

CHAMPIONS TROPHY Pakistan want Australia to participate

REUTERS, Karachi

Hosts Pakistan are confident the other teams in the Champions Trophy can persuade Australia to compete in the September tournament.

Earlier this week Australia, concerned about security after the recent spate of bombings in the country including two in Lahore on Tuesday, postponed their tour of Pakistan which had been due to start this month.

A high-level ICC (International Cricket Council) delegation will visit Pakistan from March 20 to look at security and other arrangements for the Champions Trophy.

"The Champions Trophy is an event that involves eight countries. Australia is one of them," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief operating officer Shafiqat Nagmi told Reuters on Thursday.

"We are confident the other seven nations will be able to pressure Australia to travel."

Cricket Australia said it would continue to monitor the security situation in Pakistan and that it would hopefully improve by September.

Nagmi said security for the Champions Trophy would be agreed in consultation with the ICC, cricket's governing body.

"We have maintained conditions are safe for cricket in Pakistan and we hope all the participating nations will have no problems playing in the Champions Trophy," he said.

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Did U Know?

In 1868, a team of Aborigines gave a boomerang throwing demonstration at Lord's cricket ground.



Ishant Sharma

(India's latest pace sensation) "I don't think I need to build strong muscles. I feel I am completely fit." On IPL's Kolkata coach John Buchanan's suggestion that he needs to beef up.



BTV and NEO Sports
Bangladesh v South Africa
Third ODI
Live from 9:30am

SAB TV
New Zealand v England
Second Test, Day Three
Live from 3:30am (Saturday)



World Cricket Series
Bangladesh v South Africa
Third one-day international
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium

Premier Div Cricket League
Old DOHS v Surjo Tarun
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

Mohammedan v Victoria
Venue: BKSP-2

Sonargaon v Birman
Venue: Dharmadi Cricket Stadium



DON'T LIFT THE BALL HIGHER THAN THIS! Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons (R) makes a point to captain Mohammad Ashraf as batsmen Tamim Iqbal (L) and Shabir Ali Hasan walk towards them during practice yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

One last chance

BISHWAJIT ROY

WARID Cricket Series

The series is over after South Africa sealed it quite comfortably by winning the first two games, but there are still some interest left for both sides when they meet in the third and final one-day international at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

For the battered Tigers, it is their last chance to turn the table on the Proteas and get back confidence ahead of their next home assignment against Ireland this month while the tourists are in for a much bigger achievement as a win will confirm their position as the top one-day team ahead of Australia.

Right at the moment there are few who think about any positive from Mohammad Ashraf's boys after their senseless batting in the entire series. But Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons was slightly dented with his charges' continued poor showing as he set a 'future' goal for the Tigers.

Without any doubt, anyone

would love to dream about a bright future but at the same time, one can't completely deny one's present.

"It takes time," was Siddons's response about his side's disappointing performance. Understandably none can expect miracles from a coach who has joined three months back but it is also true that no one likes to see a team's performance on the wane.

Under the tutelage of Dav Whatmore, Bangladesh at least earned a reputation as a good one-day side who can turn the table on any side. So what should his successor think of the position being intact or not?

The Australian however was very optimistic about his team's potential and ability to do better business in the highest level of the game from what they are doing now.

"Definitely we have the potential and I have no doubt about that from what I have seen after being here for just three months. We have a fair way to go with our development to be able to play consistently at international level."

"Everyone has seen that as we got comprehensively beaten by the

second best team in the world and we have a long way to go but the talent and potential is there and we are starting to find that talent is good enough to work with," said Siddons while talking with the reporters at the Mirpur indoors yesterday.

The former Australia assistant coach Siddons said that they can produce a good performance only when everything happens at once.

"If the opening batters do their job and a couple of young middle-order batsmen contribute, the tail wags and things come together then we can get to 240 which is not happening at the moment. If we could put that all together then who knows what might happen," he said.

"That is what consistency is about. One opener got a good score in the first match (Chittagong) and the two youngsters put on a partnership beautifully yesterday (Wednesday). It's all about sticking to team rules and some of the players performing and the rest will follow suit," he continued adding that they have to play cricket against teams like South Africa as much as possible.

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'They're defensive'

WARID Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Sachin Tendulkar has said the current Australian team is more defensive than its predecessors. "In 1991, they did not go on the defensive if an Indian batsman played a couple of shots," Tendulkar told the Hindu.

"In the recent series, however, they immediately posted a deep point. This did not happen in 1999 or in 2003. This was the first time they set a scattered field."

However Tendulkar, who has toured Australia four times since 1991, said it was nice to play them

as the game always moved at a different pace altogether. "I have not had a look at their juniors, but from the look of it that's how they play. The bowlers like to challenge the batsmen even in their domestic competition. There were verbal exchanges as well."

As a batsman, the defining moment of the tour for him was his two shots over the wicketkeeper off Mitchell Johnson.

Assessing the Australian bowlers he has faced over his career, Tendulkar put Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne at the top of his list, followed by Brett Lee, who, with 24 wickets, was the leading wicket-taker of the Test series, and Craig McDermott. But Tendulkar said

Australia's batting had been more of less the same as before and it was the Indian bowlers on this tour who had challenged them more often. "On various occasions their [batsmen's] temperament was tested. We created and sustained the pressure and the intensity was great."

Though he praised younger cricketers like Praveen Kumar, Ishant Sharma and members of the victorious Under-19 squad, Tendulkar said there was a need to look back to find out how many youngsters made it to the Indian team as teenagers and then went on to play for a long time. "Ishant had a terrific tour, his future looks very good. But it's equally important no

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Jahurul steers Abahani

WARID Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani maintained their unbeaten run in the Premier Cricket League when the defending champions handed a massive 105-run defeat to Partex SC in the fourth round yesterday.

Opener Jahurul Islam struck the third century of the fray at the BKSP as Abahani, who had to share points in the second round due to a washed out match, amassed 286 for nine on way to their third victory. Partex in reply, crashed to 181 in 44 overs.

City Club and BKSP, meanwhile, recorded their second wins.

ABAHANI-PARTEX
In an uneven battle, Abahani made most of winning the toss as they scored the league's highest total so far with Jahurul hammering 107 off 127 balls.

Despite losing fellow opener Mahbulul Karim for a duck, the Dhanmondi giants never looked shaky as Pakistani batsman Anower Hafeez dominated the 92-run second wicket stand with 48 off 56 balls featuring nine boundaries.

Although there was little support from the middle order, man-of-the-match Jahurul smashed four fours and five sixes to take the total to 200 by the 42nd over despite losing Sahagir Hossain (21), skipper Tushar Imran (4), Nadif Chowdhury (10) and Mohammad Rafique (0) pretty cheaply.

Jahurul eventually perished in the 45th over, leaving Aminul Islam Bulbul's title contenders at 212-7 when he was bowled by Raisul Islam.

The opposition must have been happy to get rid of the last recognised batsman in the slog overs and hoped to restrict the holders below 250.

However, they were swept by a storm as Ziaur Rahman, the pace bowler who has been extremely successful with the bat this season,

scored an explosive 20-ball 43 with one four and five sixes.

Abahani virtually took the match beyond Partex in the last five overs, rattling 70 runs.

Partex slumped to 39-4 and a 104-run partnership between Rashed Hanif (78 off 97 balls) and Raisul (46 off 89 balls) only delayed the inevitable. After the two were separated, the Partex tail shattered like a pack of cards as the rival attack scalped six wickets for 11 runs.

Talha Jubair rocked the top while Rafique, Nazmul Hossain and Arafat Sunny each chipped in with two wickets.

CITY CLUB-KALABAGAN
Kalabagan's pathetic batting saw City Club wrap up the show with a 7-wicket win at Fatullah Stadium in less than 56 overs.

Man-of-the-match Shafiq Al Jabir (3-23) struck early as the inserted Kalabagan skittled out for a paltry 101 with Pakistani Shabbaz

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Tim & Paul's rescue act

WARID Cricket

AFP, Wellington

Test novice Tim Ambrose forged an unbroken 155-run partnership with Paul Collingwood to rescue England on the first day of the second Test against New Zealand here Thursday.

At stumps England were 291 for five with Ambrose in only his second Test on 97 and the vastly more experienced Collingwood on 48.

The 25-year-old Ambrose, known as "Freak" because everything apparently comes easily to him, arrived at the crease shortly before the tea break when England had collapsed to 136 for five.

Faced with a dire situation, Ambrose was circumspect with the first four balls before launching into his counter-attack by extracting 16 off Mark Gillespie in the last over before tea.

He belted fours and contributed to four leg byes when he was hit on the helmet and the ball deflected to the boundary.

As his score rose, and Collingwood was prepared to play the support role at the other end, Australian-born Ambrose oozed confidence as he aggressively moved into the 90s pulling Kyle Mills for six over the fine-leg boundary.

England could narrowly claim the honours on the first day with unbroken stands before lunch and after tea while New Zealand took five wickets in the middle session.

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori won the toss and had no hesitation in bowling first on a green wicket with overcast skies.

But his bowlers failed to take full

advantage of the conditions allowing Michael Vaughan and Alastair Cook to go through to lunch at 79 without loss.

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PHOTO: INTERNET

NOT YET TOP UP: England's latest wicketkeeper-batsman Tim Ambrose drives on the up during his unbeaten 97 on the first day of the second Test against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Thursday.

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