



England captain Andrew Strauss (L) and West Indies captain Darren Sammy pose with the Wisden Trophy at Lord's in London yesterday, ahead of the first Test between the teams starting here today.

Lord's Test from today

Stern test for Windies batsmen

Cricket

AFP, London

West Indies face England in the first of a three-Test series at Lord's here on Thursday with the tourists' batting likely to determine the course of the match.

Should conditions prove as seam friendly as they have for much of the early part of the English season, West Indies' top order could struggle to provide the kind of platform that will help improve on a record of just two wins in 30 Tests since beating England in Jamaica in 2009.

Kieran Powell made his second first-class hundred in West Indies' 10-wicket defeat by the England Lions at Northampton last week, a match where number four Darren Bravo made two fifties.

However, Powell's opening partner Adrian Barath and Kirk Edwards managed just 26 runs between them at Northampton, having only compiled 16 and eight respectively in the near washout against Sussex at Hove.

Much could depend on world number one batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who has performed many a rescue mission for the West Indies during a career that last month saw him become only the 10th batsman to score 10,000 Test runs.

However, the 37-year-old Guyanese left-hander generally prefers to bat no higher than five in the order.

The problem with that, from the West Indies' point of view, is that too often Chanderpaul comes in with the team already in trouble.

For example, during West Indies' most recent Test -- a 75-run defeat by Australia in Dominica last month -- Chanderpaul came in at 73 for three and 45 for three.

There has been talk of promoting Chanderpaul up the order but it appears he is set to stay put -- at least for the time being.

"It's something we've thought about," said West Indies coach Otis Gibson. "Our batting revolves around Shiv -- he's very comfortable in the position he is at the moment and he's doing a good job for us."

"We've decided to leave it as it is at the moment but it's something we haven't completely ruled out."

West Indies will be without aggressive opening batsman Chris Gayle because of his Indian Premier League commitments and the fact the former captain's lengthy stand-off with the West Indies Cricket Board only recently came to an end.

But Gibson backed his younger batsmen to come good, saying: "We know it's going to be a challenge for them -- but the selectors have got a lot of confidence in them, as I have."

Before taking up his current post, Gibson was England's bowling coach and so helped the likes of home duo James Anderson and Stuart Broad.

But the tourists, whose three three leading pacemen -- Kumar Roach (ankle), Fidel Edwards (back) and Ravi Rampaul (stiff neck) -- have all overcome minor injury concerns, boast some firepower of their own.

England will be keen to make a commanding start after seeing their status as the world's number one Test side diminished somewhat during a recent 3-0

defeat by Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates and a 1-1 draw in Sri Lanka.

"I don't think we need to prove anything," said Matt Prior, the England wicketkeeper. "We've played good cricket over a number of years now."

"After the glitches in the winter, I know everyone is very keen and pumped up to perform from the off this summer."

An injury to Ravi Bopara could see Jonathan Bairstow, son of late England wicketkeeper David, make a Test debut at number six.

England, who have five seamers in their squad, face some awkward selection decisions and when it comes to top order batting they too have a problem they would like to solve quickly.

Andrew Strauss, the England captain, has made just one century in his last 49 Test innings but Prior said: "The one fantastic thing about Strauss is that he's just 'Mr Consistent'."

"He could score four hundreds in a row, four zeroes in a row, but he'll be exactly the same person."

TEAMS

ENGLAND (from): Andrew Strauss (captain), Alastair Cook, Jonathan Trott, Kevin Pietersen, Ian Bell, Matt Prior, Stuart Broad, Tim Bresnan, Graeme Swann, Steven Finn, James Anderson, Jonathan Bairstow, Graham Onions.

WEST INDIES (from): Darren Sammy (captain), Kirk Edwards, Adrian Barath, Darren Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Narsingh Deonarine, Fidel Edwards, Assad Fudadin, Shannon Gabriel, Kieran Powell, Kumar Roach, Denesh Ramdin, Ravi Rampaul, Marlon Samuels, Shane Shillingford.

Clarke, Boldy tie the knot

INTERNET

Australia captain Michael Clarke is now a married man. Clarke announced his marriage to girlfriend Kyly Boldy via his Twitter stream.

This is what he had to say: "Happiest guy in the world. Married @KylyBoldy yesterday in front of our gorgeous families. Couldn't be happier!"

Till recently Clarke was in India playing for the Pune Warriors India in the fifth edition of the Indian Premier League. With Pune left with no chance of making it to the playoffs, it looks like Clarke decided to give priority to his personal life.

Kyly Boldy is an Australian model and television presenter. She was a presenter for The Weather Channel in Australia in 2009. Boldy has a background in modelling and acting and owns an interior design business.

Clarke was previously engaged to Australian model Lara Bingle. The pair broke up following the release of nude photo of Bingle during the Australian tour of New Zealand in March 2010. Clarke left the tour midway to return to Sydney and sort out personal issues.

Citycell extends with basketball

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacific Bangladesh Telecom Limited (Citycell) has renewed its alliance with domestic basketball by assuring to sponsor the 1st division, premier league and school basketball tournament this year apart from running a training camp for the basketball players.

The first of those, the Citycell 1st Division Basketball League, will start from May 19 at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium, featuring seven teams.

The 1st Division League will be followed by Citycell Premier Division Basketball League which will feature the top two finishers of 1st division and eight more teams. The School Basketball Tournament will be held in the last week of June while the training camp will be held in July.

These details were announced at a press conference at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium yesterday. Taslim Ahmed, Citycell's head of corporate communication and public relations and AK Sarker, general secretary of Bangladesh Basketball Federation were among others present at the press conference.

Federer gets going

Tennis

AFP, Rome

Roger Federer braved dust storm conditions to blow past Argentine Carlos Berlocq 6-3, 6-4 and open his week with a second-round victory at the Rome Masters on Wednesday.

The world number two with four titles this season -- including two of the first three Masters 1000 honours of 2012 -- came good on his hope of playing in Rome the week after winning in difficult conditions on and off court on the controversial slick blue clay of Madrid.

The Swiss third seed will next play Spanish veteran Juan Carlos Ferrero, champion here 11 years ago. Federer beat Ferrero in a 2003 semi-final in Rome.

Federer is on the hunt for his first Rome title after losing the 2003 and 2006 finals. His victory left Berlocq 0-8 against top 20 opponents as the Swiss charged out by winning the first dozen points of the contest.

Federer, 30, and winner of titles in seven of his last 10 events dating to last November, left it late to actually decide on playing Rome, hoping that his body would give him indications of how he was holding up after Madrid. He evidently got the right answer with his victory, bolstered by 16 winners in the first set and success on 12 of the last 15 points of the afternoon.

The Rome pressure now shifts to five-time champion Rafael Nadal to post a victory in his opening match.

The Spaniard has been mentally fragile after his troubles last week in Madrid, complaining about the blue clay and losing badly

in the third round to Fernando Verdasco from a 5-3 lead in the final set.

The king of clay insists that all is fine in the kingdom now that he's left behind his Madrid bad memories. But his test will come in Italy as he faces German Florian Mayer, who beat him in their last meeting in Shanghai in 2011.

In women's play, China's Li Na moved on to the fourth round as third seed Agnieszka Radwanska lost to only her third different opponent of the season.

Eighth seed Li beat Iveta Benesova with ease 6-1, 7-5, but Czech Petra Cetkova caught Poland's Radwanska with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-1 loss.

The winner attacked and went for her shots on a windy day on the clay at the Foro Italico, producing 44 winners and 38 unforced errors. She broke the seed eight times from 20 chances.

Of Radwanska's eight defeats in 2012, six have come from world number one Victoria Azarenka, with their most recent meeting the Madrid semi-finals last weekend.

Li will face the winner from New Zealand's Marina Erakovic and South African Chanelle Scheepers.

In other results, US Open winner and fifth seed Samantha Stosur put out Italian Sara Errani 6-3, 7-5 while sixth seed Caroline Wozniacki fell to Spaniard Anabel Medina Garrigues, with the Dane retiring injured trailing 6-4, 4-0.

German 12th seed Angelique Kerber defeated American Vania King 6-3, 6-2, while Sorona Cirstea of Romania beat Swede Sofia Arvidsson 6-3, 6-1 and Italy's Flavia Pennetta hammered Sloane Stephens of the United States 6-2, 6-3.

Dalglish sacked

AFP, London



Kenny Dalglish was sacked as Liverpool manager on Wednesday, the English Premier League club confirmed.

The 61-year-old Scot led Liverpool to League Cup success and the FA Cup final in his second stint in charge, but he came under pressure after his side finished eighth in the Premier League, 37 points behind champions Manchester City.

It was seen as a poor return on the millions spent on new players last summer, while Dalglish was also criticised for defending Luis Suarez after the Liverpool striker was found guilty of racially abusing Manchester United's Patrice Evra.

Dalglish flew to the United States on Sunday to present his end-of-season review to principal owner John Henry and chairman Tom Werner, who had only last month given the Liverpool legend his backing.

Indeed, Dalglish's position seemed to have been strengthened when French director of football Damien Comolli abruptly left the club on April 12, having apparently taken the blame for Liverpool's poor results.

Dalglish and Comolli had come under the spotlight for the perceived failures of big-money signings Andy Carroll (£35 million; \$56m), Stewart Downing (£20m) and Jordan Henderson (£16m).

First women's

FROM PAGE 16

When asked whether the timing of the tournament was right, Rahmatullah said that they have a lot of tournaments and leagues ahead of them and had no room to accommodate this tournament at any other time.

Development Committee chairman Mirza Farid Ahmed Milu informed that they had conducted a 15-day training camp for the girls who will compete in the tournament. Most of the girls are in touch with hockey for the last one month, he added.

Participating teams are Anandomoyi Girls High School, Kamrunnessa Govt Girls High School, Municipal High School of Dinajpur (Group A), Narail District, Bandarban District and Nahar Academy in Mipur (Group B).

Russel's

FROM PAGE 16

After resumption, Sheikh Russel dominated the game but failed to extend the lead as Mouchid and Oliver squandered two chances each before the match was suspended for five minutes for bad light.

Sheikh Russel almost conceded an equaliser in the injury time but goalkeeper AI Amin foiled a powerful effort from Idris while a Conte Bangoura free-kick missed the target narrowly as Sheikh Russel left the pitch with another win.

'Tigers' camp

FROM PAGE 16

no longer seem interested. The main question surrounding the tour was whether Mushfiqur Rahim's men will travel to Zimbabwe under the guidance of interim coach Jurgensen. The BCB is trying hard to make sure that the Tigers get a new coach before the trip as they were waiting for confirmation from Richard Pybus.

Pybus, who recently visited the country to attain first-hand knowledge about the facilities available here, is yet to intimate his decision. According to sources everything now depends on whether Pybus's family gives their consent or not. The BCB is very much hopeful about the appointment of Pybus and they will explore alternate options only if Pybus declines the job.

Lara urges C'paul to move up

Cricket

AFP, London

West Indian cricket icon Brian Lara has called upon Shivnarine Chanderpaul, the world's number one batsman, to move up the order for his team's three-Test series with England which begins on Thursday.

"It beats me," Lara said of his fellow left-hander's reluctance to bat higher.

"If he can be so consistent, why he wouldn't say, 'Let me bat with some more experienced, talented players up the order.' That's not only going to benefit him but it would help the team."

"Your best batter is going to be at number three -- he is the one who is going to lay the foundations to win a match," added the record-breaking batsman.

"If your best batter is coming in at five, repairing damage, I don't understand the logic in it."

The West Indies were reliant on Chanderpaul during their recent 2-0 Test defeat to Australia, although the series was closer than the score suggests.

The obdurate Guyanese made 103 not out in the first Test in Barbados followed by 94 in Trinidad despite coming in four times during the series with three wickets down for less than 100 runs.

The 37-year-old became only the second West Indian to reach 10,000 Test runs when he went to 14 in his side's second innings in the third and final Test against Australia.

Lara also insisted that the addition of opener Chris Gayle, who remains in the Indian Premier League, "would lend the experience" needed to challenge England in the series which begins at London's Lord's venue on Thursday.

Despite the top-order weaknesses, Lara believes the series could be close.

"This team is full of talent," he stressed to reporters. "I think it is going to be very tough for them, especially with the weather conditions and the lack of preparation."

"It is a pretty young team but it is one that has something in it that could go forward. I have a funny feeling that we are going to impress you over this summer," he suggested.

England are top of the ICC Test rankings, while the West Indies -- who have won just two of 30 Tests since beating England in Jamaica in 2009 -- are down in seventh place.

However, England have lost four out of their last five Tests heading into Thursday's match, after struggling against Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Jamshed out of SL tour

AFP, Lahore

Fast-rising opener Nasir Jamshed was Wednesday ruled out of Pakistan's tour of Sri Lanka after fracturing a finger in his left hand.

The 22-year-old, who hit a brilliant one-day hundred against arch-rivals India in the Asia Cup in Dhaka two months ago, injured his finger during a club match, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said.

Jamshed, only named in the one-day squad for Sri Lanka, has been advised to take four to six weeks' rest by the medical team and the PCB said a decision on a replacement will be announced in due course.

Hussey stands

FROM PAGE 16

Srivastava was reportedly heard boasting he could do the same in the IPL.

Mishra was filmed as saying he was paid a major part of his IPL salary by Pune Warriors in "black" (illegal) money, while Yadav and Bali alleged spot-fixing existed in the tournament.

Srivastava has denied that the voice in the audio was his, and Mishra apologised, saying he made the comment "casually for personal gain."

The Hindu newspaper said corruption rumours had swirled around the IPL for a long time.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Slander
 - 6 Un-adorned
 - 11 Cigar
 - 12 Nasty stinger
 - 14 Illinois city
 - 15 Stephen King, e.g.
 - 16 Gripe repeatedly
 - 17 Shell out
 - 19 Blackjack component
 - 20 Tom-tom, e.g.
 - 22 Bygone flier
 - 23 — gin fizz
 - 24 Precipitous
 - 26 Praise
 - 28 Young chap
 - 30 Jane Smiley novel
 - 31 Listed alphabetically
 - 35 Behaved
 - 39 Withered
 - 40 Scale member
- DOWN**
- 1 Washing-ton portraitist
 - 2 "CSI" room
 - 3 Swelled head
 - 4 Ostentation
 - 5 Harvests
 - 6 "Music of the Night" figure
 - 7 Stentorian
 - 8 Illustrations
 - 9 Fill the lungs
 - 10 Ex-liberal, maybe
 - 11 Bygone Vegas casino
 - 13 Caught, in a way
 - 18 Bailout computer key
 - 21 Fracas
 - 23 Artist's garb
 - 25 — vobiscum
 - 27 Extinct New Zealand bird
 - 29 Wants
 - 31 Son of Abraham
 - 32 Gaseous cloud
 - 33 Scarlett's dress, before
 - 34 Buck's mate
 - 36 Fire insurance?
 - 37 Captivate
 - 38 "No man is an island" writer
 - 41 Camel's kin
 - 44 Sagacious
 - 45 Two-somes
 - 48 DDE opponent
 - 50 Stick with a kick

Solution time: 27 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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FKELSUM RNP AQ EKT
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VUJNL FSBB LNSL CPCCQ BPYK.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: CLASSIC SONG ABOUT SOMEBODY WHO DIDN'T CUT THE GRASS VERY WELL: "I SHOULD HAVE MOWN BETTER."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals Y