

India aim to dethrone holders Sri Lanka in Asia Cup final

India are aiming to dethrone defending champions Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup final here Sunday but captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni agreed that this would be a tough ask.

Dhoni praised Sri Lanka's recent performances but Saturday, on the eve of the final, appeared confident that his boys will topple the islanders.

'We will be playing against Sri Lanka who are a very good team, so we expect it to be tough, but we are ready for the challenge,' said Dhoni.

It would be India's second consecutive appearance in a final after they lost the title clash to Pakistan in a triangular tournament in Dhaka last month.

But Dhoni is confident that this time his boys will come out victorious here. And he is pinning hopes on in-form openers Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir.

'Our openers have given us good starts and if they continue to do so it would keep the pressure off the middle order and set the foundation (for a good total),' he said.

While India are mainly relying on their batsmen, Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene believes his potent bowling arsenal can pull his side through in the final.

The Sri Lankans, who lost to India in their last Super Four game earlier this week, will unleash a surprise in their new spinning sensation Ajantha Mendis.

The 23-year-old from Moratuwa has bowled impressively in a tournament dominated by batsmen, and after going wicketless in the first match, took 5-22 against United Arab Emirates and 4-47 against Pakistan to lead his team into the final.

Mendis did not play in the game against India and according to Jayawardene, that was 'part of the gameplan' for the final.

Sri Lanka rested him in the last match against India Thursday after they had already qualified for the final.

'We rested some of our players including Mendis because it's about executing our game plan,' Jayawardene said after his team's training session Saturday afternoon.

The organisers are making efforts to ensure a full house for the final and have distributed thousands of tickets among students to avoid having empty stands for the big match.

Teams (from):

Sri Lanka : Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Udawatte, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Silva, Chamara Kapugedera, Kaushal Weeraratne, Thilan Thushara, Chaminda Vaas, Dilhara Fernando, Muttiah Muralitharan, Ajantha Mendis, Jehan Mubarak, Nuwan Kulasekera

India:

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Rohit Sharma, Suresh Raina, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan, Piyush Chawla, Pragyan Ojha, Manpreet Gony, Rudra Pratap Singh, Ishant Sharma, Praveen Kumar

Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS), Tony Hill (NZL)

Tv umpire: Zameer Haider (PAK)

Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)

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