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‘Smith, Warner must ride the storm in South Africa’

SYDNEY: Steve Smith and David Warner will be ready for whatever South African crowds throw at them when the Australia batsmen return to the nation two years after the ball-tampering scandal, pace-man Josh Hazlewood has said. The pair will fly out with the Australia squad on Friday for a limited overs tour in the duo's first visit to the country since serving 12-month bans for their parts in the tampering plot during the Cape Town Test. Both were jeered relentlessly by

tional fold after their bans expired last March. Smith played a leading role in Australia's retention of the Ashes while Warner was awarded the Allan Border Medal for the third time on Monday as the country's top cricketer in 2019. Local media have reported that the head of the national players' union will tour with the side in South Africa to offer extra support for the players. Hazlewood said Smith and War-



English crowds during last year's one-day World Cup and the following Ashes series, and Hazlewood said they would be unfazed by more hostility.

“Steve and Dave have ticked off pretty much every box since coming back,” Hazlewood told reporters in Sydney on Thursday. “It's just another one of those and I don't think it'll faze them one bit. They probably play better when it's like this. It's nothing we haven't experienced before ... we'll be fine.”

Both Smith and Warner have thrived since returning to the na-

ner would not need to be shielded. “They'll probably try to take as much heat as they can actually, try to keep the young guys out of the spotlight,” added the paceman.

Hazlewood said engaging positively with fans was the best way to defuse them.

“Join in and try to have a good time with them. Often when you do that, they end up being on your side after a couple of overs,” he said. “It is when you fight them that it becomes to and fro, and quite abusive. Ride the storm and go along with it.”

French Open to be Federer's only claycourt appearance in 2020

Press Trust Of India

LONDON :Roger Federer will make his only appearance on clay this season at Roland Garros, his agent has told Reuters. The Swiss skipped the entire claycourt season in 2017 and 2018 and last year played only two tournaments on the surface before arriving in Paris for the French Open. There was speculation that Federer would include the Madrid and Rome Masters in his truncated schedule for 2020 but his agent, Tony Godsick, said

that was not the case. “As his schedule states, he plans on playing just Roland Garros,” Godsick told Reuters. The 38-year-old has been cutting down on the number of tournaments he plays over the last few years in a bid to prolong his career.

Unlike his main rivals, Federer, who won the last of his 20 Grand Slam titles in 2018 at Melbourne Park, opted out of the inaugural ATP Cup in Australia to spend more time with his family before launching his 22nd season on Tour.

‘ALL SET FOR PSL MATCHES IN KARACHI’



KARACHI: Senior Sindh government officials in a meeting on Thursday said security arrangements for the Pakistan Super League's inaugural matches are fully in place while the beautification of the city and the National Stadium is under process.

Sindh Chief Secretary Mumtaz Ali Shah presided over the meeting at his office that was convened to discuss and finalise the arrangements for the matches of PSL-5 scheduled to begin in Karachi on Feb 20.

Commissioner Karachi Iftikhar Shallwani informed the

meeting that he was in constant touch with the police, paramilitary Rangers and Pakistan Army as all security arrangements had been finalised while the city and the national stadium were being beautified.

The meeting discussed security and traffic plans, beautification of the city and other arrangements. “It is a matter of great honour that the inaugural match of the PSL-5 is being played in Karachi,” Mumtaz Shah said, adding, the provincial government had always extended full cooperation to the Paki-

stan Cricket Board (PCB) as it had made excellent arrangements in the previous PSL tournament that the PCB had praised. “This time again we will decorate the city in a befitting manner,” the chief Secretary said, asking officers of the city administration, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, district municipalities, cantonment boards and other concerned agencies to initiate beautification arrangements under the supervision of the city commissioner. “Presence of officers and staff of K-Electric, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board

and Sindh Solid Waste Management Authority should also be ensured in the scheme,” he said.

The PCB officials said the success of PSL without the help of Sindh government would have not been possible. “This time the number of foreign players and officials is much greater than before as officials of the International Cricket Council, Bangladesh and South Africa cricket boards are coming here as well,” said a senior PCB official.

The PCB officials said players had already started arriving, adding, in the view of the event

of such huge importance, a large number of cricket lovers are expected to turn out and fill in the stadium. Additional Inspector General of Police Karachi Ghulam Nabi Memon informed the meeting that in addition to traffic and parking plans, the security plan of international standard had been devised for the PSL-5.

Sindh home secretary, PCB officials, concerned deputy commissioners, representatives of the Sindh Rangers, officials of civic bodies and other officials attended the meeting.



South Africa call off proposed Pakistan tour citing workload

Press Trust Of India

JOHANNESBURG : South Africa have ruled out participation in a proposed T20 series in Pakistan following their India tour next month, citing players' workload.

The tour will be rescheduled at a

later date suitable to both the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Cricket South Africa (CSA), reported ‘ESPNCricinfo’. South Africa play three ODIs in India from March 12 to 18 and the tour of Pakistan for three T20s in Rawalpindi was planned after that.

South Africa are currently playing

T20s against England after competing in four Tests and three ODIs.

After the three T20s against England, the Proteas will host Australia for three ODIs and as many T20s with the last match ending on March 7, leaving less than a week in between for the series-opener in India at Dharamsala.

INDIA - NZ XI WARM-UP GAME

Three openers fail seam and bounce test before Vihari, Pujara come to rescue

Press Trust Of India

HAMILTON : Hanuma Vihari's gutsy hundred and the seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara's 92 were the bright spots in an otherwise dreadful batting performance by India on the first day of their warm-up game against New Zealand XI here.

All the three designated openers -- Mayank Agarwal (1), Prithvi Shaw (0) and Shubman Gill (0) -- failed the seam and bounce test, falling cheaply.

With skipper Virat Kohli opting for an intense net session over the warm-up game, India managed only 263 with none apart from Vihari (101 retired) and Pujara able to score even 20 runs on a Seddon Park track that had liberal grass covering.

What would worry the Indian team management

was failure of all the three openers. Shaw and Gill were undone by the extra bounce while Agarwal failed to counter to seam movement. New Zealand pacer Scott Kuggeleijn (3/40) got the ball to rear up awkwardly from length during his first spell and Shaw's dismissal was the ugliest one.

Kuggeleijn, who was hitting the deck hard, got one into Shaw's rib-cage leaving the batsman in no position to duck. The eyes were not on the ball with the bat face closed. The awkward hit ballooned up and was taken by Rachin Ravindra at short leg. Agarwal, who has been in horrible form of late, then edged an away going delivery to keeper Dane Cleaver behind the stumps.

Another classic Test match dismissal was Gill, who was given the no.4 slot in absence of skipper Kohli.

RONALDO

penalty snatches Juventus first-leg draw at MILAN

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo's injury-time penalty grabbed Juventus a 1-1 draw at AC Milan in their Italian Cup semi-final, first leg as his incredible scoring run continued. The 35-year-old has now scored 12 goals in his last eight games in all competitions after the Portuguese ultimately got the better of old rival Zlatan Ibrahimovic despite being largely anonymous for much of the match. Milan paid for Theo Hernandez's 71st-minute red card on Thursday as they failed to close out a game they had dominated for long periods and led through Ante Rebic.

Juve will now be favourites to finish the job in the second leg at the Allianz Stadium next month, with a final against either Inter Milan or Napoli up for grabs. The hosts started strongly, with Ibrahimovic heading over the crossbar inside the first minute.

He continued to be a threat to his former club early on, but could only direct an ambitious back-heel flick beyond the far post, before picking up a booking which will see him miss the second leg through suspension. Juventus finally produced their first shot in anger nine minutes before half-time, as Juan Cuadrado saw his low strike well saved by Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Milan started the second half as they did the first, on the front foot, but Rebic was denied an opening goal by Gianluigi Buffon. Samu Castillejo also called

Buffon into action seven minutes after the break, with the 42-year-old goalkeeper able to make a comfortable save.

Stefano Pioli's side finally made the breakthrough in the 61st minute, though, as Castillejo's clipped cross was volleyed home at the back post by Rebic. Juventus were gifted a way back into the game with 18 minutes remaining as Hernandez was handed a second yellow card for a late challenge on Paulo Dybala. That prompted the 13-time winners to be-latedly pile some pressure on the home goal, and Donnarumma had to be alert to keep out Matthijs de Ligt's header. Dybala curled wide with five minutes remaining, but Juve were awarded a spot-kick in the final minute of normal time as VAR spotted a handball by Davide Calabria.

Ronaldo stepped up and slammed the ball down the middle to score his 24th goal of the season. Six minutes of injury-time gave the visitors hope of clinching an unlikely victory, but Milan at least held on for a draw to keep their bid for a first Cup crown since 2003 alive.

On Wednesday, Napoli struck first blood in their semi-final as Gennaro Gattuso's men downed Serie A leaders Inter Milan 1-0 at the San Siro, with Fabian Ruiz scoring the winner. The last-four second legs will take place on March 4 and 5, with the final on May 13 at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

