

Star SPORT

Pique cleared in referee spat

Spanish football authorities announced on Thursday they had cleared Barcelona defender Gerard Pique on a charge of accusing a referee of "premeditation" in handing him a red card, they said Thursday.

"The competition committee has decided to close the complaint of the referees' committee against Pique," an official at the Spanish Football Federation told AFP on Thursday.

The federation had already banned Pique for one match and fined him 600 euros (\$785) after he made the accusation against the referee of a match against Sporting Gijon on March 3.



A century for centuries

MOHAMMAD ISAM



Three hours and five minutes into his 651st international match, Sachin Tendulkar ascended to an extraordinary high. And yesterday's Asia Cup game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium became the moment of history all of world cricket had been waiting for a year and three days. He reached the much-awaited, often much-maligned and ultimately the much-adored milestone of one-hundred international hundreds.

The moment arrived in the 44th over after he had waited on 99 for all of ten minutes.

As Shakib Al Hasan trotted in for the fourth ball, the magical figure came up as Tendulkar tucked it around the corner for a single; the jogged run followed by a reaction that was very Tendulkar-like; thanking the heavens above, the teammates below and the capacity crowd all around. It hardly showcased the air of the extraordinary circumstances that has been staged since March 12, 2011. Yet now he is a man head and shoulders above the world of cricket in terms of numbers, milestones and reverence.

As Tendulkar reached the century in 138 balls, some credit was due for the

Bangladesh bowlers for not letting him have it all his way (though the last few runs leading into the century came with the field put back). Mushfiqur Rahim took a break from the tradition of captains to tactically delay an impending batting landmark by placing fielders within the circle. But the man from Bogra walked to one side of the wicket to applaud, as did the other Tigers, among whom Mashrafe Bin Mortaza shook his hands.

The packed house in Mirpur showed its cricketing awareness by staying loyal to the home team till much of the day, a section even initiating to boo at one stage, but everyone stood up to appreciate this once-in-a-lifetime moment. The Dhaka crowd has seen many a Tigers' victory over the last few years but this was as unique as it comes; the added luxury of watching a Tendulkar hundred was the bonus on the magnanimous occasion.

A brilliant drive started it all, through extra-cover with merely a waft of the thick blade, also his 2,000th boundary in ODIs. After the first ten overs, old signs of a big innings was coming up, especially the assured footwork, be it the stretch for the defensive prod or minimal movement for the famed checked drive. Off his 63rd ball, Tendulkar reached his third ODI half-century since hitting the last

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TENDULKAR IN NUMBERS

100 International centuries	33,840 International runs at the time of scoring 100th century	160 International fifties
651 Internationals played	7 International double hundreds	27 Number of times out in the 90s

Highest score: 248 not out in tests, 200 not out in ODIs, 10 in T20.



THE SWEETEST MOMENT: India's master batsman Sachin Tendulkar kisses his helmet after reaching his 100th international century during the Asia Cup encounter against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Kamal's rejoinder, our reply

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal sent a rejoinder to The Daily Star on March 14, contesting some contents of an article titled "Smoke and mirrors" that appeared in the sport page of the newspaper on March 13. We are publishing his rejoinder in its entirety and along with it we are also submitting our reply:

THEREJOINDER

This refers to the above captioned news report published in The Daily Star on 13th March 2012. In the second last paragraph it says; It seemed that the BCB president, who reportedly expressed his satisfaction over the security arrangements in Pakistan during his recent visit with the security team, changed his stance about Bangladesh's proposed tour to Pakistan as he said: "First of all, I am waiting for the security team's report and we will inform ICC once we get it and after that we need the government's permission."

This is misleading because I never indicated any change in our 'stance' on the proposed tour and the view the reporter tries to project as mine is actually his. I would like to refer to my statement at a press conference in Lahore, Pakistan on the 4th March. Regarding the possibility of Bangladesh touring Pakistan I had made the following remarks (which had been published on ESPN cricinfo) and my position remains the same.

"After seeing all the security arrangements all of us

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