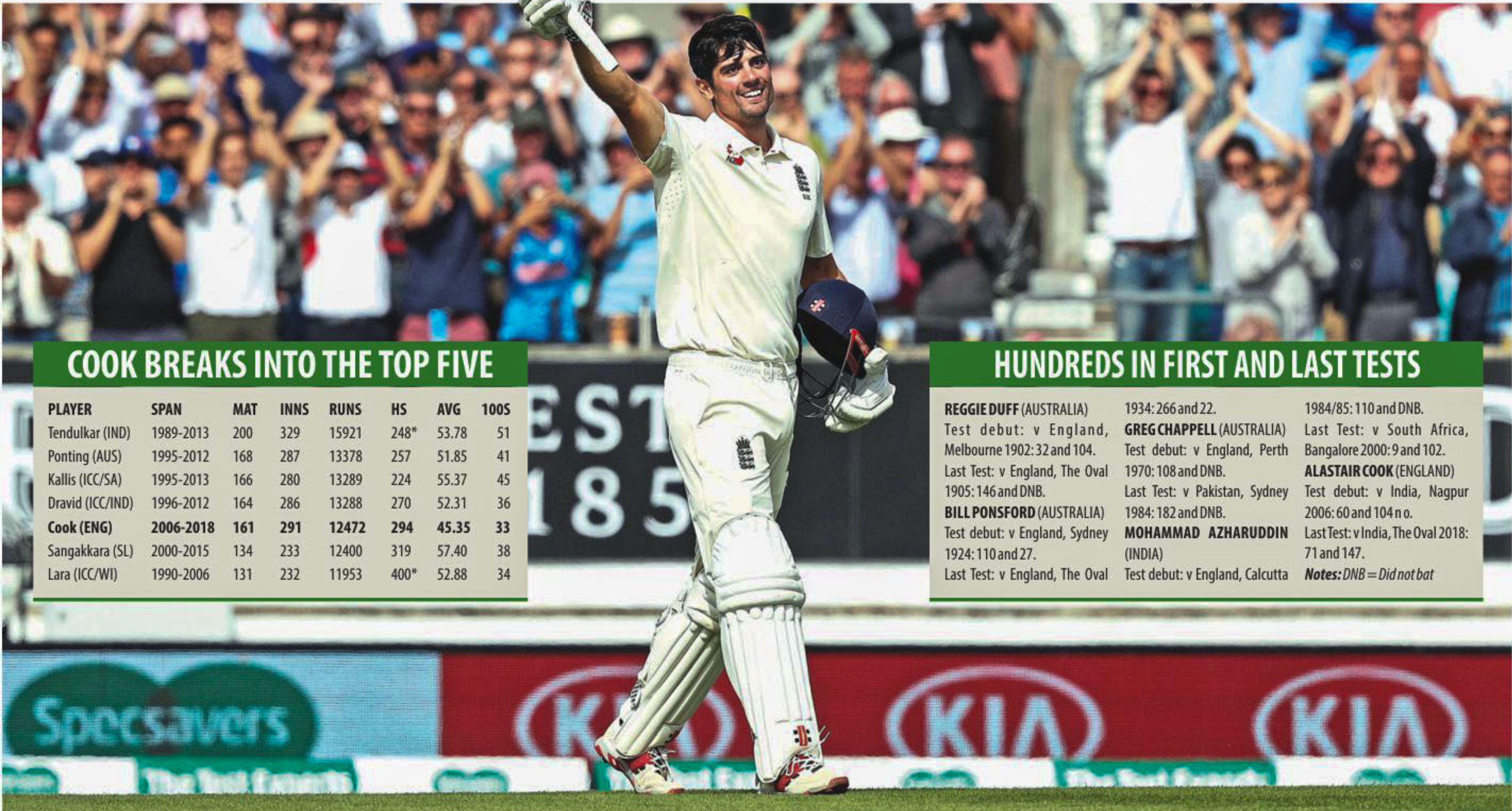


SPORT



COOK BREAKS INTO THE TOP FIVE

PLAYER	SPAN	MAT	INNS	RUNS	HS	AVG	100S
Tendulkar (IND)	1989-2013	200	329	15921	248*	53.78	51
Ponting (AUS)	1995-2012	168	287	13378	257	51.85	45
Kallis (ICC/SA)	1995-2013	166	280	13289	224	55.37	41
Dravid (ICC/IND)	1996-2012	164	286	13288	270	52.31	36
Cook (ENG)	2006-2018	161	291	12472	294	45.35	33
Sangakkara (SL)	2000-2015	134	233	12400	319	57.40	38
Lara (ICC/WI)	1990-2006	131	232	11953	400*	52.88	34

HUNDREDS IN FIRST AND LAST TESTS

REGGIE DUFF (AUSTRALIA) Test debut: v England, Melbourne 1902: 32 and 104. Last Test: v England, The Oval 1905: 146 and DNB.	GREG CHAPPELL (AUSTRALIA) Test debut: v England, Perth 1970: 108 and DNB. Last Test: v Pakistan, Sydney 1984: 182 and DNB.	ALASTAIR COOK (ENGLAND) Test debut: v India, Nagpur 2006: 60 and 104 n.o. Last Test: v India, The Oval 2018: 71 and 147.
BILL PONSFORD (AUSTRALIA) Test debut: v England, Sydney 1924: 110 and 27. Last Test: v England, The Oval 1934: 266 and 22.	MOHAMMAD AZHARUDDIN (INDIA) Test debut: v England, Calcutta 1984/85: 110 and DNB. Last Test: v South Africa, Bangalore 2000: 9 and 102.	Notes: DNB = Did not bat

A PERFECT ENDING: England opener Alastair Cook could not script a better ending to his Test career. Here the left-hander celebrates his century on the fourth day of the fifth Test against India at the Oval yesterday, becoming only the fifth cricketer in Test history to score a hundred in both their first and last Tests. On way to his landmark ton the only England batsman bracketed in the 10,000-plus runs club moved into the top five in the all-time run-scoring list.

PHOTO: AFP

BD to start against SL

The Bangladesh Cricket Board and the Asian Cricket Council yesterday announced the schedule for the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup, which starts on September 29 in Bangladesh.

The eight teams were divided into two groups with Bangladesh in Group B alongside Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong while holders Afghanistan were placed with India, Nepal and the United Arab Emirates in Group A.

All group matches will take place at the BKSP and Chittagong while the knockout phase and final will be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

ITINERARY				
Group A (Venue: Dhaka)		Group B (Venue: Chittagong)		
DATE	GROUP	MATCH	VENUE	
Sept 29	A	Afghanistan vs UAE	BKSP 4	
	A	India vs Nepal	BKSP 3	
	B	Pakistan vs Hong Kong	MA Aziz	
Sept 30	B	Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka	ZACS	
	A	India vs UAE	BKSP 3	
Oct 1	B	Sri Lanka vs Hong Kong	ZACS	
	A	Afghanistan vs Nepal	BKSP 4	
Oct 2	B	Bangladesh vs Pakistan	ZACS	
	A	Afghanistan vs India	BKSP 3	
Oct 4	A	Nepal vs UAE	BKSP 4	
	B	Pakistan vs Sri Lanka	MA Aziz	
Oct 5	B	Bangladesh vs Hong Kong	ZACS	
		SEMIFINAL 1		
Oct 7		Group A Champs vs Group B Runners-up	SBNS	
		SEMIFINAL 2		
		Group B Champs vs Group A Runners-Up	SBNS	
		FINAL		
		Winner Semifinal 1 v Winner Semifinal 2	SBNS	

A fairytale farewell

Cook signs off from Test cricket with a fabulous hundred

Alastair Cook marked his final Test innings with a storybook hundred and England captain Joe Root also made a century as India crumbled at the Oval on Monday.

India were 58 for three in their second innings, needing a further 406 runs to reach their victory target of 464, at stumps on the fourth day of the fifth Test against England.

KL Rahul was 46 not out and Ajinkya Rahane 10 not out.

England, already 3-1 up in this five-match series, scored 423 for eight in their second innings.

Cook made 147 and Root, his successor as England captain, 125, with the pair putting on 259 for the third wicket.

The 33-year-old Cook is retiring from international cricket after this match and Monday's innings meant the Essex left-handed opener became just the fifth player and first Englishman to score a hundred in both their first and last Tests after Australia's

Reggie Duff, Bill Ponsford and Greg Chappell and India's Mohammad Azharuddin.

England resumed on 114 for two, already 154 runs ahead, with Cook 43 not out and Root unbeaten on 29.

A capacity crowd, willing Cook to score a hundred, gave him the first of seven standing ovations on the day as he walked out to bat.

And they were soon giving him another when Cook, from his second ball of the day, turned fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah off his pads to complete a 127-ball fifty with his fourth four.

Cook in fine touch, late cut left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja for another well-struck boundary.

When the left-hander squirted a single off Shami and moved past Sri Lanka great Kumar Sangakkara's tally of 12,400 runs and into fifth place in the list of all-time leading Test run-scorers, the crowd rose again.

Cook was already England's leading Test run scorer and century maker, with this match seeing him extend his national appearance record to 161 Tests. And he completed his 33rd Test

century in unusual fashion when, having run a single to go to 97, a wild overthrow from Bumrah gave him four bonus runs.

The crowd rose to give Cook yet another ovation as he celebrated a 210-ball century featuring eight fours and that five which took him to three figures.

It was his first Test hundred since he made a marathon 244 against Australia in December.

Root also completed his century after lunch and was far more animated than Cook's had been after scoring his first ton in over a year. After the massive stand both departed in one over. Cook's edged cut was held by Pandya to an innings of 286 balls including 14 fours. Again spectators were on their feet, Cook bowling out with a record of 12,472 Test runs, including 33 hundreds, at an average of 45.35.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 332 and second innings 423 (Cook 147, Root 125; Vihari 3-37, Jadeja 3-179)
INDIA: First innings 292 and second innings 58 (Rahul 46 not out, Rahane 10 not out; Anderson 2-23, Broad 1-17)

An unfair disadvantage

Even before a ball has been bowled in the Asia Cup, the Bangladesh team have been considerably disadvantaged due to what can only be called mismanagement.

Most of the Bangladesh squad reached Dubai on Sunday to prepare for their tournament opener against Sri Lanka on September 15. But two of the most important members of the team -- opening batsman Tamim Iqbal and fast bowler Rubel Hossain -- are still in Dhaka as they were yet to receive their UAE visas.

The Asia Cup is the flagship event organised by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) and behind only the World Cup and Champions Trophy in terms of popularity. Even though the tournament is being held in the UAE, India are the official hosts. As such, the Board of Control for Cricket in India are the home board and it is understood that it is the host nation's responsibility to take care of the logistics and liaise with the concerned government to ensure the smooth arrival of the squads and to stage the tournament according to ACC guidelines.

Apart from Tamim and Rubel, team manager Khaled Mahmud and chief selector Minhajul Abedin were also waiting for visas, as per the latest information gathered yesterday.

It has been over 21 years since Bangladesh last played an international game in the UAE. With the desert heat and extreme conditions in mind, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had arranged to send the squad a week in advance so that they could acclimatise.

"Obviously it's a disturbing issue for us as we wanted our players to get acclimatised with conditions in the UAE for which we decided to send the team a week before the start of the tournament," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily

"I am hoping that I will be able to play from the first match. I am more concerned about my practice as it's been a long time since I have batted. I don't know about the exact condition of my injured finger as I have to know how much pain there is and how much I will be able to do. So for that I need to bat. ...Tamim Iqbal

Star yesterday.

The delay was not down to any problems on BCB's end as they completed all the legal formalities and submitted the applications to the ACC's logistics department.

"They are on standby, and will depart the moment they get the visa," Chowdhury said, but could not give a definite answer to the question of when exactly the players will get the visas.

Bangladesh has hosted many big events such as the 1998 Mini World Cup, 2011 World Cup, the 2014 World Twenty20 and several Asia Cups, and Chowdhury said that not once has there been an issue regarding visas of visiting teams.

Tamim is known as a player who likes to practise diligently and prepare himself as best as possible before a big event. Both he and Rubel are crucial players and it seems that their practice and acclimatisation will be substantially hampered. In a multinational tournament where it is imperative to give all teams equal opportunity to prepare and compete, instead of running things smoothly BCCI's mismanagement has ensured that Bangladesh -- a major contender -- will be handicapped from the start.

Walton felicitates U-15 women

Walton, one of the country's largest electronics and home appliance company, yesterday accorded a reception to the Bangladesh under-15 women's football team, who became runners-up in the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship last month.

The Bangladesh team remained unbeaten through the group stages and reached the final comfortably but were undone by the Indians in the final.

Walton, sponsors of the women's team, distributed rice cookers among the players, who are currently preparing for the upcoming AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers Round-1.

The first round of that event, involving Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Vietnam and Bangladesh, will start on September 15 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

BFF women's committee chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron, Walton's director FM Iqbal Bin Anwar Don, coach Golam Rabbani Choton, captain Maria Manda and other players were present at the occasion.

An uneven rivalry

The early exit of hosts Bangladesh may have reduced the appeal of the ongoing SAFF Suzuki Cup, but there is still something to watch out for when archrivals India and Pakistan square off in tomorrow's semifinal.

The rivalry in football between the two neighbours may not be as intense as it is in cricket, where every ball is followed by billions of people in the subcontinent and beyond.

The football rivalry, on the other hand, is far less intense as India are the dominant force in the subcontinent, having beaten Pakistan 14 times out of 23 meetings while losing only three times.

In the SAFF Championship, the two countries have faced each other five times, with India enjoying a 3-1 head-to-head lead while the other game ended in a draw. However, interestingly Pakistan beat India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in 2003 when Bangladesh had hosted the SAFF Championship for the first time.

India, however, beat Pakistan 1-0 in their last meeting in the 2013 edition in Nepal. The two sides are set to face each other

after a five-year gap following Pakistan's three-year ban from international football.

India are now 105 places ahead of Pakistan [201] in the latest FIFA rankings.

With the clash knocking on the door, Pakistan defender Zesh Rehman and captain Saddam Hossain felt the heat as they termed the game as a special one.

"It's always special to play against India. I believe it's the same for the Indian players when they play against Pakistan," Zesh was quoted as saying by the official website of the All India Football Federation yesterday.

"The match has a lot of history. The emotion involved is huge. The rivalry pushes everyone to give that extra bit," the former Fulham defender added.

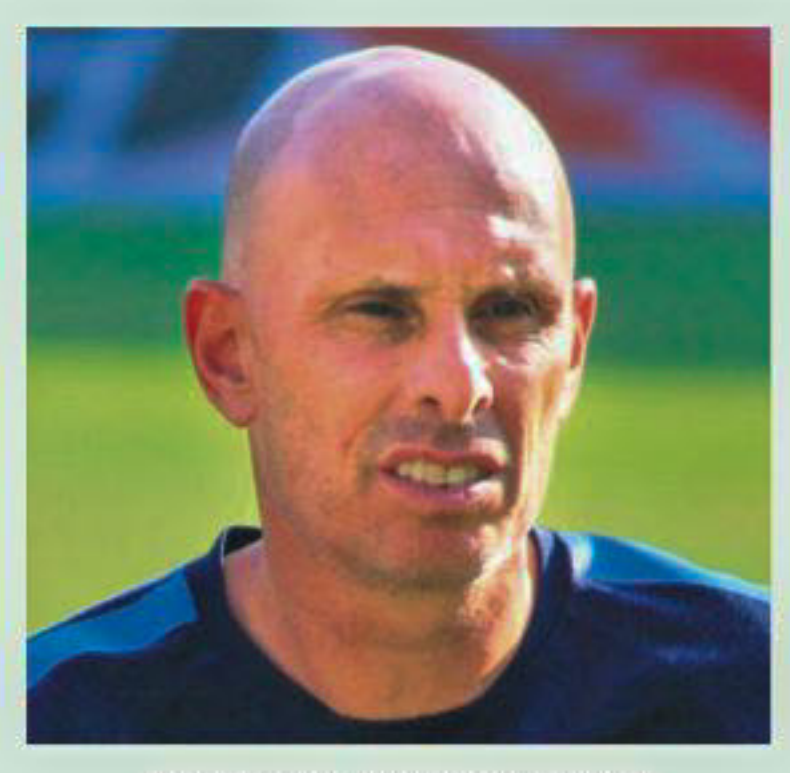
The last time the two teams met in an official encounter in 2013 in Kathmandu, Saddam was unstoppable down the right and hit the post twice. Apart from that instance, he was also part of an unofficial under-23 friendly series in Bengaluru the following year, where he was adjudged the 'Most Valuable Player' of the series.

"We just can't wait to play against India. We have every ounce of respect for our opponents but that won't deter us from playing our natural game. We have shown our worth and I believe it's going to be a heck of a contest and no one will prefer to give it a miss," Hossain was quoted as saying.

India coach Stephen Constantine is, however, taking the match as another game.

"We are aware of the contest. But that is nothing different. It's just another match. We can't let the occasion get over us and hopefully we will beat them to advance to the final," said Constantine.

Bangladesh has hosted international events in various sports where India and Pakistan faced off, notably during the 2014 Asia Cup cricket and the 2017 Asia Cup hockey. The country is now set to host another India-Pakistan battle, albeit on the football ground.



STEPHEN CONSTANTINE

Chandimal out of Asia Cup

Sri Lanka Test captain Dinesh Chandimal was withdrawn Monday from the 16-member squad for the Asia Cup because of an injury during a recent domestic tournament, the board said.

The 28-year-old batsman had injured a finger during a domestic Twenty20 match and needed more time to recover, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said in a statement.

Chandimal will be replaced by wicketkeeper and batsman Niroshan Dickwella at the six-nation Asia Cup tournament which opens in the United Arab Emirates on September 15, the SLC said.

SQUAD
Angelo Mathews (Captain), Kusal Perera, Kusal Mendis, Upul Tharanga, Niroshan Dickwella, Danushka Gunathilaka, Thisara Perera, Dasun Shanaka, Dhanajaya de Silva, Akila Dananjaya, Dilruwan Perera, Amila Aponso, Kasun Rajitha, Suranga Lakmal, Dushmantha Chameera and Lasith Malinga.

Momentum the key: Sarfraz

Pakistan will open their Asia Cup campaign on the second day of the tournament against Hong Kong. They are taking the match against the minnows as an opportunity to gain momentum which can be carried into tougher contests. That's the key to success for them. Pakistan's Champions Trophy triumph last year taught them the significance of carrying momentum in multi-team tournaments.

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed spoke about it at the end of his side's week-long training camp in Lahore on Monday. "Momentum is very important," he said. "During the Champions Trophy, we carried forward the momentum which we had gotten against South Africa and Sri Lanka. We will try to do the same here... We will try to gain momentum in our first match [against Hong Kong] and go into the contest against India with full preparation."

Three days after their tournament opener, Pakistan will be up against their arch-rivals India. Due to the dearth of Indo-Pak matches these days, it is the most-anticipated contest.

"Every match against India is important," he said. "That match [Champions Trophy final] is in the past. It was almost one and a half years ago. So, I don't think we should consider it that much. If we play India in the final, then we will be playing them thrice. All professional teams put the past behind and look forward. Both teams will do the same."