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'I didn't look at scoreboard'

CRICINFO, undated

Sachin Tendulkar admitted that he hadn't looked at the scoreboard when he was in the nineties, not wanting to think of missing out on a hundred yet again. Tendulkar endured seven scores in the nineties in the last year and said he would savour this hundred as a special one.

"It was a little different this time because in 2007 I missed a lot of hundreds and I didn't want that to continue," he said referring to his string of dismissals in the nineties, including three on 99. "I wanted to move on and the beginning of the new year is extremely important. It came at the right time so I am happy about that."

"I didn't look at the scoreboard, to be honest. I was just sharing my opinion with Harbhajan about how to go on with the innings and build our partnership and continue and that was the prime focus. That kept my mind pre-occupied with a lot of things."

Harbhajan joined Tendulkar after a mini-collapse, when India lost four wickets for 52 runs in 14.5 overs. "I had to re-think the strategy as we lost four wickets in that period. We had to plan little different. One big partnership was important."

The striking feature of this innings was Tendulkar's decision to trust the tail-enders, even if it was No. 11 Ishant Sharma, who's previous 13 first-class innings had produced just 15 runs. "It was our strategy," he said. "For me there

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FINALLY ESCAPED THE 90s: India batsman Sachin Tendulkar points to the heavens after scoring a sparkling century on the third day of the second Test against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

A Sachin special

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Sachin Tendulkar sublimely batted India into the lead in the second Test with a record 38th Test century to put the pressure back on to Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground here on Friday.

"The Little Master" defied all efforts from cricketer's number one team to remove him and remained undefeated on 154 in almost seven hours at the crease off 243 balls with 14 boundaries and a six.

Aided by some spirited lower-order partnerships, Tendulkar rallied India to 532 and a handy 69-run first innings lead with two days left to get a result.

Australia had a nervy 19 minutes and five overs to reach stumps at 13 without loss, with Phil Jaques on eight and Matthew Hayden not out.

The 34-year-old Indian cricketer hero hit his eighth century against Australia and completed his third century in four Tests at the ground to extend his SCG average to a stunning 326 from six innings with four not outs.

"It's an important century because it came at the right time," Tendulkar said. "There's plenty of cricket left. We need to put the ball in the right areas and it should be backed by good fielding for us to have a chance."

"It's one of my favorite grounds. I've really enjoyed batting here every moment. It's truly been memorable, all my outings."

Tendulkar, halfway through his 144th Test match, has now

amassed 11,520 runs and he is just 433 away from retired West Indian Brian Lara's world record of 11,953.

Tendulkar, revered by Australian cricket fans for his batting artistry on his farewell tour here, received a rapturous ovation upon reaching yet another century.

He stretched his world record number of centuries to four more than Lara and fellow Indian Sunil Gavaskar.

On India's last tour to Australia in 2003-04, Tendulkar scored an unbeaten 241 at the SCG and he also hit an unconquered 148 in the drawn 1992 Sydney Test on his first tour of Australia.

He was pivotal in India adding 187 runs for the last three wickets on Friday as the tail wagged vigorously.

Tailender Harbhajan Singh helped himself to 63 off 92 balls, RP Singh to 13 off 22 and Ishant Sharma to 23 off 34 to keep Australia in the field for virtually the entire third day.

Centuries by Tendulkar and V.V.S. Laxman (109) have turned around India's fortunes after last week's ignominious 337-run defeat in Melbourne and given them a chance of levelling the four-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series over the closing two days.

But Australia also remain hopeful. "There is a chance of winning this match, definitely," paceman Brett Lee said of Australia's chances of winning a record-equaling 16th consecutive Test.

"Tomorrow's (Saturday) first session of day four will probably be the most important session of the match. It's going to be the telltale of the whole Test match."

"When Ricky (Ponting) thinks that we've got enough runs, if we bat well, then it's time to go out there and have a crack at them."

Lee finished with 5-119 off 32.2 overs and combined with wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist for the dismissals of Mahendra Dhoni (2) and skipper Anil Kumble (2).

Dhoni's wicket was Gilchrist's 400th Test dismissal.

In the morning session, leg-spinner Brad Hogg enticed Sourav Ganguly on 67 to hit over the top of the ringed field only to find Mike Hussey at deep mid-off.

Ganguly slammed his bat into the ground before he left the wicket, annoyed that he had fallen for the Australian trap set for him.

The former Indian skipper batted for 116 minutes and hit seven fours and a straight six off spinner Michael Clarke off 78 balls. He put on 108 for the fourth wicket with Tendulkar.

Yuvraj Singh followed up his duck and five in last week's first Melbourne Test with another batting failure.

The under-fire number six was trapped leg before wicket for 12 by a Brett Lee inswinger. Yuvraj held his place in the side for the Sydney Test despite a push for opener Virender Sehwag to rejoin the team.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at the close of the third day of the second Test between Australia and India at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 463 (Symonds 162 not out, Hogg 79; Kumble 4-106, RP Singh 4-124)
INDIA: First innings (216 for 3 overnight)

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Openers cut SA lead

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

Makeshift West Indies opening batsman Denesh Ramdin survived some hostile bowling as he and Daren Ganga reduced South Africa's first innings advantage on the third day of the second Test at Newlands on Friday.

The West Indies were 30 for no wicket in their second innings at tea, still trailing by 48.

Ramdin was opening in place of captain Chris Gayle, who was having ice treatment on an injured hamstring after a long stint in the field, although Gayle was expected to bat later.

Ashwell Prince was mainly responsible for South Africa taking a first innings lead of 78, scoring 98 before he was the ninth man dismissed, run out attempting a risky second run to third man.

Prince and Mark Boucher (59) put on 129 for the sixth wicket to put the home side ahead.

Prince batted for 302 minutes and faced 224 balls, hitting 11 fours. Running out of partners, he gave two chances before he was finally out. On 90 bowler Daren Powell

could not hold a sharp return catch and one run later he swung Dwayne Bravo to deep backward square leg. Runako Morton ran from long leg and dived but could not hold a difficult chance.

On 97 Prince nudged the ball towards third man and called for a risky second run. He could not beat Jerome Taylor's throw to wicketkeeper Ramdin.

Bravo finished with four for 82. Ramdin and Ganga could only score three runs off the bat in the first 11 overs of the second innings with Andre Nel in particular beating both batsmen several times. Makhaya Ntini bowled five successive maidens from the other end.

Although Dale Steyn batted with a runner because of a strained right hamstring he took the field and came on to bowl as first change. Although he showed no obvious signs of discomfort he bowled at well below his usual pace and conceded 14 runs off three overs.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the second Test between South Africa and the West Indies at Newlands on Friday:
WEST INDIES: First innings 243
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings

(overnight 218-5)					
Smith c Ramdin b Taylor	28				
McKenzie c Gayle b Taylor	23				
Amla lbw b Bravo	32				
Kallis c Ramdin b Bravo	36				
Prince run out (Taylor)	98				
De Villiers c Ramdin b Bravo	2				
Boucher b Bravo	59				
Harris c Morton b Powell	4				
Nel c Ramdin b Powell	5				
Steyn c Morton b Lewis	19				
Ntini not out	3				
Extras: (b-4, lb-5, w-3)	12				
Total: (All out in 118.2 overs)	321				
Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-61, 3-120, 4-123, 5-131, 6-260, 7-265, 8-284, 9-301.					

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	35	4	123	2
Edwards	4.5	1	12	0
Samuels	8.1	3	18	0
Taylor	21	6	51	2
Bravo	37	9	82	4
Lewis	12.2	3	26	1
WEST INDIES: Second innings				
Ganga not out	5			
Ramdin not out	13			
Extras: (lb-12)	12			
Total: (For no loss in 17 overs)	30			
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nel	7	4	4	0
Ntini	5	5	0	0
Steyn	3	0	14	0
Kallis	2	2	0	0

Another batting debacle

Cricket

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Dunedin

The occasion of the 50th match failed to inject any spark into the under-performing Bangladesh batting as the Tigers let New Zealand gain upper hand on Day One of the first Test at the University Oval which made its debut as the world's 96th Test venue.

The pitch was under scrutiny well before the start of this Test following the infamous State Championship match a few weeks ago where 34 wickets tumbled inside two days. Such was the concern that New Zealand Cricket (NZC) even arranged a pitch inspection for the media covering the match just after toss. But it played like a typical first day track and can't be blamed for the Tigers' 137 all out after being sent in. New Zealand also did not have things entirely their way when they batted and closed day one on 156 for 4. A good first hour tomorrow (Saturday) can put the tourists back in the game with only Brendan McCullum to come among the specialist batsmen.

Bangladesh's debutant openers Tamim Iqbal and Zunaed Siddiqui left the first few balls nicely before Tamim got off the mark with a flicked four. Zunaed's first runs in Test cricket came off an inside edge but he then failed to take his bat away from a Chris Martin delivery and was caught by Stephen Fleming in the slips (1-5). Habibul Bashar (23 off 22 balls) was targeted with short balls and he threw his bat around getting two top edged sixes over the shorter boundary at the media end before he nicked Martin to McCullum behind the stumps (2-43). Captain Mohammad Ashraful padded up to a ball from Martin that jagged back and was lbw for naught (3-47).

Tamim and Shahriar Nafees batted confidently in a 35-run stand but with minutes from lunch Nafees (16) tried to slog-sweep Daniel Vettori from outside off. Vettori just held the ball back a bit and went through the batsman's defences. Aftab Ahmed was a study in patience in a total contrast to his typical nature. He batted for 33 minutes and then not getting off the mark got to him as he played across to a straight ball from Jacob

Oram and was bowled right after lunch (5-98).

Two runs later Tamim (53 off 88 balls), who had negotiated the short balls competently until then, could not get on top of a Martin bouncer that climbed on him and was taken in gully. Tamim had looked at ease as long as he was there and drove, cut and flicked with assurance and not one stroke was hit in the air. Mashrafe Mortaza made 22 in rather ungainly style where he repeatedly backed away to the pacers and hit streaky fours through the off side, but Bangladesh lost their last wicket in 46.1 overs.

Left-arm seamer Sajidul Islam opened the bowling with Shahadat

Hossain as Mortaza was given time to get over some side-muscle stiffness. The debutant didn't disappoint. He struck with his eighth delivery in Tests when he had Craig Cumming lbw with one that swung in (5-1). Peter Fulton (14) was undone by pace when Shahadat set him up with some short balls and then slipped in a length ball that hit the top of the off stump (2-31). The Bangladesh pacers struggled with line and length and gave away a four-ball almost every over. Still there were some good ones in the right areas also and Sajidul got his second scalp when Fleming, who had creamed the off side with some

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Bangladesh debutant Sajidul Islam appeals unsuccessfully for the wicket of New Zealand batsman Stephen Fleming during the first day of their Test match at the University Oval in Dunedin on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

U-19s match called off

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19 team's third match in the triangular series against South Africa was abandoned due to rain at the Sinovich Park in Pretoria South Africa on Friday.

Bangladesh started the series brightly with a two-wicket win over the same opponents in the opening match.

But on Thursday they lost to their Indian counterparts by 66 runs.

Shakil joins 9 in 2nd place

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil is in joint second position with another nine players in the Hastings 83rd Chess Congress securing five points after the 7th round matches at Hastings in England on Thursday.

Shakil beat Grandmaster Falko Bindrich of Germany and the win enabled him to move to second.

FIDE Masters Aminul Islam and Mehdi Hasan Parag secured four points each after winning their respective matches.

Aminul defeated WFM Sabine Fruteau of France while Parag beat Arne Hagesaether of Norway.

Dull draws continue

SPORTS REPORTER

Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club came from behind to play out a 1-1 draw with Agrani Bank in the Metropolitan Senior Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

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SPORTS REPORTER



Naeem Islam salvaged title contender Rajshahi's sinking ship against Dhaka on the first day of their all-important tenth and last round National Cricket League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Recovering from 79-6, the second-placed Rajshahi made a remarkable turnaround to finish the day on 264 for seven.

While Rajshahi at least managed some batting points on the first day, their rivals Khulna, who have a point's advantage, succumbed to Barisal paceman Talha Jubair.

Talha claimed a five-for to rattle Khulna and helped bowl them out for 193 but the home side's only consolation in the end was the three Barisal wickets they snared for just 62.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Imtiaz Hossain slammed a hundred as Sylhet piled up 348-8

against Chittagong.

RAJSHAHI-DHAKA

New-ball bowlers Mahbubul Alam and Mohammad Sharif found the Rajshahi batsmen wanting after the visitors decided to bat first. But number eight Nayeem joined his skipper Khaled Mashud to steady the ship and then Shahjada made a brilliant contribution to consolidate their position.

Naeem and Mashud repaired the early damage, by associating themselves in a 70-run seventh wicket stand before left-arm spinner Mohammed Rafique bowled veteran Mashud for 52 off 142 balls. The innings contained five boundaries.

And it was number nine Shahjada who frustrated the home bowlers most when he added 115 for the eighth wicket with Nayeem, who was at the crease on 82 off 188 balls with the help of eleven boundaries.

Shahjada remained not out on 57 in 102 balls.

Sharif was Dhaka's most successful bowler with 4-53 while Mahbubul took two four 55 runs.



Rajshahi batsman Nayeem Islam plays a back-foot drive during his unbeaten knock of 82 in their 10th round National Cricket League match against Dhaka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on Friday.

PHOTO: STAR

Harbhajan in hot water

CRICINFO, undated

Harbhajan Singh has been charged with a Level III offence under the ICC Code of Conduct following his on-field altercation with Andrew Symonds on day three of the second Test in Sydney.

The two players came face to face while Harbhajan was batting. Under the code, Harbhajan has been summoned to a hearing with match referee Mike Procter for "using language or gestures that offends, insults, humiliates, intimidates, threatens, disparages or vilifies another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, gender, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin".

The charge was laid by match umpires Mark Benson and Steve Bucknor after the close of play following a complaint they received from Australian captain Ricky Ponting.

If guilty, Harbhajan could face a ban of between two and four Tests or four or eight one-dayers. The hearing is scheduled for after close

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Frank Lampard

(Chelsea midfielder)

"I don't think I will receive the love I get from the Chelsea fans anywhere else. I feel strongly about it and I'd love to have another six or seven years of it. I'm at a club I love and living in an area I love."



SAB tv

New Zealand v Bangladesh
First Test, Day Three
Live from 4:00am (Sunday)

STAR Sports

Australia v India
Second Test, Day Five
Live from 5:30am (Sunday)

TEN Sports

South Africa v West Indies
Second Test, Day Four
Live from 2:30pm

ESPN

FA Cup
Bristol City v Middlesbrough
Round-3
Live from 8:55 pm

STAR Sports

FA Cup
Ipswich v Portsmouth
Round-3
Live from 8:55 pm

Aston Villa v Man United
Round-3
Live from 11:10 pm

Primera Liga

Mallorca v Barcelona
Live from 1:30am (Sunday)

Espanyol v Villarreal
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)



Nati Cricket League

(Round Ten, Day Two)
Dhaka v Rajshahi
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur

Khulna v Barisal
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium

Sylhet v Chittagong
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium