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ICC designates India v Pakistan warm-up game as ‘Catch the Spirit’ match

Proceeds to go to education fund to support families of the victims of Lahore terror attack and Peace and Sport community projects across the Asian subcontinent

Cricket stakeholders will be encouraged to support the cause

The International Cricket Council (ICC) today announced that the ICC World Twenty20 2009 warm-up encounter between India and Pakistan at The Oval on 3 June had been designated as a ‘Catch the Spirit’ match.

Funds raised through a variety of means during the game will go to support the families of the victims of the attack on the Sri Lanka team and match officials in Lahore in March, as well as Peace and Sport* projects across the Asian subcontinent.

Commenting on the initiative, ICC President David Morgan said: “The decision to designate the India – Pakistan encounter as a ‘Catch the Spirit’ match follows a recommendation by the ICC Board at its most recent meeting, in Dubai in April.

“The Board wanted to do something to assist the families of the victims of the terror attacks on the Sri Lanka team and match officials in March, and using this high-profile match with a sell-out crowd as a vehicle to do that makes excellent sense.

“‘Catch the Spirit’ is one of the themes of the ICC’s ongoing centenary year of 2009 and it highlights the respect with which the game is played around the world.

“We are extremely grateful to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the hosts, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Surrey County Cricket Club, for allowing the match to take place under this banner.

“And we are also grateful to ESPN STAR Sports, the ICC’s global broadcast partner, which is covering the match, for providing an excellent vehicle for the fund-raising efforts.

“We hope this match, watched by millions both at the ground and around the world will portray cricket in a positive light, make a positive contribution to the lives of those affected by those terrible events in March and contribute to assisting community-based projects across the Asian subcontinent that promote peace through cricket.”

Fund-raising methods on the day will include requests for contributions from spectators inside the ground, donations from appeals via broadcast and internet coverage of the match and contributions from cricket stakeholders and other parties.

Details of how people can contribute will be announced in due course.

The match is scheduled to start at 1730 British Summer Time (GMT + one hour).

Commenting on the initiative, BCCI President and ICC director Shashank Manohar said: “Cricket has a special power to bring people together. It is in keeping with the spirit of cricket that the BCCI will be supporting this cause.”

PCB Chairman and ICC director Ijaz Butt said: “The attack in Lahore was a terrible shock and we have immense sympathy for all those who were affected by the incident.

“The PCB provided support to the families of the victims immediately after the attack and it is encouraging to see the rest of the cricket world coming together in this way.”

Giles Clarke, Chairman of the ECB and an ICC director, said: “The ECB is delighted to be hosting the ‘Catch the Spirit’ match at The Oval. It is an excellent example of our great sport showing a great spirit, pulling together in a thoroughly worthy cause, and if cricket can be a vehicle for good then that has to be the right thing to do.

“I hope spectators at the ground and those following the game all around the world get behind this initiative and make it the success it deserves to be.”

Joël Bouzou, the President and founder of Peace and Sport, said: “Peace and Sport fully supports the ICC’s initiative.

“Cricket has a natural disposition to serve peace as it’s a very popular sport with great capacity to unite people: plus it has huge educational benefit.

“Peace and Sport is delighted to be able to act as the operational relay for funds generated by the ICC in order to create sustainable projects for peace through sport in this region which has greatly suffered.

“This partnership is totally in keeping with our organisation’s initiative, which has the objective of uniting decision-makers from sport and politics so that they pool their resources and expertise within structured projects.”

In celebration of the spirit and diversity of cricket, ‘Catch the Spirit’ activities are being hosted across the world in 2009, the ICC’s centenary year, bringing together cricketers across continents, countries and communities.

The India – Pakistan match is one of 12 warm-up matches that are taking place on 1, 2 and 3 June at Lord’s, The Oval and Trent Bridge ahead of the men’s tournament, which starts on 5 June at Lord’s when the host England takes on the Netherlands.

ESPN STAR Sports will be covering live 10 of those warm-up matches as well as all 27 matches in the men’s tournament and the two semi-finals and final in the women’s tournament, which take place ahead of the men’s matches on the same day and at the same venues.

Matches in the group stage of the women's tournament will take place at Taunton between 11 and 16 June.

**A limited number of tickets are still available for the ICC World Twenty20 2009.
Further details can be found at: <https://eticketing.co.uk/icwt20>**

The ICC World Twenty20 2009 involves 12 of the top men's teams and the top eight women's line-ups playing at four venues in the pinnacle of international cricketing action.

The defending men's champion is India, which beat Pakistan in the final of the inaugural event, in South Africa in 2007. This is the first staging of the women's tournament.

*Details of the Peace and Sport organisation can be found at <http://www.peace-sport.org/homegb.htm>

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