

Australia thump India at fortress Adelaide to level series

AFP- A resurgent Australia thumped India by 10 wickets to win the second Test on Sunday and level their blockbuster five-match series 1-1 after a batting and bowling masterclass at fortress Adelaide Oval.

Chasing just 19 for victory, openers Usman Khawaja and Nathan McSweeney steered the hosts to the meagre target without loss on day three of the pink-ball clash.

The visitors resumed at 128-5 after their hopes were left in tatters during a final fiery session on Saturday at the hands of an Australian pace onslaught.

They only boosted the total to 175 before meekly surrendering.

Dangerman Rishabh Pant failed to negotiate the opening over from Mitchell Starc and was out without adding to his overnight 28 while Pat Cummins accounted for Ravichandran Ashwin (7) then Harshit Rana (0).

Allrounder Nitish Kumar Reddy made a plucky 42 before he fell to Scott Boland, who then removed Mohammed Siraj (7) to end the innings.

Cummins ended with 5-57 while Boland grabbed 3-51. Starc took eight wickets for the match.

Defeat was another painful memory of Adelaide for India, who also crashed within three days in 2020 when they were bundled out for 36 – their lowest-ever Test score.

Victory capped a fighting turnaround for Australia after being crushed by 295 runs in the opening game at Perth, which sparked fierce criticism over whether the top-ranked but

ageing team could still produce the goods.

While Khawaja and Steve Smith were again notable flops with the bat, the hosts largely silenced the critics – at least until the next Test at the Gabba in Brisbane from Saturday.

Australia were always odds-on favourites in Adelaide despite the Perth calamity, boasting far more experience of day-night Test cricket.

They have now won 12 of their 13 games played under lights, including a perfect 8-0 record in Adelaide.

In contrast, India have a 3-2 win-loss record in the format, with both defeats to Australia in the South Australian capital.

India's problems began on the first ball of the match, when a menacing Starc trapped hot-shot young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal – a century-maker in Perth – lbw.

They never recovered, all out for 180, with Reddy top-scoring on 42 and Starc ending with a career-best 6-48.

– Game-changing –

India's pace attack were then unable to make the best use of the new pink ball when Australia battled through a difficult phase till stumps for the loss of just Khawaja on day one.

The visitors' bowling coach Morne Morkel pinpointed a failure by their young attack to find the right lines and lengths.

The next day Travis Head made them pay with a rollicking game-changing 140 while Marnus Labuschagne hit 64 to propel Australia to 337 and an ominous 157-run lead.

And in contrast to India, Australia then drew on their experience to decimate India's top order when they took the new ball at dusk on Saturday.

It left them with just five wickets to mop up Sunday, which they did with minimum fuss.

Pant made his intentions clear, swinging wildly at Starc's second ball, and was gone four deliveries later, thick-edging to Smith.

Cummins took care of Ashwin, who gloved a bouncer to wicketkeeper Alex Carey, then Rana for nought with another bumper that popped up to Khawaja at gully.

Reddy, India's best batter in both innings, was caught by McSweeney in the deep before Boland sent Siraj back to put India out of their misery.

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