

# Pakistan coach says fast bowlers key in India clash

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AFP Dubai

**Pakistan coach Aaqib Javed on Saturday said his fast bowlers are “match-winners” and will pull out something special against arch-rivals India in their pivotal Champions Trophy clash.**

Hosts and defending champions Pakistan need to win the blockbuster showdown with India on Sunday in Dubai to keep their chances of making the semifinals in their own hands.

Pakistan lost the opening match of the 50-over tournament to New Zealand and are bottom of Group A. India beat Bangladesh

in their first match.

Pakistan fast bowlers Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf leaked 214 runs in their 30 overs combined in New Zealand's total of 320.

But Aaqib said the trio will rise to the occasion.

“We have three specialists and I would say one of the best pace bowling options in the game with Shaheen, Naseem and Haris,” Aaqib told reporters.

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the 1990s, when Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis and Aaqib stepped up after the retirement of the great Imran Khan.

“They still have time to reach that level, but they have all the ability to repeat those sort of performances,” said Aaqib.

“When you play against India it is a special feeling and I think they will bring something special tomorrow.”

He added: “Our fast bowling options are good and they are match-winners.”

Bilateral cricket ties are frozen between the two rival nations due to political tensions and they only play each other in

## FASTFACT

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Pakistan, who hammered India in the last Champions Trophy final in 2017, have flown in from

Karachi for their must-win clash and Aaqib says pressure produces champions.

“There is no game you play without pressure,” said Aaqib. “Between India and Pakistan it doesn't matter it's a knock-out or whatever. It is beyond the game.”

Aaqib said: “If you look at the positive, it's the best time and best chance for any individual or a team to make a mark. Passion and pressure is what a player needs to showcase his game.”

The top two teams from each of the two groups make the semifinals.

The rivals last met in a one-day game at the 2023 World Cup in Ahmedabad, with hosts India winning by seven wickets.