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(MARKETING) Page No- 5

## India-Australia series off to a cracking start; expectations high for TV ratings

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Billed as the series on which the success of ODI cricket hinges, the India-Australia seven-match one-day series got off to an auspicious start on Sunday.

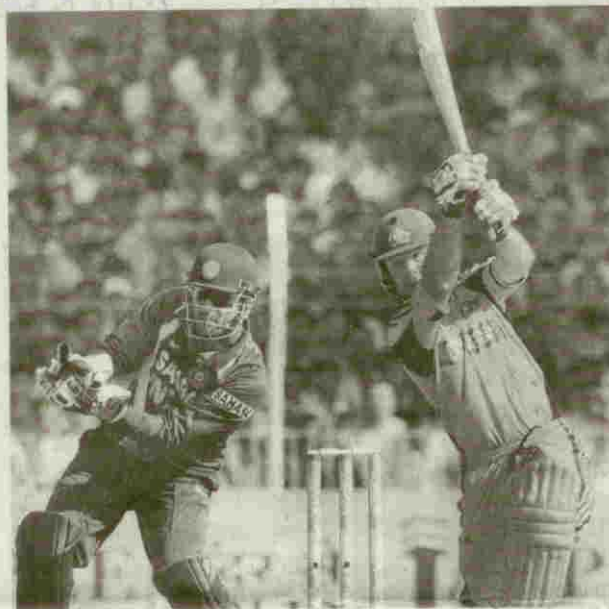
Coupled with the fact that the match was sold out, the game's tight finish is expected to rake in good television ratings when TAM releases its data on Tuesday evening.

Neo Sport's Head-Marketing, Mr Abhishek Verma, told *Business Line*, "I think it's a great start to the series. The match was held on a Sunday, which will definitely have a positive impact on the ratings.

"Also, it was a close match, which is surely going to increase interest amongst viewers for the following matches in the series."

Analysts, however, suggest that the television ratings for the match might be a bit lower than expectations because of the match starting early in the day.

But Mr Verma said that this will probably be negated be-



The first ODI match between Australia and India at the Reliance Stadium in Vadodara is expected to rake in good television ratings. — S. Subramaniam

cause cricket enthusiasts in the country follow matches from the beginning. "While it is too early to comment on the ratings for yesterday's match,

the only negative aspect was that it was a day game beginning early morning. The day-night games later in the series could get higher ratings than

the match on Sunday," he said.

There were concerns amongst sponsors and administrators about the diminishing interest in ODIs before the series started. Going by the TAM ratings, the recently concluded ICC Champions Trophy failed to impress viewers. Even the games featuring the Indian team could only garner a rating of 3.2 compared with 6.1 for the first match of the Airtel Champions League.

As against the average TVR of 1.1 garnered by the ICC Champions Trophy, the first five matches of the Airtel Champions League got an average TVR of 1.2.

However, with India battling it out with Australia to decide who will become the number one team in the world, expectations are high that the series will deliver good ratings.

"We expect the ratings to keep increasing as the series unfolds. Only one match has been played but things have started on a positive note for us," added Mr Verma.