



PHOTO: AFP
The ecstatic England team celebrate with the coveted urn and the trophy at the end of the fifth Ashes Test against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday. England won the series 3-1, their first Ashes series win Down Under in 24 years.

Eng make Ashes of Aus

Win last Test by an innings and 83 runs

Cricket
AFP, Sydney

Dominant England claimed their first Ashes series in Australia for 24 years with their third innings victory over the home team in the final Sydney Test on Friday. England wrapped up an innings and 83-run victory early on the last day after victory was assured when they had Australia seven wickets down on Thursday's close.

It was England's first series victory Down Under since Mike Gatting's team beat Australia 2-1 in 1986-87. The tourists posted their highest-ever score in Australia on 644 and dismissed the hapless hosts for 280 and 281.

It was probably England's most comprehensive performance of the series with Alastair Cook (189), Matt Prior (118) and Ian Bell (115) all claiming centuries in an overpowering first innings lasting 177.5 overs and 758 minutes.

Their bowlers, led by leading series wicket-taker James Anderson, exposed the gulf between the two attacks by dismissing Australia cheaply again.

Steven Smith and Peter Siddall showed some fight with an 86-run eighth-wicket partnership before Siddall holed out to Anderson on the square leg boundary off Graeme Swann for 43 off 65 balls.

Ben Hilfenhaus fell to Anderson caught behind for seven and debutant Michael Beer was the last Australian wicket to fall, bowled by Chris Tremlett for two. Smith remained unbeaten on 54 in 132 minutes. England were a potent force during the series, overpowering Australia in huge wins in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, with the Australians winning the third Perth Test. The opening Brisbane Test was drawn.

Alastair Cook was the series topscorer with 766 at 127.66, second only to Wally Hammond's 905 in 1928-29 for most runs for England in a series in Australia. Anderson finished the series with 24 wickets, the most by any England bowler since Frank Tyson took 28 in 1954-5 and wicketkeeper Matt Prior took 23 catches in the series. England were the last team to beat Australia at the SCG in 2003 when Andy Caddick claimed 7-94 after Michael Vaughan had amassed 183 in the second innings to pull off a massive 225-run triumph. England have now won 22 times in Sydney in 54 Tests.

The Ashes humiliation was Australia's sixth defeat in their last eight Tests and comes at a time of major upheaval in all facets of the Australian game.

Michael Clarke stood in for injured skipper Ricky Ponting for the Sydney Test and came away with a similar result. Only Mike Hussey with 570 runs and two centuries at 63.33 emerged with his reputation intact as Ponting (113 runs at 16) and Clarke (193 at 21.44) failed miserably with the bat. Australia's leading contemporary wicket-taker Mitchell Johnson also had an under-performing series -- taking 15 wickets at an expensive 36.93.

Australia's diabolical performance is expected to lead to an inquest with the administrators, selectors, coaches and players under scrutiny amid widespread public disenchantment.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: First innings 280 (M. Johnson 53, S. Watson 45; J. Anderson 4-66); ENGLAND: First innings 644 (Cook 189, Prior 118, Bell 115, Strauss 60; Johnson 4-168, Hilfenhaus 3-121, Watson 1-49)
AUSTRALIA: Second innings 281 (Clarke 41, Watson 38, Haddin 30, Khawaja 21, Smith 54 not out, Siddall 43; Bresnan 2-51, Anderson 3-61, Tremlett 3-79)
Result: England won by an innings and 83 runs and clinched 5-match series 3-1.
Man-of-the-match: Alastair Cook.
Man-of-the-series: Alastair Cook.

Start of English dominance?

Cricket
AFP, London

English commentators hailed their cricketers' crushing defeat of Australia on Friday, saying the side's first Ashes series win Down Under for 24 years heralded the start of a new era.

As a demoralised Australia limped off the field after England scored their third innings win over the home team in the final Sydney Test, joy broke out in papers in England as the scale of their team's victory dawned on them.

"Shout it from the rooftops. England have a cricket team to be proud of while Australia are about to embark on the sort of soul searching that has been an English prerogative for far too long," gloated the Daily Mail.

So emphatic was the tourists' triumph, that the Sydney Cricket Ground now "stood as a monument to English excellence," said the paper. "This humbled, chastened and -- yes -- humiliated nation came to terms with the reality that their era of greatness has finally come to a crushing end while another takes hold. "The era of English dominance." There were scenes of jubilation among the English players and thousands of supporters who had travelled with them to watch the match as England wrapped up an innings and 83-run victory early on the last day on Friday.

Victory had been assured when they had Australia seven wickets down on Thursday's close. It was England's first series victory Down Under since Mike Gatting's team beat Australia 2-1 in 1986-87. Ian Botham, former England cricket captain, hailed the side's performance as "magnificent." "I've waited a while for this," he wrote in The Daily Mirror.

"It has been 24 years since we last won over here and I didn't think it would take so long to happen again, but it is brilliant to see England win so comprehensively." Australia "could be lagging for some time to come now because this is our era," he said.

Former England cricketer Derek Pringle described the Ashes victory on Australian soil after such a long time as a feat which "suggests that all empires, even ones hard-baked by the Australian sun, tumble given time." "The joy after Australia's 24-year monopoly on their home turf was there for all to see as the team went into a huddle and danced on the grave of Australian dominance," he wrote in The Daily Telegraph.

There were few positive comments for the Australians after their total meltdown at the hands of the dominant English, with The Guardian sneering that "it was hard to spare much sympathy for a side who have perished on the sword of hubris." Martin Samuel in the Daily Mail blasted the Australians' performance as "total rubbish."

"As poor as anything we have witnessed on this tour; a capitulation so complete that, not for the first time, by stumps barely a local remained," he wrote. And The Guardian saw a bleak future ahead for the Aussies. "Over the coming months they must test themselves against Sri Lanka, South Africa and India," said the paper. "Their pain will be long and deep."

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And into this mix is Jahurul Islam, the right-handed batsman who also has the skill that could keep him in the 15-man squad: wicketkeeping. The tall Rajshahi lad struck 40 and kept wickets for the Tigers in their win against England in July last year, but has seen more bench time since and was promptly dropped for the Zimbabwe series.

There will also be a battle for places lower down the order between Mahmudullah Riyad and Naeem Islam, the latter probably nicking the spot through his superior off-spin and fielding but apart from a free-flowing middle order, Bangladesh would require spark in the tail and that hasn't come so far from Shafiqul and Sohrwardi Shuvo.

PRELIMINARY SQUAD
Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Junaed Siddiqui, Rokibul Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Naeem Islam, Shafiqul Islam, Abdur Razzak, Sohrwardi Shuvo, Mahmudullah Riyad, Rubel Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Shahriar Nafees, Jahurul Islam, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mohammad Ashraful, Shahadat Hossain, Alok Kapali, Mahbubul Alam, Dollar Mahmud, Sabbir Rahman and Syed Raseel.

Kiwis pay for poor shots

Cricket
AFP, Hamilton

Poor shot selection saw New Zealand squander a steady start to the first Test against Pakistan and they were battling for respectability at the close of the opening day here Friday.

At stumps New Zealand were 260 for seven, their innings built around only two partnerships of note. Brendon McCullum and Martin Guptill put on 83 for the second wicket while Kane Williamson (44) and Tim Southee (56) have put on 83 in their unbeaten eighth-wicket stand.

In between, New Zealand lost six wickets for 85 runs as they wrestled with the miserly spin of Abdur Rehman, who was able to produce prodigious turn at times to finish the day with three for 51 off 30 overs including 13 maidens.

When Pakistan won the toss and opted to bowl they did not get the assistance expected from the overcast conditions and after New Zealand lost Tim McIntosh early, McCullum and Guptill guided them through to lunch at 78 for one.

Race heats up

FROM PAGE 16
Bangladesh Biman and Mohammedan Sporting Club in the space of three days in the last week of December, is reason enough to tilt the scales in his favour.

Ashraful's 92 yesterday could salvage some brownie points but it does little to ease the worry about his form, as the under-fire right-hander has again gone into his shell after the shocker against Zimbabwe last month. In the Premier League, Ashraful has scored three half-centuries so far but has failed to grab the attention like Nafees has with his two consecutive centuries.

Add to that the vulnerable nature of the existing middle-order, and this proves to be an intriguing battle. Though Junaed Siddiqui has been Bangladesh's one-drop throughout 2010 and has two half-centuries in the last three ODIs, his approach is often criticised and it is reflected upon his career (67.90) and 2010 (75.43) strike rates.

Rokibul Hasan poses a similar concern and his recent international record only improved through a 65 against Zimbabwe. In fact, he has shown ordinary form during the Premier League until his 88 in Kalabagan's win against

Gymnastics from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 31st national senior and 20th national junior gymnastics will be starting today at the National Sports Council (NSC) gymnasium. Players from different districts will take part in the three-day competition that ends on the January 10.

Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarkar will be the chief guest at the closing ceremony and distribute prizes among the winners.

Aga Khan golf begins

SPORTS REPORTER

The 39th Aga Khan Gold Cup tournament started yesterday at the Kurmitola Golf Club. Chief of Army Staff, Gen Abdul Mubeen, inaugurated the tournament.

This is the longest-running golf tournament in Bangladesh. This year it is being played over a three-day period for the first time due to a large number of participants.

SL pick

FROM PAGE 16
also been included in the squad of 30.

SQUAD
Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Mahela Jayawardene (vice captain), Upul Tharanga, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Thilan Samaraweera, Chamara Silva, Chamara Kapugedera, Angelo Mathews, Tissara Perera, Nuwan Kulasekara, Lasith Malinga, Dilhara Fernando, Muttiah Muralitharan, Ajantha Mendis, Rangana Herath.

Shahadat stops Abahani

FROM PAGE 16
were the other notable scorers with 36 runs each.

In reply, Tamim Iqbal and Moeen Ali got the Motijheel outfit off to a flying start as they added 45 runs in six overs.

After the departure of the dashing Tamim who was dismissed by Ashraful, Mohammedan lost three quick wickets. Yousuf struck a typically cool 92-ball 60 and veteran Faisal smote three fours and two sixes in his 40-ball 46 to ensure the holders reached the target in the last ball.

BIMAN-VICTORIA
A 118-run opening partnership between Myshukur Rahman and Rabbi helped Victoria to score 242 for six in stipulated 50 overs.

Rabbi, who smashed nine fours and two sixes during his 130-ball 100, had another fruitful 78-run association in the second wicket stand with Fahadul Haque who made 44 off 50 balls with four boundaries.

In reply, Biman lost their first wicket in the first over but Sunny and the in-form Mushfiqur played sensibly to make sure the national airliner landed safely with one over to spare.

Sunny struck seven fours to make 71 off 96 balls while Mushfiqur contributed 60 off 76 balls with only two boundaries.

BRIEF SCORES
KALABAGAN: 217 all out in 49.2 overs (Rokibul 88, Ijaz 32, Ariful 27, extras 24; Rafique 2-31, Sajib 5-49).
ABAHANI: 188 all out in 47 overs (Imrul 59, Anamul 38, extras 15; Shahadat 5-43, Sadat 2-33).
Result: Kalabagan won by 29 runs.
CCS: 232-9 in 44 overs (Ashraful 92, Hom 36, Suleman 36, Namzul 26, extras 8; Mukter 3-42, Shuvashish 2-45, Shakib 2-48).
MOHAMMEDAN: 233 for eight in 44 overs (Tamim 25, Moeen 39, Shamsur 28, Yousuf 60, Faisal 46, extras 11; Robiul 2-40, Ashraful 2-49, Tapash 2-43).
Result: Mohammedan won by two wickets.

**VICTORIA: 242 for six in 50 overs (Myshukur 56, Rabbi 100, Fahadul 44, extras 10; Shafiqul 2-67, Sunny 2-33).
BIMAN: 243 for seven in 49 overs (Sunny 71, Jahurul 24, Mushfiqur 60, Asif 22, Sharifullah 24 not out, Monowar 21 not out, extras 13; Saju 2-38, Mominul 3-44).
Result: Biman won by three wickets.**

'Morning shows the day'

FROM PAGE 16
Flower's wicket in that game, it was the same match when Mehrab Hossain Opee scored the first hundred by a Bangladeshi at international level.

After the selection was made, the board had announced that all members of the squad would play at least one match, so I was hopeful that I would also get a chance.

DSS: You played only one game, against Pakistan. How did it feel to be picked for that game?
NRR: I was confident when the management let me know that I will be playing the game. I had nothing to lose on that day.
DSS: How different was the atmosphere of that particular game?

NRR: During breakfast on that day, I told [Naimur Rahman] Durjoy that something might happen. And as you know, morning shows the day. Although I was out leg-before to Wasim Akram in the slog overs, I bowled a tidy spell and yes, we made that into a historic encounter by winning.
DSS: What was your sweetest memory?
NRR: The 48 days on tour weren't too memorable, as I didn't play any games other than the last one. I used to call home and tell my parents about my situation.
The sweetest memory then was that my father

had come to receive me in the airport and he waited more than four hours. Also the reception that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave us, it was a huge honour for me.

School football

FROM PAGE 16
(boys) High School, thanks to a treble by Rony. Saiful and Rony scored a goal apiece.

Dolairpar defeated Govt Science College annex High School 3-0 with Rajon scoring twice and Tanvir striking once.

Earlier, A Latif Charitable School and Dhaka Residential School booked their semifinal seats for Group A.

Annual sports and athletics competition of Kanon, a concern of Autistic Welfare Foundation, took place at the Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday. Women's FIDE Master Rani Hamid was present as the chief guest while former national cricket captain Habibur Bashar and record-breaking table tennis star Zobera Rahman Linu were special guests. Rani Hamid later distributed prizes among the winners.

"The objective of the event is to help the autistic children to develop self confidence among themselves through games and participatory sports," said Dr Rowan Hafiz, chairman of the Autism Welfare Foundation.



PHOTO: STAR
Sports legends Zobera Rahman (L) and Habibur Bashar hand over prizes to winners of the annual sports event of Kanon Kids at the Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday.