

PHOTO:
AFP

AFP, NOTTINGHAM

"We will seek inspiration from our Champions Trophy win because then also we were losing and then lifted ourselves at the right time to win the trophy," Sarfaraz told AFP ahead of the game in Nottingham.

Pakistan had lost 4-1 in Australia before the tournament and arch-rivals India whipped them by 124 runs in the opening game of the Trophy.

But Pakistan then beat South Africa, Sri Lanka and England on their way to the final, where they thumped India by 180 runs.

"The boys are motivated and are eager to put these losses behind them and by playing in England for a month we are well prepared and you will hopefully see us doing well," said Sarfaraz, one of Pakistan's only two survivors from the 2015 World Cup, with left-handed batsman Haris Sohail the other.

Sarfaraz will also hope his spearhead Mohammad Amir -- playing his first World Cup after missing the 2011 and 2015 editions due to a spot-fixing ban -- will dismantle the West Indies top order boasting hard-hitting opener Chris Gayle and the impressive Shai Hope.

"We know Amir is an impact bowler and he knows his responsibilities and I am sure he will lift his bowling and get us early wickets," said Sarfaraz of Amir, who recovered

That prompted all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite to say his team can break the 500-barrier.

"If you are asking me if we are capable of it, definitely we are," Brathwaite said. "However, in a real game you probably won't have the depth in batting at 10 and 11 that we had today. So you need to be a little real about the target."

West Indies are also returning to form after sneaking their way into the World Cup through a qualifying round in Zimbabwe last year.

They squared a one-day series against top-ranked side and pre-tournament favourites England 2-2 at home earlier this year before losing the final of a tri-series to Bangladesh in Ireland.

Games between West Indies and Pakistan have always been close over the years and I fully expect it to be the same again at Trent Bridge for the opening match on Friday.

We played a couple of semifinals at World Cups against them at The Oval and they were great games. Pakistan have had formidable sides, with good all-rounders, solid batters and a good bowling attack.

We certainly never took them lightly when we came up against them.

A black and white portrait of a middle-aged man with dark skin, a mustache, and glasses. He is wearing a light-colored shirt and a dark jacket. The portrait is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the text.

Looking at the West Indies coming into the first game, if we are consistent and play to our strengths I'm sure we can give a very good account of ourselves and surprise a few people. If someone like Chris Gayle can get away often, that will set the platform for the rest of the team.

The difference with Pakistan's batting compared to the West Indies is they have a few players like Babar Azam, Imam-ul-Haq and Fakhar Zaman who score hundreds. They do not get in and get out, they tend to go on. That is what our players have to learn. We maybe have a few too many players who are happy to score 50 or 60, when instead they need to go on and get big scores.

The bigger question marks for both teams are in the bowling. The West Indies bowling hasn't been as strong in the build-up to the tournament.

And when you look at Pakistan, their spin department has been good but they have struggled for wickets at the start of innings. The fast bowlers have not really been consistent enough, and in this competition you need to get early wickets. It will be really interesting against West Indies because if they don't get any early wickets, then we could make a really big score.

INFO ZONE		
HEAD TO HEAD IN WORLD CUP		
PAKISTAN		WEST INDIES
3	WIN	7
7	LOSS	3
0	TIE	0
0	NR	0
HEAD TO HEAD IN ODIS		
PAKISTAN		WEST INDIES
60	WIN	70
70	LOSS	60
3	TIE	3
0	NR	0
LAST MEETING		
April 11 2017 at Providence Stadium in Guyana.		
Pakistan won by 6 wickets (with 41 balls remaining)		
KEY PLAYERS		
		
	PAKISTAN	WEST INDIES
Babar Azam	Shai Hope	
51.67	Bat Avg	51.06
12	50s	10
9	100s	6
125*	HS	170
2739	Runs	2247
80	Last Match	74

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PHOTO: AFP

Just a few days after Joe Root and Steve Smith rolled their arms at their respective World Cup 2019 warm-up matches, India skipper Virat Kohli honed his bowling skills at the nets on Thursday at India's practice session at Southampton.

Four days later, the Men in Blue will be up against South Africa at the Ageas Bowl in their World Cup opener.

Kohli had termed this World Cup to be one of the most difficult ones ever and hence, from his part, he is leaving no stone unturned to prepare for the showpiece event. Hence on Thursday, apart from honing his batting skills at the nets, Kohli rolled his arms as well.

In fact, he was seen trying a few off cutters in the nets.

A close-up photograph of Virat Kohli, the Indian cricket captain. He is wearing a blue Indian national cricket team jersey and a matching blue cap with the BCCI logo. He has a beard and is looking slightly to the right of the camera. He is holding a white cricket ball in his right hand, which is raised towards his face. The background is dark and out of focus.

REUTERS, London

As the contest to replace her as prime minister gathered pace on Thursday, Theresa May opted for a different battle - watching England take on South Africa in the opening match of the 2019 Cricket World Cup.

An emotional May announced last week she would step down as Conservative Party leader on June 7 after three times failing to get her Brexit deal approved by parliament.

Free from the burden of trying to deliver Britain's exit from the European Union, a relaxed-

A photograph of Theresa May, then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, clapping. She is wearing a red jacket and is standing behind a blue barrier with the text "ICC CR" visible. To her left, a man in a dark suit and red tie is also clapping. The background shows a building with large windows.

looking May gave a speech on student funding before heading to the Oval cricket ground around two miles from her Downing Street residence.

The British leader was photographed applauding from the stands during the unannounced trip, as her would-be successors toured the television studios setting out their plans for the country.

May, who once likened her resolve to see her Brexit plan through to the determination of her cricket hero Geoffrey Boycott to get runs, has long been a lover of the sport.

