

Squad for SL tour to be announced today

SPORTS REPORTER



The selectors are all set to announce the Bangladesh squad, sans Shakib Al Hasan and Liton Kumar Das, today for the upcoming three-match ODI series in Sri Lanka which begins on July 26.

The selectors plan to call up left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who is currently in India participating in the Dr. (Captain) K. Thimmappiah Memorial tournament for BCB XI, as a replacement for Shakib, who will soon perform Hajj and therefore be unavailable for the tour.

There are other options though such as Imrul Kayes or Yasir Ali, who was included in the tri-nation series in Ireland as the third opener of the 14-member team.

"Shakib is going to perform the 'Holy Hajj' so we are going to miss him. Liton will also miss the tour because of his marriage. That was fixed a long time ago. We will miss these two players," Akram told reporters yesterday.

Akram also added that the board plans to once again give Khaled Mahmud the interim coach position for the upcoming Sri Lanka tour since there is currently a crisis regarding the new head coach position.

"You all know there is a crisis about

the head coach but we are trying to get one. We will take the service of Khaled Mahmud as our main coach but we are trying to get someone," he said.

Meanwhile, Wasim Jaffer and Champaka Ramanayake, who are currently working with the BCB High Performance Unit, were appointed as the new batting and bowling consultant respectively.

Neil McKenzie's contract with the BCB as the limited overs batting consultant ended with the World Cup. The South African has not renewed his contract and so, is not expected to be available for the tour.

Akram, however, added that both Jaffer and Champaka are bound to take on additional responsibilities and were not chosen as the permanent replacements of Neil McKenzie and former bowling coach Courtney Walsh, whose contract was also not renewed by the board after the World Cup.

"Champaka [Ramanayake] is also a very good bowling coach and we have him as our backup and now we will take him to this tour. Look, some of our coaches had requested for leave during the time of Sri Lanka tour as there was some problem regarding the tour [after the terrorist attack] and only was confirmed in the recent past. If McKenzie is unable to give us time [which is likely

to be the case] then we will take Wasim Jaffer as the batting coach," Akram said.

The former Bangladesh captain also revealed that fielding consultant Ryan Cook and trainer Mario Villavarayan will join the training camp, which is set to begin on July 18.

There have also been some injury concerns over skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who has been struggling with a hamstring injury and is expected to take a fitness test.

However, Akram is confident over Mahmudullah Riyad, who suffered a Grade-1 tear on his right calf muscle during the World Cup match against Afghanistan, along with Mushfiqur Rahim, who suffered a blow on his forearm while training during the World Cup.

Young all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin has been suffering from back injury but is also expected to be fully fit ahead of the Sri Lanka tour.

"Mahmudullah is recovering fast and so is Mashrafe so we are hopeful that they will be fully fit for the upcoming tour," Akram said.

The Bangladesh team are scheduled to depart for Sri Lanka on July 20. The Tigers will take part in the first of the three-match ODI series on July 26 while the other two games will take place on July 28 and 31.



With Bangladesh set to take part in a three-match ODI series in Sri Lanka from July 26, concerns have remained over the fitness of Mushfiqur Rahim. However, the wicketkeeper-batsman could fully recover in time seeing as he attended a training session yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Cricket philosopher's triumph

SAKEB SUBHAN from London



Kane Williamson stood with hands outstretched as an accurate throw from Martin Gupthill ricocheted off a diving Ben Stokes's bat and went for four in the 100th over of a sublime World Cup final at Lord's on Sunday. If the ball had just found the keeper's glove, or even if it deflected at a less acute angle and went to the short third man fielder, England would have needed seven runs from the last two balls, but the overthrow made it three from two. A tie, then a tied Super Over later, England had won the World Cup through the quite irrelevant measure of having hit more boundaries over the course of the game.

After scoring 27 per cent of his team's runs over 11 games and also embodying the very philosophy that brought his team to the final, no one had more right to be disappointed, angered, disillusioned and frustrated by that overthrow. But Williamson put his hands down and got back to the business of leading his team with a steady hand. He repeated that when marshalling his fielders in the Super Over and, even when all was lost and all of Lord's was celebrating, Williamson's composure held when he talked to the TV cameras minutes after Gupthill was run out trying to complete the World Cup-winning run.

For those who followed Williamson through the World Cup, this acceptance of 'uncontrollables'

-- a word he repeated on numerous occasions before and after the epic final -- should not be surprising. While for most captains talking about focusing on their own team's strengths rather than the opposition's is little more than a soundbite, Williamson lived that mantra and his team followed that example. It is this acceptance of not being able to control everything in the wide scope provided by a 50-over match that brought New Zealand to within inches of winning their maiden World Cup.

On paper, their team was formidable, but Gupthill's indifferent form at the top of the order put pressure on the middle order. It was none other than Williamson who bore the brunt of that pressure and

with the continuing frailty at the top of the order, reassessed conditions and realities expertly to give New Zealand a fighting chance time and again.

While a loss of form or injuries would have had most captains cursing their luck, Williamson just recognised the reality of the situation. Instead, he hit an unbeaten 106 to secure a four-wicket win against South Africa and in the very next match, scored 148 against West Indies to set up a five-run win.

Even so, by the time the semifinals rolled around, not many would have given New Zealand a chance of winning against India because the Black Caps had scraped through on net run rate after losing

their last three league games. But there again, Williamson scored 67 in New Zealand's 239 for eight -- a total that seemed sub-par but, in another example of Williamson's pitch-perfect assessment, proved to be very competitive as New Zealand won by 18 runs.

As captain, he focused on his team's strength -- their superb seam bowling attack that could take wickets in English conditions and cover up for the oft-misfiring batting lineup -- and reassessed accordingly. His team followed by example. Even as Williamson departed for 30 in the final, the rest of the batsmen did not panic and just focused on getting a total that they believed their bowlers could defend through age-old wicket-taking methods, regardless of how strong England's batting was.

It was an uncontrollable.

Although heartbroken, Williamson graciously accepted the player-of-the-tournament trophy at the end of the match. It is not just Bangladeshis who have asked why Shakib Al Hasan -- with the greatest all-round performance in World Cup history -- did not win the prize. But for fans of cricket, there is rich justice in recognising a player who tapped into the essence of the game, understood and accepted its cruelties, scored the runs he could and in the process, led his team to within inches of the World Cup. Williamson may not have the coveted trophy, but his example over the last month and a half has been a triumph for cricket.



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson may have had to endure heartbreak in the World Cup final against England on Sunday but the man was inspirational throughout the quadrennial mega event, where he rightfully claimed the player-of-the-tournament award.

PHOTO: AFP

'England mistakenly awarded extra run'

AFP, Sydney



England were mistakenly awarded an extra run during their nail-biting World Cup win over New Zealand at Lord's, a member of the sport's chief rules committee told media on Monday.

A freak fielding deflection off Ben Stokes' bat that raced to the boundary saw the team awarded six runs with three balls to go in the final over on Sunday.

Scores were tied at the end of regular play and the resulting Super Over shootout, with England then handed their first-ever World Cup victory for their superior boundary count.

But former umpire Simon Taufel told Fox Sports Australia that umpires had made a "clear mistake", as the batsmen had not crossed for their second run.

"They should have been awarded five runs, not six," he said, adding that England's Adil Rashid should have faced the second-last ball instead of Stokes as a result.

Taufel, a five-time winner of the International Cricket Council's Umpire of the Year award, now sits on the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) laws sub-committee, the worldwide custodian of cricket's sometimes obscure rules of play.

The Australian defended the match umpires, who he said had to make a complicated judgement, and said it would be "unfair" to say the decision altered the outcome of the tournament.



SIMON TAUFEL

"Unfortunately that sort of thing happens from time to time. It's a part of the game that we play," Taufel said.

"I don't wish to nitpick, just hope it never happens in such moments ever again." England, who have often cited a humiliating defeat by New Zealand at the 2015 World Cup as the catalyst for their climb to the top of the one-day international rankings, finally have a World Cup win to go with their three losing appearances in the 1979, 1987 and 1992 finals.

By contrast, defeat is devastating for New Zealand, who were also looking to win the trophy for the first time after being well beaten by Australia in the 2015 showpiece.

Will apologise to Kane for rest of my life: Stokes

STAR SPORT DESK



England all-rounder Ben Stokes, the hero of the final for the hosts as they clinched their maiden World Cup title, said that he will be apologising to Kiwi skipper Kane Williamson for the rest of his life after his accidental nudge with the bat led to one of the most critical moments in the game.

With England needing nine runs off three deliveries, Stokes struck one towards mid-wicket, and while going for a double, his bat came in the way of Martin Gupthill's throw from the deep. The ball ricocheted off his bat as he dived at the non-striker's end and it went to the boundary. England were awarded six runs and they went on to seal the match in Super Over following more drama.

After the match, Christchurch-born Stokes said: "I am pretty lost for words. All the hard work to get here and be world champions, it's an amazing feeling. Playing against New Zealand is always a good event, they are good lads."

"I will be apologising to Kane for the rest of my life [re: the overthrow for the six]...It was written in the stars to happen for us," Stokes added.

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson pointed to luck not working in his side's favour after the game.

"That [Stokes's accidental boundary] was a little bit of a shame, wasn't it? You just hope it doesn't happen at moments like that. Perhaps it wasn't meant to be for us," Williamson said.

BD A draw 2nd 4-dayer

SPORTS REPORTER

The second four-day game between the Bangladesh A team and their Afghan counterparts ended in a draw after rain halted a major portion of the match at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

Resuming the fourth and final day on 112 for four, Bangladesh A were eventually all-out on 200 runs in their first innings following a middle order collapse, despite fifties from Naim Sheikh (65) and Rokibul Hasan (61).

Yamin Ahmadzai, Sharafuddin Ashraf and Qais Ahmed bagged three wickets apiece for Afghanistan.

In reply, the visitors ended up scoring 163 for two at the end, with man-of-the-match Ibrahim Zadran being run-out just four runs shy of a hundred on a team high 96 while Bahir Shah remained not out on 52.

Courtesy of Afghanistan A's seven-wicket win in the first four-day match, the visitors eventually clinched the two-match four-day series 1-0. The two teams will take part in the first of a five-match one-day series on July 19 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. The remaining matches will take place on 21, 24, 27 and 29 July respectively.

Shakib picked for team of the tournament

REUTERS, London



Champions England were the most represented with four players in the World Cup team of the tournament announced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday, with New Zealand's Kane Williamson captaining the side.

England opener Jason Roy, middle-order batsman Joe Root, all-rounder Ben Stokes and pacer Jofra Archer made the team following Sunday's victory over the Black Caps in a thrilling final where the hosts prevailed on boundary count after a tied Super Over.

New Zealand's Lockie Ferguson was the only other Kiwi in the side, while Australian pace bowler Mitchell Starc was picked after taking the most wickets in the tournament with 27.

The side was picked by ex-internationals Ian Bishop, Ian Smith and Isa Guha, along with cricket writer Lawrence Booth, while ICC general manager cricket, Geoff Allardice, was the fifth member and convener of the committee.

Indian opener Rohit Sharma, who top scored with 648 runs at an average of 81 was also included alongside teammate Jasprit Bumrah.

Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan was also part of the line-up for his stellar all-round contribution, which included 606 runs and 11 wickets while Australia wicketkeeper Alex Carey was chosen as the man behind the stumps.

WORLD CUP TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT

1. Jason Roy (England) – 443 runs at 63.28
2. Rohit Sharma (India) – 648 runs at 81.00
3. Kane Williamson (c) (New Zealand) – 578 runs at 82.57
4. Joe Root (England) – 556 runs at 61.77
5. Shakib Al Hasan (Bangladesh) – 606 runs at 86.57, 11 wickets at 36.27
6. Ben Stokes (England) – 465 runs at 66.42, seven wickets at 35.14
7. Alex Carey (wk) (Australia) – 375 runs at 62.50, 20 dismissals
8. Mitchell Starc (Australia) – 27 wickets at 18.59
9. Jofra Archer (England) – 20 wickets at 23.05
10. Lockie Ferguson (New Zealand) – 21 wickets at 19.47
11. Jasprit Bumrah (India) – 18 wickets at 20.61

