

Former England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff signs autographs for students during a visit to the Yusuf Meherali School in Mumbai

TEST RANKINGS

Sangakkara back on top

Kumar Sangakkara, the Sri

Lanka captain, has reclaimed

the top spot in the ICC Test

rankings for batsmen, ending

Sachin Tendulkar's short-lived

in the first two Tests of the ongo-

ing series against West Indies

coincided with Tendulkar's

modest returns against New

Zealand, leading to a swap at the

top. Sangakkara has so far

scored 228 runs in the West

Indies series, taking him to 882

rating points, 23 clear of

Tendulkar who could manage

only one half-century in four

innings against New Zealand.

Virender Sehwag is in the third

place, nine points behind

Tendulkar, while Jacques Kallis

and England's Jonathan Trott

have broken into the top ten

for the first time, following

strong performances against

Pakistan and Australia respec-

tively. de Villiers amassed an

unbeaten 278 in Abu Dhabi,

the highest Test score by a

South Africa batsman, propel-

ling him to fifth. Trott's

unbeaten 135 was a part of

England's strong second-

innings resistance in the

Ashes-opener, helping his side

earn a creditable draw, and

On the bowling front,

India's fast bowling spear-

head, Zaheer Khan, surged to

third in the Test ratings, his

highest classification to date.

South Africa seamer Dale

Steyn and England off-spinner

Graeme Swann retained the

top two positions. Australia's

Peter Siddle, who picked up six

wickets on the first day at the

Gabba, including a hattrick,

rose to the 14th spot, while

England seamer Steven Finn

moved up to 19th on the back

Sammy to lead

Windies in SL

The West Indies cricket selec-

tors on Monday named all-

rounder Darren Sammy as

captain for next month's one-

day series and a Twenty20

Batsman Kirk Edwards and

paceman Andre Russell were

the newcomers in the 15-man

squad, according to a West

Indies Cricket Board (WICB)

Edwards is one of the four

players who will join the squad

currently playing in the three-

Test series in Sri Lanka. The Test

series is tied 0-0, with the final

match set to be played in

All-rounder Kieron Pollard

spinner Nikita Miller, paceman

Ravi Rampaul and Edwards will

replace Brendan Nash,

wicketkeeper Devon Thomas,

paceman Nelon Pascal and

The West Indies will play

five one-day internationals in

Sri Lanka, with the first match

starting on Dec 9. The

Twenty20 match will be played

after the one-day series in

Darren Sammy (captain),

Adrian Barath, Carlton Baugh,

Sulieman Benn, Darren Bravo,

Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine

Chanderpaul, Kirk Edwards,

Chris Gayle, Nikita Miller,

Kieron Pollard, Ravi Rampaul,

Kemar Roach, Andre Russell,

Colombo on Dec 21.

SQUAD

Devon Smith.

spinner Shane Shillingford.

Pallekele on Wednesday.

international in Sri Lanka.

ODI series

of his six-for.

AFP, Pallekele

press release.

lifting him to the eighth spot.

South Africa's AB de Villiers

is fourth, with 806.

Sangakkara's performance

stay at the head of the table.

Cricket CRICINFO

AFP, Brisbane

yesterday. Flintoff is on a day-long trip to Mumbai as a brand ambassador of an airline company.

Changes are likely in the Australian team for the second Ashes Test after pacemen Doug Bollinger and Ryan Harris were added to the national squad following Monday's drawn first Test against England.

Their inclusion in a 13-man squad follows the inability of Australia's bowlers to capitalise on a massive 221-run innings lead and press for victory over the final two days of the Gabba Test.

England, spearheaded by an unbeaten 235 by opener Alastair Cook and centuries from Andrew Strauss and Jonathan Trott, had few problems blunting the Australian attack throughout 152 overs and 10 hours 25 minutes to consign the opening match to a stalemate.It was grim reading for Australia's bowlers, particularly their 166-wicket strike bowler Mitchell Johnson, who went wicketless for the match at a cost of 170 runs from 42 overs.

Apart from Peter Siddle's career best 6-54, including a hattrick, on Thursday's opening day, Australia's bowlers made little impact on the flat unforgiving Gabba strip.

"One for 500 is a pretty demanding scorecard, isn't it?" skipper Ricky Ponting admitted after the match.

"There's no hiding from the fact that we could have bowled a lot better as a group.

"It was hard work for our boys and they are pretty tired right now and if we get a flat wicket in Adelaide again we have to make sure we are a whole lot better than we were in this game."

Ponting indicated that Ryan Harris, who took nine wickets in his only two Tests against New Zealand last March, would be in line for selection.

"He's had some niggling knee problems in the last couple of games but the fitness staff I've spoken to believe that he will be fine for a Test match," Ponting said.

"We will get a good look at him over the next two days in Adelaide and see where he's at. It's nice to have him back around the group."

Ponting pointed to the Queenslander's work ethic as a big plus for possible inclusion

in Adelaide. "He's a great competitor. He runs in all day for you. He's going to bowl the right kind of

length in Adelaide conditions," he said. "If it happens to reverse swing down there he's very good at that, too."

Ponting said that Bollinger would be pulled out of the current Sheffield Shield match in Perth after Tuesday so he can join the Test

squad in Adelaide. The skipper said he would not single out Johnson over his ineffective Gabba

performance. "His state of mind right through the whole Test seemed particularly good and positive. I have seen him bowl better, I must admit," he said.

"I am not singling anybody out, because all our bowlers weren't at their absolute best in this game and the bowlers are all about working as a group and in partnerships, and I don't think we did that well enough.

"We have a lot of work to do as a group, let alone singling one guy out."

SQUAD

Doug, Ryan recalled

Ricky Ponting (captain), Shane Watson, Simon Katich, Michael Clarke, Mike Hussey, Marcus North, Brad Haddin, Mitchell Johnson, Xavier Doherty, Peter Siddle, Ben Hilfenhaus, Doug Bollinger, Ryan Harris.

Records roll at the Gabba

FROM PAGE 17

"I am not saying everything was absolutely perfect for us," Ponting said. "We didn't bowl as well as we could as a group by any stretch of the imagination but it was a difficult wicket to bowl on over the last couple of days of this game."

Records and personal bests kept tumbling for England on the anti-climactic last day as Cook and Trott pummelled the Australian bowlers.

Cook joined Wally Hammond, Reg Foster and Paul Collingwood as double centurions with his 625-minute epic off 428 balls in the highest score by either team in 19 Ashes Tests at the Gabba.

Their unbroken partnership surpassed the previous highest stand by England in Australia of 323 by Jack Hobbs and Wilfred Rhodes at

Melbourne in 1911-1912. When Trott's 100 came up it was the first

time three English players have scored a century in an innings of a Test match since 1924.

On that occasion the top three batsmen --Jack Hobbs (211), Herbert Sutcliffe (122) and Frank Woolley (134 not out) -- all scored hundreds against South Africa at Lord's.

Cook surpassed his previous highest Test score of 173 and also passed Ian Botham's 138 as the highest English run scorer at the Brisbane ground, set back in 1986.

England landed psychological blows on the Australians as Cook and Trott had frolicked before a small last-day crowd dominated by England's taunting Barmy Army fans, which made it more like a Test at The Oval.

More salt was rubbed into Australia's wounds with two more embarrassing dropped catches, making a total of five for the match.

Vice-captain Michael Clarke put down a regulation chance off Trott (75) at slip off Shane Watson's bowling and Ponting dropped Cook (222) in the slips.

It only got worse when Simon Katich was caught at first slip by Strauss off Stuart Broad for four in the sixth over of Australia's second innings.

Australia will have plenty to ponder ahead of Friday's second Test at the Adelaide Oval after England came away from the Gabba without losing for the first time since the drawn Test in 1998.

Over the course of the five days only 22 wickets fell, and just seven over the last three days on the bat-friendly flat Gabba pitch.

"I have never played on a Gabba wicket like

that in my whole career," Ponting said. "It's normally quicker and bouncier early on and there's a lot more wickets caught behind

the wicket than there was in this game. "I think the result indicates there was something different about the Gabba wicket this week."

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 260 (Bell 76, Cook 67; Siddle 6-54)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 481 (Hussey 195, Haddin 136, Katich 50; Finn 6-125, Anderson 2 for 99, Swann 2 for 128)

ENGLAND: Second innings 517 for 1 declared (Straus 110, Cook 235 not out, Trott 135 not out; North 1-22)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 107 for 1 (Watson 41 not out, Ponting 51 not out; Broad 1-18) Result: Match drawn.

Man-of-the-match: Alastair Cook.

New stars galore

FROM PAGE 17

responsible for their ultimate triumph. Perhaps the greatest Australian cricketer of the past twenty years, Steve Waugh turned matches with his hard hitting in the closing stages of the match and more importantly, with his intelligent medium pacers accounting for 11 wickets at a good economy rate. Craig McDermott, the young Aussie pacer equalled the Cup record for the most wickets in a tournament, including tournamentbest bowling figures of five for 44 against Pakistan in the

semi-final at Lahore. Graham Gooch of England finished the tournament as the highest run-scorer, piling on 471 three fifties and a hundred. The Australian openers David Boon and Geoff Marsh were placed at second and third positions respectively.

Kiran More of India and Greg Dyer of Australia were the leading keepers of the tournament with eleven dismissals each. More played six matches while Dyer played eight.

Ansars top

FROM PAGE 17 Bangladesh Rifles also produced a stunning result to claim five gold, two silver and two bronze as the top three teams won two gold each on the concluding day.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker distributed prizes among the winners while managing director of sponsors NCC Bank Mohammad Nurul Amin, Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Nurul Fazle Bulbul, Bangladesh Cycling Federation president Mizanur Rahman Manu and general secretary SM Imtiaz Khan Babul were present.

Captain hails

FROM PAGE 17

we've got a quick turnaround. Hopefully, I can start again in Adelaide [the second Test]."

Cook, at the tender age of 25, joined Wally Hammond (3), Reg Foster and Paul Collingwood as England's double centurions in Australia with his 625minute epic.

He said he was edgy coming into the Ashes series.

"The night before I was probably the most nervous I've ever been," he said.

"The drive into the ground, everything about it, the hype, the national anthems, it was a very nerve-wracking time and it gave me a lot of confidence to get through that first two hours.

"It's been a fantastic couple of days, obviously the pitch was amazing to bat on and got better and better."

Shakib joins anti AIDS campaign

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket's most popular face Shakib Al Hasan yesterday joined an elite group of cricketers from around the world as the International Cricket Council (ICC) appointed him the Think Wise campaign spokesperson for Bangladesh.

The campaign aims at raising awareness about HIV and AIDs in order to make a positive impact on the lives of young people across the world and help prevent new HIV infections.

A press briefing was held in this connection yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium where representatives of the ICC, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), UNICEF and UNAIDS were present.

"I feel privileged to be a part of the Think Wise campaign. I have always had a desire to support and assist social causes because as a sportsperson I know how farreaching an impact can we make in addressing key issues like HIV and AIDS, especially in developing countries like Bangladesh," said Shakib. Some of the notable

Think Wise champions from cricket are Nathan Bracken, Kumar Sangakkara, Graeme Smith, Virender Sehwag and Ramnaresh Sarwan.

Yet Rafa tops ATP world rankings

AFP, Paris

Rafael Nadal has finished the year firmly atop the world rankings despite losing to Roger Federer in the ATP Tour Championship final in London on Sunday. The Spaniard has 12,450

points, 3,305 ahead of Federer whom he replaced at the top after winning the French Open and Wimbledon during the summer. Nadal went on to win the US Open, while Federer took the year's first Grand Slam title in Australia. Andy Murray, meanwhile,

moved back above Robin Soderling to fourth place on the back of his run into the semifinals in London. Nadal and Federer have filled

the year-ending top two spots in the world rankings since 2005.

TOPTEN

1. Rafael Nadal (ESP) 12,450 pts 2. Roger Federer (SUI) 9145 3. Novak Djokovic (SRB) 6035 4. Andy Murray (GBR) 5760 (+1) 5. Robin Soderling (SWE) 5580 (-1) 6. Tomas Berdych (CZE) 3955

7. David Ferrer (ESP) 3735 8. Andy Roddick (USA) 3665 9. Fernando Verdasco (ESP) 3240

10. Mikhail Youzhny (RUS) 2920

Middle-order

FROM PAGE 17 he believes that with the World

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Cup coming, everyone will try to prove his worth which would ultimately take part of the pressure off the underperforming ones. "The best thing is we have

been playing well for some time now, and the good thing is there hasn't been too much tinkering with the squad," added Shakib.

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Weather still a threat SL, WI meet in deciding Test from tomorrow

Cricket

AFP, Pallekele

Sri Lanka and the West Indies hope for clear weather as they seek to clinch the series with a win in the third and final Test starting at a new venue on Wednesday.

The series is tied at 0-0 after rain-hit drawn matches in Colombo and Galle and the weather is likely to curtail play at the Pallekele International Stadium.

The West Indies, seeking their first Test victory in Sri Lanka, surprised the hosts with their impressive performance in Galle where they enforced the follow-on, restricting the home side to 378 after posting 580-9 declared.

Sri Lanka came back strongly in the second Test in Colombo when they made 387-9 declared in their first innings on a new pitch before bowling the tourists out for 243.

The hosts declared their second innings at 57-1 before taking two West Indies wickets, including that of former captain Chris Gayle, for 12 runs in the final session. Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara, who

led from the front with a superb 150 in the first innings, expects his bowlers to repeat their performance in a bid to keep pressure on the tourists in the final Test. The hosts were indebted to their spinners

for gaining the upper hand, with Rangana

Herath, Ajantha Mendis and part-timer

Tillakaratne Dilshan giving a good account of

themselves with three wickets apiece. Debutant paceman Suranga Lakmal and fast bowler Nuwan Kulasekara also backed

their spinners.

"If the match had gone the full distance, it would have been great to see our spinners performing," Sangakkara said after the Colombo Test.

"We applied ourselves in batting and our bowling performance was a lot better than the first Test."

The West Indies, who arrived in the country with new captain Darren Sammy and an inexperienced bowling attack, will need to be consistent with their batting and bowling. The tourists batted well in the opening

match, with Gayle showing the way with a brilliant 333, but faltered against Sri Lanka's disciplined pace-spin combination in the next game.

Darren Bravo, 21, impressed in both the Tests with his exciting stroke-play, scoring 58 on debut in Galle and an attractive 80 in Colombo.

"We didn't play as well as we wanted to [in the second match], but the series is still 0-0, so we have everything to play for in the final Test. We need to keep improving," said Sammy.

"Darren Bravo, Kemar Roach and Carlton Baugh all played well [in the second match]. It's been a long time we are going into the final Test of a series 0-0 and the players are looking forward to it."

Wicketkeeper Baugh contributed a crucial 50 in the second innings to help his side avoid a follow-on, while fast bowler Roach bagged 5-100 in the first innings.

Roach also did well in the opening Test, finishing with five wickets, but the West Indies expect other bowlers to raise their performance.

The West Indies have lost five and drawn three of their eight Tests in Sri Lanka.

Roger eyes return to top

Tennis

AFP, London

Roger Federer believes his ATP World Tour Finals triumph against Rafael Nadal will provide him with the perfect springboard to return to the top in 2011.

Although Federer is publicly adamant he has nothing to be disappointed about over the last 12 months, privately he will feel a nagging sense of regret at the loss of the world number one ranking to Nadal, who also

took the French Open and Wimbledon titles from the Swiss star.

That was what made the 6-

3, 3-6, 6-1 victory over Nadal in the final at London's O2 Arena on Sunday so significant for the world number two. In Federer's mind, his record-equalling fifth title in

the prestigious end-of-year event was secondary to the message the win sent to Nadal and his other rivals at the top of the rankings. "I'm happy I made my ninth

final this season. I've won five titles, won a slam. That obvi-

the best for last. "Obviously, beating Rafa in the finals makes it extra special because of the year he had. "I've had a good season. I don't see how someone can say it's been a bad season. I had some tough losses, sure but

2011," he said.

you're not going to win every tournament you play. "After having somewhat of a disappointing clay, Halle, Wimbledon stretch, where I wasn't able to win any tournaments, maybe didn't play some of my best tennis, played a bit

ously makes me be very posi-

tive for next year. I believe I can

have another great season in

way I was able to finish the

season in style, playing some of

my best tennis, really saving

"I'm just really happy the

was able to pick up my game." The 29-year-old will take a short vacation now before starting his preparations for the new campaign, which he begins by defending the

passive, it was important that I

Australian Open in January. But the 16-time Grand Slam champion is well aware that Nadal would love to repeat his remarkable year, which included successive Grand Slam triumphs at the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open.

Nadal leads their career head-to-head 14-8 and Federer admits every match between them seems to carry an historic edge.

"I think the men's game is at an absolute high right now, with a lot of exciting games being played, with a lot of respect. Also I think having had me and Rafa both made the career Grand Slam already at a young age I think is great for the game," he said."We're obviously playing not only for ourselves and beating the other guys, but also for history. I think there's a lot at stake always in all our matches we play in the future. I think it's

wonderful."

Swiss super star Roger Federer holds the winner's trophy after beating Spain's Rafael Nadal in the final of the ATP World Tour Finals in London on Sunday.



CRYPTOQUIP

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