



I am more than happy to be included in the team as I was injured and was out of the team for nearly one and a half years. Alhamdulillah that I got selected in the team in the previous series.

Taskin Ahmed
Bangladesh bowler

With a 35-man preparatory camp set to begin today, Mahmudullah Riyad elected to put in the hard yards beforehand as he was seen batting at the nets in Mirpur yesterday. (Inset) Interestingly, Mohammad Saifuddin (L), who was left out of the camp due to back pain, also honed his skills while pacer Taskin Ahmed felt it prudent to sharpen up in order to retain his place in the squad.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

No issues with Shakib: Riyad

SPORTS REPORTER



Senior Bangladesh batsman Mahmudullah Riyad issued a clarification to refute reports of a rift with the Bangladesh Test and T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan during the ICC World Cup.

According to the reports, which emerged during Bangladesh's 3-ODI tour of Sri Lanka in late July, ODI vice-captain Shakib had suggested during a selection meeting that Mahmudullah be dropped from the team's fourth World Cup game against Sri Lanka on June 11. Mahmudullah had batted slowly in the team's third World Cup match against England when the Tigers were chasing 387 to win. Shakib's suggestion had reportedly gotten round to Mahmudullah and caused a rift between the two senior players. The reports in question also said that Mahmudullah, after scoring a 50-ball 69 against Australia on June 20, had reacted with anger directed at teammates after he returned to the dressing room following his dismissal.

Mahmudullah, however, said yesterday in a Facebook post that there were no problems between Shakib and himself.

In a video message with the caption reading 'For your clarification, I want to let everyone know that the rumours of a rift between me and Shakib in the dressing room are not true', Mahmudullah stressed that all was well in the Tigers' dressing room.

"A while ago I saw a headline in an online site that the incident with Shakib in the dressing room was presented differently," Mahmudullah said in the video. "Actually,

there is no clash whatsoever between me and Shakib. We have been very good teammates as long as we have been playing together. We still are and inshAllah we will be the same in the future. I think it is a lie that I have had any issue with Shakib. I thought that I should clarify this, which is the reason for this video. We have some very important matches coming up... please pray for us so that we can perform even better for Bangladesh."

There has also been talk about Mahmudullah's fitness. He has recovered from a calf injury that saw him miss Bangladesh's penultimate World Cup match against India. He had also been nursing a shoulder injury since before the World Cup and only returned to bowling his part-time off-spin with a modified, round-arm action in the three-ODI series in Sri Lanka.

"I am hundred per cent fit after that calf muscle injury. I had taping [on his calf] and ran yesterday. Shoulder range is also better, our physio [Thihan Chandramohan and Dr. Debashish Chowdhury] reported that. Yes, I will try [bowling]. I will start bowling from today [Sunday]," he said.

According to the 33-year-old, the break after the Sri Lanka series will help players to start fresh, but Mahmudullah added that it's an open challenge for him now to give his best in the upcoming one-off Test match against Afghanistan, which will be followed by a tri-nation T20I series also involving Zimbabwe.

"I think it's an open challenge now, because the preliminary squad has just been announced, not the final team. So, everyone will try to give their best physically. There will be a physical test soon," he said.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO SEE THE VIDEO

Stokes, Buttler keep Australia at bay

AFP, London

England's Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler batted through a rain-shortened first session on the final day of the second Ashes Test at Lord's on Sunday after Australia's Steve Smith was ruled out with concussion.

At lunch, England were 157-4, a lead of 165 runs, with Stokes (51 not out) and Buttler (31 not out) having so far shared an unbroken stand of 86.

England resumed on 96-4 after rain -- which had already washed out five sessions in this match -- delayed the start by over an hour.

Stokes was then 16 not out and Buttler unbeaten on 10, with the match in the balance.

All-rounder Stokes, however, went on to complete a 106-ball fifty including seven fours and, with Buttler, was inching England closer towards the safety of a draw. Smith was felled by a bouncer from Test debutant fast bowler Jofra Archer that struck his neck on Saturday and, although he resumed his innings after retiring hurt, was ruled out of Sunday's play by Cricket Australia.

This series is the first being played under the International Cricket Council's new concussion substitute regulations, part of the inaugural World Test Championship.

These allow players who have suffered head or neck injuries to be replaced fully by

a substitute, who was previously restricted to fielding alone.

Marnus Labuschagne, on the field as 12th man when play resumed Sunday, became the first concussion substitute in Test history after Australia's request was approved by match referee Ranjan Madugalle.

Smith was hit by an Archer delivery when on 80 on Saturday and retired hurt.

He resumed his innings at the fall of the next wicket after 46 minutes off the field, and was eventually out for 92 -- the first time this series he had been dismissed for fewer than 100 runs.

But there are doubts over whether he will be fit for the third Test at Headingley starting Thursday, with an Australia spokesman saying the "short turnaround is not in his favour".

Australia, bidding for their first Ashes campaign triumph on English soil in 18 years, lead the five-match series 1-0 after a 251-run win at Edgbaston last week.

In that match, former captain Smith marked his first Test since completing a 12-month ban for his role in a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa with superb innings of 144 and 142.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 258 and second innings 157 for 4 (Burns 29, Denly 26, Stokes 51 not out, Buttler 31 not out; Cummins 2-24, Siddler 2-22)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 250

Dimuth fires SL to 1-0 lead

AFP, Galle



Captain Dimuth Karunaratne scored 122 as Sri Lanka chased

down 268 for the loss of just four wickets to win the first Test against New Zealand at Galle on Sunday and take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

Karunaratne posted his ninth Test hundred along with enjoying a record-equalling opening partnership of 161 with Lahiru Thirimanne, who made 64, as Sri Lanka collected their first points of the World Test Championship.

Former captain Angelo Mathews chipped in with an unbeaten 28 as Sri Lanka finished off the game before lunch after the morning session was extended because only 22 runs were needed at the scheduled time for the interval.

Karunaratne enjoyed some luck on the way to his century, dropped on 58 at forward short leg by Tom Latham while wicketkeeper BJ Watling missed a stumping chance on the same score. He batted for over five hours, facing 245 deliveries, and hit six fours and a six.

"Perhaps we didn't have a lot go our way, and maybe the odd chance we let slip," New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson told reporters.

"We knew that on that sort of surface if you are able to get a breakthrough things can happen quickly, as we saw later on today when perhaps the game was already lost. It was a shame not to



Sri Lanka batsman Dimuth Karunaratne celebrates after scoring a ton on the fifth day of their first Test against New Zealand to guide the side to a six-wicket win yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

get early breakthroughs."

Karunaratne and Thirimanne's stand equalled the record for the highest opening partnership in Tests between the two countries. In 1991, John Wright and Trevor Franklin had also put on 161 for the first wicket in Hamilton.

The opening stand was pivotal in Sri Lanka achieving the highest successful run chase in Galle, easily surpassing the previous best of 99. Resuming play on 133 for no loss, Sri Lanka required 135 from the remaining three sessions.

"Thirimanne did a very job for us.

The key was rotating the strike. I told him that we needed a big partnership. They had two left-arm spinners and the two of us being left-handers, we had to handle them. That was what we were talking about," Karunaratne said.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 249 and second innings 285

SRI LANKA: First innings 267 and second innings 268 for 4 (Karunaratne 122, Thirimanne 64, Mathews 28 not out, Perera 23; Boulton 1-34, Southey 1-33)

Result: Sri Lanka won by six wickets. P-O-M: Dimuth Karunaratne.

HP thrashed in 1st one-dayer

SPORTS REPORTER

The BCB High Performance team suffered a massive 186-run defeat at the hands of their Sri Lankan counterparts in the first one-dayer of the three-match series at BKSP yesterday.

Number six batsman Wanindu Hasaranga struck a 46-ball 70 with the help of seven fours and three sixes after one-down batsman Charith Asalanka's 79-ball 71 as the visitors piled up 304 for seven in 50 overs.

Shafiqul Islam was the most successful bowler with two for 22 while Shahidul Islam also took two wickets, but conceded 71 runs in 10 overs. Yeasin Arafat was the most expensive bowler, leaking 89 runs in 10 over for one wicket.

In reply, Bangladesh were bundled out for 118 in just 28.3 overs. For the home side, opener Saif Hassan top-scored with 50 off 70 balls with six boundaries.

Shiran Fernando, Nuwan Thushara and Amila Aponso bagged two wickets each for the visitors.

The second one-dayer will take place at the same venue on August 21.

Felled Smith in doubt for third Test

AGENCIES, London

Australia's Steve Smith has been ruled out of the last day of the second Ashes Test with concussion against England at Lord's, Cricket Australia announced on Sunday.

Smith was felled when a Jofra Archer bouncer struck his neck on Saturday.

"Steve has been closely monitored by medical staff overnight and this morning reported that after sleeping well, he woke with 'a bit of a headache and a feeling of grogginess,'" said an Australia team spokesman.

The series is the first being played under the International Cricket Council's new concussion substitute regulations, part of the inaugural World Test Championship, which allow players who have suffered head or neck injuries to be replaced fully by a substitute, who was previously restricted to fielding alone.

Marnus Labuschagne, on the field as 12th man when play resumed Sunday, became the first concussion substitute in Test history after Australia's request was approved by match referee Ranjan Madugalle. Labuschagne would have

been able to bat or bowl in Smith's place if required. There are doubts whether star batsman Smith will feature in the third Test at Headingley starting on Thursday, with the spokesman saying "the short turnaround is not in his favour".

Smith was hit by an Archer bouncer when on 80 on Saturday and retired hurt. He resumed his innings at the fall of the next wicket after 46 minutes off the field, and was eventually out for 92 -- the first time this series he had been dismissed for fewer than 100 runs.

The spokesman added: "Steve reported that his left arm which was also struck [by Archer] during his innings yesterday [Saturday] was 'much better' and that as part of further testing on Sunday, Smith "demonstrated some deterioration".

"On that basis Steve has been withdrawn from the match by team doctor Richard Saw," the spokesman said.

Explaining how Smith had been allowed to resume his innings, he said: "It is not uncommon for players to pass their tests and feel well on the day of an injury and then display symptoms 24-48 hours later.

"Steve's fitness will be assessed on an ongoing basis and will undergo



Australia batsman Steve Smith receives treatment after being floored by a bouncer from England's Jofra Archer during the second Ashes Test at Lord's in London on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

a precautionary scan on his neck on Sunday.

Significantly, Smith was wearing a helmet without the additional stem guard neck protection introduced following the death of Phillip Hughes after his former Australia teammate was hit by a bouncer in a 2014 domestic

Sheffield Shield match in Sydney.

"He (Smith) just doesn't feel right (wearing a stem guard)," Australia coach Justin Langer said after stumps on Saturday.

"I know they came in after the tragedy of Hughes. He might rethink it now after seeing what happened

today, but you'd have to ask him that.

"At the moment, the players have a choice and I wouldn't be surprised if they become mandatory in the future."

'EVERYONE'S HEART SKIPPED A BEAT'

Archer was criticised on social media for exhibiting a lack of concern on the field for Smith's well-being but in an interview with BBC Radio before Sunday's final day, he insisted: "That is never the plan (to hit a batsman)."

"You are trying to get a wicket first. To see him go down, everyone stopped and everyone's heart skipped a beat," he added.

"After he got up he was moving around and you breathe a sigh of relief. No-one wants to see anyone getting carried off on a stretcher. It was a good challenge, a really good spell.

"You don't ever want to see anyone carried off on a stretcher, or you don't want to see them missing a day, or a game, especially with what happened a few years ago as well," said Archer.

'FANS WHO BOOED ARE NOT CRICKET FANS'

Australia's cricket union Sunday slammed fans at Lord's for booing Steve Smith after he was felled, saying

the sport deserves better.

"Cricket deserves much better than that. And Lord's, the home of cricket, deserves much better than that also," president Greg Dyer and chief executive Alistair Nicholson said in a joint statement.

"What we witnessed was bravery from an outstanding young man. It should be commended not vilified.

"Over the English summer, generally the crowds have been terrific and really added to the contest. But when someone is hurt, yet the boos continue, it's time to call 'enough'."

"It has really disappointed me. I do not care what people say. Yes, they can say he is a cheat [for his role in the ball-tampering scandal in March 2018] and that's why we are booing him but that is absolute rubbish to me. Yes, he has done what he has done," Former Australia fast bowler Mitchell Johnson said in a video posted by ESPNcricinfo.

"You can boo him when he comes out to bat at the start of innings, but seeing him getting booed when he came back out after being struck by Archer, that was disappointing. The fans that booed Smith are not cricket fans according to me."