



Today isn't Haq's last

Clarke keen on playing ODIs

AGENCIES, Adelaide/Melbourne

Defiant Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq refuses to accept that Friday's World Cup quarterfinal against Australia could be his last one-day international.

"Obviously this World Cup and my career are still not over," said Misbah.

The 40-year-old has already announced his intention to retire from one-day cricket after the World Cup as has star all-rounder Shahid Afridi.

"We would really like to go further in this tournament and will try our best to win Friday's match and that's what the desire and dream is, so let's see. I want to play good cricket and put in my best performance."

Meanwhile, Australia captain Michael Clarke has declared he has no intention of retiring from one-day cricket after the World Cup.

Clarke has long suffered a back condition and in recent months battled a succession of hamstring injuries that have prompted calls for the 33-year-old to retire from the shorter format to prolong his career in Test cricket.

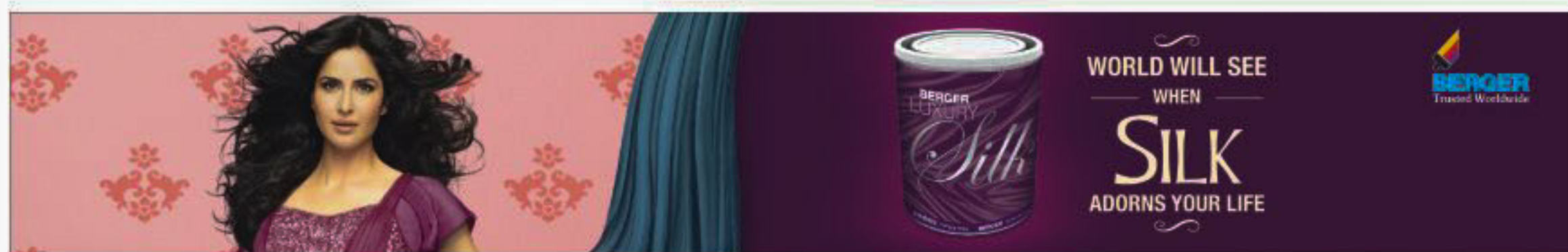
Clarke poured cold water on the idea on the eve of Australia's quarterfinal against Pakistan in Adelaide.

"And I have managed to play over 200 one-dayers and over 100 Test matches so it hasn't stopped me to date. And I don't think it will do after this series either."



India opener Rohit Sharma salutes the MCG crowd after scoring a superb century in the second quarterfinal against Bangladesh yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Rohit times it right

REUTERS, Melbourne

Rohit Sharma took his time joining the World Cup party but arrived in style on Thursday, rocking the Melbourne Cricket Ground with a match-winning century to send reigning champions India charging into the semifinals.

The opening batsman's crisp 137 at the iconic stadium set up an imposing total of 302-6 and the platform for an emphatic 109-run victory over Bangladesh.

More ominously for India's next opponents -- either Australia or Pakistan -- Rohit has found form at exactly the right time.

Big things had been expected of the sublimely talented 27-year-old, who blasted a world record 264 last year against Sri Lanka, smashing former teammate Virender Sehwag's mark by 45 runs and becoming the first player to score two double-centuries in one-day internationals.

He compiled an imperious 138 in the lead-up tri-series against Australia at the same ground and belted 150 against Afghanistan in a warm-up days before the start of the tournament.

After the curtain was raised on cricket's global showpiece, however, Rohit struggled, managing only 15 and a duck from the first two Pool B matches, before scoring an unbeaten

57 in a pressure-free romp against United Arab Emirates.

He sandwiched a 64 against Ireland between two failures against West Indies and Zimbabwe in the three matches leading into the quarterfinal and arrived in Melbourne under some pressure from home media.

Rohit pushed a two through the covers to raise his century off 108 balls and leapt into the air, punching his fist in celebration as the crowd of 51,000 dominated by fanatical Indians roared.

Rohit's joy was no doubt mixed with relief, having been handed a generous reprieve when 10 runs short of his seventh ODI hundred.

'It's a World Cup of the batsmen'

AFP, Wellington

Legendary West Indies pacesman Curtly Ambrose said Thursday that one-day cricket's rules favoured batsmen so much that teams might as well use bowling machines to send down deliveries.

With the quarterfinals barely begun, there have been 32 centuries at this year's World Cup, compared to 24 for the entire tournament in 2011.

Ambrose, who took 225 ODI and 405 Test wickets for the West Indies, said the rules were undermining the contest between bat and ball that was fundamental to cricket's DNA.

"It's too one-sided and the powers-that-be need to look at this seriously and make it a little more even, because at the moment it's all about batting," he told reporters in Wellington ahead of Saturday's New Zealand-West Indies quarterfinal.

"The bowlers, they can't play cricket. Soon they might have to get in bowling machines."

He said a free hit when there was a no-ball and the batting powerplay meant bowlers could not build pressure to strangle an innings.

"Everything favours the batsman," he said. "A bowler trains hard to do the best for

his team, oversteps the front mark and there's a free hit, the powerplays and all that stuff -- I'm totally not for it.

"I believe as a bowler, if you bowl well enough, you can keep it real tight and they can't score. [But now] all of sudden they're taking the powerplay and the field moves around so they can score runs."

Ambrose, who was part of the most intimidating pace attack in cricket history, also took aim at sledgers, saying verbally taunting opponents had no place in the game.

The Antiguan, who stands at six foot seven and could silence most foes with a menacing glare, said he never found it necessary to sledge.

"I don't believe in it, I don't think that sledging is a part of the cricket," he said.

"If you're a good enough player, you should let the bat or the ball do the talking for you."

Ambrose, who is serving as the West Indies bowling coach at this year's tournament, conceded his side were underdogs against New Zealand but backed their chances of an upset.

"We've got some dangerous players as well, it just depends what happens on the day," the 51-year-old said.

Mashrafe suspended for one ODI

SPORTS REPORTER from Melbourne

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza has been suspended for one ODI and fined 40 per cent of his match fee, while his players have been fined 20 per cent of their match fees for maintaining a slow over-rate during the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 quarterfinal against India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Thursday.

Match referee Roshan Mahanama imposed the suspension on Mashrafe after Bangladesh was ruled to be two overs short of its target at the end of the match when time allowances were taken into consideration.

As Mashrafe had also been found guilty of a minor over-rate offence during the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 match against England on 9 March, this offence constituted his second minor over-rate offence for the

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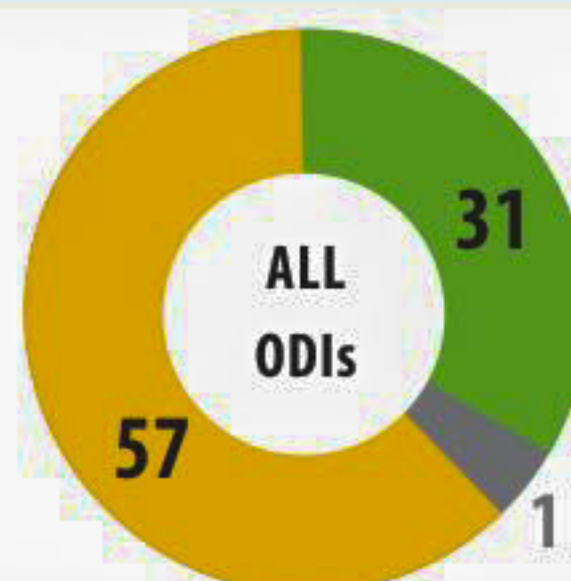
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INFO ZONE

QUARTER FINAL MATCH - 3



AUSTRALIA v PAKISTAN

HEAD TO HEAD

LAST MEETING

12 October 2014 at Sheikh Zayed Stadium, UAE:

Australia won by 1 run



KEY PLAYERS

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| BATTING AVG. | 34.21 |
| INNINGS | 43 |
| S/R | 125.48 |
| 50s | 11 |
| 100s | 1 |
| HIGHEST SCORE | 102 |
| LAST MATCH | DNB |



GLENN MAXWELL

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| BOWLING AVG. | 30.29 |
| INNINGS | 52 |
| ECONOMY | 5.62 |
| 4w | 2 |
| 5w | 1 |
| BEST FIGURES | 5/46 |
| LAST MATCH | 3/54 |



WAHAB RIAZ

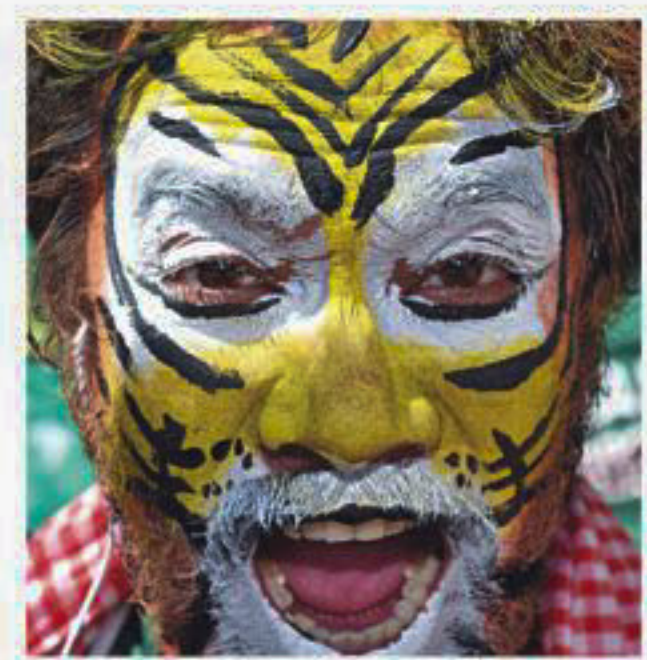
FAN ZONE

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স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য
সুস্বাদু
Freshness



Bangladesh fans were out in great numbers at the MCG yesterday with all sorts of placards and makeup, but it was the Indians who were left cheering at the end of the game.



Rabiul Alam: We are proud the way our Tigers have played. You gave your best and reached new heights. It was the 'rise of the Tigers' indeed.



Rahul Kanwal: About time Rohit Sharma came good in a crucial encounter. But would be better still if he showcased his talents against Oz in Semis

Dhoni all smiles

REUTERS, Melbourne

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni praised his teammates for the way they have quickly pulled themselves out of a form slump to reach the semifinals of the World Cup.

The defending champions were struggling just over a month ago but have now won seven matches in a row.

"It has been good, we can't shy away from the fact that we are playing some good cricket," Dhoni said at the post-match presentation.

"But at the same time a month back we were struggling. A lot of credit needs to go to the boys and the support staff."

Dhoni said he was especially pleased with the overall health of India's game.

India's batsmen have a well-deserved reputation as being among the best in the world but they have also bowled out their opposition in all seven matches and excelled on the field.

"The good thing is not many players from our side are in the top run-scorers list, but the batting has performed," Dhoni said.

"That was an area we wanted to improve [bowling teams out]. Even in

New Zealand and South Africa, we were struggling with that, but now we are doing much better. It's difficult to pinpoint how it changed.

"Cricket has a lot of abstracts, but we need to do a lot of the small things right. Put in the intensity and hope it all turns out."

Batting first, India compiled a daunting total of 302 for six, built on the back of a magnificent century from Rohit



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Sharma, who completed his first World Cup hundred.

He started cautiously after India slumped to 115-3 but picked up the tempo later on, finishing with an impressive 137 off 126 balls.

"I wanted to bat as long as possible and put the team into a good situation and the bowlers did a fantastic job," Rohit said after being named player-of-the-match.

Legends rally round WI

AFP, Wellington

The West Indies received heavyweight support Thursday ahead of their World Cup quarterfinal against New Zealand with former greats Brian Lara and Andy Roberts both tipping an upset.

Home side New Zealand, unbeaten through pool play, are heavily favoured to win Saturday's knock-out match in Wellington and go on to play South Africa in the semifinals.

But Lara said he was "patriotic and optimistic" the West Indies "have the armoury and the personnel" to win.

"Obviously, the West Indies are going into that match as underdogs but I believe there's a chink in the armour of the New

Zealanders," he told Indian broadcaster NDTV, noting New Zealand fell apart in the play-offs last time they co-hosted a World Cup in 1992.

But Lara wants a shake-up in the West Indies line up with Johnson Charles, who scored 55 when called up as a late replacement for the United Arab Emirates game, to replace Dwayne Smith as Chris Gayle's opening partner.

Former fast bowler Andy Roberts also believes New Zealand can be toppled if the West Indies set aside the significance of the occasion.

"Don't get too intense because when you get too intense you shrivel up and you know we are famous for that because sometimes we have victory in sight but end up losing," Roberts told the Daily Observer in Antigua.