Asif shoots six down

Cricket

CRICINFO, Sydney

Mohammad Asif completed a career-best six-wicket haul as part of Pakistan's broader demolition of Australia on the opening day of the second Test that called into question Ricky Ponting's decision to bat first on a Sydney green-

Sami, who dismissed Australia's top three batsmen before the first drinks break, Asif exploited the heavy pitch and atmospheric conditions to full effect to rout Australia for 127 -- their second-lowest total batting first at the Sydney Cricket Ground and

green, seaming pitch after opted to bowl. How he must

wicket stand between Mitchell Johnson and Nathan Hauritz saved Australia from complete embarrassment although, as it stood, the humiliation ran deep enough. Sami, playing his first Test in more than two

years following a stint in the unauthorised Indian Cricket League, scythed through Australia's top order with seven overs of express pace and prodigious movement to account for Phillip Hughes, Ponting and Shane Watson before the first drinks break.

Asif then swung into gear in the period leading up to tea with the wickets of Michael Clarke, Michael Hussey, Marcus North and Brad Haddin. He went onto remove Hauritz and Johnson to finish with the career-best figures of 6 for 41 as Australia were rolled inside 45 overs.

Pakistan's opening batsmen, Imran Farhat and Salman Butt, added 14 runs without loss before bad light stopped play 4.1 overs into the tourists' innings. Both Ponting was left to rue the survived the odd anxious moment, particularly against Doug Bollinger, but their rain delayed the coin toss battles paled into insignifi- Akmal. cance compared to those experienced by the Australian batsmen against a Pakistan attack at its enigmatic best.

Sami was an eleventhhour inclusion in the Pakistani side after the withdrawal of Mohammad Aamer, one of the heroes of Melbourne, with a groin injury. The move almost paid immediate dividends when Sami had Hughes, a replacement for the injured Simon Katich, dropped by the hardhanded Umar Akmal at backward point from his first delivery. Retribution followed in the next over, however, when Sami lured Hughes into an aggressive push to a straighter, fuller delivery that flew low to Faisal Iqbal at second slip.

The inspired paceman then removed Ponting with his very next ball, wafting at a shorter delivery that reared off the surface, and might well have completed a hat-trick had Billy Doctrove ruled Watson out to an excellent lbw appeal that struck him on the front toe. The Pakistanis sent the decision for video review, however Hawk-Eye confirmed Sami's 150kph bolt had struck the batsman outside the line of off stump. Watson successfully dodged that bullet, but was not so lucky in Sami's next over, edging a seaming, straightening delivery to Kamran figures.

That left Sami with figures of 3 for 5 from his first four overs, and Australia gasping for breath. Clarke rounded out an eventful hour by successfully overturning Asoka de Silva's decision to adjudge him lbw to an Umar Gul delivery that was comfortably clearing the stumps, but his defiance ended shortly after the drinks break when he was bowled through the gate to an Asif delivery that straightened off the pitch.

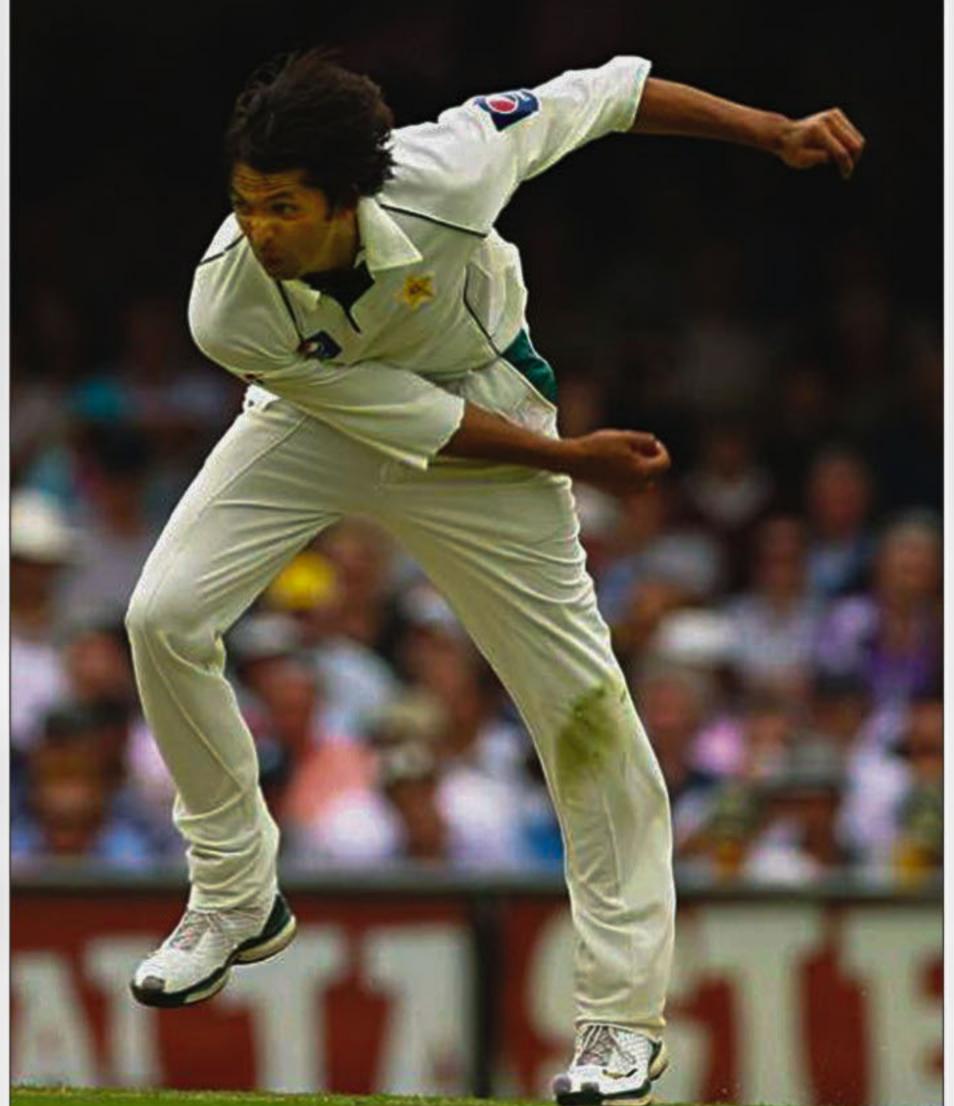
The task fell to Hussey and

North, both well short of peak form, to pull Australia from the mire. Neither looked comfortable repelling Asif's relentlessly probing lines and it came as little surprise when Hussey fell to a top-edged pull-stroke that was accepted by Misbahul Haq in the slips. North followed next ball, waving at a delivery outside his off-stump, and Asif completed the first session rout by removing an attack-minded Haddin.

Australia enjoyed a brief period of respite in the final session as Johnson and Hauritz took the attack to the Pakistanis. The hosts showed no nerves through the nineties -- a curious twist on an oft-mentioned topic this summer -- as the lower-order duo pounded 17 runs from one Danish Kaneria over to guide the team into triple

But the wheels fell off thereafter. Hauritz was bowled to an Asif delivery angled back into the righthander, while Johnson fell attempting to loft over extracover. Umar Gul completed the rout with the final wicket of Doug Bollinger -- the sixth Australian batsman to post a single-figure total -- to close out the hosts' innings in just 44.2 overs. Much will be made of

Ponting's "anti-Edgbaston" moment at the coin toss, but **SEE PAGE 18 COL 2**



Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Asif hurls down yet another venomous delivery during his sixwicket haul in the first innings of the second Test against Australia at the SCG yesterday.

'I never wanted to leave'

Football

As he looks forward to his first return to Old Trafford in March, David Beckham has made the admission that he wanted to emulate Ryan Giggs and spend his entire career with

Beckham was one of the star graduates from the United youth academy, winning six league titles and the Champions League, but cut his

Beckham, who has revealed he never wanted to leave the club that turned him into the most

anywhere else but it just wasn't meant to be,' Beckham told BBC Radio Five Live's Sportsweek.

"It takes a special person and a player to stay at a club for so many years. Ryan's been there for so many years now and he'll be part of Manchester United for life - he's a Manchester boy and it runs through his blood.

"I'm so honoured to have played with Ryan through the years I did and to know him as a person and a player. He deserves all the success he's had this year and in the other years."

Despite turning 35 in May, Beckham remains a prominent member of the England squad and Fabio Capello recently stated that the midfielder will almost certainly travel to the World Cup finals if he can maintain his fitness and impress at AC Milan.

Beckham is refusing to take his place in the squad for granted though and is determined to once again prove a useful signing as his second loan spell in Italy begins in earnest.

"I've never expected anything," Beckham said. "I know I have to play quite a lot for AC Milan. I'm prepared to do that. Everybody knows I'm prepared to work hard to be part of the England squad."

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard celebrates after scoring in their FA

pointed that when we went York 3-1, the latter going

one up early on, we were not ahead through Neil Barrett.

Campbell.

scoring.

Steed Malbranque goal and

two headers from Frazier

Stoke drew level through

Daniel Parslow's own-goal,

and went clear through

Ricardo Fuller before Matthew

Etherington completed the

Bolton, who on Wednesday

sacked manager Gary

Megson, endured a goalless

first-half before beating

Lincoln, 90th out of England's

Nottingham Forest held

Premier League Birmingham to

a goalless draw in a match

where Forest's Robert

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Championship high-flyers

92 league clubs, 4-0.

Relegation-threatened

Stoke saw off non-league

Cup match against Reading at The Madejski Stadium on Saturday.

Baines's last-minute penalty

Carlisle, but I was disap-

able to build on that and con-

trol the game better," said

Everton manager David

club Portsmouth, the 2008 FA

Cup winners, had to come

from a goal behind to salvage a

1-1 draw at home to

Championship side Coventry

City for whom David Bell

time, cash-strapped Pompey

equalised through Kevin-

But on the stroke of half-

Sunderland defeated non-

scored in the 30th minute.

Premier League basement

"I was not surprised by

sealed the win.

Moyes.

Mancini eyes Cordoba

SOCCERNET

Roberto Mancini conceded in is "possible" Manchester City will sign Inter Milan defender Ivan Cordoba following his side's 1-0 victory over Middlesbrough in the third round of the FA Cup.

A goal from Benjani was enough for an understrength City side to beat Boro at the Riverside and secure their place in the fourth round, but the focus was on Mancini's possible transfer targets in the post-match press confer-

Inter defender Cordoba, who won three Serie A titles under Mancini, has admitted his interest in joining City in January and though the new manager was reluctant to discuss transfer policy, he did admit that the Colombian could be one of his first | signings at Eastlands.

Asked immediately after the game about suggestions he is close to signing Inter Milan defender Ivan Cordoba, Mancini replied: "No, not for now. At the moment, what is important is this game and Manchester United. We are not talking about transfers. It's possible, but not now, no.

"It is important the injured players recover - [Nedum] Onuoha, [Joleon] Lescott, [Wayne] Bridge. I hope we can recall [Shaun] Wright-Phillips, Onuoha and Micah, who has a problem with his groin."

It's not Jose's Chelsea: Carlo

SOCCERNET

Carlo Ancelotti insists Jose Mourinho is wrong to use the term "my Chelsea" as the mind games continue ahead of the Champions League clash against Inter Milan in February.

The Inter coach made a high-profile trip to Stamford Bridge to watch his former club defeat Fulham during the Christmas period and the 'Special One' gave an interview where he called Stamford Bridge his "home".

Since leaving the club in 2007, Mourinho has described the Blues as "my Chelsea", but Ancelotti said: "It's not true. It's not his team. It's the team of Roman Abramovich.

"It's not mine: it's Roman Abramovich's. Mourinho had the honour to train this club and I do too. This team is Roman Abramovich's team."

Avram Grant, Luiz Felipe Scolari and Guus Hiddink have taken charge since Mourinho's departure but Ancelotti is not concerned by the quick turnover of managers at Chelsea.

"Now is the time (for Chelsea to stick with a manager)," he said. "Pressure is normal when you do this job and I am not afraid of pressure. Here it is different - there is less pressure than the last year in Milan for me."

Loew's tough stance Cup who have played regularly at their clubs

Football

INTERNET, undated

Germany coach Joachim Loew will not shy away from dropping players at the last instance again in order to have the best squad available at this year's World Cup.

Loew told the Welt am Sonntag Sunday paper that he does not rule out taking more players to a final training camp and to decide on his final 23men squad just before the June 5 nomination deadline for the June 11-July 11 tournament in South Africa.

Loew did the same ahead of Euro 2008 when Marko Marin (Werder Bremen), Patrick Helmes (Bayer Leverkusen) and Jermaine Jones (Schalke 04) missed the cut. "We were criticised for this approach the last

time around, but we were convinced that it was necessary," Loew said. Loew said he will decide on another casting

ahead of the training camp in mid-May. "It is possible. It depends on the situation. Are there players we are not sure about? Players who

we know but whose form we want to test again?" Loewsaid Loew said he will only take players to the World England in the round of 16. "We must go beyond the group stage," said

because full fitness will be an important factor in

Germany's bid to do well at the World Cup.

Germany won three World Cup titles 1954,

1974 and 1990. It reached the final in 2002 and came third at the home event in 2006. Loew has just one game on March 3 against

This game could determine who will be the startingWorld Cup goalkeeper, Loewsaid.

Argentina to test his players ahead of the training

Rene Adler (Leverkusen), Manuel Neuer (Schalke) and Tim Wiese (Bremen) are the candi-

"The man who is between the posts against Argentina definitely has an advantage," said

"All three are very good. Neuer is young and very good in opening up the game. Wiese is very experienced and has been playing on a high level for years. Adler has improved a lot after a mediocre past season and was very convincing in recent important internationals."

Leeds scalp bitter rivals Man Utd

AFP, Manchester

Third-tier Leeds United produced the shock of the third round by knocking record 11times winners Manchester United out of the FA Cup with a 1-0 victory at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Fallen giants Leeds, the League One leaders who are 43 places below English champions Manchester United, won thanks to Jermaine Beckford's 19th minute goal and then denied their hosts, second in the Premier League, an equaliser.

It was the first time Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson had lost in the third round of the FA Cup, the stage at which teams from England's top two divisions enter the knockout tournament, since he arrived at Old Trafford 24 years ago. Not since 1984, when beaten

by third tier Bournemouth, had Manchester United lost at this stage of the competition.

Victory was also Leeds's first at Old Trafford since 1981. Their goal came after Jonny

Howson's superb 50-yard pass over the head of Wes Brown found striker Beckford and he outpaced the defender before sliding the ball left-footed into the far corner and beyond goalkeeperTomaszKuszczak. United did threaten and,

after Leeds keeper Casper Ankergren had advanced quickly to block Wayne Rooney's initial shot, Jason Crowe had to clear off the line from the England striker. Ankergren then produced

another good block to deny Danny Welbeck early in the second-half.

Just short of the hour mark, Loew said he expects "fast-paced" football in United manager Sir Alex South Africa, where Germany are in group D with Serbia, Ghana and Australia and could face Ferguson made a double substitution with veteran forward Ryan Giggs replacing Gabriel Obertan and striker Antonio Valencia coming on for Danny Welbeck.

But still Leeds denied the home side and, with 20 minutes left, Ferguson sent on Michael Owen, his final substitution, only to see the England striker scuff a shot from inside the box moments later.

Rooney then fired way over the crossbar and, with 12 minutes left, Beckford could have

made it 2-0 only for his shot to whistle past the far post. Leeds substitute Robert Snodgrass then hit the crossbar

and, in the five minutes of stoppage time, Ankergren saved from Rooney.

Barca drop points

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona dropped their first home points of the season on Saturday in a disappointing 1-1 home draw Villarreal as

the Spanish league season resumed after its winter break.

Pedro put Barca ahead after just seven minutes but David Fuster equalised five minutes after the break to prevent the champions from making it a perfect eight wins at Camp Nou. Real Madrid, three points

behind in second, can now move level on points with victory at Osasuna on Sunday. "We are having a good

season and have to continue what we are doing," said Barca captain Carles Puyol. "We didn't get the three

points but we were up against

one of the best teams in the league. We have to rest now because we have another game very soon."

Barcelona host Sevilla on Tuesday in the first leg of the Kings Cup last 16. The Kings Cup was one of

six trophies Barca won in 2009 and they presented their silverware to the Camp Nou fans in a pre-match ceremony. The players were also given

a guard of honour by Villarreal before kick-off.

Barcelona rested Lionel Messi while Andres Iniesta started on the bench as he came back from injury but the celebrations continued as Pedro netted the opening goal.

Thierry Henry hammered a spectacular volley against the crossbar and the ball fell to Pedro who controlled brilliantly on his chest and drilled

Villarreal refused to be rattled by the early goal and in the 27th minute came within inches of equalising with

Cani's cross finding the onrushing Fuster who was unlucky as his downward header looped over the bar.

whipped in another brilliant cross but the lively Henry could not head in as Diego Lopez did enough to put him off. Minutes into the second

half Barca midfielder Sergi Busquets lost the ball and Fuster fired wide. It was a good chance but Barca did not heed the warning and a minute later Villarreal equalised.

Cani floated in a 50th minute cross and Fuster produced a controlled finish at the back post to stun the hosts. Substitute Iniesta and

Zlatan Ibrahimovic had chances for Barcelona while Giuseppe Rossi had a shot cleared off the line by Puyol two minutes from time.

Sevilla failed to reclaim third place from Valencia following a 2-1 defeat at Atletico Madrid.

Brazilian Renato headed



Sevilla ahead on 44 minutes but a disastrous own goal from Ivica Dragutinovic three minutes after the break helped Atletico draw level. Close to the interval Alves Sevilla had Argentine Aldo

Duscher sent off for a malicious challenge and Atletico captain Antonio Lopez scored a last minute header to win the game. Valencia now lead Sevilla by

two points while Atletico move five points clear of the relegation zone with a moraleboosting win.

Serbian substitute Nikola Zigic scored a stoppage time winner as Valencia defeated Espanyol 1-0. The giant Zigic came off the bench on 63 minutes and

headed in the winner from a great cross from Joaquin in the second minute of injury time. Valencia were without David Silva and Pablo

Hernandez due to injury so the attacking onus fell on Spanish international DavidVilla. Villa, the league's top-

scorer with 12 goals, had a personal duel with Espanyol goalkeeper Carlos Kameni who twice denied him in the second Espanyol had not won away

in the league since mid-September and it showed as they clung on although Luis Garcia had a chance to put his side ahead in the final quarter of an hour.

When Villa finally beat Kameni he was denied by the post with his header hitting the woodwork on 76 minutes as Valencia's frustrations continued.

It looked like Valencia would drop more valuable points at home - something that has been their problem so far - but Zigic sealed a late win and tore off his shirt to celebrate.

receiving end of late goals against Sporting (Gijon), Atletico (Madrid), and (Real) Mallorca so this is really good for us," said Valencia coach Unai Emery.

"We have been on the

Barcelona forward Pedro Rodriguez is upset after missing a chance during their Primera Liga clash against Villarreal at the Nou Camp on Saturday.

Clayton gifted the ball to Toffees striker James Vaughan. But Carlisle equalised six minutes later when Clayton's shot was deflected in by teammate Kevan Hurst.

The visitors were level until Prince Boateng's header. the 82nd minute when Australia midfielder Cahill league Barrow 3-0 at the scored before Leighton Stadium of Light thanks to a

In union with Mohammad

worst at home since 1996.

decision to bat first on a until shortly before 2:00pm. Not since his infamous decision to send England into bat at Edgbaston in 2005 has Ponting called correctly and

wish to have his time over. Only a 44-run eighth-

SOCCERNET Manchester United.

£25 million move to Real Madrid.

Football

Liverpool's season suffered

another stutter as they were

held to a 1-1 draw at

Championship strugglers

Reading in the third round of

Cup represents their last

realistic hope of domestic

silverware this term, fell

was kept in expertly by

Grzegorz Rasiak at the far post

and, following his first-time

cross, Simon Church scored

behind for 12 minutes, inspi-

rational captain Steven

Gerrard scoring with a curling

pressure Liverpool manager

"I'm relieved," said under-

"I think it was difficult. I

think Reading played really

well. To play in front of the TV

(cameras) and against

Liverpool I think was a mas-

sive boost for them and you

could see they played really

Earlier, Australia's Tim

Cahill ensured Liverpool's

city neighbours Everton

avoided the embarrassment

of a replay against third-tier

side Carlisle by scoring the

crucial goal in a 3-1 victory at

Everton, last season's

losing finalists, went ahead in

the 12th minute when a back

pass from Carlisle's Adam

Goodison Park.

Liverpool though were only

from barely a yard out.

25-yard shot.

Rafael Benitez.

Ryan Bertrand's free-kick

behind in the 24th minute.

Liverpool, for whom the FA

the FA Cup on Saturday.

AFP, London

ties with the club in 2003 when reports of a falling-out with Sir Alex Ferguson preceded a Having returned to AC Milan on loan from LA

ence a return to his former club when the Italian side visit Old Trafford in the second leg of their Champions League last 16 clash on March 10.

recognisable sportsman on the planet.

United for my whole career and never gone

Galaxy in January, Beckham will soon experi-It promises to be an emotional occasion for

"I'd have loved to have stayed at Manchester

Reading hold L'pool