Here's why Rameez Raja says Pakistani team could lose against Afghanistan

KABUL: Everyone has become a fan of Afghan star Hazratullah Zazai in the second qualifier of the Pakistan Super League 2021 (PSL 2021). Zazai's 66 runs secured Peshawar Zalmi a spot in the PSL 2021 final. After witnessing Zazai's batting, former Pakistani captain Ramiz Raja remarked that Afghanistan's squad has more batsmen like Zazai and that if they compete with Pakistan, the Afghan team may win the match.

"Pakistani fans haven't seen Zazai much before," Rameez Raja said on his YouTube channel. In Afghanistan, there are other players similar to him. The Islamabad United line up had three Pakistani T20 players, all of whom comfortably handled the pressure. Shadab Khan, Pakistan's T20 captain, too bowled to Zazai but failed to make an effect.

"Zazai is full of potential, and he can play lengthy innings as well. In a T20 encounter, I wouldn't be surprised if Afghanistan beats Pakistan," Rameez Raja added.

Rameez Raja also praised Afghanistan's spin bowlers, saying that Pakistan needs players like them. "Afghanistan has terrific spinners," he remarked.

"This team will become stronger if Zazai continues to play like this. Najibullah Zadran is also a good batsman. Pakistan should raise the alarm and figure out why players like Zazai aren't being recruited. Pakistan's existing middle-order appears to be very weak. When it comes to batting, the entire team appears to be based solely on skipper Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan," Raja added.

Pakistan is about to embark on a challenging tour of England.

Anthony Joshua's ideal rival for a fight in Nigeria is Joe Joyce, says Sam Jones

Anthony Joshua's dream of a fight in Nigeria could be aided by the emergence of Joe Joyce as a challenger, says Sam Jones.

Joyce could become the mandatory challenger to Joshua and enforce a world title fight, his manager Jones says.

Undefeated Joyce will face Carlos Takam on July 24, while Joshua is set to defend his IBF, WBA and WBO heavyweight belts against Oleksandr Usyk at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in September.

"There is a possibility Joe and Joshua could fight in Nigeria," Jones told Sky Sports. "They are both of Nigerian descent so that could be huge.

"If AJ needs a dance partner in Nigeria, look no further. That fight would be something very, very special.

Joshua's undisputed title fight with WBC champion Fury could be resurrected if they each come through summer fights. Fury will face Deontay Wilder on July 24, hours after Joyce fights Takam.

Joyce was initially in talks to contest a WBO interim belt with Usyk when Joshua and Fury were on a collision course but he could still force himself into the world title picture.

"Joe will be mandatory to the world title," said Jones. "Hopefully Joshua and Fury get it on, and Joe will get the winner.

"Joe's time will come. He wants to see Joshua vs Fury too - there needs to be an undisputed title fight. He doesn't care who wins."

Joyce earned a career-best win by stopping the previously-undefeated Daniel Dubois last time out.

Novak Djokovic and Ashleigh Barty named top seeds at Wimbledon

Novak Djokovic and Ashleigh Barty have been named as the top seeds in the men's and ladies' singles draw at this year's Wimbledon, as Great Britain boast three seeded representatives at SW19 for the first time since 1978.

British No 1 Dan Evans occupies the No 23 spot in the men's draw, while Cameron Norrie (No 30) is seeded at a major championship for the first time in his career, fresh from reaching the final at Queen's Club last weekend.

Johanna Konta - a semi-finalist four years ago - is seeded No 28 in the ladies' draw, as two-time winner Andy Murray prepares to make his first Wimbledon appearance since 2017 as a wildcard entry.

Cameron Norrie is seeded at a Grand Slam for the very first time following his exploits at Queen's Club last weekend

However, much of the focus will centre on Djokovic's bid to draw level with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 Grand Slam singles titles, with the world No 1 eyeing a sixth Wimbledon crown in 2021. The Serbian is the defending champion at the All England Club, having beaten Federer in an epic 2019 final, and he kept alive his hopes of completing the coveted 'calendar slam' by scooping a second French Open title earlier this month. Russia's Daniil Medvedev will feature on the opposite side of the draw from Djokovic as the No 2. Seed, while Paris runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas is seeded third. Former US Open champion Dominic Thiem is due to be the No 4 seed, although the Austrian is a major doubt for the tournament after withdrawing from an ATP event in Mallorca with a wrist injury on Tuesday.

The Swiss icon has featured sparingly over the last 12 months, but he enjoyed a successful return to Grand Slam action at Roland Garros - progressing to the last 16 before withdrawing as a precaution ahead of his clash against Matteo Berrettini.

Germany 2-2 Hungary: Leon Goretzka's late equaliser sees Germany survive Euro 2020 scare

Leon Goretzka's late equaliser was enough for Germany to draw 2-2 with Hungary and secure second spot in Group F, setting up a last-16 showdown with England.

Germany were hoping to follow up their 4-2 win against Portugal on Saturday with a comfortable victory against Group F underdogs Hungary, but made the worst possible start as Adam Szalai (11) nodded home.

The hosts were mostly laboured in their play, but were handed a lifeline as Mats Hummels and Kai Havertz took advantage of an error from goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi, allowing the Chelsea forward (66) to nod home from close range.

But 91 seconds later and straight from the restart, Hungary re-took their precious lead. Szalai set up Andras Schafer (68) to slot past Manuel Neuer, sending Germany to the bottom of Group F and on the verge of a second successive exit in the group stages of a major tournament.

There was more drama to come though as Goretzka fired home in the 84th minute to fire Germany into second place, setting up an enticing last-16 tie with old foes England at Wembley on Tuesday.

It was heartbreak for Hungary, who were minutes away from reaching the knockout rounds for a second European Championships. It echoed their 3-3 draw against Portugal from Euro 2016 too, where they were pegged back three times during a thrilling encounter. However, in a tough group, they are able to exit Euro 2020 with their heads held high.

Both sides had snapshot efforts in the opening ten minutes. Gulacsi made a good, reactive save as Joshua Kimmich fired his way from a tight angle, before Neuer came out to collect a good pass from Attila Szalai.

But Neuer found himself beaten soon after. It was a classic counter-attack from the Hungarians, with Roland Sallai and Loic Nego linking up superbly. It was Sallai who sent in a superb, diagonal cross into the middle and Hungary captain Adam Szalai was there to flick a header home, sending the ball past Neuer's fingertips.

Germany then had a few chances to equalise. Soon after the goal, Havertz made a superb run between Adam Nagy and Attila Szalai, but the slightest of touches from Gulacsi sent the ball away from the paths of Leroy Sane and Robin Gosens.

Germany's best effort of the first half came in the 21st minute. Kimmich delivered their first corner of the game, but Hummels could only direct his powerful header onto the crossbar. Soon after, Matthias Ginter poked the ball goalwards, but it was straight at Gulacsi.

Although Sallai hit the crossbar early in the second half, it was Germany who hauled themselves level in the 66th minute. Kimmich swung in a free-kick, which Gulacsi came out to punch away, but missed the ball completely. Hummels was lurking just behind to nod it goalwards, with Havertz helping to guide it home from close range.

But the 1-1 scoreline lasted for all of 91 seconds. Hungary pumped the ball forward, with Adam Szalai there to flick the ball on for Schafer's run in behind. It was a sweeping finish from the forward, to once again send Germany to the bottom of Group F and set up a tense, nervous finish.

Germany continued to push for an equaliser, opting for crosses into the box to target their taller players. But it was 18-year-old Jamal Musiala who created the much-needed leveller mere minutes after coming on.

He twisted past Endre Botka on the left, before cutting the ball back to Goretzka. He laid it off for Timo Werner, but the Chelsea forward's shot was deflected back into Goretzka's path. He then powered a volley goalwards, securing Germany's spot in the last-16 in the process

It was an impressive night's work from Hungary captain Adam Szalai. Hungary had little pressure on them, but his opening goal was taken superbly. He then unselfishly set up his team-mate for the second as Hungary dared to dream of the knockout round.

While Hungary did not quite make it through, Szalai was still making the tackle and passes needed, even late in the day. A fine performance to finish Euro 2020.

Germany coach Joachim Low: "We showed great morale, but we also made mistakes. It was good to see that we fought hard until we got the equaliser. It was a nervy match. We knew Hungary would give it their all. I am just happy we got through in this group.

"All the 'small' teams invest so much work and defend well. Hungary played with ten men in their own half and they had nothing to lose. It's great that we got through in this tough group. Now we can look forward to a match against England."

Hungary coach Marco Rossi: "We went very close to a qualification which would have not just been historic, it would have been incredible and almost unimaginable. But unfortunately even in the greatest fairy tales, there can be some less than happy endings, and that was the way it went tonight.

Jos Buttler hits fifty as England hammer Sri Lanka in T20 series opener

England romped to an eight-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the first T20 international of their three-match series in Cardiff on Wednesday night.

Restricting Sri Lanka to a well-below-par score of 129-7 when getting first use of the Sophia Gardens surface, England then chased down their total with 17 balls to spare, with Jos Buttler firing an unbeaten 68 off 55 balls.

Buttler and Jason Roy (36 off 22) raced through to a fifty stand inside five overs, blasting 61 from the opening powerplay. Sri Lanka, by comparison, were only 39-2 after their first six.

Roy departed in the 10th over, with Danushka Gunathilaka pulling off a stunning catch at mid-off, but Buttler bought up his fifty in the 12th and steered the hosts through to a comfortable victory.

Adil Rashid was the pick of the England bowlers, taking 2-17 from his four overs. Sam Curran (2-25) too picked up a couple, while Chris Woakes (0-14) proved particularly tough to get away in his first T20 international for six years.

After winning the toss and opting to bat first, Sri Lanka lost opener Avishka Fernando for a duck in the second over, plinking Curran to mid-off, where Chris Jordan claimed the first of three catches for the innings.

Gunathilaka (19) cracked Mark Wood for back-to-back boundaries in the fourth over, only to depart in the fifth, skying an attempted ramp off Jordan behind to Buttler.

The tourists put up little fight for the remainder of their innings; Liam Livingstone (1-9) trapped Kusal Mendis (9) lbw, Wood (1-33) picked up Dhananjaya de Silva (3) caught at third man, while Rashid claimed Sri Lanka captain Kusal Perera (30) and Wanindu Hasaranga (5) in consecutive overs.

Dasun Shanaka (50 off 44) put some respectability on Sri Lanka's score with some lusty late blows, bringing up his half century in the final over before topedging Curran's last ball behind.

In reply, Buttler and Roy were in no mood to hang around. Roy cracked four fours and cleared the rope once, swinging Nuwan Pradeep away over deep midwicket. Buttler, meanwhile, found the boundary eight times and hammered Akila Dananjaya for a glorious straight six down the ground shortly before bringing up his 13th T20I fifty.

After Roy fell to Gunathilaka's superb diving grab, Dawid Malan (7) contrastingly looked far from comfortable during his 14-ball stay at the crease before being bowled by Isuru Udana.

But England were never in danger of stuttering over the finish line; Jonny Bairstow (13no off 12) smashed Dananjaya for a big six over deep midwicket a ball before Buttler was dropped by Perera, allowing him to scamper through for the winning run.