

SPORT

'Nothing to be afraid of'

STAR SPORT DESK

Although Bangladesh have been gearing up for a do or die Champions Trophy Group A match against two-time winners Australia today in London, sport was reduced to a trivial matter in the city after the terrorist attacks at London Bridge and Borough on Saturday night.

For Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, the incident may have been jarring but it also held some resonance. "We were in the hotel. This is happening all over the world -- we have total faith on the hosts and the ICC, so we don't have to think about it," he said at the pre-match press conference yesterday.

But the attack in a city holding a multi-national event seemed to take Mashrafe's mind back to 2016, when the England team were debating about coming to Bangladesh in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on a Gulshan bakery on June 1. To the great joy of Bangladeshis, England -- sans ODI captain Eoin Morgan and Alex Hales -- decided to come, but before that Australia had cancelled a tour to Bangladesh in 2015 and pulled out of the 2016 ICC U-19 World Cup for similar reasons.

"We stay in the hotel most of the time and the security in the hotel is good," said Mashrafe, before perhaps pondering on the mild double-standard of teams continuing in England and not touring countries like Bangladesh in similar scenarios. "In a way, it is good for our cricket because sometimes for these reasons teams don't play with us. We are playing, everyone sees us playing, so we hope that will give others more courage. The ICC puts sufficient security measures in place and so do the hosts.

"We were all grateful when England went. Individuals like Morgan or Hales did not go, perhaps because they had personal fears. But maybe they too will now see that it can happen, with all the security, in their country too."

About the match, Mashrafe said that they would not be paying particular attention to any one of Australia's many talented cricketers. "We said that England have a lot of batsmen, like Morgan or [Jos] Buttler, but before them Hales came and scored 95. Australia have many players, match-winners and key players. The aim is to win. It will be difficult, but the focus has to be there to win. That is how we have planned.

Mashrafe also said that the onus is on the bowlers to excel on pitches that are very batting friendly. "We know that ICC tournaments always feature good wickets. Here, life is difficult for the bowlers, but we have to play with the conditions we get. Extra effort from the bowlers is very important because if they can turn in an extraordinary performance, it will really help the team."

In that regard, ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan's form with both bat and ball is a concern. "We have no doubt about the fact that he will be back in form, but if that doesn't happen in this tournament, it will make things a bit more difficult. In that case, the other players will have to take on additional responsibility."



Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza said he has full faith in the ICC and England to provide full-proof security for the teams in the Champions Trophy. PHOTO: BCB



Although they got off to a fantastic start in their Champions Trophy opener against England, Bangladesh's batsmen failed to capitalise on that and finished the innings with a whimper. It will be up to them to sustain a high level against Australia if the Tigers are to have a chance against the two-time champions. PHOTO: BCB

BERGER LUXURY Silk METALLIC FINISH Painting Metallic Walls! BERGER Trusted Worldwide

Do-or-die for Tigers

AL-AMIN from London

The sky over The Oval was gloomy yesterday and when the Bangladesh camp was training there in the afternoon they were perhaps thinking that they could turn that gloom into bright sunshine the next day by winning against the mighty Australia in what will be a do-or-die Champions Trophy fixture for both teams.

Bangladesh will go into today's day-night game on the back of a punishing eight-wicket defeat against hosts England. Australia on the other hand can feel that they were lucky to sneak away with a one crucial point against New Zealand in a rain-abandoned game where they were precariously placed at 53 for 3 chasing the Black Caps' 291.

Bangladesh have beaten Australia once in their previous ODI meetings. Incidentally that famous victory was in England way back in 2005 in Cardiff's Sophia Gardens. However, the Tigers hardly get the opportunity to play against Australia with their last one-day fixture against them in Dhaka way back in 2011, during a three-match series. There was a chance for Bangladesh to have a clash with the Aussies in the 2015 World Cup's group stages, but it was washed out without a ball being bowled due to rain.

A different Bangladesh however will desperately want the rain to stay away to showcase their improvement against a team that have won the Champions Trophy twice. And with the pay dispute creeping in the Aussie camp it might also be an ideal opportunity to emulate what they did in Cardiff 12

years ago against Ricky Ponting's all-conquering side. The good news for Bangladesh is that their batsmen are in good form. Opener Tamim Iqbal hit a magnificent 128 in the opening game against England when the Tigers posted 300-plus score. They will look for another 300-plus score on belter of a wicket and hope that the bowling comes to the party.

"The wickets are too good for batting. It has got nothing for the bowlers. Our Mustafizur [Rahman] and Australia's Mitchell Starc and South Africa's Rabada are three very good bowlers, but even they are struggling," Bangladesh captain Mashrafe quipped ahead of the pre-match briefing yesterday.

But he felt that Bangladesh has the bowling variation of restricting any team below 300-mark. However, the trend in the tournament has suggests that even 300 is not safe.

The Tigers were actually in a good position to take the score to 330 in their opening game against England, but they lost their way a bit after the departure of Tamim and Mushfiqur Rahim off successive deliveries in the 45th over.

Besides the decision to play with eight batsmen also back-fired, leaving them with virtually four bowlers. After first game on June 1, a keen follower of Bangladesh cricket remarked that Bangladesh actually played with two-and-a-half bowlers. He actually discounted Shakib Al Hasan for not performing with the ball, and deemed captain Mashrafe as half a bowler.

But after that bitter experience in the opening game, the Bangladesh team management are thinking of including a bowler, who will be either a spinner or pacer.

No room for error: Smith

AFP, London

Steven Smith admits Australia have no margin for error as they look to kick start their Champions Trophy campaign against Bangladesh on Monday.

Australia's bid to open the Champions Trophy group stage with a win were thwarted by heavy rain against New Zealand on Friday, with both sides taking a point apiece, a result that most benefits Group A rivals England.

England launched the tournament with an eight-wicket win over Bangladesh at The Oval on Thursday. Smith acknowledged his team now have to win their remaining group matches if they are to advance to the semi-finals.

"It's obviously not ideal for both sides to have a washout. So for us now it's just about making sure that we're playing each game like a final and winning the next two," Smith said. "It's a pretty quick tournament. So you can't really afford a washout or a loss.

"You've got to turn it around quickly now and control what you can control."

While Australia will be expected to take maximum points against Bangladesh at The Oval, history suggests Smith's side shouldn't underestimate their unheralded opponents.

Australia were the victims of one of the all-time great upsets when Bangladesh beat them by five wickets in a one-day international in Cardiff in 2005.

For Australia to avoid another epic embarrassment, Smith needs far more accurate and penetrating spells from his bowlers.

ANWAR INDUSTRIAL CEMENT SHEET DURABLE ROOFING SOLUTIONS
01973091223, 01869339198, 01990408906

Josh Hazlewood took six wickets against New Zealand, but fellow quicks Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins were much less impressive, managing just one wicket between them.

Smith was frustrated with the sloppy bowling, but he refused to reveal whether he would make changes to the line-up to face Bangladesh.

"I thought it was probably one of the worst bowling displays that we've put on for a very long time," he said.

"We're going to be trying to win the game. So whatever team we see fit for the next match against Bangladesh at The Oval, we'll look at the conditions there and see what sort of wicket we get."



Australia captain Steven Smith has asked his bowlers to step up against Bangladesh after a dismal showing in their opening game against New Zealand. PHOTO: REUTERS

2-match ban for Tharanga

AFP, London

Sri Lanka captain Upul Tharanga is banned for the next two Champions Trophy matches due to a slow over-rate in Saturday's opening loss to South Africa.

The suspension, handed down by the ICC after Sri Lanka's 96 run Group B defeat at The Oval, rules Tharanga out of the match against India at The Oval on June 8 and Pakistan in Cardiff on June 12.

Sri Lanka fell foul of the rules after they took four hours and seven minutes to finish their overs during the South African innings.

ICC rules stipulate that teams should finish their 50 overs within three-and-a-half hours.

As well as Tharanga's ban, Sri Lanka players were fined 10 per cent of their match fees for the first two overs and 20 per cent of their match fees for the additional overs their side failed to bowl in the allotted time, with the captain also receiving two suspension points, the ICC said in a statement.

Tharanga pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing, the statement added.

Champions to be decided today

SPORTS REPORTER



After an exciting season of cricket, the champions of the Dhaka Premier League will be decided today during the last round of Super League matches in three venues across Dhaka. Fittingly, the two contenders will be duking it out against each other to settle the issue when leaders Gazi Group Cricketers and third-placed Prime Doleshwar lock horns at BKSP-3.

Gazi Group currently sit on top of the six-team table with 24 points from 15 games. Second-placed Abahani, who will take on Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at BKSP-4 today, have 22 points from 15 matches but are out of the title race as they have lost both their group phase and Super League encounters against Gazi Group, so even if they win today and move to 24 points they will lose out in a tie-break situation to Gazi.

Prime Doleshwar, also on 22 points, had lost to Gazi in the group phase and if they beat the leaders today, the head-to-head will be one all and it will come down to the net run-rate calculations. Gazi currently have a net run-rate of 0.687 while Doleshwar's is 0.532. This means that Doleshwar will have to beat Gazi Group quite handily if they are to clinch the title.

The day's other match will be between Prime Bank Cricket Club and Mohammedan Sporting Club at Fatullah.

| Teams | M | W | L | T | N/R | Pts |
|-----------------|----|----|---|---|-----|-----|
| Gazi Group | 15 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| Abahani | 15 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Prime Doleshwar | 15 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Prime Bank | 15 | 9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Mohammedan | 15 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 16 |

Warner sounds another Ashes warning

ESPNCRICINFO

Australia's vice-captain David Warner has stuck firm to his assertion that the players are prepared to be absent from this summer's Ashes if the current pay dispute drags into the six months beyond the June 30 expiry of the MOU between Cricket Australia (CA) and the Australian Cricketers Association (ACA). "I stick firm behind it," Warner said in London. "If we are unemployed we have no contracts, we can't play. We would love to see something happen between now and July 1 and I am sure that it is in the capable hands of the ACA to get to the table with CA and come to some form of an agreement."

Warner was subjected to plenty of criticism after earlier comments about the possibility that CA "might not have a team for the Ashes".

"It comes with my background and my history with that kind of stuff. So you know, it is water off a duck's back," Warner said. "I have a verbal stance, to stick up for all our players, and we are always talking about a fair share and equality. And that's what we are sticking to."

WI rout Afg for series win

AFP, Basseterre



Another abject batting display by Afghanistan paved the way for the West Indies to complete a series-clinching 29-run win on the Duckworth Lewis System (DLS) in the rain-affected second fixture of the three-match T20 International series at Warner Park in St Kitts on Saturday.

Set a revised target of 123 after the hosts were limited to 112 for three in a match reduced to 15 overs per side, the Afghans were routed for just 93 off 13.3 overs with

fast bowler Kesrick Williams leading the demolition with figures of three for 11 to take the "Man of the Match" award.

A day after being restricted to 110 all out off 20 overs on the way to a six-wicket defeat, this effort did little to enhance the visitors' claims to be elevated to the ranks of Test-playing nations.

They now face the prospect of being whitewashed in the T20 series going into the final match at the same venue on Monday and look set to suffer the same fate in the three One-Day Internationals which follow in St Lucia.



India opener Rohit Sharma scored 91 to help the defending champions post 319 in their 48-over contest against Pakistan at Edgbaston yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

IND-PAK SCOREBOARD

| INDIA: | | R/B | 4s/6s | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|---|
| Sharma run out | 91/119 | 7/2 | | |
| Shikhar Dhawan c Azhar | | | | |
| b Shadab | 68/65 | 6/1 | | |
| Kohli not out | 81/68 | 6/3 | | |
| Yuvraj lbw b Hasan | 53/32 | 8/1 | | |
| Pandya not out | 20/6 | 0/3 | | |
| Extras: (lb-2, w-2, nb-2) | 6 | | | |
| Total: (For 3 wkts in 48 overs) 319 | | | | |
| Did not bat: Dhoni, Jadeja, Jadeja, Kumar, Yadav, Bumrah. | | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-136, 2-192, 3-285. | | | | |
| PAKISTAN: | | R/B | 4s/6s | |
| Azhar c Pandya b Jadeja | 50/65 | 6/0 | | |
| Shehzad lbw b Kumar | 12/22 | 1/0 | | |
| Babar c Jadeja b Yadav | 8/12 | 1/0 | | |
| Hafeez c Kumar b Jadeja | 33/43 | 2/0 | | |
| Shoaib run out | 15/9 | 2/1 | | |
| Sarfraz Ahmed c Dhoni | | | | |
| b Pandya | 15/16 | 2/0 | | |
| Imad Wasim c Jadhav | | | | |
| b Pandya | 0/1 | 0/0 | | |
| Shadab not out | 14/16 | 1/1 | | |
| Amir c Jadhav b Yadav | 9/16 | 0/0 | | |
| Hasan c Dhawan b Yadav | 0/2 | 0/0 | | |
| Wahab absent hurt | - | - | | |
| Extras: (lb-2, w-6) | 8 | | | |
| Total: (all out in 33.4 overs) 164 | | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-47, 2-61, 3-91, 4-114, 5-131, 6-135, 7-151, 8-164, 9-164. | | | | |
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Kumar | 5 | 1 | 23 | 1 |
| Yadav | 7.4 | 1 | 30 | 3 |
| Bumrah | 5 | 0 | 23 | 0 |
| Pandya | 8 | 0 | 43 | 2 |