



Coach Chandika Hathurusingha spoke of the team being in good spirits and that was evident as the Tigers trained at Edgbaston yesterday. The players, including a smiling Shakib Al Hasan (R) and Musfiquur Rahim, unwound with a game of football and (inset) setter Mashrafe Bin Mortaza even found the time to fool around with his coach.

PHOTOS: BCB/REUTERS



'A big opportunity'

By Al-Amin from Edgbaston

Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha said that Thursday's ICC Champions Trophy semifinal against India would be just another game in the context of the tournament, but added that it would be an opportunity for his boys to show the world what they are capable of.

He also ruled out the game as some sort of revenge after that 2015 World Cup quarterfinal loss against India where a couple of decisions went against the Tigers.

"There is no feeling of revenge. It's about playing a good game against India. We are thinking of competing and doing our best," said the Bangladesh coach, adding that his boys were ready for the brand of fearless cricket that they have been playing since the 2015 World Cup down under.

"The mood is very good. We are very relaxed. We are looking forward to the game. At the start of the tournament I said that whatever we will achieve is going to be big and so we are very happy about where we are and the way we have played so far," he told reporters after the morning training session.

"For everyone, including the coaching staff, it's the first time and our aim is to go and express ourselves. It's not a very big game; it's a very big opportunity. So, for both the seniors and the juniors my message is to grab this opportunity with both hands," said the inspirational Bangladesh coach.

He however refused to make any comment on Kumar Dharmasena, a regular feature in Indian games, as one of the two umpires for the semifinals.

The coach admitted that experimenting with the batting order was something he should not have done.

"I should admit that we strayed from our

original plan in one game. I take the blame. But we still back our initial thought that we need to give players enough opportunity to get used to certain places. He [Sabbir Rahman] has got limited opportunities to prove [himself] and deserves more opportunities."

"His comment indicated that Bangladesh are going to field the same eleven that pulled off a famous five-wicket against New Zealand.

"That's the biggest challenge [settling on a combination] we had. We knew we had good enough skills. We have a good combination in place – a good combination of youth and experience," Hathurusingha said, reflecting on that remarkable turnaround against the Black Caps after being reduced to 33 for four chasing 266.

He said Bangladesh's progress to the semifinal was a reward for steady progress both at home and abroad.

"It was a gradual improvement if you look at our progress over the last two years. The World Cup was the big turning point for us. We went to the quarterfinals by beating England. Then we set a target to do well at home and we have achieved that. And for the last year or so we set our target of doing well overseas. And coming all the way to play the semifinal is a big step for us," the coach observed.

He said Bangladesh are still a developing team but also aren't afraid of anyone.

"We are very confident. We don't want to think who our opposition is but we want to maximise our potential to give ourselves the best chance," he said, adding that India are still one of the favourites to win the title.

"To be honest not many people will give us a chance to win against India. They are a good team but if we can beat them it will be a very good achievement for us," he said.

Consistent England or mercurial Pakistan?



With six wickets in three matches, Pakistan pacer Hasan Ali will once again hope to spearhead the bowling lineup to a strong showing against England in the first semifinal at Cardiff today.

PHOTO: REUTERS

ROAD TO SEMIFINAL

ENGLAND: GROUP STAGE
Beat Bangladesh by 8 wickets
Beat New Zealand by 87 runs
Beat Australia by 40 runs (D/L method)

PAKISTAN: GROUP STAGE
Lost to India by 124 runs (D/L method)
Beat South Africa by 19 runs (D/L method)

HEAD TO HEAD

PAKISTAN VS ENGLAND

NR 2

49

VS

LAST MEETING

4 September 2016 in Cardiff; Pakistan won by 4 wickets

They have never met in the CT before

AFP, Cardiff



England were earmarked as one of the favourites ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy and they lived up to the billing as the powered into the semifinals with a perfect record. Pakistan, their opponents for today's first semifinal and the eighth-ranked team in the world, on the other hand were almost thoroughly disregarded.

England boast the best record ODI record among all teams in the calendar year, but Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed remains hopeful that the team's "high confidence" in Cardiff will stand them in a good stead when they return to the Welsh capital to face England.

"England is a very good team, a very

good team," said Sarfraz of the tournament hosts. "If you are playing a world-class team, definitely, you play more positive cricket, so we will do so against England," he added.

Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur added that his side would not settle for simply reaching the semis as he urged them to go "one step further."

"We certainly didn't want to be just making up the numbers in this competition, and we've shown that we weren't," said the South African. "Now we need to go one step further and never be satisfied."

"The last thing I want is for us to go away now thinking that we got to a semi-final, we're okay, we've achieved, because that would be a cop-out in my mind."

"We've got nothing to lose, yes, but we've always said we're in it to win it. We know that realistically England are

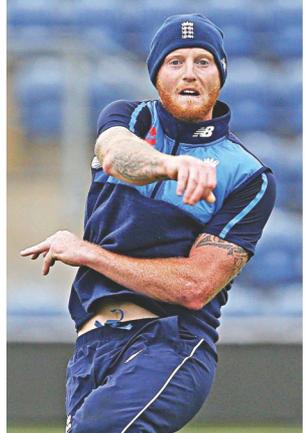
playing unbelievably well. They're a really, really good one-day unit with no apparent weaknesses."

Sarfraz's opposite number Eoin Morgan hinted that there may be a change to his side's top order for the match after Jason Roy disappointing outings.

Morgan said there was a "chance" Jonny Bairstow could replace the struggling Jason Roy and insisted he would have "no worries" about Bairstow opening – something he has yet to do in international cricket.

Morgan would not confirm his XI at Tuesday's pre-match press conference in Cardiff but said there was "a chance we could make a change."

Surrey opener Roy averaged just 6.37 from eight ODI innings this season, with a mere two double-figure scores and has lost seemingly lost the backing of his captain.



With a batting average of 150 and an opener's scalp to his name in all three group games, Ben Stokes will hope to initiate the carnage yet again against Pakistan in their Champions Trophy semifinal today.

PHOTO: AFP

AB to lead in T20 series

AFP, London

AB de Villiers will captain South Africa in their three-match Twenty20 series against England, team officials announced Tuesday.

De Villiers takes over from Faf du Plessis, who has returned home, following South Africa's group-stage exit from the Champions Trophy on Tuesday.

He will be in charge of a 14-man squad, without several Proteas regulars and one man yet to make his T20 international debut in all-rounder Dwayne Pretorius.

'Pace variety is our strength'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha spoke highly about his versatile bowling department ahead of their ICC Champions Trophy semifinal clash against India at Edgbaston on June 15.

"I'm not going into that, far to say that we are better than anybody else [when he asked to compare his bowling attack with India]. But we have variation. Our four fast bowlers each give you a different taste," said the Sri Lankan while talking to reporters after the training session at Edgbaston yesterday.

"I always said that my bowlers are better. I don't underestimate India. They have a very good fast bowling attack. They are very good in helpful conditions. As I said before we have

four bowlers with different sets of skills," he added.

Pacer Mustafizur Rahman has yet to come up with his best in the tournament and when Hathurusingha's attention was drawn to the matter, he said: "If you remember, he had a bit of a setback after the first year. It took eight or nine months out of his development. He is developing, the fast bowling coaches and the captain is working with him about the tactical side of the game and skill development. He is still improving. He is coming back from



Bangladesh bowler Taskin Ahmed is one of the bowlers in a pace attack that coach Chandika Hathurusingha described as having good variety.

PHOTO: BCB

injury. It is challenging for him in the second and third season but he is really doing well. He is a very clever cricketer and he is learning very fast."

Replying to a question about whether his side will play aggressive or normal cricket against India, he said: "At the start of the tournament if you had asked me I would have told you India are one of the favourites. For me they are still the favourite team. But as I said before if we play to our potential we can give any team a run for their money."

Everybody wants to see Ind-Eng final: Kohli

PTI, London



Done with the tough part of making it through the league phase, Indian captain Virat Kohli says opposition hardhat matters in the Champions Trophy semifinal and even though an India-England final is what everybody seems to want.

India will take on Bangladesh in the second semifinal on Thursday after England and Pakistan play out their first-as-four clash on Wednesday.

The Indian cricket captain was joined by some of his teammates and coach Anil Kumble at a special reception hosted by the Indian High Commission to mark the UK-India Year of Culture at the Lord's High Pavilion.

"It would not have mattered who we were playing in the semis. The league phase is the toughest. We have an opportunity to win one game and enter the finals. Everyone wants to see an India-England final. If both teams play well, people might get what they want to see," he said.

Asked which team he would prefer to come up against in the finals, he added: "Anyone. We would just be happy to be in the finals."

Kohli said it was a treat to be welcomed by "massive crowds wherever we play". "What better way to connect than cricket. Everyone is hoping for an India-England final at The Oval in this special UK-India Year of Culture. My better team win," said Indian high commissioner to the UK, Yasvardhan Kumar Sinha.

Kumble to coach till WI tour

AFP, New Delhi

Anil Kumble's term as India coach looks set to be extended until the end of the West Indies tour next month, a top official said Monday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) advertised for a head coach in the mix for the post along with former India opening batsman Virender Sehwag and Australian coach Tom Moody, according to media reports.

The first one-day international in the West Indies just 10 days away with Kumble in the mix for the post along with former India opening batsman Virender Sehwag and Australian coach Tom Moody, according to media reports. "But BCCI official Vinod Rai said a special panel overseeing the selection was yet to decide if someone else will take the reins.