

## The love affair goes on

AFP, New Delhi

Indian newspapers on Friday showered praise on star batsman Sachin Tendulkar for returning from injury with a sparkling unbeaten 141 against the West Indies in Malaysia.

Tendulkar's 40th one-day century, which gave him a staggering 75 hundreds in international cricket, dominated the sports pages even though the West Indies won the rain-affected match in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

It was the 33-year-old's first major game after a shoulder injury kept him out since the third Test against England in Mumbai in March.

"He's back, and how," cried the Indian Express with a picture of Tendulkar with his arms raised. It also carried an appreciative article by former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar.

Gavaskar wrote that Tendulkar had dispelled all doubts over his fitness with the masterful and enter-taining knock.

"Once he hit that front foot down and straight drove the fast bowler, it was clear that he was mentally at peace with himself and had no doubts in his mind about his fitness," Gavaskar wrote.

Popular television pundit Harsha Bhogle, also writing in the Indian Express, cautioned against taking Tendulkar for granted.

"As we celebrate, we need to tuck away at the back of our minds that this will not happen everyday," Bhogle wrote. "Tendulkar is in a reality show, not a scripted Bollywood blockbuster."

"Let us not package him like the movies, just savour him for what he has done and is doing for as long as he can."

The Times of India, under the headline "Hooked on Sachin", gave statistical details of the prolific batsman who holds the world record for most runs (14,289) in one-day cricket and has scored a record 35 hundreds in Tests.

"D/L spoils Tendulkar's KL party", the paper added, referring to the Duckworth and Lewis system that awarded the curtailed match to the West Indies.

Most papers did not fail to note that the West Indian total of 141-2 in 20 overs was the same as Tendulkar's individual score and blamed bad luck for the defeat.

The front page of the Hindustan Times had a picture of Tendulkar under the headline "Batman returns", while The Hindu said, "Sachin scores, but Duckworth and Lewis prevail."

**Moratti demands**

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among the goals."

Inter's first match of the season away to Fiorentina last week ended in a 3-2 win, but once again they showed their defensive frailties.

The champions, awarded the title after Juventus and AC Milan were found guilty of match-fixing, opened up a 3-0 lead and seemed set to run up a cricket score.

But they relaxed after their blistering start and allowed Fiorentina to score twice late on and nearly snatched a point.

Esteban Cambiasso, who scored twice in Florence, has been ruled out for a month after suffering a calf strain in that match.

Roma, who scored four goals in the last 23 minutes in Tuesday's 4-0 Champions League win over Shakhtar Donetsk, visit Siena.

Roma, likely to be Inter's closest rivals, kicked-off their campaign with a 2-0 victory against Livorno.

AC Milan, who started on minus eight points for their role in the match-fixing scandal, face a potentially tricky match away to Parma.

Fiorentina, firmly rooted to the foot of the table having been deducted 19 points for rigging matches, visit Livorno for the Tuscan derby.

Atalanta, who are top of the table after the first round of matches by virtue of their better goals scored record, play away to Sicilian side Catania.

**Mixed fortune**

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Africa international striker, and former Champions League winner with Porto, Benni McCarthy also found the net.

But a last minute equaliser from substitute Marc Janko salvaged a draw for the Austrians.

Ajax, who won this competition back in 1992, were being pegged at 2-2 on the hour mark in Norway before striding clear with three unanswered goals.

Young Netherlands international striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar scored a brace while there were also scores from Markus Rosenberg, Wesley Sneijder and Garcia Roger.

Sevilla took a 2-0 half-time lead through Kepa Blanco-Gonzalez and Duda but Atromitos hit back after the break through Giorgos Karakakis to set up a nervy final.

Former European Cup winners Red Star Belgrade crashed 2-0 at Slovan Liberec while Eintracht Frankfurt cruised to a 3-0 win over Brondby.



New Zealand goalkeeper Kyle Pontifex (R) challenges England's James Tindall during their Hockey World Cup classification match in Moenchengladbach on Friday.

## England down NZ

**Hockey**

AFP, Moenchengladbach

England won through to the playoff for fifth and sixth positions at the men's field hockey World Cup Championship with a 4-3 defeat of New Zealand here Friday.

The result of the match between the Netherlands and Pakistan will determine England's playoff opponent.

England played catch-up after New Zealand scored twice in the first-half through two low penalty corner flicks by Hayden Shaw, one deflected by Ryan Archibald.

In the last minute of the first-half Simon Mantell took a rebound off

Kyle Pontifex' pads from a Ben Hawes penalty corner flick to put England on the scoreboard and back in the match at 2-1 going into the break.

Glenn Kirkham capitalised on a defensive error by Archibald, dis-

possessed by Richard Alexander who ran to the right through the circle and fired in a shot to score with a diving backstick flick in front of goal for England's equaliser 11 minutes into the second half.

Simon Child drove in backstick

shot from the top of the circle for

New Zealand to lead 3-2 after 51

minutes but England's equalise came through a second for Mantell, set up again by Alexander's shot from the right.

A win it might have been, but England coach Jason Lee was not too happy.

"This is the worst we have played

in this tournament. It seems that

England has a record of playing the

sixth match of a tournament badly

as we did in the European Cup and

in the Commonwealth Games loss

to Malaysia," Lee said.

New Zealand coach Kevin Towns said he was "extremely

disappointed to concede the goals

to England. We should have been

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James Tindall scored England's winner in the last minute from a variation penalty corner.

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