



England captain Jos Buttler will look to redeem himself and lend some respectability to the floundering defending champions' camapaign when they face an in-form Australia, led by Pat Cummins, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad today.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Cummins feels faltering England still ‘dangerous’

AFP, Ahmedabad

Australia skipper Pat Cummins on Friday said he was “a little bit surprised” at England’s disappointing show at the World Cup but still rates them as “dangerous” opponents.

The two Ashes rivals meet on Saturday with third-placed Australia looking to further boost their semi-final hopes with a win at the world’s biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

The five-time winners will be without two key players in Glenn Maxwell and Mitchell Marsh and only have 13 players left in the squad.

Defending champions England remain on the brink of World Cup elimination with five losses in six matches and another defeat would officially knock them out of the final-four race.

“Yeah, a little bit surprised, they’ve obviously got some class players and performed really well in these kind of tournaments over the last few years,” Cummins said.

“These tournaments are pretty fickle. You see it in T20 tournaments around the world,

sometimes the best-looking teams just don’t start off well and then find it hard to kind of gain ground.”

England knocked Australia out of the 2019 World Cup in the semi-finals and went on to win their maiden title.

Cummins still believes England have the players to put up a stiff challenge on Saturday.

“They’ve got a lot of similar personnel, so they’re going to be dangerous tomorrow,” said Cummins. “You’ve got to be careful of any team with that kind of calibre of players.”

The two teams come into the contest with memories of their thrilling and acrimonious Ashes series, which ended 2-2, still fresh.

Cummins said the historic rivalry will be an added incentive to win the match and boost their semi-final push.

“I mean it helps our chances to get into the semis so that’s probably the overarching feeling of winning this one,” said Cummins.

“It’s an old rivalry. You’re not going to lie, if they beat us, I know it’s probably just that little bit sweeter than beating other teams.

“And the same with their history of how



well they’ve done in white ball cricket. It would be a great win.”

Australia are well-placed to reach the semi-finals after winning four games, but the loss of Maxwell and Marsh has been a blow to them.

Cummins said they expect to book a place in the final four and move into the business end free of injuries.

“We need to obviously make the semi-finals, but hopefully this is the last little kind of hiccup where we’ve got a smaller squad to pick from and then once we get closer, we’ve got a full squad,” said Cummins.

“But I’ve kind of got in my mind the main 11, the way that we want to play, but really happy with our squad.”

- England and Australia played the first-ever ODI in the history of cricket when they faced off in Melbourne in 1971 for a 40-over game.
 - The two sides have faced off in 155 ODIs out of which 87 matches have been won by Australia. England have 63 victories to their name, while two matches have ended in a tie and three produced no results.
 - Australia hold a 6-3 advantage over
- England in World Cup meetings.
- Australia leg-spinner Adam Zampa, who is amongst the leading wicket-takers in the tournament with 16 wickets in six matches, has the best average (23.47) amongst active players having scalped 23 wickets in 11 matches in Australia-England encounters.
 - Australia have won four out of the last five matches against England, including a 3-0 series win last year.

Howe has transformed Newcastle, says Arteta

AFP, London

Mikel Arteta says Eddie Howe has “transformed” Newcastle as he prepares to take his unbeaten Arsenal team to face the high-flying Magpies at St James’ Park on Saturday.

Arsenal, last year’s Premier League runners-up, are second in the table behind Tottenham after seven wins and three draws in 10 games.

But they suffered a chastening 3-1 midweek defeat against West Ham in the League Cup, on the same evening that Newcastle beat Manchester United 3-0 at Old Trafford.

“We know the standards and we know that the way we played, especially in the second half the other day was not good enough,” said Arteta, who made multiple changes at the London Stadium on Wednesday.

The Spaniard said St James’ Park was one of the “toughest places” to win.

“We’ve done it and there is nothing



new to it, we know what we’re expecting,” he said. “It is very clear what they do, what their strengths are, and where the opportunities are for us. We will try to take the game where we want.”

Arteta said Howe deserved huge credit for the job he has done since taking over late in 2021, weeks after a Saudi-backed consortium bought the club.

Sixth-placed Newcastle beat struggling Manchester United despite a much-changed line-up and are also playing in the Champions League this season.

“I think he has transformed the club, the environment, the atmosphere and what he created in the team as well,” said Arteta.

“They have such a belief in what they do and that’s a huge compliment to him for what they’ve done.”

Arteta said the Premier League was becoming ever more competitive, with a clutch of clubs within striking distance of early pacesetters Tottenham.

Tigresses take on Pakistan in 1st Women’s ODI today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women’s team will take on Pakistan in the first Women’s ODI of the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka today in a bid to improve their standing in the ICC Women’s Championship.

Bangladesh are currently ranked ninth in the 10-team competition with just one win in nine games.

The Nigar Sultan-led side could count themselves a bit unlucky as three of those matches ended in no-result due to inclement weather.

Now, the Tigresses have a chance to make upward strides in the league, where the top five teams and hosts India will secure a spot in the forthcoming edition of the women’s 50-over World Cup in 2025.

“The points up for grabs in this ODI series are very important for us. We all know what a good team Pakistan are. Our plan will be to go match by match,” Nigar told the media a day before the series.

Both Bangladesh and Pakistan have won six matches against each other in 12 encounters in the format.

Nigar hopes that her team will carry the momentum from their 2-1 win in the preceding Twenty20 series against the same opponents and that every member of the team would contribute towards a victory.

“I want everyone in the team to contribute. We definitely have match winners in our team but all of us need to play as a unit and support them,” said the wicketkeeper-batter.

The women’s team’s T20 series win over Pakistan provided some relief for the country’s cricket fans who are dealing with the utter disappointment the men’s team have dished out in the ongoing World Cup.

Nigar shielded the men’s team and asked the fans to support the Tigers.

“They are going through a strenuous period. Whatever they are trying to do, it’s not coming off. That doesn’t mean we can’t play better cricket. As a player, as a cricket fan, all of us need to back them.”



R’ganj keep last eight hopes alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj MFS kept their Independence Cup’s quarterfinal hopes alive when they came from behind to hand a 4-1 defeat to Bangladesh Air Force FT in their third and final group fixture in Munshiganj yesterday.

The outcome helped Rahmatganj level with second-placed Sheikh Russel KC in the four-team group, with equal four points and goal difference, but the latter have played a game less. Rahmatganj will be banking on Abahani to defeat Sheikh Russell in Group B’s final match on Saturday in order to progress into the knockout stage.

At Birshreshtha Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium, Jewel Mia gave a 32-minute lead to winless Air Force who, however, could only hold on to the lead for a minute.

After Murad Hossain levelled the margin, Samin Yasar gave Rahmatganj the lead at the stroke of half-time.

Samin again struck in the 55th minute before Air Force’s Abbas Sattar was given marching order. Rofiqul Islam went on to cap off the victory with a strike in stoppage time.

Shadman, Naeem hit double centuries

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Metro batters Naeem Islam and Shadman Islam notched up their career-best scores with both reaching double centuries to propel their side to 601 for five against Sylhet Division on the second day of their National Cricket League fixture in Cox’s Bazar yesterday.

At the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium, in reply, Sylhet raced off to 101 for no loss in the final 20 overs of the day, courtesy of a fifty from opener Taufil Khan Tushar and an unbeaten 42-run knock from Zakir Hasan as they trail by 500 runs.

Having started the day at 359 for two, with Shadman and Naeem unbeaten on 157 and 104, Metro piled on the runs as the former was first to the double-century milestone. Naeem caught up soon after but had to lose his partner to left-arm spinner Nabil Samad, breaking a 434-run stand for the third wicket.

Shadman had put away 28 fours and a solitary six in his 437-ball 250, while Naeem smashed five sixes and 23 fours for his 278 ball 221 before being dismissed by Nabil.

Meanwhile, at the Shaheed AHM Kamaruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi, Rangpur Division ended the day at 20 for the loss of one as they trail by 143 in response to Dhaka Division’s 321.

Earlier, Dhaka added 247 runs to their overnight total of 47 for two, courtesy of Nadif Chowdhury’s 93 and an unlikely 57 from pacer Sumon Khan.

Elsewhere, at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, Chattogram Division managed to reduce Barishal Division to 196 for nine after getting bundled out for 298. Barishal’s Fazle Mahmud Rabbi remained unbeaten on 54 runs at stumps and would hope to chip away at Barishal’s lead.

At the Sylhet Academy Ground, Khulna Division’s Imrul Kayes scored a century (115 off 187) and had able support in Soumya Sarker (86) and Nurul Hasan Sohan (93 not out) as Khulna took a 240-run lead after bundling out Rajshahi Division for 185.

