

# Mash to lead team on Sri Lanka tour

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is all set to lead Bangladesh on their upcoming tour of Sri Lanka, where they will play a three-match ODI series against the hosts, informed national team selector Habibul Bashar yesterday.

However, wicketkeeper-batsman Liton Das had asked for a leave till August 5 to complete his nuptials and so will not be available for the tour.

Meanwhile, vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan, who is currently on holiday with his family, is likely to miss the series as well. The champion all-rounder previously requested the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for a break following the 'Tigers' World Cup campaign.

There are also concerns regarding the availability of both Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim, who have been nursing injuries since the World Cup.

Bashar, in hopes of a fresh start after a disappointing World Cup, is expected to form the best possible team for the Sri Lanka tour.

"Some of the players have injury concerns, we haven't got that report in our hand. Mahmudullah has some injury concerns, Mashrafe has also some injury problems and Mushfiq [-ur Rahim] has some problems," he said. "But as far as we know, they will be able to play. But we haven't got that report in our hand yet. I

think we should start from this series. I am hoping that we get everyone fit so that we can take everyone with us."

According to Bashar, Mashrafe will have to complete a fitness test ahead of the series as the seamer has been suffering from side strain injury since the World Cup. However, he hopes that the inspirational cricketer will be able to recover in time.

"I think he is fit. Mashrafe's fitness is upon himself. I think, he will need to give a fitness test. There are a few concerns about him because he played the World cup with injury. He has got some time to recover from that. I am hoping that he will be fit before the Sri Lanka series," Bashar told reporters yesterday.

The former captain also informed that they have already started work on forming the squad, keeping the absence of Shakib and Liton in mind.

"We discussed this matter today. If we don't get them [Shakib & Liton], who might be their replacement. Liton has asked for leave and perhaps Shakib asked for a leave earlier but that is not also confirmed yet. We were told to keep two options open and we have thought about that too," explained Bashar.

It was also learnt that the Tigers will not have a training camp before their departure for Sri Lanka on July 20. Bangladesh will play the first of the three-match ODI on July 26 while the other two matches are scheduled for July 28 and 31 respectively.

# Wackiest blow of this World Cup

**ABDULLAH AL MEHDI**

All the signs pointed towards an Australia-India final but it was not to be as the World Cup decided to break millions of hearts while energizing millions of others. This is because no matter the outcome of the final tomorrow, this World Cup will see a newly crowned champion in either England or New Zealand.

The tournament is on the precipice of a thrilling conclusion and this has everything to do with the how unpredictable the mega event has been so far. Sure, the top four sides which made the semifinals were expected to be there but the circumstances in the run up were not so predictable.

Cricket is a funny old game and it was this quality which in the end led to New Zealand

England rolled over Australia like they have never been rolled over before; not in a major tournament at least. Perhaps the rot started right at the top, when Jofra Archer and Chris Woakes gave Australia an early scare but those who truly know how the Aussies fare in big matches would only have seen it as a hiccup and nothing else. Just as was expected, Alex Carey and Steve Smith were soon at hand to turn things around with a 103-run partnership.

In so many instances, Australia returned to the driver's seat from precarious positions and so, it was almost disconcerting that Adil Rashid struck twice in the same over to leave Australia at 118 for five. Glenn Maxwell and Smith were still there but then Archer struck with a slower cutter and despite a valiant knock from Smith,

an in-form team in four World Cup finals over the last five editions of the tournament. This time they were receiving end as England did to them what they usually do to other teams. Aaron Finch has been a strong leader for Australia at this World Cup. His aggressive captaincy was commendable, especially with the way he attacked with Starc and Cummins whenever he needed wickets. Starc, the most fearsome bowler at this World Cup, was expected to keep Australia in contention but in this pivotal game, he came up short. Jason Roy's strokeplay set the table and England feasted, even on Starc as the left-armed wenter for 70 in nine overs. He bagged Bairstow after England had crossed 100 but the game was well and truly over even after Roy was dismissed after a stormy 85. The impetus of Roy's innings saw



After showing tremendous fighting spirit throughout the World Cup, the Aussies appeared helpless in the semifinal against the hosts, unable to find an answer to Jason Roy's intent and aggression as he steered England to an easy victory at Edgbaston. PHOTO: REUTERS

and England making it through to the final of the World Cup at the expense of favourites India and Australia.

However, Australia losing a World Cup semifinal, and the manner with which they lost it, was perhaps the most unnatural thing that happened in this World Cup. Since the inception of cricket's showpiece event, the Aussies have made the semis in 1975, 1987, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2015 and while the 1999 semifinal ended in a draw with South Africa, Australia scraped through to the final courtesy of a win against the same opponent in the Super Six stage. Australia won on each of those occasions, that is until they met England on July 11 at Edgbaston.

Australia kept losing wickets and the innings never took off as the side finished on 223.

Such is Australia's fighting spirit that they usually make below-par totals look good. Add to that the pressure of a World Cup semifinal, England did not have the upper hand, lest we forget Australia's Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins, both of whom have taken wickets at will in the ongoing tournament. It all looked set for a competitive game until Jason Roy and Jonny Bairstow set the tempo with a perfect start.

Australia are known for how they sweep the floor with their opponents in the late stages of the tournament, having emphatically defeated

Joe Root and Eoin Morgan finish it off in style.

It was not easy to put a finger on where Australia had gone wrong. Ahead of the World Cup, they had not shown spectacular form but when the tournament began, they were the best as a unit. They gelled under Finch and key performers turned up when needed. In their most dire moment, Australia were found to have nothing up their sleeves this time around, an occurrence that has never happened before at this stage. The World will see a new champion on Sunday but how helpless Australia looked as they edged towards defeat last Thursday will possibly be the wackiest thing the 2019 World Cup offered.

I found myself getting quite emotional. All we wanted four years ago was for England to go out and play a different style. We didn't know where it would lead us but we thought that was England's best chance of winning a world cup. The only thing I'd ask of that team is: please play the same way.

**ANDREW STRAUSS**  
FORMER ENGLAND  
DIRECTOR OF CRICKET

# I'm really calm: Archer

**ICC**

From the outside Jofra Archer does not seem to be affected by nerves and according to the man himself that is true of this entire England team.

Archer set the ball rolling with his very first delivery of the ICC World Cup semifinal victory over Australia, trapping Aaron Finch leg before for a duck as England marched to an eight-wicket win at Edgbaston.

The success was as comprehensive as it was impressive with Archer later shaking up Alex Carey with a rapid bouncer and then removing Glenn Maxwell just as the big-hitting all-rounder was preparing to tee off.

And for Archer, it was clear from the moment the team got together on Thursday that they would be ready for England's first ICC World Cup

semifinal in 27 years.

He said: "I'm really calm. You got that feeling, even when we were at breakfast, I don't think anyone looked nervous. I might be wrong."

"Everyone just looked focused from the time we got into the ground. It's those little things that make you think the guys are ready."

"I've always been like this. I try not to get nervous because then you do things you are not meant to do. The calmer you are, the better you are in a situation."

It has been a remarkable rise for Archer, who only made his international bow against Ireland at the start of May.

He finished with figures of 2/32 from his ten overs in this game, but the fast bowler insists personal glory

takes a back seat to the team's success in reaching the final against New Zealand at Lord's.

He added: "It hasn't sunk in just yet. I'm just happy to play games and win games."

"We probably would have batted first. Personally I like to bowl first and get the work done. Emotions were definitely flying after that (first wicket). Everyone looked a lot more focused and switched on."

"I'm just glad the team is doing well. I could be doing terribly but as long as the team is winning, I'm alright."

"It's been mixed feelings at Lord's. Sometimes I do ok, sometimes I don't do as well as I'd like. Hopefully Sunday goes England's way, not just my way but England's way."

# Final to be shown free to air in UK

**AFP, London**

England's first Cricket World Cup final appearance for 27 years will be screened on free to air television in the United Kingdom to satisfy the demand to watch Sunday's showdown against New Zealand.

England beat holders Australia by eight wickets in the semifinals on Thursday to ensure their place in the title match at Lord's.

Live international cricket in the UK has been behind satellite broadcaster Sky Sports' subscription payroll since 2005.

Many pundits claim the decision by the England and Wales Cricket Board to take the game off free to air television has been a central factor in the sport's declining popularity in its birthplace, particularly among younger age groups.

The television audiences in Britain for the Cricket World Cup have been contrasted unfavourably with the millions who watched England's run to the last four of football's Women's World Cup on free to air broadcasts.

But Channel 4 has struck a deal with Sky Sports, which holds the UK rights for the World Cup, to also show the final, which could see England win the

tournament for the first time.

Channel 4, one of the UK's non-subscription broadcasters, will combine the World Cup final with its live coverage of the Formula 1 British Grand Prix.

"This is fantastic news for cricket fans and the nation," Channel 4 CEO Alex Mahon said on Thursday.

"This Sunday is a massive day for British sport with England tantalisingly close to lifting the Cricket World Cup for the first time and Lewis Hamilton setting his sights on his seventh win at Silverstone."

England captain Eoin Morgan welcomed the decision, saying: "That's very cool. Particularly given the 2005 Ashes for me was sort of the day cricket became cool."

"It's really good for the game and it's the game I love."

Channel 4 will carry Sky's coverage of the cricket from 9am local time, but the game will move to More 4 at 1.15pm as Formula 1 takes over before returning after the race.

The match will also be broadcast on Sky 1 as well as the network's dedicated Cricket World Cup channel and Sky Sports Main Event.

# Tajjul bags 21st fifer

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Tajjul Islam bagged eight wickets in an innings to help the visiting Bangladesh Cricket Board XI take a 147-run first innings lead on the third day of their four day-day match against Vidarbha Cricket Association in the Dr (Capt) K. Thimmappiah Memorial tournament at the Golden Oval in Aluru yesterday.

Resuming the day on 114 for one, Vidarbha were all out on 353 after a brilliant performance from left-arm spinner Tajjul, who registered his 21st five-wicket haul in first class cricket to end with figures of eight for 89 from 27.4 overs.

Ariful Haque and Taskin Ahmed took a wicket each while Atharva Deshpande top scored with 91 runs for the batting side.

In reply, BCB XI lost the wicket of Jahurul Islam on 25 and ended the day's play on 42 for one with Anamul Haque and Mominul Haque set to resume the fourth and final day leading by 189 runs.



England speedster Jofra Archer enjoys the calm following his first over after he himself had stirred up a storm against mighty Australia, removing consistent top-order batsman and Australia captain Aaron Finch with his very first delivery of the match. PHOTO: TWITTER

# Dharmasena to stand in final

**AFP, London**

Sri Lankan umpire Kumar Dharmasena has been appointed to stand in the World Cup final between England and New Zealand at Lord's on Sunday despite finding himself involved in a controversial incident with home batsman Jason Roy.

The Surrey opener had made 85 to set England on their way to an eventual eight-wicket win against Australia in Thursday's semi-final at Edgbaston, when he was given out caught behind down the legside by Dharmasena.

Roy requested a review but England had already used their lone review of the innings. Nevertheless, Dharmasena incorrectly signalled for a review, with Australia pointing out his mistake.

Roy, his arms spread wide, clearly believed Dharmasena should have

signalled a wide delivery instead and the audibly furious batsman had to be ushered away from the crease by square-leg umpire Marais Erasmus. Replays suggested he did not touch the ball.

The England star, 28, was fined 30 percent of his match fee for showing dissent and received two demerit points from match referee Ranjan Madugalle.

South Africa's Erasmus will be the other onfield umpire in the final, with experienced Sri Lankan official Madugalle once again the match referee.

But in a change from the Edgbaston line-up, Australia's Rod Tucker will be the third umpire instead of New Zealand's Chris Gaffaney, who was ruled out of officiating in the showpiece match once the Black Caps beat India in Wednesday's first semifinal at Old Trafford.