



## **Ponting failure did Oz in**

30<sup>th</sup> Aug'09

THE Ashes series is over with England regaining the urn they so badly lost in 2006-7 when they were walloped 5-0 in Australia. The Australian team has been in some decline after that as they started to lose the services of some of its stalwarts who had helped make it the number one team in the world in two formats of the game.

Most crucially they lost the three players who invariably turned the match on its head and in Australia's favour time and again. Glenn Mc-Grath, Shane Warne and Adam Gilchrist were the three players who were the backbone of the Australian team and once they retired and Matthew Hayden followed suit a year later the Australians looked like any other team and the invincibility aura that they had began to wear thin.

They are still a good team but now everybody knows that they are vulnerable and susceptible to pressure like other teams. The batting depends so heavily on Ricky Ponting getting a big hundred that when he fails to do that Australia struggle to save the game.

After the first Test when he got a 150, Ponting hasn't quite hit his straps and it was this inconsistency that allowed England to make inroads into the Australian batting. Whatever the critics may say about the selection of the Australian team, it was Ponting's failure with the bat that sealed Australia's fate. Ponting is an all time great batsman and such has been his impact on the Australian team's fortunes that once he fails the others are just not able to step up and play their part.

Sri Lanka's win against New Zealand in the first Test makes it a real bad time for teams from Down Under. Sure the teams were affected by the heat and humidity but just like teams touring Kiwiland have to cope with the extreme cold weather, teams touring Lanka and the subcontinent have to prepare for the heat.

With Indian curry restaurants opening every nook and corner of the world there is no excuse either for not preparing the stomach for eating the same when touring the subcontinent. And then the tremendous improvement by T Dilshan has meant that Lanka have a class batsman added to Jayawardene and Sangakkara. It was Dilshan's century and near century in the Test that took the game away from New Zealand and he is this week's CEAT International Cricketer of the Week for that tremendous performance.