

## Twenty20 more demanding

PTI, Durban

Twenty20 might be the shortest version of cricket but it is more demanding than Tests and one-dayers, says Indian skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who feels the slam-bang version was taking a toll on the players' bodies.

"Twenty20 is a very demanding form. It is just 20 overs a side and three hour match, but the intensity and involvement is more than a 50-over match or even a Test match," Dhoni said.

The wicket-keeper-batsman said the format was especially punishing on the bowlers, who had little margin for error against batsmen ready to knock them out of the ground.

"The bowlers have to put in more than 100 per cent because even though they have only four overs, the batsmen are looking to go at them all the time," he said.

"The batsmen also love to challenge fielders, by looking to convert ones into twos. Twenty20 is very tiring and exhausting, it takes a good toll on the body," Dhoni said.

On playing back-to-back matches in the competition, Dhoni said although it was tiring, it helped the team getting acclimated to conditions.

"It is international cricket and you always want to win whether you are playing back to back or matches after a gap. If you play back to back matches, you have the advantage of knowing the conditions," he said.

That knowledge would put the Indians at an advantage against the Australians in the semifinal here on Saturday.

"We definitely know the wicket, we know the conditions, we know how the pitch behaves when there is grass on it, so we won't really panic. We do have an advantage, but everything depends on how you play on that day," he added.

## Big guns ready

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"We knew the South Africa game would be among the toughest matches we would play in the whole tournament," he said.

"It was their home ground and the conditions were favourable for them, so we were under pressure and we did not get the start we were looking for."

The captain also had high praise for 20-year-old Sharma, who was named man of the match ahead of Rudra Pratap.

"It was a brilliant performance by Rohit," said Dhoni. "He has been sat out for ages and did not play in England, yet he came out and helped us recover."

"It is always a challenge to play Australia because they are the best team in the world, but I am sure we will be up to the challenge."

India received unexpected support from South African captain Graeme Smith, who said Dhoni's men were capable of upsetting Australia.

"They bowled and fielded superbly and kept us under pressure all the way," said Smith.

"In this format of the game things can change so quickly and if they carry on playing the way they are having a good chance."

### TEAMS

**AUSTRALIA:** Adam Gilchrist (capt, wk), Matthew Hayden, Brad Hodge, Andrew Symonds, Mike Hussey, Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Brett Lee, Mitchell Johnson, Nathan Bracken, Stuart Clark.

**INDIA:** Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wk), Rohit Sharma, Irfan Pathan, Jignesh Sharma, Harbhajan Singh, Sreesanth, RP Singh.

## Community rues Jose exit

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20 million pounds (40 million dollars).

### WENGER, FERGUSON

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has admitted he was sad to see Jose Mourinho leave Chelsea despite their stormy relationship.

Wenger could have been forgiven if he breathed a sigh of relief on hearing Mourinho had left Stamford Bridge after a series of highly-public disputes with the Portuguese coach.

Mourinho infuriated Wenger when he described the Frenchman as a "voyeur" and the squabbling continued when the Gunners boss responded by saying: "When you give success to stupid people, it makes them more stupid sometimes and not more intelligent."

But Wenger insisted he had immense respect for the way Mourinho transformed Chelsea one of Europe's most powerful teams and won back to back Premier League titles.

"It is basically sad because I feel Mourinho is a manager of quality," he said. "We didn't get on the best but recently it has become better. That does not hide the fact I respected what he did and the



Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury hands over a jersey at BKSP yesterday to one of the members of the Bangladesh contingent that will participate in the Special Olympics World Summer Games which begins from October 2.

## Eyes on the prize

AFP, Cape Town



Pakistan captain Shoab Malik

said his team were looking beyond Saturday's semifinals after they laboured to a four-wicket win over Bangladesh in their final World Twenty20 Super Eights match at Newlands on Thursday.

"We had hiccups today (Thursday)," Malik admitted. "We are much focused to improve on this performance."

Pakistan's win ensured they finished top of Group F in the Super Eights stage with three wins in three matches.

They earned a semifinal at Newlands against the second team from Group E, one of South Africa, New Zealand or India, depending on the final Super Eights match between South Africa and India later Thursday.

But Malik said he wasn't concerned about who Pakistan play Saturday. "We have our sights set higher than the semifinals," he said. "We are looking at winning the trophy."

Australia were the other semifinal qualifiers from the group after beating Sri Lanka by ten wickets in the first game of a double header at Newlands. Australia will have to travel to Durban for their semifinal.

Newcomer Zunaid Siddique made an aggressive half-century to play virtually a lone hand for Bangladesh after they were sent in to bat.

Opening batsman Siddique, who

was named man of the match, blasted 71 off 49 balls but Bangladesh were bowled out for 140 in 19.4 overs.

Pakistan seemed set for an easy win but they suffered a middle order batting collapse.

Opening batsman Imran Nazir, who had earlier retired hurt before scoring, returned at the fall of the fifth wicket and hit 27 not out to guide Pakistan home with six balls to spare.

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful said a dropped catch in the deep two balls after Nazir returned could have made the difference between winning and losing.

Siddique, 19, a tall left-hander, marked his international debut with a sparkling innings which included six fours and three sixes.

He said he was told to play his natural game. "I went out to play as I do in domestic cricket and not worry about the opposition," he said.

He showed a fearless approach at the crease. Even when three wickets fell in successive overs, he slammed two successive sixes over mid-wicket off off-spinner Mohammad Hafeez.

But his penchant for the lofted stroke over midwicket caused his downfall when he was caught in the deep of Pakistan captain Shoab Malik.

Nazir retired hurt before a run had been scored by Pakistan when he was hit in the abdomen by a ball from Mashrafe Mortaza.

Opening batsman Siddique, who

## Afriди, Vettori hold

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us it worked out well. We make a lot of them (sem-finals) now it's about kicking on."

"It looks good," said Malik after inspecting the surface. "But the out-field is heavy so 165-170 should be a good total." The sunshine of recent days is also expected to be replaced by a touch more cloud cover, offering more assistance for the bowlers.

If Afriди, Misbahul Haq (holder of the longest six in the tournament) or Oram get hold of a ball deep midwicket will need to be standing on the other side of the railway line.

Although chasing has been the preferred route, Malik doesn't think it's the only way to go. "If you have a strong bowling line-up can bat first and put pressure on the other side," he said.

Vettori believes it would have been harsh for New Zealand to miss out on the semi-finals. "Sometimes we have scraped through, but this time I think we deserved it but luckily enough for

us to get a clearer picture of why such turmoil is engulfing their club."

But while the United manager insisted the make-up of the Chelsea side will be unaffected by the changes in the dug-out, he admitted Mourinho's replacement, Avram Grant, faces a daunting task attempting to emulate the success of his predecessor.

"He deserves a lot of credit for that because it is never easy to win and in England it is maybe more difficult."

"I thought for a while, when he extended his contract, he was on the same way of thinking as I or Ferguson, where we try to impart something over a longer period at a club."

Sir Alex Ferguson admits Jose Mourinho's dramatic departure from Chelsea this week came as a major disappointment to the Manchester United manager.

Mourinho was due to take his side to Old Trafford on Sunday to face Ferguson's United before the Portuguese unexpectedly left his post on Thursday.

Ferguson attempted to play down the impact of Mourinho's absence on the weekend clash between the two teams expected to

challenge most strongly for this season's Premiership title.

But while the United manager insisted the make-up of the Chelsea side will be unaffected by the changes in the dug-out, he admitted Mourinho's replacement, Avram Grant, faces a daunting task attempting to emulate the success of his predecessor.

"He has been fantastic, unparalleled success and it's a test for whoever replaces him. At the moment it's Avram Grant and it's a big test for him."

"We did not want this to continue or affect the club further."

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS GP bids farewell to Bangladesh team

SPORTS REPORTER

Youth and Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury hoped that Team Bangladesh will shine in the 2007 Special Olympics in Shanghai, China this year.

Addressing a reception held for the Bangladesh team's farewell party at BKSP yesterday, organised by Grameenphone, Tapan said: "I hope the team will once again make us proud by bringing more medals as the whole nation's blessing is on them."

"They had been successful in the past and we should encourage them," added Tapan, who also handed over official jerseys to the team.

Zheng Qingdian, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Bangladesh, was also present as special guest.

Youth and Sports secretary Dr. Golam M Talukder, Chairman of Special Olympics Bangladesh Ashraf-ud Dowla and Kafil HS Muyeed, Director, New Business Division of Grameenphone, were also present.

GP is the sponsor of the Bangladesh team for the Games that will be held in Shanghai, China from October 2-11.

The 20-year-old Rohit, who made his debut Twenty20 only 24 hours ago against England but did not get to bat, played with controlled aggression to help India cross 150.

He posted his half-century in style, pulling the last ball of the innings from Johan van der Wath for a six over square leg. He faced 40 balls and hit seven fours and two sixes.

"I always knew he had the potential to be a good cricketer and he proved it. I provided a platform and he achieved it. I feel he has great role to play in the future for

Bangladesh, who have been taking part in the Games since 1995, will participate in seven disciplines – aquatics, athletics, badminton, bocce, football, table tennis and cricket."

They have so far won 37 gold, 22 silver and 19 bronze medals in the last three editions.

Earlier this year, GP pledged its support to Special Olympics Bangladesh, a non-profit organisation which helps people with intellectual disabilities to develop self-confidence, social skills and a sense of personal accomplishment through sports training and competition.

The sponsorship will go beyond the team's participation and GP will also co-organise talent hunts in both regional and national levels to search for new talents.

## INDIA-SAFRICA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Twenty20 World Championships Super Eights match between India and South Africa at the Kingsmead on Thursday:

### INDIA

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gambhir c Smith b Pollock	19			
Sehwag c Boucher b Ntini	11			
Karthick c Morkel b Pollock	0			
Uthappa c Smith b M Morkel	15			
R Sharma not out	50			
Dhoni run out	45			
Pathan not out	0			
Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-8, nb-1)	13			
Total: (For 5 wickets in 20 overs)	153			
Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-33, 3-33, 4-61, 5-146				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Pollock	4	0	17	2
Ntini	4	0	30	1
Van der Wath	4	0	43	0
M Morkel	4	0	32	1
Philander	2	0	14	0
A Morkel	2	0	13	0

### SOUTH AFRICA

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gibbs lbw b Rudra Pratap	1			
Smith c Karthick b Rudra Pratap	4			
De Villiers lbw b Sreesanth	1			
Kemp run out	5			
Boucher b Sreesanth	36			
Pollock b Rudra Pratap	0			
Philander c Morkel b Rudra Pratap	36			
Van der Wath c Karthick b Harbhajan	2			
M Morkel not out	1			
Ntini not out	4			
Extras: (lb-9, w-15)	24			
Total (for nine wickets in 20 overs)	116			
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-12, 3-12, 4-30, 5-31, 6-100, 7-103, 8-109, 9-111				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sreesanth	4	0	23	2
Rudra Pratap	4	0	13	4
J Sharma	4	0	24	0
Pathan	4	0	16	0
Harbhajan	4	0	31	2

Result: India won by 37 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Rohit Sharma.

Toss: India

## Ryoto breaks Indian monopoly

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