

Ganguly praised

REUTERS, Nagpur

Indian opener Sourav Ganguly's match-winning effort on his return to the one-day arena after a 16-month hiatus elicited praise from both the West Indies captain Brian Lara and the home skipper Rahul Dravid.

The 34-year-old left-hander struck a sparkling 98 on Sunday to help his side register a 14-run victory against the visitors in the first one-day match of the four-game series.

"He's a player of high class and you expect performances like that from him," Lara told a news conference.

"We know he's eager to get back and you got to give him all the credit. He's mentally strong and to come back and do well shows he's very capable."

"Batting out there he showed how eager he is. But unfortunately Ganguly didn't get a hundred."

Ganguly was run out by Dwayne Smith with a direct hit from short mid-wicket.

Ganguly returned to the one-day side on the strength of his performances in the Test series in South Africa where he was the most successful Indian batsman with 214 runs.

It marked a tremendous comeback for the Kolkata batsman after the selectors appeared to have called time on his career when they sacked him as skipper and one-day player in October 2005 because of a batting slump and a row with coach Greg Chappell.

Dravid spoke highly of the openers Ganguly and Gautam Gambhir, who laid the platform for a commanding total with a 144-run stand.

"(It was a) very good innings. Both (were) coming back after long time. A great sign. (They) stayed at the wicket."

Ganguly

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number-three position. Tendulkar contributed 31 before being trapped leg-before by Gayle.

Ganguly looked set to complete his 23rd one-day century when he was run out following a superb piece of fielding by Dwayne Smith, who picked the ball cleanly and hit the stumps at the non-striker's end.

Runs continued to flow after Ganguly's dismissal as Dhoni and Dravid dominated the attack in the closing overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the first one-day international between India and the West Indies in Nagpur on Sunday:

INDIA

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Gambhir c Samuels b Gayle | 69 |
| Ganguly run out | 98 |
| Tendulkar lbw b Gayle | 31 |
| Dhoni not out | 62 |
| Dravid not out | 54 |
| Extras: (b-5, lb-8, w-11) | 24 |
| Total: (For three wkts in 50 overs) | 338 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-144, 2-214, 3-219. | |

| | | | | |
|----------|----|---|----|---|
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Bradshaw | 6 | 0 | 43 | 0 |
| Taylor | 10 | 0 | 71 | 0 |
| Samuels | 10 | 0 | 53 | 0 |
| Powell | 5 | 0 | 32 | 0 |
| Gayle | 9 | 1 | 51 | 2 |
| Bravo | 4 | 0 | 41 | 0 |
| Smith | 6 | 0 | 34 | 0 |

WEST INDIES

| | |
|---|-----|
| Gayle c Dravid b Harbhajan | 52 |
| Chanderpaul not out | 149 |
| Morton b Harbhajan | 8 |
| Samuels b Zaheer | 40 |
| Lara st Dhoni b Tendulkar | 31 |
| Bravo c Dhoni b Zaheer | 17 |
| Smith b Agarkar | 1 |
| Ramdin c Gambhir b Sreesanth | 7 |
| Bradshaw run out | 0 |
| Taylor not out | 1 |
| Extras: (lb-8, nb-5, w-5) | 18 |
| Total: (For eight wkts in 50 overs) | 324 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-80, 2-102, 3-175, 4-214, 5-264, 6-269, 7-304, 8-319. | |

| | | | | |
|----------|----|---|----|---|
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Bradshaw | 6 | 0 | 43 | 0 |
| Taylor | 10 | 0 | 71 | 0 |
| Samuels | 10 | 0 | 53 | 0 |
| Powell | 5 | 0 | 32 | 0 |
| Gayle | 9 | 1 | 51 | 2 |
| Bravo | 4 | 0 | 41 | 0 |
| Smith | 6 | 0 | 34 | 0 |

Result: India won by 14 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

Toss: West Indies

Umpires: Billy Bowden (NZL) and Suresh Shastri (IND)

Second one-dayer: At Cuttack on Wednesday.

'Black Widow'

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"For me, this relationship so far is great. For the last year-and-a-half, I'm playing my best tennis. So these comments didn't (relate to) our relationship."

He said the timing of his injury was a coincidence.

"When I spoke to my doctor and asked what should be the reason for it, he said 'you can have it already for a couple of years,'" Stepanek said.

"Suddenly, there is a million things that can bring up your injury and affect my right hand."

"So it is nothing to do with the private life or anything else."

When asked about the "Black Widow" tag before the tournament started, Hingis tersely refused to comment.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Juventus legend Alessandro Del Piero (C) receives a model of the new Fiat 500 car from Fiat Marketing Director Luca de Meo (R) as club President Giovanni Cobolli Gigli holds a plate referring to Del Piero's 500th game for Juventus prior to their match against Bari at the Turin Olympic Stadium on Saturday.

Del Piero inspires Juve

Football

AFP, Rome

Alessandro Del Piero was bursting with pride after making his 500th appearance for his beloved Juventus on Saturday.

"Alessandro moved well and did great things all afternoon, and then rounded it off with a good goal," said the Frenchman, who played alongside Del Piero when Juventus won the 1996 Champions League final against Ajax.

"It was a goal and a performance fit for the occasion."

Furino, now 60, paid tribute to Del Piero before kick-off.

"He is a man who complements the Juventus mentality in terms of his style and behaviour," he said.

"I'm not surprised he has reached this milestone and he deserves all the success he gets."

Del Piero was one of the few stars to stick by Juventus when they were

relegated from Serie A last summer for their role in the Italian match-fixing scandal.

The club were also given a nine-point penalty this season, but despite their handicap they seem set for a swift return to the top flight.

Former Italy coach Marcello Lippi, who stood down after the Azzuri triumphed in Germany, said Del Piero's name is synonymous with Juventus.

"When anyone thinks of Juve, they think of Del Piero. He is one of the few real symbols of Italian football; he is a leader and has an immensely tough character, he demonstrated that at the World Cup."

"He stayed with Juventus after they were relegated and is a shining example to the rest of the squad."

In addition to the 1996 Champions League trophy, Del Piero has also won five Serie A titles (1995, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003) in his time at Juventus.

Champion

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(overnight 115-3)
Smith c Inzamam b Asif 10
De Villiers b Asif 15
Amla b Sami 16
Kallis lbw b Asif 91
Prince Ibw b Kaneria 22
Gibbs c Younis Khan b Asif 40
Boucher c Younis Khan b Asif 46
Pollock c b Kaneria 36
Nel not out 23
Harris c sub (Iqbal) b Kaneria 0
Ntini c Hameed b Kaneria 18
Extras: (b-3, lb-5, nb-6) 14
Total: (All out in 133.2 overs) 331
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-30, 3-61, 4-117, 5-195, 6-205, 7-285, 8-289, 9-290

| | | | | |
|---------|------|----|-----|---|
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Asif | 38 | 16 | 76 | 5 |
| Sami | 29 | 5 | 90 | 1 |
| Kaneria | 51.2 | 14 | 105 | 4 |
| Nel | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Harris | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ntini | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Extras | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Scoreboard

Scoreboard at the end of South Africa's second innings on the third day of the second Test between South Africa and Pakistan at St George's Park on Sunday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 124

PAKISTAN: First innings 265

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings

Umpires: Billy Doctrove (WIS), Peter Parker (AUS)

Eight reach main draw

4 Bangladeshis in 2nd place

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmasters Ziaur Rahman and Niaz Murshed and fellow Bangladeshi IM Enamul Hossain Rajib and IM Abdullah Al Rakib earned seven points to share the second place with eight others at the end of the ninth round of the 5th Parsvnath International Open Chess Tournament yesterday in New Delhi.

In the 9th round at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Zia drew with joint-leader GM Adly Ahmed of Egypt while Niaz outplayed IM Roktim Banerjee of India.

In other games, Rajib beat IM Sriram Jha of India, Rakib beat Sarwat Walaa, Javed beat IM Vijayalakshmi, Sohel drew with IM Prakash, Nasir lost against Arun, Taibur beat Debashish, Debraj beat Eswar, Ali drew with Kantilal, Lavlu beat Panaippan, Parag beat Saket and Liza beat Wakar.

Javed, on 6.5 points, was followed by his Bangladesh teammates FM Taibur Rahman, Debraj Chatterjee, Sohel Chowdhury and Saif Uddin Lavlu – all on six points.

GM Alexie Dreev of Russia, GM Adly Ahmed of Egypt and local players G Rohit and Adibahan were sharing the top spot with 7.5 points each.

England one

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He said: "They can do well in one-day cricket if they get their heads right and find a format to play the game.

"I think there is enough talent in this team to do well in one-day cricket."

Ganguly, who hit 98 in India's 14-run win over West Indies on Sunday, is however concerned about the personnel in the England team.

He feels the absence of Marcus Trescothick could hurt the team and says Usman Afzaal, not even named in England's initial squad of 30, should be playing.

"I played with Usman at Northampton last year and he looks a very talented player," said Ganguly.

"I'm sure if he gets an opportunity for England he will do well for the country."

"I feel he's got a lot of ability. He can hit the ball, he's a clean striker of the ball and can be a strength to English cricket."

Afzaal, 29, played in three Tests in the Ashes series of 2001 but has not featured in a one-day international. He hit 319 runs at an average of 63.8 in the Pro40 League in 2006.

Eight reach main draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Eight players qualified for the main draw of the 5th BKSP International Junior Tennis Championships at the Savar sports institute yesterday.

In boys' singles, Max of Great Britain, Sitaram of India, Kim of South Korea and Indian player Christopher qualified for the main draw while Dutch players Vilaar and Schuurs and Belgians Meuleman and Schrul-Urs made it to the girls' singles main event on the second day of the tournament.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF) president AMM Nasir Uddin officially declared the meet open yesterday. BKSP's DG Brig Gen M Najib Hasan, tournament director Faruqul Islam and BTF general secretary Sanau Haque were also present.

A total of 60 boys and 25 girls from 14 countries including the hosts are taking part in the event.

Sharapova

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topped the rankings in August 2005, has enjoyed the honour for seven weeks.

Kim Clijsters, Martina Hingis and Serena Williams are the only other remaining women at the Melbourne Park event to have held the top ranking.

Kabaddi team

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Stadium from the government last year, the BKF has yet to provide the mat for its players, who had to remain satisfied with bronze medals in the 10th South Asian Games and the Asian Games last year.

Jali told that playing in two international meets, the SA Games and the Asiad, recently will boost the team's confidence.

"If we can avoid India in the knockout phase, we hope to reach the final. And we are confident that we will beat Pakistan this time," said Jali.

Bangladesh lost to eventual silver medallists Pakistan in both the Games while India are the undisputed king of the game.

"We could have said more had we known the draw," the coach added.

The participating teams: Canada, West Indies, Australia, Germany, England, Kazakhstan, Iran, Thailand, Japan, Nepal, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh and India.

BANGLADESH SQUAD

Ziaur Rahman (captain), Mojammel Haque, Mosharrif Hossain, Abu Musa, Abdur Rouf, Kamal Hossain, Raju Ahmed, Al Mamun, Tariqul Islam and Badshah Mia.

SECRETS

Australian Open

The Grand Slam of Asia/Pacific

AP, Melbourne

and that's it."

TROPHY HOG: Roger Federer is so good that a couple of his U.S. rivals want to team up against him.