

SPORT

ICC could award 2024 T20 WC to USA

AGENCIES

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is expected to give the nod to a joint USA-West Indies bid for the 2024 T20 World Cup, as a platform for cricket's inclusion in the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

According to a report in Sydney Morning Herald, a "decision on venues for ICC events in the next cycle was imminent, and that an outward, global focus would mean they were more widely distributed than in the recent past."

This would be the first global tournament not hosted by either India, England or Australia since the 2014 T20 World Cup in Bangladesh. Under changes that same year wrought by the "big three" — the Board of Control for Cricket in India, the England and Wales Cricket Board and Cricket Australia — every event between 2015 and 2023 was awarded to one of the game's richest three countries.

The ICC has been for a long time looking to give emerging countries the hosting rights for the mega events.

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NEW ZEALAND
Vs AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA
172 for 4
in 20 overs
(Williamson 85, Guptill
28, Phillips 18;
Zampa 1-26,
Hazlewood 3-16,
Starc 0-60)



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson and Glenn Phillips run between the wickets during their 68-run third-wicket partnership against Australia in the ICC T20 World Cup final in Dubai yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



A World Cup to remember

MAZHAR UDDIN FROM DUBAI

T20 Men's T20 World Cup 2021
It was a huge challenge for the governing body of world cricket to stage the ICC T20 World Cup in the UAE while adapting to the norms of the new normal against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Life inside bio-secure bubbles has taken a toll on players and officials and even the media personnel who came to cover the flagship event were not given a reprieve in cricket's first major event since the pandemic.

However, despite all that, there was no shortage of drama, emotion, agony or heartbreak in the T20 World Cup this time around, which is undoubtedly an event that will be remembered for a long time.

It was a nightmare for Bangladesh, who started their campaign with a shock loss to Scotland before a roller-coaster ride saw Mahmudullah Riyad and his troops reach the Super 12 stage, but their fortunes remained unchanged.

Although they came close to beating Sri Lanka and West Indies, they returned home after suffering defeats in all five Super 12 games.

Bangladesh's off-field incidents also made headlines as some heated comments by senior players during press conferences courted plenty of controversy.

The tournament did witness some brilliant



cricket as a spirited Pakistan were clinical throughout the Super 12 stage, getting a famous 10-wicket win over archrivals India in their opening game only to splice things up in the semifinal against Australia.

On the other hand, India bowed out of from group stages for the first time in the history of the T20 World Cup while associate nations Namibia and Scotland showed the world what they are capable of on the biggest stage.

England had also come out all-guns-blazing and in their attempt to live up to the tag of favourites, Eoin Morgan's side played a truly outstanding brand of cricket.

Ios Buttler struck the maiden hundred of the T20 World Cup against Sri Lanka as belief in the English lifting the trophy grew, but they were undone by a clinical New Zealand in a semifinal that will undoubtedly go down as one of the best games of the tournament.

The Kiwis eventually avenged their heartbreaking loss in the final of the 50-over 2019 World Cup in similarly dramatic fashion, courtesy of Daryl Mitchell's blistering unbeaten 72 in chase of 167.

Australia were not considered among the favourites but they kept doing the basics right to secure a last-four spot. Aaron Finch's side then dismantled high-flying Pakistan in another epic semifinal clash, which saw Matthew Wade smite three consecutive sixes to Shaeen Afridi and getting 22 runs in the over to register a thumping five-wicket win.

Despite losing their semifinal, Pakistan's wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan won hearts following his heroic showing. The cricketer had spent two days in the ICU prior to the game due to a severe chest infection but went on to strike a blistering 67 against the Aussies regardless.

The spectators also played a vital part in marking the event as a success and despite the UAE not taking part in the global event, teams received great support from the stands in the mega event.

England fans turn Kiwi supporters

AFP, Dubai



Scores of England and Pakistan fans turned up for the Twenty20 World Cup final with allegiances switched for the day to Kane Williamson's New Zealand in Sunday's trans-Tasman contest.

Both Australia and New Zealand were gunning for their maiden T20 World Cup crown in Dubai after defying predictions from pundits of an England-Pakistan title clash.

Eoin Morgan's England went down to the Black Caps in the first semi-final and Australia broke Pakistan hearts through a Matthew Wade blitz to chase down 177.

"I hoped England was going to be here, so I bought the tickets in the flight and then we got knocked out, but I wanted to come anyway," Simon Lawrence, who flew in to watch the final from London, told AFP.

The 45-year-old software professional admits that the Kiwis deserved to win in spite of the "shock and distress" it caused him. He says he is now a New Zealand fan for one day but believes Australia have got "the best team, unfortunately".

Mark Lewis, another England supporter who came in from the United Kingdom with his partner, said England peaked too early in the tournament.

"I thought they (England) might (win) but they played too well too soon to be fair," Lewis told AFP.

"They were going good but lost to South Africa. And we were on the flight when they lost to New Zealand."

"Looking forward to a good game. It's hard to call. I think Australia will beat New Zealand but the Kiwis beat a better team (in the semi-final) so they have come in strong as well."

Plenty of people sporting Pakistan T-shirts trickled in to the venue in the scorching Dubai heat, still carrying the disappointment of Pakistan's loss in the knockout game after an unbeaten streak in the Super 12 stage.

"Very annoying that Matthew Wade's last over - the triple six," 12-year-old Saafyan Choudhary told AFP.

"I am Pakistani-English, so hoped that one of them got through, but neighbours Australia and New Zealand got here," Saafyan said.

Virat Kohli's India suffered an early exit after going down to Pakistan and then New Zealand in their opening two matches to leave their semi-final fate on others.

New Zealand's win over Afghanistan eliminated India from the contest, but a few Indian fans still came in to watch the finals. "It is disappointing that India is not here but that's the reason why I got the ticket so easily yesterday," Manish Garg, who arrived from India on a business assignment, told AFP.



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FINANCE

'Rebuilding team morale is key'

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI


Bangladesh team will look to regain lost confidence in the upcoming series against Pakistan following a disastrous T20 World Cup campaign in UAE recently. The Tigers had notched series wins against Australia and New Zealand at home ahead of the World Cup but their preparations on slow, docile pitches left them with obvious deficiencies while their qualities proved not to be quite adequate for the challenges of a World Cup.

Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, mentor to many national team players, spoke to The Daily Star on the challenges facing the team for the Pakistan series and how the team morale can be rebuilt now.

"Given the team morale, I don't think they are in a position to do well in international cricket even though I don't know who will feature in the side. I have said before that the preparation we took at home, affected us negatively," Fahim said.

Questions would be asked as to why the players could not make up for bad preparation and adjust. The reality though cannot be escaped regarding the T20 abilities of the side.

"We're not that good a T20 team. People may say that Australia have done well after playing here, and even though Australia didn't bring everyone, had they played here for over a year they would forget their own game," Fahim opined.

The disaster got out of hand and the team did not show the ability to fight back after the Sri Lanka game. Fahim has great experience of handling national and upcoming stars. He had his say on the team's mental state at the World Cup.

"I would say the environment around the team was one of disrespect and mistrust with the players on one side and the management on the other. The players had to overcome the challenge but they did not find mental strength. The players were on separate islands of their own in regards to mental balance. If the environment was positive, they could have made a comeback."

"The batsmen had a lack of confidence after playing on such surfaces at home while the message we sent to the bowlers were that they were terrific. We didn't tell the bowlers that those surfaces were



not the real world. Because the home series were connected to our World Cup preparations, it created problems."

Where do the team go from here?

"Right now, rebuilding team morale is key. We need someone to correct the individual trust and relationships. The skill at the moment is secondary," Fahim said. The conditions might once again be in focus but Fahim believes the focus should be on performing in adverse conditions. "Pakistan will have the upper hand even here. We're not in

"Change has to come slowly. It will be risky to change drastically. You have to understand that we sent these players to the World Cup because they were the best of the bunch. If you change half the team overnight, it means the vision was wrong heading to the World Cup. I don't think the vision was all wrong. Change has to be gradual because the replacement players aren't ready yet. You can lose a series but the thing is you have to face up to losses and rebuild for the longer term," Fahim concluded.



Tamim 'disappointed' to sit out Pakistan series

SPORTS REPORTER



After the latest T20 World Cup debacle, Bangladesh are already struggling to regroup as they prepare to face a stern test in their upcoming series against Pakistan, which includes three T20Is and two Tests, later this month.

The ominous phase for the country's cricket seems to be prolonging with Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal now ruled out of the two Tests against Pakistan as his injury to the left thumb resurfaced. "I was desperate to make my return with this series. But I am very disappointed that this happened and now I have to sit out the series against Pakistan," Tamim told The Daily Star yesterday.

The left-hander, who had opted out of the T20 World Cup from which the Tigers crashed out after losing six of their eight clashes, was already unlikely to participate in the T20Is against Pakistan. And now his exclusion from the Test series has come as a major blow for Bangladesh as the Tigers will have to begin their second season of the World Test Championship without the southpaw.

Tamim had picked up the injury while playing

in the Everest Premier League in Nepal last October and was on his way to recovery following around a month of rest.

However, the left-handed opener, who began practising a few days ago as part of his recovery, seemed to have been struggling while playing fast bowlers at the nets. That prompted him to undergo a scan on Sunday which revealed his injury had aggravated.

Bangladesh already have a few injury concerns in the side with all-rounders Mohammad Saifuddin and Shakib Al Hasan, both of whom were ruled out of the T20 World Cup midway, still recovering from a recurring back injury and a hamstring injury, respectively.

However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) informed that it will meet regarding the injury issues of the side today.

"There are a number of injury issues in the side. After getting the full injury report from the BCB medical team, we will sit for a meeting tomorrow [Monday]. We can confirm anything only after this meeting," informed BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin to The Daily Star yesterday.

It was, however, learned that Tamim, who last featured for Bangladesh in July this year in an ODI against Zimbabwe, is considering going abroad for further check-up.