



Indian batting great Sachin Tendulkar walks out for possibly his last Test innings amid deafening applause from his home crowd on the first day of the second Test against West Indies at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday. PHOTO: INTERNET

TENDULKAR

at the crease

PTI, Mumbai

Iconic batsman Sachin Tendulkar kept his emotions in check and showed his genius for one last time in front of adoring fans with an unbeaten 38 as India seized early control of his 200th and final cricket Test against the West Indies after a disciplined bowling display in Mumbai on Thursday.

The 40-year-old maestro walked in to the middle amid thundering cheers from the crowd and a guard of honour from his West Indies rivals as he showed glimpses of his vintage form to remain unconquered at close of an eventful opening day of his last Test.

At stumps, India were comfortably placed at 157 for two after bundling out the hapless West Indies for a meagre 182 by tea, riding on left-arm spinner Pragyan Ojha's five-wicket haul.

While Ojha (5 for 40) grabbed the spotlight in the first half of the day, it was the retiring legend, who held centre stage in the last session with his entire family and childhood coach Ramakant Achrekar watching from the stands.

It was an abysmal batting display by the West Indians after being put in by India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni. The tourists lost eight wickets for just 89 runs in a single session much to the delight of the Wankhede crowd.

Kieran Powell (48) and Darren Bravo (29) were the only batsmen to put up a semblance of fight against the stifling line and length of the Indian bowlers, who utilised the conditions well.

India responded strongly with openers Murali Vijay (43) and Shikhar Dhawan (33) putting on 77 runs in quick time. The two were sent back by Shane Shillingford before Tendulkar and Cheteshwar Pujara (34) took control of the proceedings.

India, leading 1-0 after winning the first Test in Kolkata inside three days, were just 25 runs behind West Indies at close of play raising doubts whether the match will go the full distance.

Call him a picture of confidence or an epitome of concentration, Tendulkar was everything during his undefeated stay at the crease in which he faced 73 balls hitting six boundaries.

Not only did he look in control but also helped Pujara (34 batting) gain in confidence as they added 80 runs in an unbroken third wicket stand.

At exactly 3:33 pm, India's most loved sportsman walked down the staircase of the pavilion to deafening applause from the near-packed Wankhede Stadium with spectators on their feet after the fall of Vijay's wicket to welcome the legendary player.

He acknowledged the 'Guard of Honour' from the West Indian cricketers, shook hands with rival captain Darren Sammy and umpire Nigel Llong and did what no one ever saw him do during a match.

He touched the 22-yard strip which has given him everything and sought its blessings, as mother Rajni Tendulkar, immediate family members and Achrekar

And the show goes on

AGENCIES, Mumbai

India's Sachin Tendulkar is ending an international career during which he became the all-time leading Test and one-day batsman and the only man to score 100 international centuries.

Ahead of the ongoing second Test, he said the last 20 years had been "marked by some of the most challenging, exhilarating, poignant and memorable moments of my life".

"The game has seen so much change over the last two decades -- from advances in technology, new formats, yet the basic spirit and passion surrounding the game remains the same," he wrote in a front-page Hindustan Times article.

The end of the "Little Master", who has almost god-like status in his cricket-mad country, has been met with nationwide nostalgia for his sporting feats.

As he strode to the crease, acknowledging the applause with a modest raising of his bat, Indians all over the country huddled around television sets and Twitter exploded with messages wishing him luck.

With his heavy bat -- sporting a grip in the colours of the national flag -- tucked under his arm, Tendulkar trotted out to bat at the fall of opener Murali Vijay, whose dismissal had sparked wild celebration among expectant fans in the stands.

"A billion hearts are beating at the moment," Tendulkar's childhood idol and former India captain Sunil Gavaskar said from the commentary box.

Tendulkar led the team out onto the field at the stadium in the morning and the toss took place with a specially minted coin bearing his image on one side, footage showed. Cries of "Sachin! Sachin!" echoed throughout the day.

Excitement around the game has been building since last month, when he announced his intention to retire. Highlights of his innings and interviews have been looping on news channels.

"He's not just a cricketer. For me he's an ideal son, an ideal friend. The biggest thing about him is his humility," said fan Himanshu Kapadia, queuing for entry to the stadium with his two sons.

Among the spectators was Sudhir Gautam, Tendulkar's celebrity fan, who travels across the world to watch him while painted in the colours of the Indian flag -- with his idol's name written across his chest and back.

The star's wheelchair-bound mother Rajni was also watching him bat for the first time after a special ramp was built for her at the south Mumbai Stadium. She normally stays away out of fear of bringing bad luck.

"I am really touched with #ThankYouSachin messages. Your support all these years have inspired me to give my best," Tendulkar said on Twitter on the eve of the match.

"I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for 24 years of support."

Along with Indian politicians, businessmen and Bollywood stars, cricketing greats Brian Lara and Shane Warne flew in for the game at Wankhede, where a huge security force has been deployed.

"We will be very fortunate if we get another Sachin," India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said at the toss. "So it is important that we learn from the great man."

Since 16-year-old Tendulkar made his debut in Karachi in 1989, he has racked up an astonishing 15,847 runs in 199 Tests, helping India win the 2011 World Cup and reach the top of

Walton Fed Cup sponsors

SPORTS REPORTER

Walton has bought the rights to sponsor the season's curtain-raising Federation Cup, which is supposed to get underway by November 20.

"We have been involved with women's football and we are also a part of BFF (Bangladesh Football Federation) Elite sponsor. For the first time we are sponsoring the Federation Cup. If this event is completed successfully, then we will think about associating ourselves with other football events," said Iqbal Bin Anwar, sports director of RB Group at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

Walton will provide Tk 20 lakh for the 12-team tournament and their products to the player of the match after every match.

"We are satisfied with the amount they provided us for the time being and we thank Walton to come forward to sponsor the Federation Cup," said BFF senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy.

Currently, the game's governing body has no long-term sponsors after the three-year contract expiration with Grameenphone, who had provided Tk 8 crore per year.

Shadow of Sk Russel

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel KC will face tough challenge in their defence of three titles they achieved last season as they could hardly rope in big name footballers during the players' registration formalities at the BFF House yesterday.

Players like midfielder Mamunul Islam, striker Zahid Hasan Emily, wingers Zahid Hossain, Rajon Mia, defenders Ashraf Mahmud Linkon and Nahidul Islam had been regular members of the team of late, but this time they all joined rivals clubs such as Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Mohammedan Sporting Club. Sheikh Russel even lost their last season's main architect Haitian Sony Norde to Sheikh Jamal and those losses definitely reduced their strength heavily, compared to the last season.

Sheikh Russel is the country's lone club which won three successive titles -- Federation Cup, Independence Cup and Bangladesh Premier League -- in a season before finishing runners-up in the Super Cup last year.

They however tried to make up for those losses by roping in some promising and veteran players from Arambagh KS, Sheikh Jamal, Mohammedan and Muktijoddha Sangsad but it's apparent that their new signings will struggle to match the quality of the players they lost to other rivals.

"It is for sure that we have not formed a champion team. The squad would have been much better had we not allowed Zahid and Nahidul to join Mohammedan at the last moment," said Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque yesterday.

"It will be challenging for us to defend all three titles we won last season but I think I have still time to rebuild the squad through training and the success of Sheikh Russel will depend more on the services from the foreign players," opined the successful coach.

However, Sheikh Russel have yet to finalise their foreign collection with Jamaican Ricardo Cousins and four Moroccan players training with the squad while Uruguayan midfielder Francis and a Haitian striker are supposed to arrive here today.

SQUAD: Biplob Bhattacharjee, Masud Rana, Asim Das, Aminul Islam, Rezaul Karim, Hasan Al Mamun, Mamun Mia, Rajani Kanta Barman, Bappi Hasan Murad, Shakil Ahmed, Imrul Hasan, Suman, Jewel Rana, Sabuj Kumar Biswas, Rabbi, Mithun Chowdhury, Anwar Hossain, Mohammad Robin and Touhiduzzaman.

Hemanta to try out for Dutch club

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 football captain Hemanta Vincent Biswas has been given the rare opportunity to appear for a youth trial for Holland's FC Twente following recommendations from Bangladesh's Dutch coaches Lodewijk de Kruijff and Rene Koster.

"At the moment we have a visa for Hemanta. He will go to FC Twente for a one-month trial. FC Twente is a very big club with a fantastic organisation, a very good youth development department," said Kruijff at a media briefing yesterday.

"It's a very big opportunity for Hemanta and he can be an example for other players. He will depart for the Netherlands within a week and will be accompanied by Nepal Under-16 captain Bimal Gharti Magar," said de Kruijff.

"It is very important for them to show their qualities and stay normal, stay humble and keep eyes and ears open and try to adapt to the level. We think that they have a chance. It would be a very big success if we can succeed over there," de Kruijff added.

Hemanta said that he will try his best to seize the opportunity with both hands.

Brothers-Sk Jamal to be a re-match

Match referee Obaydul suspended

PRIME DOLESHWAR: 252-9 in 50 overs (Cobb 69, Shohag 58 not out; Sharifullah 3-40, Zakaria 3-48)	KALABAGAN CA: 173 all out in 46.1 overs (Sahagir 34, Nuruzzaman 30; Taijul 3-33, Forhad 3-34, Sabbir 4-22)
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SPORTS REPORTER

The first phase of the Dhaka Premier League was supposed to end yesterday after Prime Doleshwar beat Kalabagan Cricket Academy by 79 runs in the last match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. However, it will end with a re-match between Brothers Union and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club tomorrow at Mirpur.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) disciplinary committee yesterday ruled that Brothers Union's controversial must-win encounter on November 9 in which they fielded a suspended player -- Sohrwardi Shuvo -- against Sheikh Jamal be replayed. Brothers won the match by six wickets to get the points for a Super League entry.

The match referee for the game in which Shuvo was handed a suspension -- Obaydul Haque Azam -- has himself been suspended for two years for creating the confusion in Brothers' next match. Shuvo will not be allowed to play in the re-match. The disciplinary committee also decided to fine Brothers Tk 1 lakh for fielding a suspended player.

"As there is no clear explanation in this year's bylaws regarding this kind of situation, the disciplinary committee took the best possible decision. We conveyed the

decision to both clubs and have planned to arrange the re-match on Saturday if everything goes well," informed CCDM (Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis) member-secretary Rakib Haider Pavel last night.

If the re-match takes place on Saturday, then the Super League is likely to begin from Monday.

Meanwhile, their sixth win in ten matches helped Doleshwar finish at number four while Kalabagan, who earlier confirmed their Super League berth, stayed on 11 points.

Back to yesterday's match, Shohag Gazi and Arman Hossain put on a 97-run ninth-wicket partnership after opener Joshua Cobb, the English right-hander, scored an 83-ball 69 as Prime Doleshwar posted a challenging 252.

National player Gazi -- whose wonderful Test ton, six wickets and hat-trick in the second Test against New Zealand at Chittagong set a world record -- hit an unbeaten 58 off 49 balls that featured seven fours and a six. Arman added 38 runs.

Later, Forhad Reza gave the first breakthrough removing Abdul Majid in the second after which Taijul Islam dismissed other opener and dangerman Zimbabwean Hamilton Masakadza in the fifth over with the scoreboard reading 10 for two. In the end, Kalabagan failed to recover from the early losses and were bundled out for 173.

SCOREBOARD				
WEST INDIES: First innings				
Gayle c Sharma b Shami				11
Powell c Dhawan b Ojha				48
Bravo c Dhoni b Ashwin				29
Samuels c Vijay b Ojha				19
Chanderpaul c Ashwin b Kumar				25
Deonarine c Vijay b Ashwin				21
Ramdin not out				12
Sammy c Sharma b Ashwin				0
Shillingford lbw b Ojha				0
Best c Dhoni b Ojha				0
Gabriel c Dhoni b Ojha				1
Extras: (b-8, lb-8)				16
Total: (All out in 55.2 overs)				182
Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-86, 3-97, 4-140, 5-148, 6-162, 7-162, 8-162, 9-172				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Kumar	17	2	45	1
Shami	12	2	36	1
Ashwin	15	2	45	3
Ojha	11.2	2	40	5
INDIA: First innings				
Vijay c Sammy b Shillingford				43
Dhawan c Chanderpaul b Shillingford				33
Pujara not out				34
Tendulkar not out				38
Extras: (b-8, nb-1)				9
Total: (For 2 wickets in 34 overs)				157
To bat: Kohli, Sharma, Dhoni, Ashwin, Kumar, Ojha, Shami				
Fall of wickets: 1-77, 2-77				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sammy	6	0	27	0
Gabriel	6	0	32	0
Shillingford	12	1	46	2
Best	5	0	27	0
Samuels	5	0	17	0