

If you close your eyes during play, Brisbane has a distinctly English sound. The flagging pound and strong Australian dollar hasn't stopped thousands from coming on holiday and today it felt like more than half of the crowd of 21,677 were tourists.

"Unfortunately we were not able to quieten the Barmy Army for too long today, we had to put up with it," Shane Watson said. "They didn't seem to carry on too much yesterday when Mike Hussey and Brad Haddin were batting so well, but we gave them the chance to carry on today."

Has the English support had any influence on the Australians? "I don't really think it has," Watson said. "It's a bit annoying to be honest."



SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net



PHOTO: STAR

SENT PACKING: Shahriar Nafees smiles ruefully in the wake of news that he has been dropped from the Bangladesh squad for the Zimbabwe one-dayers. Here the BCB XI captain is leaving the National Cricket Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

Captaincy 'imposed' on Shakib

Nafees dropped, in comes Ashraful

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh captaincy for Zimbabwe one-day series has been 'imposed' on Shakib Al-Hasan yesterday. The long-awaited decision could have stretched a bit more had Shakib not budged, as he was reluctant to take up the job.

But Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal convinced Shakib, ending much speculation about the captaincy issue that hung in the air for far too long, yet it remains on a series-to-series basis.

"If you ask me if I'm happy or not, then the answer is no," was Shakib's only reply.

Shakib's appointment as captain however, following his success in the New Zealand series, is perceived as a positive move given Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's injury worries.

"Shakib has been successful so we selected him as captain. Mashrafe is also good and recognised but we decided to keep Mashrafe away from the pressure and burden of captaincy," said BCB chief executive officer Manzur Ahmed.

Also, the system of appointing a captain for only one series is regarded by many as a needless exercise. Manzur also believes that a long-term stint is viable.

"We would also like to do that. It would have been better had we put that into our thinking a bit more but there are some complications regarding team combina-

tion so we had to go for the series-to-series practice," explained Manzur.

The five-match one-day series against the southern Africans starts on December 1.

BCB announced the 15-member squad that included Tamim Iqbal and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, both of whom were out due to injury. Tamim returns to the national team after five months while Mashrafe has been given the green signal after he sustained an ankle injury in the first one-dayer against New Zealand last month. Tamim replaces Shahriar Nafees while Jahurul Islam makes way for Mohammad Ashraful and there was no place for Dollar Mahmud and Syed Rasel who were also added to the squad during the New Zealand series.

Ashraful's inclusion and the axe on Nafees stirred a potential hornet's nest as the latter had had a reasonable time against the Kiwis.

"I am definitely disappointed. I think I did well in the last series, so I expected to play in the series," rued Nafees, who replaced an injured Tamim against New Zealand against whom he struck an important half-century in the second

game, scoring 119 runs in the series.

Chief selector Rafiqul Alam said that Tamim's status as an automatic choice worked against Nafees. "He [Nafees] played well but he didn't do too well in the National Cricket League. Another reason is that Tamim is also our automatic choice, plus we have a settled batsman at No 3 in Junaed Siddiqui," he said.

Nafees however believes there wasn't much connection between his selection and Tamim's return. "I think the selectors can tell you the reason behind my exclusion. I can understand that Tamim is back but it doesn't mean I have to go," he added.

Ashraful, who was dropped after the England ODIs after a poor run of form, scored 331 runs in the NCL one-dayers and a first-class century over the last two months and Rafiqul believed Ashraful was in-form. "He is among the proven players who is in-form. He scored two hundreds and a couple of fifties," said the former national cricketer.

"If he's not in now, he might miss out on the World Cup," added Rafiqul about the man who had an ordinary time even in the just-concluded Asian Games where Bangladesh won gold in the men's cricket competition.

Rafiqul however could not confirm if Mashrafe would be picked ahead of fast bowlers Rubel Hossain and Shafiqul Islam. "We will decide on that later but Mashrafe is a world-class bowler. He is also kind of an automatic choice because now he's fit and getting better," he said.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

Aussies open Cup account

The 1987 World Cup was the first to be held outside England, co-hosted by India and Pakistan. The teams were the same as in 1983, and the format was also the same: eight teams in two groups of four, with teams playing each other twice, and the top two to progress to the semifinals. Because of the shorter daylight hours in the subcontinent, the match length was reduced from sixty overs per innings in the previous editions to fifty in 1987.

Champions: Australia

The cricket world in 2010 has gotten used to Australia's dominance, but in the mid-80s Australian cricket was not in the robust health as it is in now. A clutch of heavyweights including Dennis Lillee, Greg Chappell and Rodney Marsh had exited the scene, and the new generation initially found life without the greats tough. Toughness though is a quality Australians are born with, and the team had begun to gel under Allan Border's stewardship. This triumph was the start of Australia's resurgence to the top of the cricketing world.

A majority of the Australian squad went on to carve out stellar careers. The openers, David Boon and Geoff Marsh, finished second and third in the tournament run charts respectively. They were equally adept at attack and defence. The portly Boon was one of the best players of his era, a fact he

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We are here not to lose, says Butcher

SPORTS REPORTER



Coach Alan Butcher believes Zimbabwe are here with a winning mentality, a different approach from their last month's tour to South Africa.

"We felt we didn't really have a chance to win in South Africa but it is different here. I can't sit here and promise you all [of a series win] because Bangladesh is pretty confident as well, but we will approach and prepare for every game to win," said Butcher.

The former England and Surrey cricketer was speaking to the media yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur ahead of the five-match one-day series that begins on December 1.

Zimbabwe predictably lost 3-0 to the Proteas in October but their batsmen racked up scores like 287-6 and 268 in the first two games, before conceding the second biggest defeat in the history of one-day cricket, a defeat by 272 runs.

"We got quite good reviews for our performance in South Africa, but we didn't win any

matches. We want to play some good cricket here and win games," remarked Butcher, who replaced Walter Chawaguta as Zimbabwe coach in February this year.

Zimbabwe have so far won six out of the 16 matches under Butcher's coaching, including a stellar home tri-series in June when they beat India and Sri Lanka in consecutive matches.

The two wins coupled with the return of players due to the return of political stability in the country, have resulted in Zimbabwe being granted a Test match in June 2011 and according to Butcher, a series win here would certainly bring in some reverence.

"We have already been granted a Test match, against Bangladesh in June next year in Harare. So that's already in place. What it would factor in is how people perceive Zimbabwe cricket.

"Should we win the series, after Bangladesh destroyed New Zealand, there would be respect for Zimbabwe cricket and it would show that our game is in an upward path again," added Butcher. The last time Zimbabwe

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U-17 booters in quarters

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-17 footballers moved into the quarterfinals of the 51st Subrata Mukherjee Cup beating their Nepalese counterparts 4-3 in tiebreaker at the Ambedkar Stadium in Delhi yesterday.

The regulation time had ended goalless. The BFF

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DIV I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Partex Sporting Club and Eskaton Sabuj Sangha notched up 6-wicket victories against their respective opponents in the First Division Cricket League yesterday.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Partex bowled City Club out for 190 runs in 49.2 overs. Sadaf Sarker (86) was the only notable scorer in the City Club innings. Partex

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India take lead easily

Cricket

AFP, Guwahati

A century from Virat Kohli helped India secure a convincing 40-run victory in the first one-day international against New Zealand on Sunday.

India's total of 276 looked enough, and New Zealand were out of contention at 169 for 8 after 36 overs before a quick ninth-wicket partnership of 67 between Nathan McCullum and Kyle Mills offered them a glimmer of hope.

But McCullum's dismissal in the 45th over allowed India to bowl the tourists out for 236 and finish as easy winners in gloomy conditions at the Nehru Stadium in Guwahati.

Kohli's 105 was the highlight of the game, with the right-handed number three scoring 100 off 100 balls before falling to Andy McKay, New Zealand's most effective bowler, when caught by Jamie How in the 43rd over.

"It feels good. I had a kind of a lean patch in Sri Lanka recently, the teammates and coach backed me. I would like to thank them," Kohli said.

"I try to probably stop myself if I feel like playing a big shot and enjoy the singles."

McKay pinned India back with four

wickets for 62 runs, as the hosts' stand-in captain Gautam Gambhir scored 38 and Murali Vijay and Yusuf Pathan both contributed with 29 each.

"Leading the first side and to get the first win under your belt is very satisfying," Gambhir said. "Everyone chipped in and Virat went on to score a big one. I am happy with the team's effort."

"We also would have bowled this there

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Virat Kohli celebrates his match-winning century in the first one-dayer against New Zealand at the Nehru Stadium in Guwahati yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

A ground of hope

SPORTS REPORTER

'Ground Olympian', the highest playing ground of the country on top of a mountain in Lama, Bandarban, was formally opened to local students on Friday.

Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder of Biswa Sahitya Kendra, formally opened the ground that has been developed by Quantum Foundation.

The ground, situated about 1,000 feet above sea level, was carved out of a pineapple yard and will be the only such ground for about 400 students of nearby Quantum Shishu Kanon, a school, to engage in sporting activities.

That region of Lama had been hitherto bereft of such a playground and the children had to practise in rugged fields or even on the streets of the mountainous area.

The main purpose of the ground will be to build up the children of the region for the exigencies of national and international level sports.



Eng fight back

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

England are on course to salvage the opening Ashes Test after a dominant batting display to overturn a massive innings deficit into a mounting lead on the fourth day at the Gabba on Sunday.

England surged back after Saturday's fruitless third day in the field to trail by 221 runs and hit the front on the back of a ground record stand between skipper Andrew Strauss and Alastair Cook.

At the close, the Ashes holders, cheered on by their chanting Barmy Army fans, were 309 for one with Cook unconquered on 132 and Jonathan Trott on 54 to hold an overall lead of 88 runs.

Strauss and Cook combined for the highest English partnership for any wicket at the Gabba of 188 runs, eclipsing the previous best of 160 between Graeme Hick and Graham Thorpe in 1994.

It was also the first century opening stand by an English pair in Australia since Graham Gooch and Mike Atherton put on 203 for the first wicket in Adelaide in 1991.

Strauss was the only wicket to fall on the day when he came down the pitch and was deceived by off-spinner Marcus North to be stumped by Brad Haddin for 110.

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EXORCISING THE GABBA GHOST: England captain Andrew Strauss swipes hard, sending Simon Katich fending for cover, during his superb knock of 110 against Australia on the fourth day of the first Test in Brisbane yesterday. Strauss and his opening partner Alastair Cook put on 188, the highest first-wicket stand for any visiting team at the Gabba.

PHOTO: AFP