

# Sensational Sachin

Cricket

CRICINFO, Gwalior

It took nearly 40 years of waiting and it was well worth it. Sachin Tendulkar chose arguably the best bowling attack doing the rounds, to eclipse the record for the highest score ever, before bringing up the first ever double-hundred in the game's history. The spectators at the Captain Roop Singh Stadium here became the envy of world cricket as they witnessed one of the country's favourite sporting heroes play a breathtaking innings which not only set up a 153-run annihilation but also the series victory for India. He may have been run out cheaply in the previous match, but nothing could deny him Wednesday -- be it bowlers, fielders or mix-ups. Dinesh Karthik, Yusuf Pathan and MS Dhoni stood by and admired as the master unfurled all the shots in his repertoire in the second one-day international against South Africa.

At 36, Tendulkar hasn't shown signs of ageing and his recent sparkling touch in both forms of the game has ruled out all possibilities of him checking out anytime soon. Fatigue, cramps and paucity of time have stood in the way of batsmen going that extra mile to get to the 200-mark. Tendulkar did cramp up after crossing 150, but he didn't opt for a runner. His experience of 20 years at the international level came into play in this historic innings, staying at the crease from the first ball to the last, never once losing focus. There were no chances offered, no dropped catches, making his innings absolutely flawless.

A swirl of emotions must have run through his mind as he approached one record after another but he ensured he was never lost in the moment. His running between the wickets remained just as swift as it had been at the start of the innings. The humidity in Gwalior was bound to test him but he stood above it all and played like he owned the game, toying with the bowling with a mix of nonchalance and brute power.

In the 46th over, with a flick for two past short fine-leg, Tendulkar broke the record for the highest ODI score, going past the 194 made by Zimbabwe's Charles Coventry



PHOTO: AFP

SKY IS THE LIMIT: Sachin Tendulkar, the Indian batting master, looks up to the heavens upon reaching 200, the first time ever in limited-overs cricket, in the second one-day international against South Africa at the Captain Roop Singh Stadium in Gwalior yesterday.

and Pakistan's Saeed Anwar, and to say that he acknowledged his feat modestly would be an understatement. His muted celebration on going past 194, true to style, made his innings all the more endearing. He didn't raise his bat, merely shook hands with Mark Boucher and simply carried on batting amid the din. Coming from a man who is not known to showing too much emotion with the bat in hand, it wasn't

surprising. He reserved his celebrations for the magic figure of 200, which he reached in the final over with a squirt off Charl Langeveldt past backward point. He raised his bat, took off his helmet and looked up at the skies and it was only fitting that one-day cricket's highest run-getter reached the landmark.

Tendulkar's innings featured strokes of the highest quality, but his true genius was

exemplified by one particular shot which rendered even the best bowler in the world helpless. In the first over of the batting Powerplay -- taken in the 35th over -- Dale Steyn fired it in the block-hole for three deliveries outside off to keep him quiet. Tendulkar, feeling the need to improvise, walked right across his stumps and nonchalantly flicked him across the line, hopping in his crease on one leg to bisect the

gap at midwicket. A helpless Steyn watched the ball speed away and merely shrugged his shoulders. There was no use searching for excuses or venting frustrations at the temerity of that shot. It was just that kind of afternoon for the bowlers.

It wasn't all just about the cheekiness of his shots. His timing and placement were the hallmarks at the start of his innings. On a road of a pitch

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## TOP TEN INDIVIDUAL SCORES IN ODIS

| Player       | Runs | Balls | 4s | 6s | SR     | Team         | Opposition   | Ground     |
|--------------|------|-------|----|----|--------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| S Tendulkar  | 200* | 147   | 25 | 3  | 136.05 | India        | South Africa | Gwalior    |
| C Coventry   | 194* | 156   | 16 | 7  | 124.35 | Zimbabwe     | Bangladesh   | Bulawayo   |
| S Anwar      | 194  | 146   | 22 | 5  | 132.87 | Pakistan     | India        | Chennai    |
| V Richards   | 189* | 170   | 21 | 5  | 111.17 | West Indies  | England      | Manchester |
| S Jayasuriya | 189  | 161   | 21 | 4  | 117.39 | Sri Lanka    | India        | Sharjah    |
| G Kirsten    | 188* | 159   | 13 | 4  | 118.23 | South Africa | UAE          | Rawalpindi |
| S Tendulkar  | 186* | 150   | 20 | 3  | 124.00 | India        | New Zealand  | Hyderabad  |
| MS Dhoni     | 183* | 145   | 15 | 10 | 126.20 | India        | Sri Lanka    | Jaipur     |
| S Ganguly    | 183  | 158   | 17 | 7  | 115.82 | India        | Sri Lanka    | Taunton    |
| M Hayden     | 181* | 166   | 11 | 10 | 109.03 | Australia    | New Zealand  | Hamilton   |

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## Ratna bags silver

SPORTS REPORTER

In the South Asian Games held in Dhaka, Sharmin Akhter Ratna followed up her team success with an individual gold in the 10m air rifle event. And while the country expected a repeat, the talented shooter fell short, managing to only land silver in the same event of the Commonwealth Shooting Championship yesterday. Bangladesh's great hope fell to India's Neha Sapte at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi yesterday.

Keeping Tuesday's golden memory in mind in the 10m air rifle pair event, Ratna and Syeda Sadia Sultana went to the range for another golden hope and the focus was on Ratna, who had earlier made her career best score of 499.4 (398 in qualification and 101.4 in the shot-off) in the recently concluded South Asian Games on way to winning the individual gold medal on home soil.

The girl from Magura, however, could not overcome the pressure of expectation and performed poorly in the qualification in contrast to her Tuesday's performance scoring 394, two less than her pair event's scores of 396. Indian Neha Sapte topped the qualification with a score of 395 out of 400.

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## DEBATE OVER ASHRAFUL

# Mashrafe on the return

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The focus will be on Mashrafe Bin Mortaza when the second limited-over warm-up match between visiting England and BCB XI takes place at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium today. The fit-again pace spear-

head bowled confidently the last two days in practice after returning from Australia where his surgeon gave him the green signal to return to competitive cricket. And he has been drafted in the BCB selection for the second practice match along with Zunaed Siddiqui and Aftab Ahmed to make sure there is nothing wrong for the country's pre-

mier paceman to make his international comeback after an eight-month break.

"I'm looking forward to bowling in tomorrow's warm-up match because it will help me to fully understand my position. But what I can say is that I am ready to make my comeback, as there is no problem with line and length in my bowling. It may take a little bit of time to get back the full pace but what I want to see in the practice match is whether my landing is okay or not," said a confident Mashrafe yesterday.

It was told that Mashrafe will be included in the side only when he himself feels confident and now it seems that there is no shortage of confidence from Mashrafe. The well documented 'fear factor' has seemingly vanished as he has got back the confidence after the all clear from Dr David Young, the Australian surgeon who operated on both his knees.

The question was raised about his long absence from the international arena and whether the transition would be hard, but Mashrafe apparently rubbished the idea by saying that he had a record of directly returning to the international cricket after recovering from injury.

"You know, it's nothing new in my career that I played the international cricket without playing domestic first-class cricket. I don't think it would be a major issue rather I am confident that I can give hundred percent effort if I am selected in the team," said Mashrafe throwing the ball into the selectors court ahead of the team selection for the three-

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**DAY'S EVENT**  
National Cricket League  
(Four-Day Match, Day Four)  
Rajshahi v Khulna  
Venue: BKSP-2  
Dhaka v Chittagong  
Venue: Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium, Khulna

## BCB faces sponsor dilemma

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has been facing a big problem to get a title sponsor for the Bangladesh-England home series which will kick off with the one-day match of the three match series on February 28 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

There has been a possibility that the series will start without any sponsor but BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus informed that they were negotiating with a few private banks.

"We are not sure about the poor response. But surely it's not because of performance rather most of the companies are in financial problem especially due to recession," said Yunus.

There was a floor-price of one lakh twenty five thousand dollars and only one company showed their interest with an offer of 72 thousand dollar but they were reluctant when the

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## NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE

# Nazimuddin leads from the front

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazimuddin hit a magnificent hundred to put Chittagong on top against Dhaka on the third day of the second round match of the second phase of 11th National Cricket League at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

The right-hander, who smashed the only double hundred in the first phase, clobbered 12 fours and a six during his 214-ball 136 as Chittagong piled up 325 for 8 in their second innings before stumps were drawn for the day to take an overall lead of 498 runs.

Nazimuddin anchored the innings after three wickets fell at 57 runs and got good sup-

port from in-form Faisal Hossain, who made 59 off 119 deliveries with five fours and two sixes, during their 123-run fourth wicket stand.

Arman Hossain was the other notable scorer with a 58-ball 32 that featured three boundaries. Away at the BKSP cricket ground, Rajshahi were in a comfortable position against Khulna as they improved their lead to 247 runs after making 221 for six in their second innings.

Rajshahi resumed the day on 50 for one after the match was delayed due to foggy weather and they rode on Zahurul Islam and Sabbir Rahman's half centuries to tighten the grip on their opponents.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

IF YOU ARE WITH US, .... BCB XI captain Shahrir Nafees (L) talks to Bangladesh paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as they head for a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. In a bid to return to international cricket, Mashrafe will test himself in the second one-day warm-up match against visiting England today.



PHOTO: STAR

England pace bowler Ajmal Shahzad (R) bowls under coach Andy Flower's (2nd from R) supervision as batting star Kevin Pietersen looks on during a practice session at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday. The tourists take on a BCB XI in the second one-day warm-up match here today.