

Daily Star win big

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star returned to the cricket field with a bang, defeating newsagency UNB by five wickets in the 3rd DRU-Pepsi six-a-side cricket tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

Opting to bat first, UNB were all out for 60. Shamim Ashraf emerged as the fastest bowler in the tournament while Shariful Islam and Helemul Alam bagged a wicket each. Daily Star's fielding also looked good, with special mention for Suranjit Deabnath who had a forgettable time last year.

UNB captain Fahad Ferdous scored 35 runs.

In reply, Daily Star openers scored 56 with captain Abul Kalam Azad scoring 33 and Shamim hitting 23. Jasim Uddin Khan's contribution was a six off the only ball he faced as Daily Star reached their target in 3.3 overs. Azad was adjudged as the man-of-the-match.

Bhorer Kagoj, Ittefaq, Destiny, Independent and Amar Desh also won their respective matches.

Inter-Hall swimming

RU CORRESPONDENT

A daylong Inter-Hall Swimming and Water Polo Competition was held at the Rajshahi University Central Swimming Pool yesterday.

A total of 50 residential students under nine halls took part in 17 events.

On the occasion, an inauguration function was held where RU acting VC Dr Mamnunul Keramat was present as the chief guest and inaugurated the competition. Later, the VC distributed prize among the winners.

Flintoff sets up big win

AFP, Mumbai

Andrew Flintoff smashed an unbeaten century to set up England's emphatic 122-run victory against a Mumbai side in a one-day warm-up game here on Sunday.

Flintoff hit three sixes and 12 fours off 85 balls to help the visitors score 297-4 in 50 overs in the tour opener at the Brabourne stadium.

Paceman James Anderson then boosted his claim for a comeback to the team after having missed out on the Twenty20 Stanford series last week by picking three wickets and restricting Mumbai Cricket Association to 175-8.

Left-arm spinner Samit Patel claimed two wickets before Flintoff, who also took a low catch in the slips off Anderson, capped off a fine all-round performance with a wicket in the penultimate over.

Flintoff later said the century would hold him in good stead when the real contest against India begins with the first one-day in western Rajkot on November 14.

"We'll play against better teams on this tour," he said. "I'm not deaf and I know it's a starting point. We're going to be playing against the likes of Harbhajan (Singh) and (Ishan) Sharma just over a week's time."

"But a hundred is a hundred and I've not scored one for ages so I'll take it," the all-rounder said.

Other visiting batsmen too looked in prime form with Ian Bell (58) and Owais Shah (83) chipping in with healthy knocks after Mumbai skipper Nilesh Kulkarni won the toss and elected to field.

Bell was stumped advancing down the wicket to Vikrant Yelliger while Shah mistimed a pull for Abhijit Shetye to take a catch at mid-wicket.

Shetye also top-scored for the hosts before being caught behind by Matt Prior off Anderson for 50, which included four fours.

His dismissal triggered a middle-order collapse with the home side losing three wickets for just five runs.

The tourists are set to play another warm-up game on Tuesday in the lead-up to the seven-match one-day series. The one-dayers will be followed by two Tests in Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

England pick

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Mascarenhas who claimed the Player-of-the-Tournament award, were consistent throughout the two-day event and powered to 121 for 1, their highest total of the weekend, in the final. However, Australia responded in style and reached 89 without loss to give themselves a great chance of snatching their first Sixes title.

Crucially, though, they lost three quick wickets and needed two off the final ball. Stephen O'Keefe hit Tim Bresnan's delivery towards mid-on and though he picked up a single he was then run out, meaning England secured the trophy.

"We like leaving it late but that was outstanding," Bresnan said. "I don't think any of us have ever been involved in a final like that, played in front of such a fantastic crowd and with a tie at the end."

Ashley Giles, the England team manager, added: "It was a great game of cricket. I thought we got a good score, maybe could have got a bit more, but Australia played really well to fight back. To win one like that was great. It showed great character from the lads."

Venus downs Jelena

Tennis

AFP, Doha

Venus Williams reached the final of the WTA Tour's year-end event for the first time in her career when she beat world number one Jelena Jankovic in a long, drawn-out thriller here on Saturday.

However the Wimbledon champion had several moments during the two-hour, 11-minute struggle when she looked physically stressed, especially in a final set lasting almost an hour.

"A couple of times I did feel distressed but you can't afford to lose these kind of matches," Williams said after her 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 win over the top-seeded Serb.

Williams succeeded despite frequently being forced to contain against a more mobile and surprisingly-aggressive opponent who had won five of their last six meetings, and who, after dominating the second set, seemed the more likely winner.

But Jankovic also tired, which hindered her chances of converting five chances to break back for 3-3 in the final set, in a pivotal game which had her mother Snezana calling out to her.

After that Williams was able to attack a little more, though her serving, which included eight double faults -- following ten the previous day -- was again patchier than she might have liked.

Nevertheless Williams three times got big first serves in during the deuce game in which she reached 5-3 and after that she took strength from the closeness of victory. She finished with an unstoppable straight forehand, backhand cross court angle combination.

She was watched sombrely throughout by her sister Serena Williams, the US Open champion who withdrew with a stomach muscle injury the day before. It was only when Venus got to match point that Serena grinned expansively.

The younger Williams' absence ensured there would be a surprise

finalist, with Vera Zvonareva, the last woman to qualify for the eight-player event, continuing her giant-killing run all the way to the final with a fourth major scalp.

The 24-year-old Russian, who has never won a major title, overcame Elena Dementieva, the Olympic champion, 7-6 (9/7), 3-6, 6-3 -- only the second time in six attempts that she has beaten her better-known compatriot.

It followed Zvonareva's other victories this week over the world number one Jelena Jankovic, the French Open champion Ana Ivanovic, and the former US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova, to extend the finest run of her career.

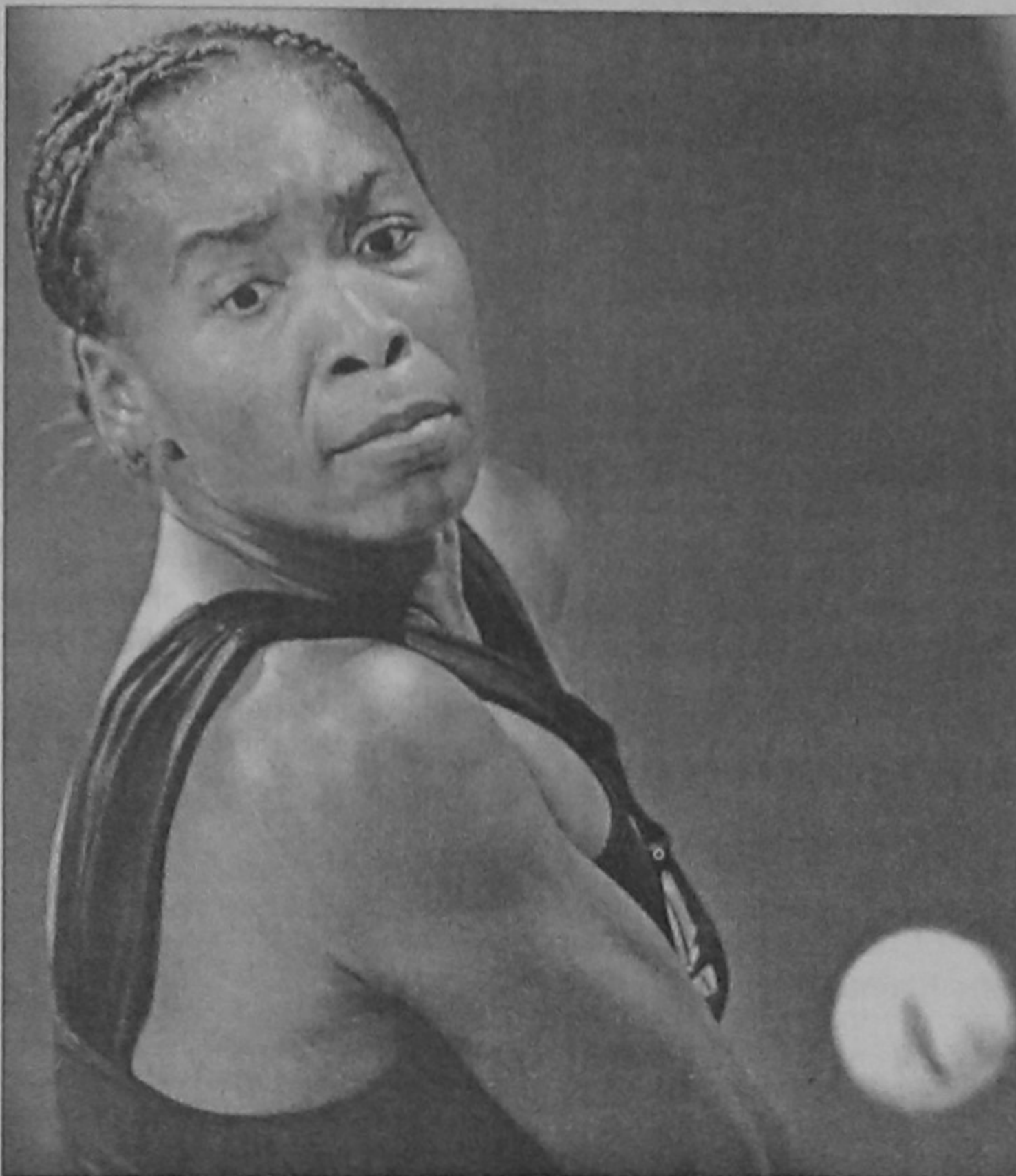
"Here I knew I had to play good straight away," she said. "If not, there is no chance. I didn't have any expectations. I felt confident but I

didn't know what would happen." Already certain of the first season-end top ten finish of her career, Zvonareva also extended the biggest pay cheque of her career to 715,000 dollars so far.

"I've not really thought about the money," Zvonareva claimed. "I try to challenge myself and do my best and produce the highest level I can."

"I always try to be good at what I do. If I am not good I don't touch it. If I am I try to make it perfect."

Remarkably for the player possessing the slightest build of any in this tournament, Zvonareva was often able to force the pace from the back of the court, rifling flat and brilliantly accurate groundstrokes into tight corners and sharp angles against her much more powerful opponent.



American Venus Williams plays a backhand return against Serbian Jelena Jankovic in the season-ending WTA Championships in Doha on Saturday.

Roy opens old wounds

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Andrew Symonds says he got "darker at the world" during Australia's tour of India last year, when he was subjected to monkey chants by the crowd, and by his subsequent altercations with Harbhajan Singh, who was charged for racist abuse against Symonds earlier this year.

Symonds was left out of the Test squad for Australia's ongoing series in India on disciplinary grounds -- he skipped a team meeting to go fishing ahead of the ODI series against Bangladesh -- and he said the events in India and then in Australia had made him "physically tired and mentally worn down" by the end of the season.

Recounting the events in his new book Roy on the Rise, Symonds said though "some people in authority" during the ODI in Vadodara, where the monkey chants were first heard, were aware that it was getting out of hand, "others continued to hide behind the line that it was all a cultural misunderstanding and that the chants were merely celebrating the monkey god."

"One of our off-field team couldn't hide his disbelief at this...The frustration levels in the camp were rising and I was conscious of contributing to the pressure on the team. It was another turbulent match. I was out for a first-ball duck. I trudged off, getting darker at the world by the second as monkey chants boomed out around Wankhede Stadium. Finally

in the rooms, I said to myself: 'Well, what happened there? I wasn't referring to the dismissal, more to the events that had led up to the game. It had become impossible to escape and I only hoped things might start to improve.'

Symonds said things just got worse in the Indian innings. "Harbhajan and I locked horns briefly in the 35th over and that's when he chuckled the 'monkey' word at me. I didn't have to be Einstein to work out what he was referring to. The word got around the team, but I had decided I really didn't want to go any further with it. Frankly, I was sick of it and just wanted it all to go away."

"India won the game, and afterwards the team had a brief discussion about whether a formal charge should be laid against Harbhajan. But I was keen to try to deal with it there and then and went along to their dressing-room and asked to speak with Harbhajan. I basically told him: 'Look, the name-calling is fine with me, it doesn't particularly worry me what you call me, but you know what is going to happen. One thing will lead to another and you blokes will end up going to an umpire and it will get out of hand.' I said that the word he used was offensive and hurtful and he apologised and said it wouldn't happen again."

"We shook hands and I said: 'That's the end of it.' As it turned out, Harbhajan would later deny this conversation took place, but my recollection is about as clear as I can be on the event."

Following the Sydney Test between the two sides earlier this year Harbhajan was slapped with a

three-Test ban for making a racist comment against Symonds. His ban was overturned on appeal and Symonds said the hearing was not one of the most enjoyable days of his life. By the end of the season he said he was sick of cricket for all the wrong reasons. "I know some people might struggle to understand, but all I can say is that the stuff that wore me down was not the playing of the game. This time, it was feeling that I had been let down, or had let people down -- or both."

Tigers better

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as fourteen players left their country simultaneously," he said.

Campbell was a little bit disappointed with the performance of Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful.

"He was too young when I played against him but now he is matured enough. His poor average hardly reflects his calibre," he said expressing his disappointment about Ashraful, who averages a little bit over 23 in both Tests and ODI.

Johnson also echoed with his former teammates sentiment about Bangladesh cricket after the ICL effect.

"Still it's long way to go but this young team is really progressing well, especially it seems that the departure of some key players has hardly affected the team. It's always good if you have a combination of young and experienced cricketers in the team," said Johnson, the former Zimbabwean pace bowler, who is running a cricket academy named after him in Durban.

Dravid c Haddin b Watson	3
Tendulkar run out	12
Laxman b Krejza	4
Ganguly c and b Krejza	0
Dhoni c Hussey b Krejza	55
Harbhajan b Watson	52
Zaheer c Haddin b Krejza	6
Mishra b Watson	7
Sharma not out	1
Extras: (b-6, lb-3, nb-2, w-6, pen-5)	22
Total: (All out in 82.4 overs)	295
Fall of wickets: 1-116, 2-132, 3-142, 4-163, 5-163, 6-166, 7-274, 8-286, 9-288.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Johnson	14	4	22	0
Lee	10	3	27	1
Krejza	31	3	143	4
Watson	15.4	2	42	4
White	2	0	15	0
Hussey	4	2	3	0
Clarke	6	1	29	0

AUSTRALIA: Second innings
Hayden not out 5
Katich not out 8
Total: (For no loss in 1.3 overs) 13
To bat: Ponting, Hussey, Clarke, Watson, Haddin, White, Lee, Johnson, Krejza.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	1	0	13	0
Sharma	0.3	0	0	0

Sourav Ganguly walked out to plenty of cheer in his last international innings, took guard, and was out first ball. Shaping to turn a flighted delivery off his pads, he got a leading edge back to the bowler. It was a tame end to the career of the most fascinating modern-era Indian player. Krejza didn't achieve his hat-trick, but Australia ended the session with the run out of Tendulkar, inexplicably searching for a risky single to the penultimate ball.

What transpired after the interval was quite something else, and Australia now find themselves with 369 to win.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the fourth and final Test between India and Australia in Nagpur on Sunday:
INDIA: First innings 441 (Tendulkar 109, Ganguly 85; Krejza 8-215)
AUSTRALIA: First innings 355 (Katich 102, Hussey 90; Harbhajan 3-94)
INDIA: Second innings (overnight 0-0)
Sourav c Haddin b Lee 92
Vijay lbw b Watson 41

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The first Junior South Asian Tennis Championship was officially inaugurated at the National Tennis Complex in Ramnagar yesterday.

Under-16 players from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and hosts Bangladesh will take part in the meet. The competition will be played with Davis Cup rules where the results will be determined by wins or losses in two singles and one doubles match between the sides.

Omar Sunny, Mofazzal Hossain and Swe Swe make up the Bangladesh team for the tournament.

DIVII FOOTBALL
Police Athletics Club and Little Friends bagged identical 1-0 wins in the Second Division Football League at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Stadium at Kamalapur yesterday.

Police's Barua struck the all-important goal against Bangladesh Boys in the 33rd minute in the day's first game.

In the day's other match, Little Friends beat Basabo Tarun Sangha at the same venue in the afternoon. Shahinoor netted the match-winner in the 35th minute.

In today's matches, BG Press face Euro Famous and Kadamtola Sangsad take on Gazirchot.

DIVI HOCKEY
Barnak Samaj crushed Shishu Kishore Sangha 4-0 in the Green Delta First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Nadim, Prosenjit, Sumon and Wahib scored once each for the winners.

In another match, Bachelors beat Dhaka Wanderers 2-1 at the same venue.

Saim and Latif scored field goals for Bachelors in the 41st and 60th minutes before Rahat of Wanderers scored a consolation goal five minutes later.

Rajib's 4th draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Enamul Hossain Rajib drew his third match in a row when the Bangladeshi Grandmaster split points with local International Master Zude Arno in an eighth round match of the 12th Bavarian Open International Chess Championship on Saturday.

Rajib, unbeaten with six points after four wins and as many draws, was playing Pirrot Dieter of Germany in the ninth and last round yesterday.

GM Edouard Romain of France led the table with seven points.

Chandigarh crash out

CRICINFO, undated

Chandigarh Lions needed a big win to boost their semi-final hopes, but once they conceded 197 runs against Ahmedabad Rockets, their campaign was all but over. Their top order crumbled in the chase, and had it not been for a few handy lower-order contributions, the margin of defeat would have been much higher.

Ahmedabad's openers have been the engine of their batting line-up, and they reaped it in their final game. Ryan Campbell hit five fours and a six in his 12-ball 28, putting on 44 with Murray Goodwin in 2.5 overs. Goodwin and Damien Martyn build on that early momentum, and Ahmedabad went along at more than ten an over. Martyn played second-fiddle to Goodwin, who was bowled by Rajesh Sharma for a 31-ball 61. The middle- and lower-orders, however, failed to carry on with the momentum, and though Chandigarh added 79 in 8.5 overs after Goodwin fell, they were bowled out for 197. Love Ablish grabbed three wickets in the 20th over, finishing with figures of 4 for 35.

Chandigarh had a disastrous start -- by the third over they were reduced to 12 for 3. Jason Gillespie took two wickets and later strikes from left-arm spinners Sumit Kalia and S. Sriram reduced them to 37 for 5. Captain Andrew Hall was left to rebuild the innings; he could manage only 22 and was the sixth wicket to fall with the score on 58. Karanveer Singh and Amit Uniyal revived the innings with brisk 40s, scoring seven fours and seven sixes in total, but it came too late to force a win.

Jamshed out of WI ODIs

CRICINFO, undated

Nasir Jamshed, the Pakistan batsman, will miss the ODI series against the West Indies after all, after he woke up on the morning of Pakistan's departure with high fever. His place as opener in the squad has been taken by Karachi batsman Khurram Manzoor, a board statement said.

Jamshed's availability had been in doubt since the 15-man squad was announced. He had only just recovered from malaria when he was included in the squad and questions were immediately raised about the wisdom of such a decision. But the board's medical team cleared him to play earlier in the week and he took a full part in the squad's two-day training camp in Karachi recently.

'Possibly the best'

Cricket

CRICINFO, Mumbai

India's recent performances against Australia have impressed Andrew Flintoff enough to call them "possibly the best team in the world at the moment". Despite the retirement of Anil Kumble and Sourav Ganguly, Flintoff said it was going to be tough to overcome India at home.

"The big test for us is adapting to the conditions we are going to play in," Flintoff said in Mumbai. But he felt England were capable of winning their first Test series in India since 1984.

"I thought we had a good chance last time. But one bad hour in Mohali cost us the Test match. We would like to correct that this time," Flintoff said.

England have been a force to reckon with over the last year, with home and away Test wins against New Zealand, their fightback in Sri Lanka where they bounced back to win the ODIs 3-2 and their 4-0 one-day rout of South Africa in this summer.

Flintoff returned to international cricket after an 18-month hiatus, having recovered from his fourth ankle injury. Even though he

failed to transform England's fortunes in the Test series against South Africa, which they lost 2-1, Flintoff left an indelible stamp by winning the Man-of-the-Series award in the ODI whitewash.

"The big thing was to put the England shirt back on. Each time you have it on you want it back on time and time again. It is a big incentive to get back to full fitness and get back into the team," Flintoff said.

His ability to inspire his teammates was evident during England's last tour of India, in 2006, when the visitors rallied to draw the Test series 1-1 with a brilliant victory in the third Test in Mumbai. However, they lost the ODIs 5-1. He was appointed the captain mid-way into the tour after Michael Vaughan's knee injury forced him to return home.

Flintoff felt he was performing and enjoying himself because of the lack of responsibilities, something that was proving to be a burden when he was the captain. "I'm more comfortable now. I have had a go at captaincy. Batting and bowling and captaincy turned out a bit too much." Now his role is to help out the younger players.

India have rested Sachin Tendulkar from the first three ODIs but Flintoff did not feel his absence

would give England an advantage. "Not at all. It is a shame Sachin will not be there for the first three ODIs. In a strange way I enjoy playing against him. He is the greatest I have ever bowled to. You want to play against people like that. You want to test yourself."

With the series still a week away Flintoff was relaxed and even joked with the media. On the topic of Ganguly, a fierce competitor and former teammate at Lancashire, Flintoff said he was disappointed when the former Indian captain missed out on a century in his farewell Test in Nagpur. Would he miss him? "Not on these wickets," Flintoff chuckled.

Both Ganguly and Flintoff have celebrated victories by taking their shirts off -- Flintoff in India in 2001 and Ganguly in England the following year -- but Flintoff wasn't sure if he would repeat the act in this series. "We will have to find some abs in the next few weeks," he said.

He was not so forthcoming -- or flippant -- on the subject of IPL. Asked if he believed the players would try to make a reputation on tour in India, which has become the game's economic hub, Flintoff was dismissive. "If you think about distractions like the IPL, endorsements, media attention and stuff, you are going to struggle."

Mahela asks for youth

Cricket

CRICINFO, Colombo

Zimbabwe may not be the kind of opposition Sri Lanka would like to have to improve their rankings, but the tour, which comprises five ODIs in addition to two practice matches, gives them the opportunity to give some of their younger players a taste of international cricket.

Zimbabwe are ranked No. 11 in the ICC ODI rankings, below Associates Ireland, but Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene, who left with the team for Zimbabwe on Saturday, is not taking them lightly. "They may have their internal problems where they lost a good majority of top-class cricketers, but they have got some raw talent who have shown they are good enough to compete in one-day and Twenty20 cricket," he said. "Our focus will be to play the cricket we want to play and make use of the tour to give the younger guys the necessary exposure at international level. We don't have much international cricket in the next six months or so and we

need to take whatever opportunities that come our way."

After the Zimbabwe tour, Sri Lanka's next assignment is in Bangladesh, which starts in December. They will play two Tests and three ODIs, after which they have no confirmed engagements till the World Twenty20 in England next June.

"Unlike some countries we don't have a particular season for international cricket. These countries secure the summer period to play their sports and travel abroad during the winter," Jayawardene said. "This is where we need to be a bit smarter and try and reciprocate with other boards to ensure we have a regular flow of international cricket at home and abroad. Unfortunately it is not the case."

Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe are facing each other in a bilateral contest after four years. The last time they met was in Zimbabwe in 2004, when Sri Lanka whitewashed the hosts 2-0 in Tests and 5-0 in ODIs. Zimbabwe haven't improved much since then and Sri Lanka will be disappointed if they don't repeat that scoreline.

By resting the pair of experienced Sanath Jayasuriya and Chaminda Vaas, players like Upul Tharanga, Thillina Kandamby, Mahela Udawatte and Angelo Matthews have a chance to establish themselves. The focus will be on Tharanga, whose poor form resulted in him being dropped from the team. "Upul has shown a lot of character to fight his way back with performances with the A team and in domestic cricket. It's good that he has been thrown into reality at a relatively younger age. He has responded very well. He should mature into a good cricketer."

Almoud Mathews is the new kid on the block. "He's got something special. It would help him immensely to be part of the squad and travel with it so that the transition to the senior team would be smooth."

Jayawardene welcomed the competition for places in the team, and said it kept the players on their toes. Tillakaratne Dilshan, who was deputy to Jayawardene in last month's T20 Canada, finds himself as a standby for Zimbabwe after a poor run. He managed only one half-century in his last nine ODI innings.

'A bit of Sunny, a dash of Viv'

Cricket

PTI, New Delhi

His loyal fans in India are treating him like a demigod for his cricketing exploits but Sachin Tendulkar is humbleness personified who feels that nobody is bigger than the game.

"No, never! Nobody is bigger than the game. Cricket teaches you every day. If you start feeling that you are bigger than cricket, sooner comes the fall," Tendulkar, Test cricket's most prolific run getter and scorer of most centuries, said.

"When I started learning cricket from my coach Ramakant Achrekar, I was told clearly by him that not only I should respect the game, I should worship cricket also and then only cricket will take care of me. I still believe in that," Tendulkar, known for his humbleness despite his unrivalled achievements and adulation by fans, told a news channel.

The Mumbai batsman, who had

already featured in five World Cups, was non-committal when asked whether he would play in the 2011 World Cup to be held in the sub-continent.

"Every cricketer wants to be a part of a World Cup winning team. Same is the thing with me. If I get a chance to be part of a world cup winning team it will be a great thing for me," he added.

Tendulkar picked Sunil Gavaskar and West Indian great Vivian Richards as his cricketing role models.

"I always wanted to be a combination of Gavaskar and Viv Richards. I admired their batting styles," he said.

Asked about his best innings in his illustrious 19 years of cricketing career, he said, "1992, Perth against Australia. I was 18 years old and scored my first Test hundred on a very difficult pitch. In the hindsight it proved to be the turning point in my career. I gained confidence of a lifetime on that day."

Asked about the saddest moment of his cricketing career,

Tendulkar said, "2003 World Cup final. We were so close to winning the World Cup and we were really playing good cricket at that time."

"We were over aggressive in that game. There was a sense of compulsion inside us to win that match and we went too hard in the game. Had we got that kind of chance again, I am sure we would have prepared for the game in a different way."

35-year-old Tendulkar said he will miss retiring stalwarts Sourav Ganguly and Anil Kumble.

"I used to talk with Ganguly in Bengali. How correct was my language I don't know. But we had great time both on the field and off the field. While batting we both understood each other better and talking to each other."

"Similarly with Kumble I have spent a lot of time. He has played for the country for 18 long years. One can't become Ganguly or Kumble overnight; it takes years of perseverance to reach that level. Surely I will miss both of them," he said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	42 Beetle	2 Lotion	19 Piece of
1 A piece	43 talisman	additive	work
5 Despondent	45 Mythical	3 R.I.	22 Biblical
8 Vagrant	maidens	neighbor	king
12 Sly tactic	49 Collected	4 Mint	24 Scoundrel
13 Praise in	into a	often	25 Sapporo
verse	51 Hodge-	used as	sash
14 October	podge	an herb,	26 Mes-
birthstone	52 Sheltered	5 Re	sieurs'
15 Charged	53 'Hall,	Plato's	counter-
particles	Caesar!	teacher	parts