



There were some very concerning sights in the World Cup clash between England and West Indies yesterday as three players were forced to leave the field with injuries. (FROM L) West Indies' Andre Russell and England's Jason Roy and Eoin Morgan were all casualties of the hosts' eight-wicket win. PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

Bangladesh's 'cricket bat village'

MOHSIN MILON from Benapole

With Bangladesh participating in the ongoing World Cup at its birthplace in England, cricket fever has spread all over the country. However, a number of workers in a factory located in Mistiripara village of Narendrapur union in the Sadar upazila of Jashore district remain preoccupied with their endeavour to make one of the most crucial equipment required to play the beautiful game.

The Mistiripara region is now commonly known as 'cricket bat village' and just as the name suggests, cricket bats have been made in a local factory for a long time now.

Almost a staggering four lakh bats are made in Mistiripara and other nearby villages like Battala, Mahajerpara and Rupdiya of Narendrapur union. While these bats are sent to different parts of the country for retail, its biggest market

remains the districts in North Bengal.

"We have been making and selling bats for almost five years. My factory makes seven to eight types of bats and everyday a minimum of 100 bats can be made here," said Gourango Majumdar, the owner of a local bat-manufacturing factory.

Gourango, whose economic condition has taken a turn for the better courtesy of his factory, said that they are held back due to the unavailability of a certain type of wood required to make international standard bats.

"If willow wood was available, then we could also make international standard bats like India and Pakistan," said the proud owner.

He also informed that he is not the only one who has expertise in making bats in the region.

"I am not alone in this region, almost everyone here knows how to make bats."



'We'll risk injury to save runs'

ICC

India have the attitude in the field that can help them build towards a third World Cup triumph, according to their specialist coach.

Virat Kohli's side have taken plaudits for their batting and bowling, but the fielding side of their game attracted less attention in the build-up to the ICC Men's World Cup.

Rain washed out the opportunity to showcase this talent when the game against New Zealand at Trent Bridge was abandoned without a ball bowled, leaving both sides unbeaten.

According to Ramakrishnan Sridhar the umpires had no option but to call off proceedings.

India won the tournament in 1983 and 2011, and Sridhar believes that the approach, athleticism and competitive will in the field will help their push this time.

"The biggest thing is the attitude of the fielders where they put the team ahead of themselves," he said. "These are qualities you need to go out and win championships. They are willing to risk injuries to save that one run, which is a great quality to have."

"We have a terrific slip catcher and a safe catcher in Rohit Sharma, and two guys, Virat Kohli and Kedar Jadhav, who are very intimidating to the opposition. They can intimidate any batsman, and they are prowling in the 30-yard range."

"To complement that, we have a player in Hardik Pandya, who can really help when needed."

"These are all the usual suspects, but we saw Yuzvendra Chahal and Jasprit Bumrah crack it up in the last game, diving after bowling long spells, and stopping runs."

"I think the biggest challenge



is to stay consistent, to reduce the time between the good days and bad days. That is integral."

India will consider the fielding element when they take a call on Shikhar Dhawan's return to action. The opener hurt his left thumb during his innings of 117 against Australia at the Oval last Sunday.

Sridhar said: "Throwing won't be a problem, but definitely the impact while fielding and catching [will], especially as he is a slip fielder. That can be an issue."

"We will test him out with lighter balls first and gradually move on to the cricket ball and see how it goes from there, but yes, that will be a challenge."

Rishabh Pant is to join the squad on standby. He will be close by if the selectors opt to make a formal change, with Dhawan likely to be assessed at some point next week.

Sridhar knows what it takes to achieve tournament success having been the fielding coach of India when they won the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup in 2012.

He was elevated to the senior team two years later and has helped to bring about a consistent improvement since.

An example was the performance against Australia.

"We did not have a big total so we had to field out of our skins," Sridhar said. "Fielding is vital in every game. We should expect to out-field our opponents every time but we should also expect our opponents to do the same. We should go out with the best intensity possible."

There will be no lack of that when India resume action in the much-awaited game against neighbours and rivals Pakistan at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Rain threat looms over India-Pakistan

AGENCIES, Manchester

The most awaited encounter of the ongoing World Cup 2019 is just a couple of days away and fans are keeping their fingers crossed in hopes of seeing a 100-over game with no rain interruptions.

India are set to take on archrivals Pakistan at Manchester on Sunday.

The World Cup has witnessed five games being washed out due to unrelenting rain and both India and Pakistan have had their last games abandoned due to inclement weather.

However, fans, and the teams, will be hoping for bright sunshine when they take the field for what is expected to be a cracker of a contest between the two Asian giants.

However, whether there is rain or not, the weather forecast has already put a damper on their hopes. The local weather department predicts that rain will arrive in Manchester on Friday and continue intermittently till Monday.

If less than 15 overs are played, then fans can get a full refund and if 15.1-30 overs are played, they are entitled to 50 per cent refunds. However, there is no such provision for sponsors and broadcasters.

BEST QUOTE



I don't think we have gone anything near our best which is still a good thing. We have six points on the board but are not playing anywhere near our best cricket which is a real positive.

Aaron Finch,
Australia captain

Windies rue what might have been

REUTERS

Listen carefully and when Jofra Archer took aim at the West Indies top order on Friday you might have heard a collective sigh of regret from the Caribbean contingent inside Southampton's Rose Bowl.

In parallel universe, the 24-year-old Barbados-born paceman would have walked out of the West Indies dressing room with his sights set on Jonny Bairstow and Jason Roy.

Instead it was the West Indies batsman shifting uncomfortably in the crease as Archer unleashed the seemingly effortless 90mph bouncers honed in Bridgetown.

It was not quite the impact Archer would have hoped for, however, as Chris Gayle put him in his place with a flurry of boundaries as his first five overs went unrewarded.

Whatever pans out later on Friday, the overriding emotion back in the Caribbean is bound to be how could they have let Archer slip through their grasp.

He was not stolen. Archer's father is English which is how he qualifies for a British passport.

It was his future stepfather Patrick Waithe who introduced

him to cricket though, and Archer quickly developed into a prodigious talent with ball and bat at schoolboy level.

When he shone for the country's under 19s in a regional tournaments it seemed Archer was destined to join an illustrious list of Barbadians to grace the West Indies senior side.

The fateful day he was left out of the squad for the 2014 Under 19 World Cup squad inadvertently paved the way for the impetuous Archer to look elsewhere to fulfil his ambition.

"At the beginning, he really, really wanted to play for West Indies. After being disappointed, his desire changed and it became just a matter of playing international cricket," former team mate Zachary McCaskie told The Times.

He joined English county side Sussex in 2016 and his career took off in 2018 when he signed for Rajasthan Royals in the IPL auction for 800,000 pounds.

Even then, with eligibility rules stating that he needed a seven-year residency to play for England, his ambitions were still on hold.

However, last November, the ECB announced, conveniently, that



they were reducing the eligibility rule to three years in line with ICC regulations.

Suddenly Archer was seen as the X-factor to help England win the tournament on home soil and the clamour to include him grew louder with each passing week.

He has not disappointed either. His display in England's opening win against South Africa was superb. He took three for 27 and anyone still in the dark about Archer's searing pace had only to witness the bouncer that rattled into Hashim Amla's helmet.

Archer took three more wickets against Bangladesh and is England's leading wicket taker in the tournament so far.

One can only imagine the longing looks of those watching the action at Willey Cricket Club back in Bridgetown -- the place where a teenaged Archer once used to smash sixes into the adjacent graveyard and skittle opposition battling lineups.

HAPPY MOMENT



It was a mixed day for the English seaming all-rounder Chirs Woakes against the West Indies. The thirty-year-old dropped a straight forward catch at deep mid-wicket of the dangerous Andre Russell when he was on just three runs at the bowling of Adil Rashid. However, Woakes did get the opportunity to compensate the drop chance when he finally completed a catch to dismiss Russell on 21 runs at the same position, this time the bowler was Mark Wood. A relieved Woakes was ecstatic to hold on to the catch was surely the happy moment of the day for England and especially for Woakes.