his right Achilles. The two left-handers exploited those lapses and slices of fortune to the hilt. In fact, Warner reached his fifty in 28 balls and Head his half-century in 25 balls.



Edwards fifty pushes Netherlands to 229 against Bangladesh

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Netherlands skipper Scott Edwards overcame an edgy start to score a second World Cup fifty and take them to a modest 229 all out in their World Cup match against Bangladesh here on Saturday. Desperate to revive their fortunes after four successive losses, Bangladesh made smart bowling changes and their attack looked incisive.

The Netherlands scored 36 runs in last three overs before being bowled out in the last ball of the innings. Mustafizur (2/36) was the pick of Bangladesh attack and his wickets of the dangerous-looking Wesley Barresi (41) in the middle overs and Dutch skipper at the death ensured Bangladesh restricted them to a manageable total.

The attack of Taskin and Shoriful in effortless fashion. The 39-year-old, who is the only surviving member of the Netherlands side from the 2011 World Cup, started off with a leg-side flick to boundary against Shoriful and followed it up with another boundary in the same over to unsettle the rhythm.

Unstoppable India face deflated England



PTI ■ LUCKNOW

India and England have played with contrasting approaches in the World Cup so far, producing contrasting results. And that is unlikely to change here on Sunday. India are on course to top the league stage while England are looking to survive in the tournament they won four years ago.

factor player will be itching to make an impact. The chatter on Shreyas Iyer's perpetual struggles against the short-ball has resumed following his dismissal in Dharamsala. He will be fired up to prove his doubters wrong.

Shubman Gill, who missed the first couple of games due to dengue, is due for a special knock. The Lucknow crowd could also witness a record equalling 49th hundred from Virat Kohli. Wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who is from Uttar Pradesh, will be looking to fox the England batters at the state-of-the-art stadium here. It was a good test for him against the rampaging Daryl Mitchell and he will be ready for the England challenge.

WILL ENGLAND CHANGE THEIR BATTING APPROACH?: England possess plenty of firepower in the batting department and they would be hoping to string together a worthy performance after a string of abject failures. Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Ben Stokes, Liam Livingstone, Harry Brook. They are all formidable names in world cricket but have found the going tough in very familiar conditions.

We haven't put together perfect game yet: Arthur

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Pakistan's director of cricket Mickey Arthur said his team has failed to put together the "perfect game" in this World Cup, the main reason for their struggles at the ongoing showpiece.

pitch is 300 at least. So, we have not put together enough runs," a disappointed Arthur said at the post-match press conference. "And then we haven't put together a bowling performance that goes with it. So tonight, I thought it was our best bowling performance of the competition.



Pakistan started their innings on a strong note and were 225 for six by the 40th over before the lower middle-order and the tail-enders failed to do anything significant and were bowled out for 270.

"So, we've had players get in. We've had players get starts. We haven't had players go through. And I don't think we managed the last five overs particularly well tonight," he added.

Arthur said Pakistan were 30 runs short of what would have been a winning total. "There was still, at one point, in the 45th over, I remember saying to the dressing room a run a ball gets us 295 and a little bit more we get to 300. I know we would have defended 300 tonight (Friday)," he said.

We could have been more clinical in our run chase: Bavuma

PTI ■ CHENNAI

South Africa were lucky to escape by the skin of their teeth and should have been more clinical in the run chase against Pakistan during the World Cup match here, said skipper Temba Bavuma.

South Africa on Friday managed to walk away with a narrow one-wicket win in a tense finish. It was their first World Cup win against Pakistan since the 1999 edition. Chasing 271, the Proteas had a comfortable start, aided by Aiden Markram's assertive 91

but it turned sour with Pakistan scalping a flurry of wickets in the closing stages. "I think obviously at the end, we were all on the edge of our seat. You had everyone's opinions flying around as to how we should be going about that run chase," he said during the post-match press conference here.

up a lot more of a clinical display in going about that run chase. I think we did have luck on our side. We did give them opportunities to get into the game. But, fortunately for us, I think the gods were with us."

While the Proteas were 206 for 5 in the 34th over, they lost four more wickets by 260. But the duo of Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi held their nerves to take South Africa home with 16 balls to spare.

Wade to lead Australia in T20 series against India

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Veteran wicket-keeper batter Matthew Wade received a shot in the arm after he was named as Australia captain for the five-match T20I series against India to be played just after the ongoing World Cup.

The 35-year-old considered his international career all but over 12 months ago as he felt that last year's T20 World Cup would be his last for Australia. But now he will lead a 15-member Australian squad that will be without its frontline fast bowlers.

Travis Head will stay back for the T20 series. Australia's T20 squad for India series doesn't have any uncapped player. Matt Short, Spencer Johnson and Tanveer Sangha all have made their debuts against South Africa earlier this year and will feature in the T20 series in India.

Batters need to read situation better: Trescothick

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

England batters, who have failed miserably in the World Cup so far, need to read situations better as their team looks to bounce back from the brink, hinted assistant coach Marcus Trescothick on Saturday.

England's all out approach with the bat has backfired in Indian conditions including at venues like Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, where other teams have piled on the runs.



putting it all together to get that score," he said. England batting is full of match winners and firepower but is yet to fire in the mega event. Dawid

the team hasn't been as good as what we normally have. Normally there's always one, maybe two people in that team who are going to get a hundred-plus or a big score that's going to make a big difference," said the assistant coach.

"That's (playing on slower wickets) always a challenge for us. Every game that we want to play we want to play on the best wicket possible. If it's not and it turns, then we're okay with that and we've been good enough and we've been very smart at that in the last few years."

Trescothick also asserted that his team remains fully committed to the 50-over format.

Like Mitch Marsh in the South Africa series, this is another great opportunity to further deepen our international leadership experience and depth.

AUSTRALIA T20 SQUAD: Matthew Wade (c), Jason Behrendorff, Sean Abbott, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

"I don't always feel fierce and fearless, but I do feel like I'm a rock star at being human"
—Tracee Ellis Ross



TOURISM RENAISSANCE

As the spectre of militancy recedes to its lowest ebb, Kashmir the paradise on earth is experiencing tourism resurgence like never before. The recent success of the third G20 Tourism working group meeting in Srinagar has proven to be a pivotal moment, propelling Jammu & Kashmir into the limelight. This flourishing appeal is not confined to Bollywood alone; it extends to filmmakers from Telugu, Kanada, Marathi, Punjabi, and various OTT platforms, writes **MOHIT KANDHARI**

Against the backdrop of a historic low in militancy, the Kashmir valley has emerged as a cinematic treasure trove, drawing film crews from around the globe. The Union Territory administration, seizing this opportune moment, is now actively positioning itself on the global tourism map. This surge in interest comes in the wake of the highly successful third G20 Tourism working group meeting held in Srinagar.

During this meeting, the Government of India presented Kashmir as nothing short of a paradise on earth, solidifying its status as an unparalleled destination for international filmmakers. Beyond the glitz of Bollywood, production houses from Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Punjabi, and various OTT platforms have also set their sights on the valley.

While classics like Gulmarg continue to enthrall, lesser explored locales in the Jammu region, such as Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Bani, Basohli, and Ramban, are being fervently promoted to entice film crews. The Jammu & Kashmir tourism department, in sync with this surge, has meticulously curated a selection of destinations to further boost film tourism within the UT.

The region, now at the cusp of tranquility, has witnessed an influx of foreign tourists post the G20 meeting. Over 30,000 visitors have already explored Jammu & Kashmir this year, marking a substantial increase from the previous year's count of 19,985. With the winter season approaching, projections indicate an even greater surge.

In a bid to captivate travellers from distant corners of the world, the Jammu & Kashmir tourism department is fervently promoting hotspots and beckoning adventure enthusiasts to partake in the winter carnival and annual snow festivals.

Foreseeing an exceptional year for tourism, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha envisions an influx exceeding 2.25 crores, including a growing number of foreign tourists. To accommodate this surge, the Srinagar airport is maintaining an active

schedule, handling around 90 incoming and outgoing flights, facilitating a footfall of approximately 15,000 passengers regularly.

As of September, an impressive 1.70 crore tourists and pilgrims have already explored Jammu & Kashmir. With last year's total footfall recorded at 1.88 crore, the tourism department anticipates breaching the monumental 2 crore mark by year-end.

The revered Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in the Jammu region is poised to welcome over 90 lakh pilgrims by this year's end. During the auspicious nine-day Navratri festival, 4 lakh pilgrims paid obeisance at the Trikuta hills' sanctum sanctorum. Additionally, this year witnessed 4.5 lakh pilgrims at the Amarnath cave shrine. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, anticipating a landmark figure of one crore pilgrims, underscores the region's spiritual significance.

Anticipating yet another milestone, the upcoming launch of train services between Jammu and Srinagar in early 2024 is expected to revolutionise travel in the region. The Indian Railways' introduction of the Vistadome Coach, an all-weather glass ceiling AC train, promises an unparalleled experience, allowing passengers to immerse themselves in the awe-inspiring Kashmiri landscape through transparent coach windows.

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari affirms the government's commitment, with road projects valued at ₹1.25 lakh crore underway in Jammu & Kashmir. Proposals for 20 to 22 ropeways and cable cars, estimated at ₹25,000-30,000 crore, are poised to bolster tourism fourfold, ensuring the UT's self-reliance and prosperity.

Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Secretary Syed Abid Rashid Shah attributes the extraordinary growth to a confluence of factors, notably the groundbreaking G20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Srinagar. Beyond the numbers, Shah emphasises the government's endeavour to spotlight lesser-known destinations, with 75 offbeat locales, and to enhance spiritual and religious

WITH OVER 300 FILM CREWS GRANTED PERMISSION TO SHOOT IN THE PAST TWO YEARS AND A STEADY STREAM OF NEW PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE, THE KASHMIR VALLEY IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING A CINEMATIC RENAISSANCE. TOURISTS NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VENTURE BEYOND THE FAMILIAR, UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN GEMS OF BHADERWAH, KISHTWAR, BANI, BASOHLI, AND RAMBAN. FOREIGN TOURISTS HAVE ALSO JOINED THE SURGE, ENRaptured BY THE CHARM OF THIS EARTHLY PARADISE. WELCOME TO A LAND REBORN, WHERE ANCIENT CULTURES AND TIMELESS LANDSCAPES CONVERGE, PROMISING AN EXPERIENCE UNLIKE ANY OTHER

tourism across Jammu and Kashmir.

In a resounding endorsement of India's tourism potential, 35 villages have recently been acclaimed as the 'best tourism villages' in the country. Dawar, the Abode of Dards, and Shinas, stands out as the Best Tourism Village of 2023 in the Gold category. Nestled in the Gurez tehsil of Bandipore district, this village offers a captivating view of the Habba Khatoon Mountain and Krishna Ganga River.

Dawar, steeped in the history of the ancient Silk Route, showcases its enduring artistry through traditional handicrafts like Pattu and Gurezi chadar. Its allure is boundless, catering to seekers of solace, equanimity, thrill, and adrenaline rush. Dawar's ascent to this prestigious award is a testament to the concerted efforts to unlock Gurez's tourism potential, resulting in a remarkable surge in tourist numbers, from a mere few hundred to an impressive 35,000 and counting. The Indian Army's brainchild, "Shinon Meeras," a cultural center dedicated to preserving and promoting the rich artistic heritage of the Dard-Shina tribal community, serves as a gateway to their culture, language, and way of life.

In an insightful address, the Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Secretary elaborates on the ongoing initiatives, spotlighting the region's beauty and cultural opulence. He underscores the department's active participation in International Trade Marts, engaging global tourists, and assures of a pro-artisan policy in the works, aimed at bolstering the local artisan community. With unwavering dedication, the Tourism Department is vigorously promoting various tourism packages during promotional excursions across destinations.

The G20 summit has injected a new vigor into the tourism sector of Jammu & Kashmir. Officials proudly assert that the region's tourism contributes around 7 per cent to the gross State domestic product, directly and indirectly benefiting the local populace, including hotels, guesthouses, houseboats, homestays, and other tourism services.

Remarkably, nearly 90 per cent of the foreign tourists to Kashmir hail from three

nations — Thailand, Malaysia, and Russia. The remaining visitors predominantly arrive from Singapore, the USA, the UK, France, Germany, and Israel.

Describing the G20 meeting as a pivotal moment for Jammu & Kashmir's tourism, the Tourism Secretary underscores the surge in inquiries and bookings from countries previously untapped, such as Sweden and the US. This newfound interest promises to further diversify the tourism landscape.

A senior member of the Kashmir Houseboat Owners Association sheds light on the past challenges of negative travel advisories, which significantly impacted the region's tourism. Today, the narrative has evolved as foreign tourists are warmly welcomed, signifying a positive shift in perception. The previous cautions from countries like the UK, the US, and Australia have waned, paving the way for a flourishing tourist season in the valley.

With the G20 summit's resounding endorsement, Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha remains optimistic that the US will reconsider its negative advisory, given the region's improving situation. Chairman of the Jammu & Kashmir Hoteliers Club, Mushtaq Chaya, recalls the concerted efforts during the G20 Tourism working group meeting, where members championed Kashmir's tourism potential and advocated for the removal of negative travel advisories. As a stakeholder, he rejoices in witnessing a positive transformation in the valley's tourism landscape.

President of the Travel Agents Association of Kashmir Farooq Ahmad Kuthoo emphasises that the G20 summit conveyed a strong message to foreign countries: Kashmir is a safe haven for tourists. Travel agents are actively engaging with foreign associations to showcase the allure of Kashmir. Tailored packages, offering a gamut of adventure and offbeat experiences, are being rolled out to entice foreign tourists.

(The writer is a Pioneer correspondent based in Jammu)

