



PHOTO: INTERNET

England fast bowler Stuart Broad (L) talks to coach Andy Flower as the former takes part in a batting practice session in Durban on Thursday. The second Test between South Africa and England begins here today.

SOUTH AFRICA V ENGLAND: SECOND TEST KP braced for Durban return

Cricket

AFP, Durban

Controversial England batsman Kevin Pietersen hopes to end his topsy-turvy 2009 by playing a match-winning role on the Kingsmead ground where he learnt his trade.

The South African-born batsman, who started the year by losing the England captaincy and was sidelined during the Ashes through injury, has shrugged off the significance of his return to his former home where the second Test gets underway today.

"My family are all here, and it's something that is special," said Pietersen.

"It's not all about me playing in Durban; it's about the team coming here and doing special things. Playing for England in South Africa is something I love and enjoy."

Pietersen made 40 and 81 in the drawn first Test at Centurion and refuses to believe that 2009 has been a year to forget.

"It's true 2009 hasn't been fun. But life isn't always good," he said.

England captain Andrew Strauss said he was confident in the ability of his batsmen to deal with what is likely to be an improved South African bowling attack.

Fast bowler Dale Steyn, who was ruled

out of the first Test before the start because of a hamstring injury, is set to return, while Jacques Kallis is likely to feature as a bowler as well as a batsman after a rib injury restricted him to just three overs on the final day at Centurion.

The weather could be a factor in Durban, where rain is predicted at some stage during all five days, but the pitch looked in good condition on Thursday.

It is expected to be hard and provide more consistent bounce than was the case in the first Test.

Strauss said of Steyn: "I respect him as a bowler. He's the kind of skiddy bowler who sometimes you can score off but obviously he bowls wicket-taking balls."

"But if he is a bit rusty and bowls a few loose balls it's important to put them away and put him under pressure."

Responding to South African captain Graeme Smith's assertion that the hosts played the better cricket in the first Test, when England's last wicket pair needed to bat out the last 20 balls to earn a draw, Strauss said the pressure could be on South Africa.

"It can be pretty dispiriting getting a side nine wickets down and not winning," said Strauss who admitted however that England needed to play better than they did in the opening encounter.

Kingsmead has a reputation for helping the bowlers in the early part of a match before flattening out.

The three previous Test matches between South Africa and England at Kingsmead have been drawn.

Rain spoiled the clash in 1995/96 and the next two matches both featured high scores in the third innings, with Gary Kirsten scoring 275 after South Africa were forced to follow on in 1999/2000 and England scoring 570 for seven declared after trailing by 193 runs five years ago.

Strauss was one of three England century-makers on the latter occasion.

Teams have several times gone into Kingsmead Tests without picking a spin bowler but it is unlikely this time, with off-spinners Paul Harris and Graham Swann having been the most successful bowlers in the first Test.

While Steyn is expected to replace Friedel de Wet in the South African team, England are likely to be unchanged.

TEAMS

SOUTH AFRICA (probable): Graeme Smith (captain), Ashwell Prince, Hashim Amla, Jacques Kallis, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Mark Boucher, Paul Harris, Morne Morkel, Dale Steyn, Makhaya Ntini.

ENGLAND (probable): Andrew Strauss (captain), Alastair Cook, Jonathan Trott, Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood, Ian Bell, Matt Prior, Stuart Broad, Graeme Swann, James Anderson, Graham Onions.

V-Day tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

Top four men seeds booked their places in the Victory Day Tennis Tournament 2009 with easy wins at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

Top seed Amol Roy beat U Sue Sue 6-1, 6-1; Dipu Lal beat Mizanur Rahman 6-2, 6-1; Alamgir Hossain beat Delwar Hossain 6-4, 6-2 while fourth seed Ranjan Ram got a walk-over over Murad Hossain in their respective matches yesterday. And it was the top-seeds in the doubles as well who ruled the roosters. In the women's group, top seed Disha Islam and second seed Sathi Sarker both got through to the finals. Sathi Sarker made an easy work of Mubashshera Firoz as she swept to a 6-0, 6-1 victory while Disha Islam overcame tough resistance from Sharda Alam to win 6-1, 5-7, 6-4.

Light fiasco to be probed

PTI, Kolkata

Embarrassed over the power failure in one of the floodlit towers at the Eden Gardens during the fourth ODI between India and Sri Lanka on Thursday, the Cricket Association of Bengal has constituted a seven-member panel to inquire into the incident.

The seven-member committee which includes Kolkata police commissioner Gautam Mohan Chakrabarti, deputy commissioner of Detective Department Javed Shamim, former CAB joint secretary Chittrak Mitra, Sadhan Mukherjee, Dilip Sen, S Biswas and PK Mullick will look into the black-out incident which plunged the stadium into near darkness after floodlights at the High Court end went off for nearly 26 minutes with just four balls remaining in the Sri Lanka innings.

With such malfunctioning becoming a common feature at the Eden Gardens in the last couple of years, CAB president Jagmohan Dalmyia said they would go deep into the matter.

India seal series

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should have been more disciplined. Gautam and Kohli batted quite brilliantly."

India captain Sehwag said the playing conditions proved crucial.

"We knew dew would be a factor. Even if I had won the toss, we would have fielded," said Sehwag.

Sri Lanka were earlier well-served by left-handed Tharanga, who hit two sixes and 14 fours in a 128-ball knock for his seventh one-day hundred.

He added 126 for the third wicket with skipper Sangakkara (60) to prop up the innings after the early dismissals of in-form opener Tillakaratne Dilshan (nine) and Sanath Jayasuriya (15).

Tharanga dominated the Indian attack with a wide range of strokes, once cracking five fours in an over from paceman

Ishant Sharma.

Sri Lanka plundered 98 in the last 10 overs, with debutant Thissara Perera smashing a 14-ball 31 and Mahela Jayawardene 33 in 30 deliveries.

Tharanga offered a difficult chance on seven when Nehra failed to hold a firmly-struck shot off his own bowling.

Sangakkara, dropped by Harbhajan Singh off Sharma before he had opened his account, made the most of the opportunity as he consolidated his team's position.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the fourth one-day international between India and Sri Lanka at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday: **SRI LANKA:** 315 for 6 in 50 overs (Tharanga 118, Sangakkara 60, Jayawardene 33, Perera 31; Zaheer 2-49, Nehra 2-68).

Ponting likely

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by far the stronger. But if all goes well, it could be the most closely-fought series between the two sides since the 1994-95 tussle in Pakistan.

Bollinger has become Australia's newest cult bowling hero. He entertains his teammates with his antics, thrills the fans with his whole-heartedness and good humour, and worries the opposition with his pace, swing and consistency. Chris Gayle made no secret of the fact that he felt Bollinger was the most dangerous of Australia's fast men during the recent Test series and Bollinger will be desperate to ensure his place in the attack becomes permanent.

On the other hand, three hundreds on an impressive Pakistan A tour to Australia in July brought Umar Akmal into the national side and he hasn't stopped scoring since; he already has two international hundreds and a spate of fifties.

He was hugely impressive in his maiden Test tour against New Zealand and his clear-headed aggression and a

steady technique should win him more fans down under.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA (probable): Shane Watson, Simon Katich, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Hussey, Michael Clarke, Marcus North, Brad Haddin, Mitchell Johnson, Nathan Hauritz/Steve Smith, Peter Siddle, Doug Bollinger.

PAKISTAN (probable): Salman Butt, Imran Farhat, Faisal Iqbal, Mohammad Yousuf (captain), Misbahul Haq, Umar Akmal, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Aamer, Umar Gul/Saeed Ajmal, Mohammad Asif, Danish Kaneria.

All eyes on

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Opener Shahriar Nafees, middle order batsman Aftab Ahmed, all-rounder Alok Kapali and wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh, the players who had signed up for the unapproved Indian Cricket League (ICL) in September have received call-ups in the 26-member preliminary squad on December 12.

INDIA

Sehwag c Dilshan b Lakmal 10
Tendulkar c Randiv b Lakmal 8
Gambhir not out 150
Kohli c sub (Pushpakumara) b Randiv 107
Karthik not out 19
Extras: (lb-5, nb-2, w-16) 23
Total: (For 3 wickets in 48.1 overs) 317
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-23, 3-247
Did not bat: Raina, Jadeja, Harbhajan, Zaheer, Nehra, Ishant

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Perera	9	0	66	0
Lakmal	10	0	55	2
Malinga	9.1	0	75	0
Randiv	10	0	57	1
Jayasuriya	7	0	42	0
Dilshan	3	0	17	0

Result: India win by seven wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Gautam Gambhir.
Toss: Sri Lanka.
Umpires: Marais Erasmus and Sanjay Hazare.

'Kumar made

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"The fast bowlers should have been more disciplined."

Gautam and Kohli batted quite brilliantly." However, Sangakkara credited the crop of youngsters to have made an appearance in the one-day leg of the tour owing to injuries and poor form from the seniors.

Randiv has impressed in the ODIs and Lakmal, after a poor debut, had a decent outing in Kolkata.

"We had so many debutants on our tour and some of them have really stepped up and that promises better things on future tours," said Sangakkara. "This is the most competitive we have been in India since I debuted." Gambhir, the Man of the Match for his unbeaten 150, heaped praise on young Kohli who batted his way to a maiden century.

He too concurred with Sehwag's opinion of fielding.

"We knew the dew would be a big factor."

Even when last played here, Graeme Smith got a hundred and it was hard for the bowlers," he said.

"We lost two wickets but we had someone who could play

Sport's great comebacks

AFP, Paris

Seven-time Formula One champion Michael Schumacher is to make a comeback at the age of 41 for Mercedes GP for the 2010 Formula One season.

His is just the latest in a series of comebacks of former champions who found the temptation for further glory too good to resist.

These are some of the former greats who have had another crack at more success with varied results.

LANCE ARMSTRONG

(CYCLING)

The combative seven-time Tour de France champion couldn't resist another tilt at the greatest cycling race in the world and duly announced his return to the sport last year at the age of 37. He defied the sceptics to produce a typically aggressive and competitive ride in this year's edition and finished a highly commendable third behind his Astana team-mate Alberto Contador. The Texan and the Spaniard then exchanged less than complimentary words with Armstrong acidly remarking 'there is no I in team'. Next year's race promises to be an even greater spectacle as Armstrong has decamped to the Radioshack team run by his mentor and close friend Johan Bruyneel.

ALAIN PROST (FORMULA ONE)

After Prost was left without a drive following Ferrari's decision to release the Frenchman for the 1992 season, he returned to the circuit one year later at the wheel of a Williams-Renault. He then went on to lift a fourth drivers championship before leaving the track for good.

MICHAEL JORDAN

(BASKETBALL)

After a brief and modest spell in baseball's minor leagues, "Air Jordan" came back to the basketball court following a 17-month spell away from the game between 1993

and 1995. The man many regard as the greatest ever to play the game led his former club, the Chicago Bulls to three more NBA titles.

MUHAMMADALI (BOXING)

The man simply known as "The Greatest" retired from the ring after regaining his world title from Leon Spinks on September 15, 1978. After two years on the sidelines, he re-laced his gloves at the age of 39 but was badly beaten by world champion Larry Holmes who stopped Ali in the 11th round in October 1981.

GEORGE FOREMAN (BOXING)

Olympic champion in 1968 at the age of 19 in Mexico City, Foreman went on to become world champion five years later when he defeated Joe Frazier. The future preacher went on to lose his belt to arch rival Mohammed Ali one year later in the legendary 'Rumble in the Jungle' in what was then Zaire - now the Democratic Republic of Congo - but after some 12 years out of the fight game, he stunned the world of boxing when he floored Michael Moorer in 1994 at the age of 45. One of the hardest punchers in the game, he remains the oldest ever boxing world champion.

PELE (FOOTBALL)

The brilliant Brazilian quit the game of football in 1974 after a glorious career at Santos and the rare achievement of lifting three World Cups with the South American giants. Six months later, he was coaxed out of retirement by the New York Cosmos and won the now defunct North American title alongside such fellow greats as Franz Beckenbauer.

DARA TORRES (SWIMMING)

The champion of coming out of retirement, Torres quit twice only to return to the pool for the Beijing Games in 2008 at the age of 41. The American proved to the world, she was still a force to be reckoned with by winning three silvers in the 50m

free, 4x100m free and 4x100m medley to take her career tally to 12 Olympic medals.

Torres also took part at the 1984, 1988 and 1992 Games before returning to the starting blocks at Sydney 2000 and winning five medals. Following the Australian Olympiad she continued her education, gave birth to a baby girl Tessa, in 2006, before announcing her second return to competition a few months later.

BJORN BORG (TENNIS)

Stunned the sporting world when he retired at just 25 after hitting the peaks of tennis. Won 6 French Open titles and 5 Wimbledon crowns before hanging up his Donnay racquet for the first time. Made a doomed comeback in the early 90's when he tried the absurd idea of continuing with a wooden racquet. Never won another match in 10 miserable tournaments.

MARTINA NAVRATILOVA

(TENNIS)

The Czech-born American quit the courts in 1994 at the age of 38 after winning 18 individual Grand Slam titles.

She remained out of the game for six years before making a successful return in the doubles game. Won three more Grand Slam titles, including the mixed doubles at Australia and Wimbledon in 2003 with India's Leander Paes and the US Open in 2006 with Bob Bryan, just weeks ahead of her 50th birthday.

MARTINA HINGIS (TENNIS)

Cursed by injuries, the temperamental Swiss Miss was forced into early retirement at just 23 in 2003. Three years later the former world number one was back and played two seasons winning three individual tournaments and the Australian Open mixed crown, alongside India's Mahesh Bhupathi. Her comeback was brought to a premature end when she tested positive for cocaine in 2007 during Wimbledon.

Asian chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's chess team tasted their first victory in the third round of the Asian Team Chess Championship defeating Yemen 4-0 at the Town Hall in Kolkata on Thursday.

GM Ziaur Rahman beat Abdullah Sonbul, GM Niaz Murshed beat FM Foad Mofleh, FM Mohammed Abdul Malek beat FM Faraj Yahya and Mahtabuddin Ahmed beat Al-Agrabi Saleh.

In the women's section, Bangladesh drew with Indonesia 2-2 as Nazrana Khan Eva beat WGM Irine Kharisma Shukandar while IWM Rani Hamid and WFM Zakia Sultana drew with WCM Medina Warda Ulia Lestari Baiq Vina respectively. Masuda Begum, however, lost to WFM Dewi Aa Citra.

V-Day hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police finished third in the Victory Day Hockey Competition when they handed a 2-1 defeat to Bangladesh Air Force in the final group match at Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Hockey Federation XI and Bangladesh Kriya Shiksha Protisthan having already qualified for the final, Bangladesh Police and Air Force took part in the game on academic interest where the former came out winners.

Monir Hossain scored both goals for Police while Shuvo pulled one back for Air Force, who finished bottom without securing a single point from four matches.

No Victoria stint for Tanvir

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's all-rounder Sohail Tanvir Friday pulled out of a contract with Australian side Victoria after doctors advised him to rest an injured knee.

The 25-year-old was due to play for the Bushrangers in the Australian Twenty20 tournament, famous as the Big Bash, but he has instead informed the Australian side of his unavailability, on medical advice.

"Tanvir had to pull out of his contract with Cricket Victoria, as he has been further advised by doctors to make sure his knee injury is properly healed," a statement from his agents said.

They added that the healing process may need two to three weeks.

Tanvir, who last year turned out for South Australia in the event, has recently recovered from back trouble and a knee injury which forced him out of the Pakistan team.

The lanky left-arm pacer's ambitions to play for Surrey county in the English season also failed to materialise earlier this year.

"As much as I feel really good on my fitness, I have to listen to the advice of my doctors at the Pakistan Cricket Board," Tanvir was quoted as saying in the statement.

"This is a huge loss for me and my cricket, but it is important that I have the go ahead from my doctors who have been working on my knee injury for a few months, as I have been recovering," said Tanvir.

He added, "I would like to thank Cricket Victoria for giving me the opportunity, and wish them best of luck in the T20 competition."

Tanvir said he hoped to recover in time to regain his place in Pakistan's one-day

MSC

FROM PAGE 17 point a few hundreds spectators in Kamalapur.

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: MN Shakil, Wali Faisal, Nasir, Ariful Islam, Saikat, Arman Aziz, Abdul Baten Komol (Mamunul Islam), Enamul Haq Sharif (Alamgir Kabir Rana), Emeka Christian, Alamu Bukola (Zahid Hossain), Zahid Hasan Emily.

CTG ABAHANI: Khaled Azam Biplob, Jahangir, Zamiruddin, Shamol Ahmed Rony (M Tareq), Shahidur Rahman Shohel, Shumon Barua, Shakhawat Hossain Rony (Shyedul Haque Sayed), Yeakub Awudu Solaiman, Nche Francis, Mithun Chowdhury and Akinyele Peter (Masud Alam).

Yellow cards: Saikat (Mohammedan), Zamir, Shohel, Shumon (Abahani)
Red card: Emeka Christian (Mohammedan)
Referee: Azad Rahman

My best knock, says Gautam

INTERNET, undated

Elated after guiding India to a facile, series-clinching win, star batsman Gautam Gambhir said he would rate his unbeaten 150 against Sri Lanka as the best innings of his career. Gambhir said it was very satisfying to stay till the end and guide the team to victory.

"This is the first time I finished a game remaining unbeaten. It feels great," Gambhir said in the post-match conference.

"It was important for me to get going and convert it into a big one. It feels great that I finished the game," Gambhir, who was adjudged man-of-the-match, said.

It was a brilliantly paced innings by the left-hander who added 224 runs with Virat Kohli (107) for the third wicket to put India's chase back on track.

Explaining his early caution, Gambhir said, "While chasing it's always important to have wickets in hand. When you have wickets in hand, it's always easy to chase down about 130 in the last 15 overs."

India's win came without regular skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who is serving a two-match ban, and star batsman Yuvraj Singh, who is nursing an injured finger.

Gambhir said that victory was made possible by the team's impressive bench strength. "We have enough guys in the bench who can prove themselves even in the absence of great players like Dhoni and Yuvraj," he said.

যাঁরা ইতিহাস আঁকেন, সে সকল শিল্পীদের ছবি ও কথা নিয়ে তৈরি হয়েছে

সাদাকালো '৭১

যেখানে শিল্পী একেছেন একাত্তরের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ, বলেছেন তাঁর অনুভূতির কথা। সাদাকালোতে আঁকা ছবি এ বই-এর মধ্য দিয়েই আমরা আমাদের পরবর্তী প্রজন্মকে জানিয়ে যেতে চাই, জাতি হিসেবে আমাদের সবচাইতে বড় অর্জন- আমাদের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ।

২৬শে ডিসেম্বর ২০০৯ বিকেল ৫:৩০ মিনিটে

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