

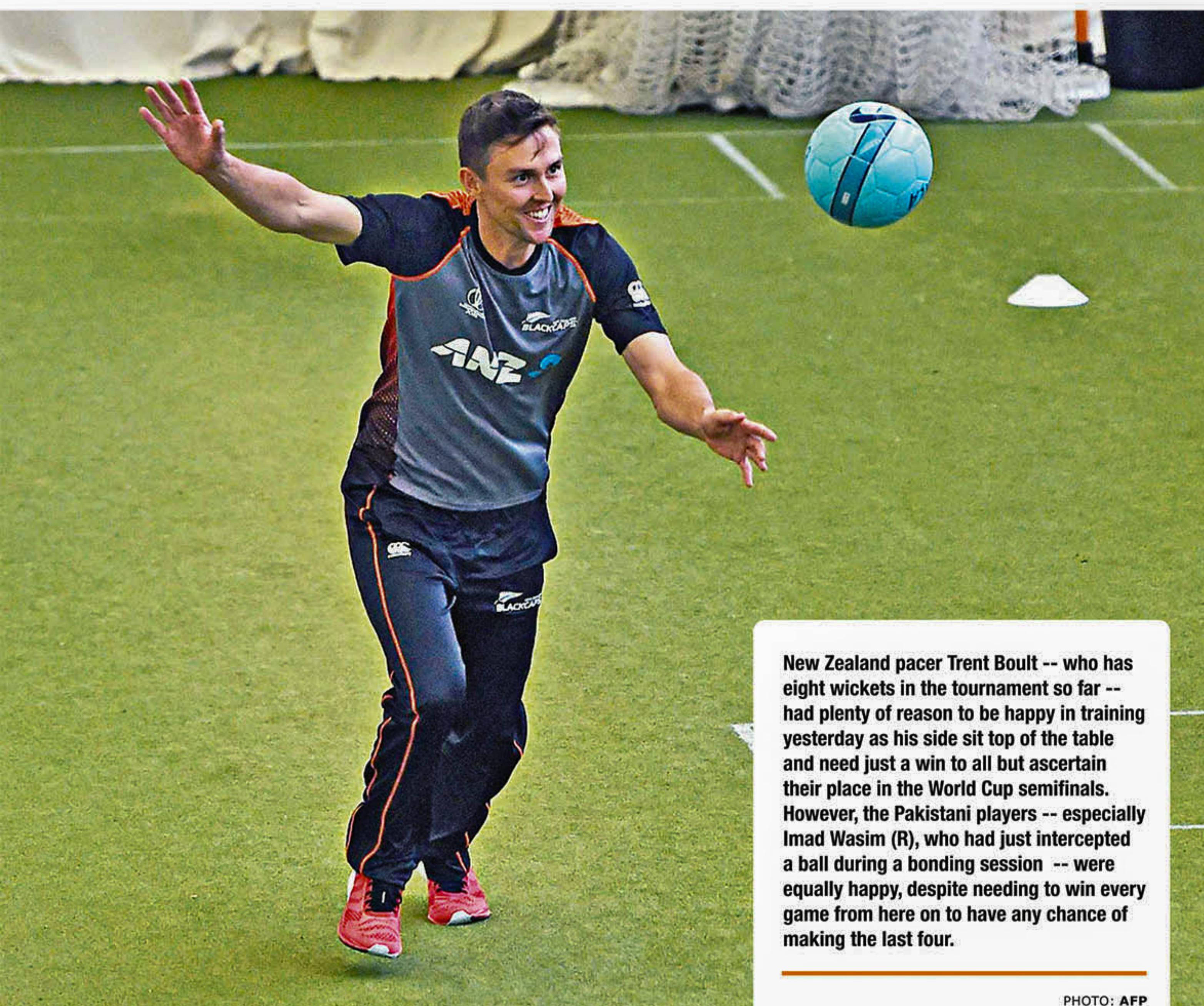


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DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 26, 2019, ASHAR 12, 1426 BS

SPORT

CITY



New Zealand pacer Trent Boult -- who has eight wickets in the tournament so far -- had plenty of reason to be happy in training yesterday as his side sit top of the table and need just a win to all but ascertain their place in the World Cup semifinals. However, the Pakistani players -- especially Imad Wasim (R), who had just intercepted a ball during a bonding session -- were equally happy, despite needing to win every game from here on to have any chance of making the last four.

PHOTO: AFP



MR EFFICIENT



Australia captain Aaron Finch led from the front yet again, registering his 15th ODI hundred and second in the ongoing World Cup against England. He was eventually dismissed exactly on a hundred after facing 116 deliveries, which featured eleven fours and two sixes.

Pakistan hope for fast start to undo flawless Kiwis

ICC

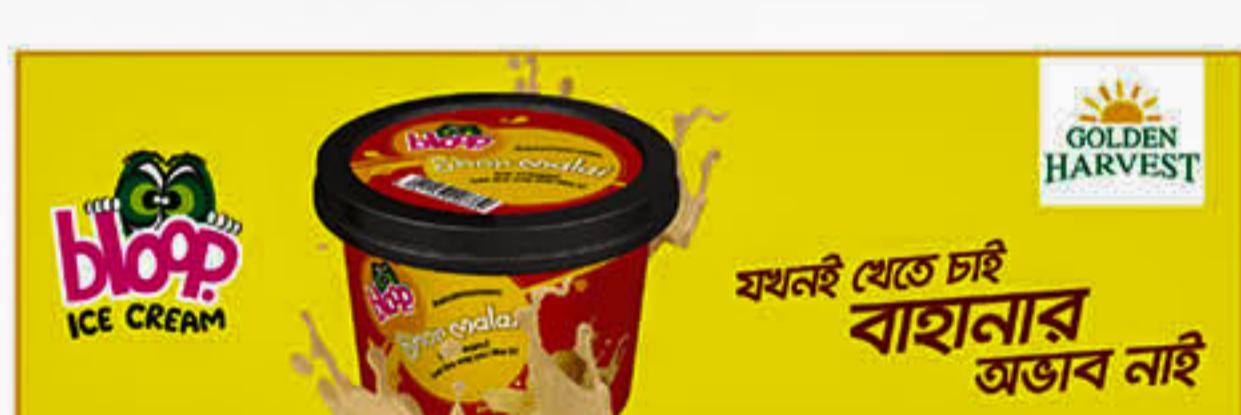
Azhar Mahmood has warned Pakistan they must win the early battles in their clash with New Zealand if they are to stand any chance of toppling the unbeaten Black Caps.

Buoyed by victory over South Africa last time out, a resurgent Pakistan will look to continue their late charge for a semifinal berth at Edgbaston today.

With Haris Sohail starring with the bat at Lord's and the Mohammad Amir sitting atop the list of World Cup wicket-takers, a tight encounter could well ensue against Kane Williamson's in-form side.

But Mahmood, now a bowling coach within the Pakistan setup, insists renewed promise will count for nothing if the Men in Green don't win the battle of the opening powerplay.

"They are a very strong side and have won all their games," he told a press conference ahead



of the game. They've got matchwinners in their side, so it's going to be crucial for us to take wickets with the new ball.

"And when we bat, we need to get runs up front. If we can get our discipline right like last game - in batting, bowling and fielding - then we can beat any side. If we do the basics right, it's just about us, not them."

Still well within the hunt for a top-four berth, Pakistan have been indebted to the exceptional form of Mohammad Amir for helping to keep their qualification hopes alive.

The standout member of the pace attack so far, Amir's form has been held up as a reference point for others within the squad - particularly fellow paceman Hasan Ali.

Yet to play a pivotal role with the ball, Mahmood believes the example of Amir shows a change in fortunes is just around the corner for Hasan.

"I think everyone in cricket, whether you're a batsman or bowler, goes through good and bad form," Mahmood added. "So he's low on confidence. But he's running in, and working hard on and off the field. You can all see that.

"It's just a matter of getting wickets, and he'll be back."

"The same thing happened with Amir, you know. After the Champions Trophy, he was struggling - but still bowling well. Now you can see that he's having a good time. That's what has happened with Hasan Ali as well."

FACTS

Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez has scored 733 runs -- the most by any current Pakistani player -- in the 27 matches he played against New Zealand.

New Zealand's Ross Taylor, who has amassed 1068 runs in the 26 matches against Pakistan, is the highest scorer among the players of both sides' current World Cup squads.

Ross Taylor's unbeaten 131, which came against Pakistan back in 2011 in Pallekele, is the highest individual score by any player on the two sides' current squads to have played each other.

Shoaib Malik has scalped 16 wickets -- the most by any current Pakistani player -- in the 28 matches he played against the Kiwis.

Tim Southee is the highest wicket-taker among the current Kiwis against Pakistan. The right-arm quick has scalped 25 wickets in the 17 matches he played against Pakistan.

INFO ZONE

HEAD TO HEAD IN WORLD CUP

PAKISTAN	WIN	NEW ZEALAND
6	2	2
2	LOSS	6
0	TIE	0
0	NR	0

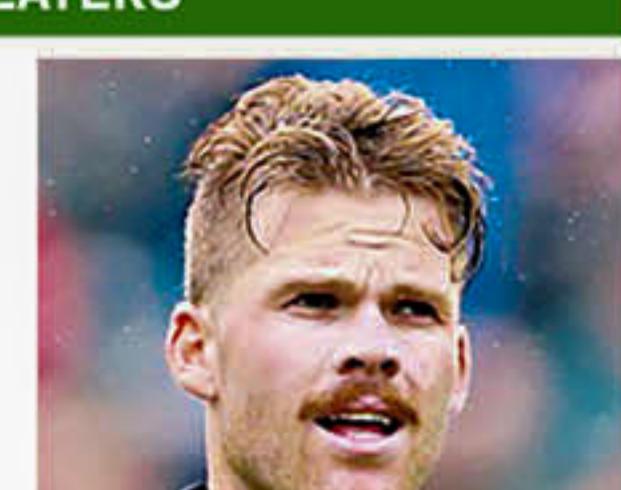
HEAD TO HEAD IN ODIS

PAKISTAN	WIN	NEW ZEALAND
54	48	48
48	LOSS	54
1	TIE	1
3	NR	3

LAST MEETING

November 11 2018 at Dubai International Cricket Stadium. No result.

KEY PLAYERS



PAKISTAN

MOHAMMAD Hafeez	LOCKIE FERGUSON
33.01/38.38	Bat/Bowl Ave
76.68/54.9	Bat/Bowl Strike Rate
38	50s
11	100s
140*	HS
4.18	Econ
4/41	BBM
6536/139	Runs/Wickets
20,0/11	Last Match

NEW ZEALAND

Bat/Bowl Ave	8.85/25.45
Bat/Bowl Strike Rate	50.81/27.8
50s	0
100s	0
HS	0
Econ	547
BBM	5/45
Runs/Wickets	62/60
Last Match	3/59

'We don't want to lose Williamson'

Stead insists after Williamson admits to deliberate over-rate offence

AGENCIES, Manchester

Coach Gary Stead insists the Black Caps' poor over-rate was a one-off and blames the high pressure and noise of Sunday's cliffhanger against West Indies.

The transgression will be high on their list of discussion points as unbeaten New Zealand prepare to face Pakistan in Birmingham on Wednesday (9.30pm NZT) with captain Kane Williamson facing a one-game ban if they transgress again.

Williamson was fined about \$800, 20 per cent of his match fee of about \$4000, by match referee David Boon for the Black Caps being one over short of their stipulated target during their pulsating five-run win over West Indies in Manchester.

The rest of the team were each fined 10 per cent of their match fees under International Cricket Council policy.

It also states if New Zealand commit another minor over-rate breach during the tournament with Williamson in the side, he will face a suspension for a second offence.

With the Black Caps the first team to book their spot in the semifinals and unbeaten in their first six matches, hitting a crucial knockout match without their captain and talisman is near unthinkable.

"We will be talking about it [over rates]. It's certainly something we don't want [a Williamson suspension]. Our record has been really good and the moment the other night probably got to everyone," Stead said.

"It was so noisy and really difficult

to hear. When you get in those pressure moments sometimes you need to take a bit of extra time to be clear. The West Indies were slow as well."

Stead said manager Mike Sandle received a slip of paper from match officials outlining their breach and added they wouldn't challenge the decision.

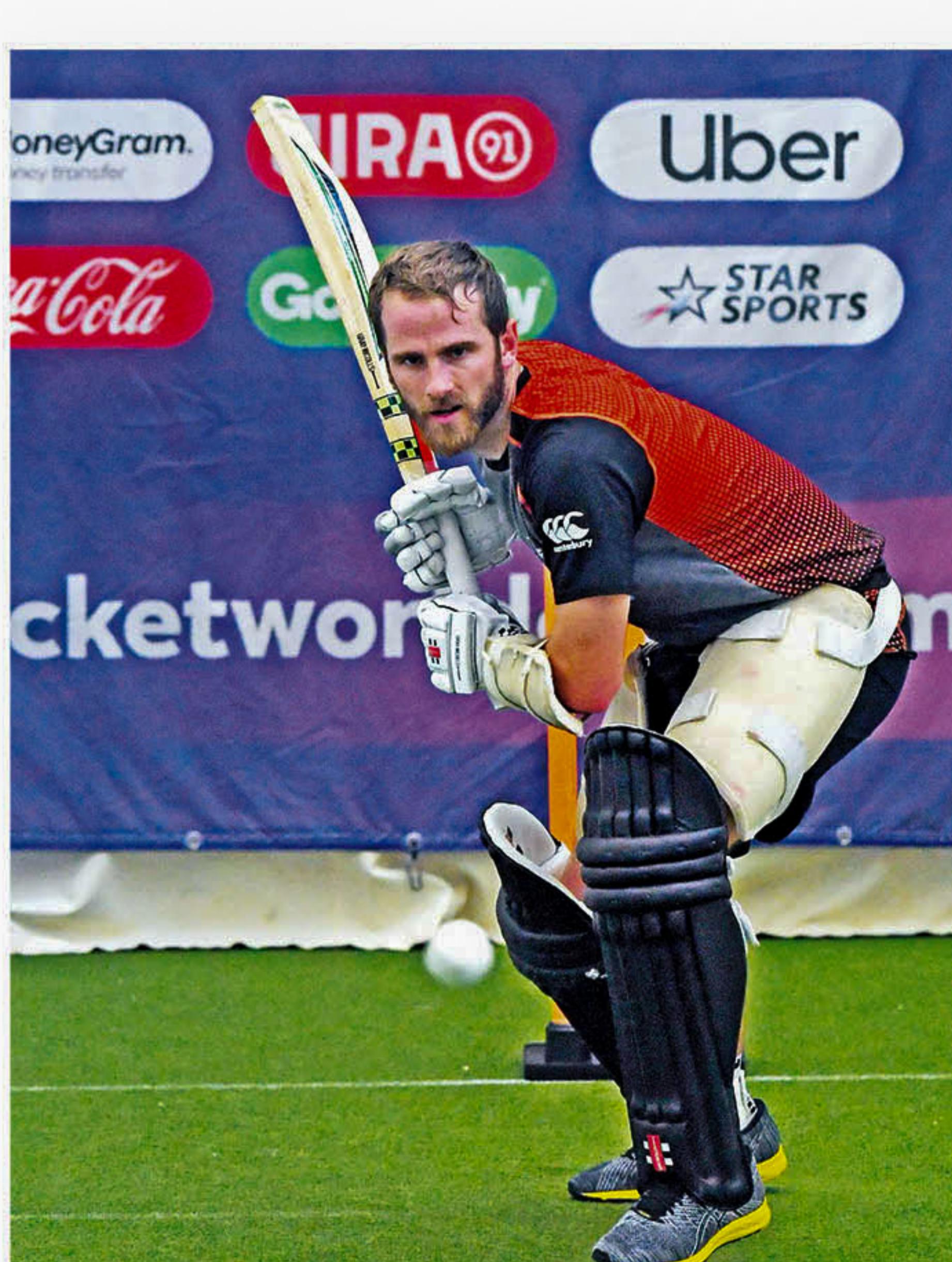
They also wouldn't take drastic on-field measures to try and address it and ensure Williamson isn't hit with a ban.

"It's the first time in my involvement with the team, maybe 20 ODIs, that we've had this. I understand the ICC have things they need to clamp down on. We don't want to lose Kane so it's something we will be chatting about."

Williamson addressed the issue too with media in Birmingham, saying closing out victory amid the batting carnage caused by Carlos Brathwaite was the priority.

"There are a number of parts to it and the umpires do keep you noted in terms of your over rate. We were very close, and then when the game got tight, I thought in the back of my mind that we were going to be a little bit slow," Williamson said.

"But I thought what was more important was trying to make sure we were clear in what we were trying to do as a team, and then cop the charge at the end. There was a lot going on and naturally when it comes down to the last couple of balls you are perhaps having a few more conversations. Unfortunately we were an over short."



An average of 168.5 and two match-winning centuries in the 2019 World Cup paints a perfect picture of the impact that New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson has had on his side at the World Cup and he will be hoping to keep that impressive form alive in today's match against Pakistan.

PHOTO: AFP