

# High-flying Biman beat Abahani

Sports Reporter



Abahani's middle and lower order batting wilted under pressure as last year's runners-up stumbled to a humiliating 70-run defeat against Bangladesh Biman in the Navana Premier Division super league at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The Abahani batsmen, chasing a somewhat modest Biman score of 216 for eight in 45 overs, brought about their own destruction by squandering a comfortable position to give the airline team, which has been flying high of late, a surprisingly easy win.

Cruising at one stage on 96 for two, Abahani lost their last six wickets — five of them through run outs — for only 20 runs to be booked for a humiliating 140 in 37.1 overs.

The result means Abahani still lead the points table but their lead at the top of the table is reduced to just two points. The loss, Abahani's second in the league and first in the super league, breathed fresh air into the championship race which after Mohammedans' loss to Biman on Thursday had become almost one-sided.

Abahani made an awful start to their chase of the Biman score, losing both their openers for 26 in only the ninth over. The Sri Lankan opening pair of Athula Samarasekara and Ashoka De Silva was severed in the very first over when Babul rattled De Silva's stumps for one. In his fifth over, Babul gave Biman a booster when he trapped the redoubtable Samarasekara leg before. The tall Sri Lankan Test discard appeared disappointed at umpire Dipu Chowdhury's decision. Although he made no verbal protest he stayed long enough at the crease to register his disapproval which did not help him at all since after the match he was slapped with a show cause notice by the league committee.

Jahangir, playing at number three instead of his usual opener's role, teamed up with Faruque, standing in for skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu who pulled out with back pain, for the third wicket and the two seemed to have steadied the innings when Faruque offered Selim a catch off Rupam. In that space of 16 overs

Faruque shared a 70-run stand with Jahangir. The stand-in skipper made 27 with the help of two fours. Jahangir followed him three runs later after scoring 41 off 67 balls, inclusive of three boundaries. With the departure of these two the slide began.

overs with his wily leg-spinners. Faruque must have been ruing his decision to field when he saw the Biman opening pair of Rupam and Shaheen race to 32 in 28.4 overs. But then came De Silva with his redeeming act. He removed

scoring a superb 76. The lanky allrounder occupied the crease for 114 balls and hit half a dozen fours and a six. Of the remaining Biman willow-wielders only Wasim Haider came up with any notable effort against De Silva's guile. The Pakistani, who



Biman's hero Shaheen (in cap, foreground) leads his teammates off the field after beating title-aspirants Abahani Krira Chakra by 76 runs in their Navana Premier division super league match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Shaheen, opening the Biman innings, topscored with 76. — Star photo

Akram Khan, the burly middle-order batsman, was sent back to the pavilion, beaten by a brilliant throw from short square leg by Wasim Haider, the Pakistani allrounder. Akram contributed 11 in what was to be Abahani's last piece of resistance. His stand with Khaled Mahmud Sujon for the fifth-wicket yielded 22 runs.

Sujon, who skipped the Bangladesh national under-19 squad in the 1989 Asian Youth Championship in Dhaka, was involved in another run-out incident, this time with Shoven, the Abahani keeper. Sujon went back on 133. In an incredible procession of self destruction the next three Abahani batsmen followed suit, departing in similar fashion with the addition of just seven runs to the total.

Earlier in the morning, Ashoka de Silva stemmed Bangladesh Biman's race towards a big total by taking five wickets for 26 runs in nine



ASHOKA DE SILVA .5 for 26 Rupam with the fourth ball of the 28th over. Rupam played a cautious knock of 57 in 90 balls, punctuated with a couple of fours.

played for his country in the World Cup last year, could not, however, perform his usual aggressive act in the face of De Silva's naggingly accurate bowling. Yet, he held up one end, managing 27 runs from 34 balls with the help of two fours.

Jahangir, the Biman wicket-keeper, was the only other batsman to reach a double-digit score knocking 17 in 19 balls. In the end the Biman score read 216, less imposing than what a 100-plus partnership for the first wicket would have suggested.

Anis and Samarasekara claimed one Biman wicket each while the only other wicket to fall was that of skipper Moni who was run out. Abahani now have 20 points from 12 outings while Biman have 16 from same number of matches.

**TODAY'S MATCH**  
Mohammedans vs GMCC (Dhaka Stadium)

other three occasions, England hosted Sri Lanka, in 1984, 1988 and 1991. Mendis said Sri Lanka cricket had matured and come a long way since those first heady days of being granted Test status.

"At the start we approached a game thinking whether we could last five days. Then the



DULEEP MENDIS next phase was if we could play five days and draw the game. But now we are thinking of winning," said Mendis confidently.

"Those days the public here came to see the foreign teams in action. But now, I feel they come along to watch us play too."

Shri Lanka's growing stature, especially at home, has been highlighted by the recent

tours of Australia and New Zealand.

Allan Border's Australian side were extremely fortunate to leave the shores of Sri Lanka last year winning the three Test series 1-0.

A somewhat depleted New Zealand team, who followed, lost a similar series 1-0.

"Of course there is the advantage of playing at home. The wickets suit us and we have enough players to play around with. Like anyone else, we capitalise on these strengths and exploit the home advantage," explained Mendis.

The dusky Mendis, who captained Sri Lanka from 1983 to 1987, however, warned his side not to become too complacent against the English.

"Just because they were drubbed 3-0, does not mean that we can write them off. Basically their side is good with their batting going all the way down."

"It is not going to be easy to beat them. But we are very confident," he added.

**ENGLAND ITINERARY**  
10 March — First one-day international, Khetarama Stadium (day-night).  
13-18th March — Test, SSC Stadium.  
20 March — Second one-day international, Moratuwa Stadium.

# Lankans look to Test expectantly



COLOMBO, Mar 6: Fast-maturing Test nation Sri Lanka are awaiting the arrival of cricket's founding fathers: England, with uncooled excitement and confidence, reports AFP.

A hugely humbled English side leave India after a 3-0 Test thrashing and will arrive in Colombo late Saturday night.

Awaiting them are an eager Sri Lanka outfit whose only discontent is that England will be playing just a solitary Test during the short two-week tour.

"We are really sorry that we Samarasekara gets show cause notice

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) yesterday issued a letter to the Sri Lankan Test star Athula Samarasekara of Abahani Krira Chakra asking him to explain by this afternoon why disciplinary measures should not be taken against him.

Samarasekara, who was trapped leg before wicket by Babul of Bangladesh Biman in yesterday's match, protested umpire Dipu Roy Chowdhury's decision in a rather unsporting manner.

The BCCB served the show cause notice on the basis of the reports submitted by the umpires and match referee, Golam Faruk Apu, BCCB Joint Secretary, said.

If Samarasekara fails to provide a satisfactory answer, he may be suspended for a match, sources said.

The BCCB had earlier suspended national player Salim Shahed of Victoria Sporting for his unsporting behaviour during the match against Brothers Union last month.

Meanwhile, the defending Navana Premier Division league champions Mohammedan Sporting Club served a letter to Minhazul Abedin Nannu last Friday seeking an explanation for his alleged violation of club discipline.

Nannu, who has reportedly been stripped of the captaincy recently, did not turn up for Mohammedan's super league opener against Bangladesh Biman last Thursday claiming to have been suffering from viral fever.

Nannu allegedly did not inform the club of his physical indisposition, according to club sources.

Nannu must give his explanation by today.

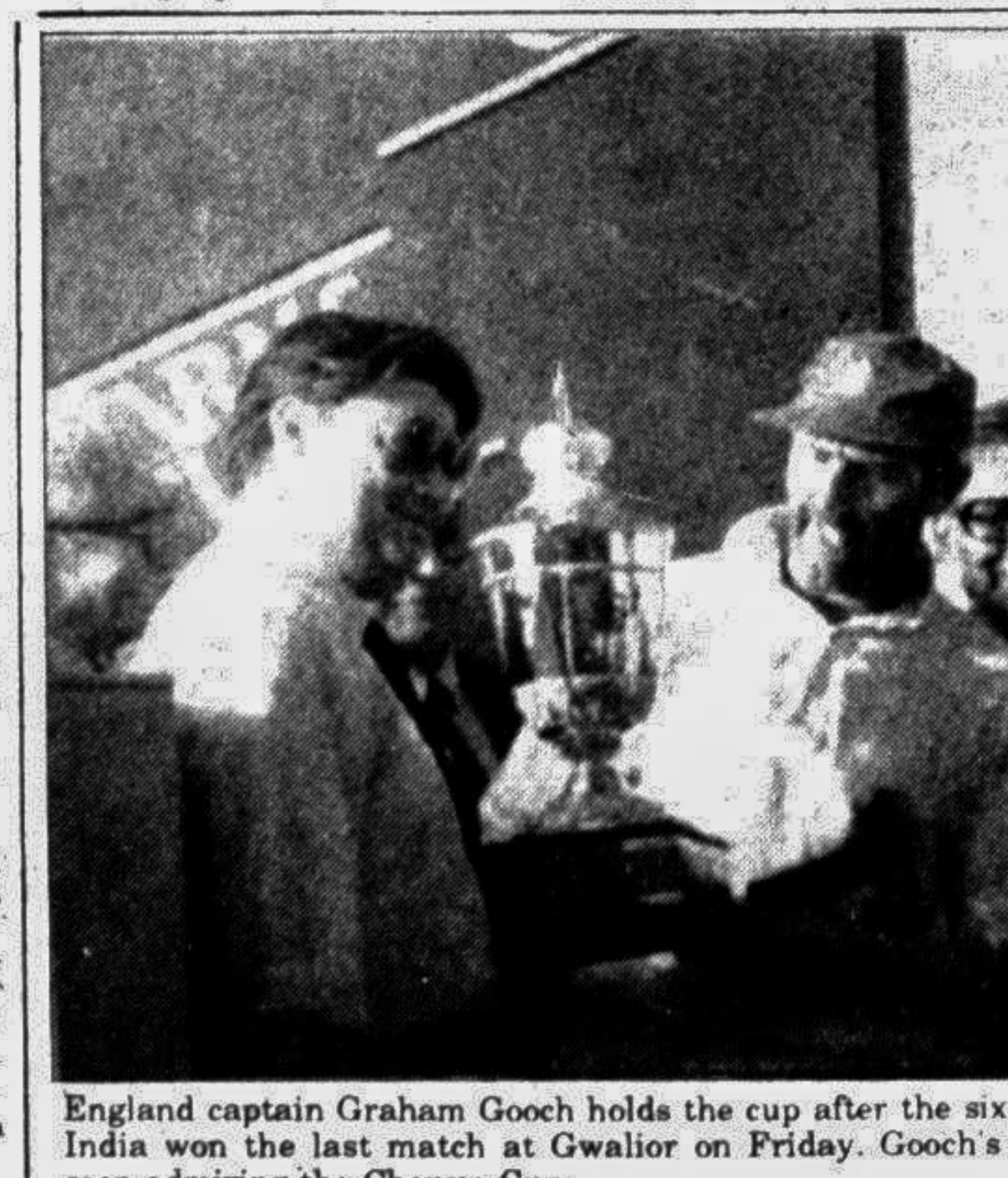
## Another De Silva for SL Test squad

COLOMBO, Mar 6: Sri Lanka have included rookie wicketkeeper Ashley de Silva in their 14-man squad to play an English side arriving today for a Test match and two one-day games, reports Reuter.

De Silva, a competent batsman, replaces regular wicketkeeper Gamin Wickremasinghe who has a thigh injury. He has played just one one-day international, against Pakistan in 1986.

The tourists' first game is a one-day match on March 10.

The Sri Lankan squad is: A Ranatunga (captain), R S Mahanama, U C Hathurusinghe, A P Gurusinha, P A de Silva, H P Tillekeratne, S T Jayasuriya, A M de Silva, M Muralidharan, H C P Ratnayake, D Liyanage, G P Wickremasinghe, K P J Warnawera and R Wijesuriya.



England captain Graham Gooch holds the cup after the six-match one-day series ended 3-3. India won the last match at Gwalior on Friday. Gooch's counterpart Azharuddin is also seen admiring the Charms Cup. — AFP photo

# Pardon us, please, pleads PWD

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Public Works Department Sporting Club, the wooden-spoonists of this year's 11-team Navana Premier Division cricket first league who failed to win a single game, have asked the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) to be spared the rigours of a so-called relegation play-off league planned by the BCCB.

In a rare but admirable act of realism, officials of PWD informed the Board, organisers of the league, that they'd rather go down to the Millars First Division league next season than be subjected to another round of hopeless exercise along with the four other teams which failed to make the six-team super league. PWD Club officials have no illusions as to their prospects of averting relegation — though, in theory, that is within the realms of possibility — by playing the so-called relegation league featuring Uddy Club, Surjo Tarun, Kalabagan KC and Victoria Sporting. They are also convinced that playing four more games would be an unnecessary — and perhaps unbearable — drain on their strained financial resources.

PWD's pragmatism leaves the BCCB little choice other than to scrap the idea of the relegation league altogether. Such a decision would no doubt be welcomed by the four other clubs concerned.

According to observers, the very idea of a relegation league when the points table of the first phase of the league shows such stark discrepancy — Uddy have eight points while Tarun, Kalabagan and Victoria have six each compared to PWD's nought — is incomprehensible. Logic suggests that the BCCB, hard pressed as it is to get over with the super league given the number of "contingencies" which seem to crop up every now and then impeding the smooth conduct of the league, would take the line of least resistance and settle the issue of relegation by demoting the bottom team in the first league. Yet, for reasons best understood by themselves, the BCCB this year came up with a novel — as distinguished from the normal — plan to subject five teams with unequal collection of points in a fruitless but expensive exercise.

## Crowe lashes out at media

WELLINGTON, Mar 6: New Zealand cricket captain Martin Crowe lashed out today at what he called media lies and innuendoes about his private life that had demoralised his family, reports Reuter.

"My wife is demoralised by the whole thing after last night," Crowe said of a story calling for his dismissal in a weekend tabloid.

"There are lies being written, there are a lot of innuendoes that affect me personally, my marriage and my family," Crowe told a news conference after the third day of the second cricket Test against Australia.

"I really do wonder whether it's worth it. It's certainly not why I took on the job," he said shortly after scoring 97.

"Martin Crowe should be sacked as captain of the New Zealand cricket team," the tabloid paper Truth wrote in its Friday edition. Crowe offered his resignation after defeat in the first Test but it was turned down.

"He has little support within the team... rarely do they socialise together," the weekly wrote.

Crowe has been forced several times to deny rumours that he is either a homosexual or that he has AIDS.

The rumours that Crowe was homosexual and that his marriage was on the point of breaking up were referred to in a television programme aired last week after the first Test loss in Christchurch.

# Aussies restrict Kiwis to 328



WELLINGTON, Mar 6: Australia took advantage of New Zealand's brittle middle order to even the honours on the third day of the second Test today, report agencies.

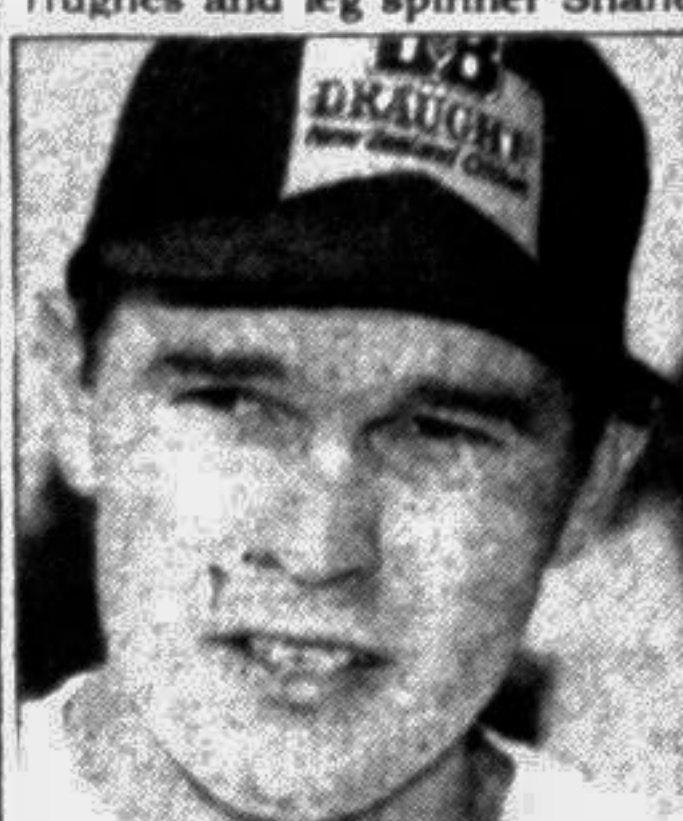
After a brisk start by New Zealand captain Martin Crowe and Ken Rutherford on a bitterly cold day, Australia's resurgent pace attack bundled out New Zealand's last seven batsmen for a paltry 42 runs.

Openers Mark Taylor and David Boon then built an opening partnership of 92 before a confident looking Taylor was run out by direct hit from substitute fielder Murphy Su'a for 50.

The tourists ended the day on 107 for two in their chase to catch New Zealand's first innings total of 328 in the rain-shortened match.

Rain had washed out all but 12 overs of play on the first day of the match on Thursday. New Zealand began today on 237 for three, having racked up 190 runs on Friday when Australian fast bowlers struggled to find a tightline.

Crowe and Rutherford piled on 49 in the first half-hour. Crowe looked in vintage form, cutting and pulling pacemen Craig McDermott and Merv Hughes and leg spinner Shane



MARTIN CROWE... 97 Warne to the boundary.

Then, in a devastating five-over spell, McDermott took three wickets for 11 — including Crowe, bowled just three runs short of what would have been his 16th Test century.

With the score on 286 began the slide.

Rutherford pushed forward to Hughes and was adjudged to be caught behind by Ian Healy.

Hughes then knocked out Tony Blair's off-stump in his next over, giving him his third scalp of the innings.

Chris Cairns guided a catch to Allan Border at third slip off McDermott after making only 13 and it was during this period that Crowe lost momentum in his own innings.

Crowe received little of the strike while wickets were falling at the other end and struggled to score from the tight bowling of McDermott and Warne.

McDermott eventually removed Crowe's off-stump with the skipper looking uncomfortable on 97.

The classy New Zealand captain batted for four hours in

all, hitting 14 boundaries and one six, but lacked support from the lower order to push the total towards 400.

Shane Warne polished off the tail after lunch and the young legspinner deserved much better figures than his return of 2-59 from 29 overs.

Boon and Taylor easily weathered New Zealand's opening attack on a pitch which apart from the occa-

Reserve:

NEW ZEALAND: 1st Innings	
Greatbatch c Taylor b Reiffel	61
Wright c Healy b Hughes	72
Jones b Reiffel	4
Crowe b McDermott	97
Rutherford c Healy b Hughes	32
Blain b Hughes	1
Cairns c Border b McDermott	13
Patel not out	13
Morrison c Warne b McDermott	2
Watson c Taylor b Warne	3



Australian skipper Allan Border grimaces after catching New Zealand batsman Chris Cairns during the third day's play of the second Test at the Basin Reserve yesterday. The Kiwis were all out for 328. — AFP photo

sional low bounce offered little to the seamers.

Taylor grew in confidence as the afternoon progressed, driving several fuller deliveries from fast bowlers Danny Morrison and Chris Cairns off the front foot to the cover point boundary.

Taylor's fifty came up in 135 minutes off 112 balls and included six fours.

Out of form before the New Zealand tour, Taylor re-established himself as Boon's first-choice opening partner with a valuable 32 in the first Test in Christchurch and now 50 in Wellington.

Taylor's contribution on the seaming Lancaster Park pitch helped set up Australia for their crushing innings and 60-run inside four days in the first Test.

**SCOREBOARD**  
Scoreboard at the close of the third day of the second cricket Test between Australia and New Zealand at the Basin

Owens b Warne	0
Extras: (7-b, 11-ib, 2-w, 10-nb)	30
Total:	328
Fall of wickets: 111, 120; 191; 286; 288; 306; 307; 313; 328; 328.	

Bowling	O	M	R	W
McDermott	31	8	66	3
Hughes	35	9	99	3
Reiffel	23	8	55	2
S Waugh	15	7	28	0
Warne	29	9	59	2
M Waugh	2	1	3	0

AUSTRALIA: 1st Innings	
Boon c and b Morrison	37
Taylor run out	50
Langer not out	8
M Waugh not out	0
Extras: (lb-9, nb-3)	12
Total: (for two wickets)	107

To bat:	S Waugh, A Border, I Healy, M Hughes, P Reiffel, S Warne, C McDermott
Fall of wickets 1-92: 2-105	

Bowling	O	M	R	W
Cairns	13	2	28	0
Morrison	8	3	24	1
Watson	17	8	27	0
Owens	8	2	15	0
Patel	1	0	4	0

# Harassed Englishmen off to SL



NEW DELHI, Mar 6: England's battered cricketers departed from India's shores Saturday leaving behind a jubilant nation celebrating one of the greatest turnabouts in the game's history, reports AFP.

Following the unprecedented 3-0 "spinwash" in the Tests, a magnificent comeback to draw the one-day series was an unexpected bonus for even the most optimistic Indian supporter.

## Gooch keen to lead England in Ashes series

LONDON, Mar 6: Graham Gooch hinted on Saturday he is ready to captain England against Australia this year despite his team's 3-0 Test whitewash in India, reports Reuter.

"It's every England player's dream to beat Australia on home soil," he said on his return to London on Saturday.

"I still like playing for England. I didn't have my best tour but I haven't lost confidence in my ability."

"We didn't get our act together as a team and were well beaten."

England manager Keith Fletcher and chairman of selectors Ted Dexter have urged Gooch, 39, to carry on as captain.

But the Ashes series against Australia would almost certainly bring down the final curtain on a Test career spanning more than 100 matches.

Gooch said before the Indian trip that it would be his last overseas tour. He went only on condition that he did not have to go on the final leg to Sri Lanka.

Alec Stewart has taken over the captaincy in Sri Lanka where England will play one Test and two one-day internationals.

Having watched on television the drubbing India received in Australia and South Africa over the past 16 months, most Indians would have settled for less.

The great revival not only caused a major sensation in international cricket but also gave a new lease of life to the game's popularity in this cricket-mad country.

"Everyone loves a winner. And the best part of this victory is that cricket has once again become the national pastime," observed Madhav Rao Scindia, the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

As the beleaguered Englishmen groped and plodded their way through the 10-week tour, they received little sympathy from critics and fans alike.

Most Indian fans recall former England opener Geoff Boycott's comment that captain Mohammad Azharuddin's men were "the worst cricket team in 28 years" or England manager Keith Fletcher's prediction during a spying mission to South Africa in December that "They will not be a problem."

Former Indian Test batsman Dilip Sardesai responded: "The tourists were the worst cricket side to visit our shores. They lacked imagination and had no clue on how to play spin."

Even though the cricketers themselves offered no excuses for their defeat, the rumblings in the British press about the smog in Calcutta, the prawns in Madras and general chaos in India were heavily criticised.

In an editorial entitled "Prawns Horribilis", the respected India Today magazine wrote: "The hangover of the raj is obviously more prolonged than the effects of an overdose of stir-fried prawns. And the indignity of losing a Test series to the 'natives' infinitely harder to stomach."

"Any international sports

team worth its salt and chili pepper knows that the true Test of ability is to perform in alien conditions and still overcome the opposition."

"If a plateful of prawns can spell doom for an entire team, it's clearly time for English players and their journalistic colleagues to get used to more examples of the Raj's revenge," the magazine concluded.

England were clearly out of sorts in alien conditions despite five weeks of practice on artificial spinning wickets back home and rigorous training sessions.

England captain Graham Gooch admitted India were "the better team who deserved their success" and called for "some deep thinking by English authorities about the future prospects."

India, who have won seven of their last eight matches at home but are winless in 16 Tests abroad, still have a way to go before being considered among the very best Test nations.

But no one here is complaining, as the nation rejoices in India's biggest cricket triumph since Sunil Gavaskar's team won the World Championships of cricket in Australia in 1985.

Man of the moment is Azharuddin, who put aside earlier disappointments to lead from the front with a spectacular display with the bat and in the field.

He began England's plight with a brilliant 182 in the first Test in Calcutta and delivered the knockout punch with a blistering 95 in Gwalior Friday to level the one-day series three all.

"It is great to return to form. I would like to bat on and on and on," said a relieved Azharuddin, whose job was on the line when India returned from their dismal African safari in January.

"It was also good to see spin take centre stage once again," the 30-year-old said.