

## England seek consolation win

REUTERS, Dharamsala

England, chasing a consolation victory in the five-match Test series against India, will be banking on two pacers and two spinners to do the trick in the final game in Dharamsala on Thursday.

England announced their lone change for the game, with seamer Ollie Robinson making way for fast bowler Mark Wood. Robinson remained wicketless in the fourth Test in Ranchi, where India grabbed an unassailable 3-1 lead.

Wood joins James Anderson in England's seam attack, while Tom Hartley and Shoaib Bashir will shoulder the spin load with Joe Root chipping in with his part-time off-spin.

"I think going with two seamers and two spinners is probably the right call when unsure of pitch," England captain Ben Stokes told reporters on the eve of the match.

Stokes expected batters to dominate the contest and would particularly want his good friend Jonny Bairstow to shrug off his poor form in what would be the batter's 100th Test.

Having secured their 17th consecutive Test series win at home, India can afford to relax in Dharamsala but Ravichandran Ashwin will be keen to make his 100th Test a special occasion. "It's a big achievement for any player to play 100 Tests," India captain Rohit Sharma heaped praise on the off-spinner, who claimed his 500th Test wicket in the ongoing series.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Taskin Ahmed celebrates with Mahmudullah Riyad after dismissing Avishka Fernando early, setting in motion a good bowling display as Bangladesh restricted Sri Lanka to 165 runs before chasing the target down with eight wickets in hand to draw level in the three-match T20I series at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. (Bottom) A bizarre reversal of on-field decision by the third-umpire during Bangladesh's chase was the only controversial issue in an otherwise plain-sailing for the home team.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SRI LANKA**  
165 for five in 20 overs (Kamindu 37, Kusal 36, Mathews 32 not out; Soumya 1-5, Taskin 1-38)

**BANGLADESH**  
170 for two in 18.1 overs (Shanto 53 not out, Hridoy 32 not out, Liton 36; Pathirana 2-28)

**RESULT**  
Bangladesh won by 8 wickets  
**PLAYER OF THE MATCH**  
Najmul Hossain Shanto

“Firstly, we were short about 20-25 runs, and then Kamindu's [Mendis] run out also played a huge part in the game. As a batter, we have to make big runs, especially in these conditions. Because it's very hard for the bowlers to bowl in these conditions.”

Charith Asalanka, Sri Lanka captain.

### 100-TEST CLUB ENTRANTS

The fifth and final Test between India and England, starting today, and the second Test between New Zealand and Australia, which will start in the wee hours of Friday, will see a total of four players get their landmark 100th Test debut.

### THE PLAYERS ARE

Ravichandran Ashwin (INDIA)  
Jonny Bairstow (ENGLAND)  
Tim Southee (NEW ZEALAND)  
Kane Williamson (NEW ZEALAND)

## Aussies out to spoil Kane, Southee's 'huge achievement'

AFP, Wellington

Seamer Mitchell Starc said Australia's bowlers aim to ensure New Zealand world-class batter Kane Williamson doesn't stay long at the crease in his 100th Test in Christchurch on Friday.

The tourists lead the two-match series 1-0 after Australia romped to a 172-run win in the opening Test.

Both Williamson and New Zealand Test captain Tim Southee will play their 100th Test at Hagley Park.

"During the game, (the aim is) to make it as short as possible," Starc told reporters Wednesday when asked about Williamson's milestone.

"Anytime you can get one of the best batters in the world out is always a nice little touch."

Williamson, who has chalked up nearly 9,000 Test runs, had a torrid time in the first redball game against Australia as he scored a duck and nine in the two innings.

The Australian paid tribute to the two milestone-approaching New Zealanders' lengthy careers.

Williamson scored a hundred on his debut against India back in 2010, while Southee took five wickets on his first Test appearance in 2008 against England.

"For Kane and Tim, it's a huge milestone this week," Starc added.

"Especially for Tim - we all know how taxing it can be as a fast bowler on the body, so to play 100 Tests is a huge achievement. I'm sure they will both enjoy the week."

"We're looking forward to celebrating with them... but hopefully winning the Test match as well."

## Shanto ticks the right boxes to get moving

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Following the post-match press conference yesterday, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto was asked whether a change of environment from his BPL franchise to the national team had seen him get back to runs. He replied with a shrug, suggesting it may or may not be the case. But it was not something he was focusing on. Out on the field during the game, he was able to tick the right boxes as Bangladesh levelled the T20I series against Sri Lanka with an eight-wicket win in Sylhet.

In 12 innings in the BPL, Shanto's highest was 39 and he scored runs at an average of under 15. In short, the BPL did not go well for the recently-appointed national team captain across formats. The Bangladesh bowling unit put on a far more disciplined display from last game and the top-order also got some runs, including Shanto himself.

"It feels good to win the match. I think in both matches we played good cricket. We were unlucky not to win the last match but the way we played as a team, very happy about that."

"Yes, the BPL did not go well but I am still trying to overcome the lackings in my batting. Fortunately,

it was a bit better today and would try to continue," he said.

It had been a bit of a surprise seeing Shanto come out for a batting session on the afternoon of the match yesterday, along with Towhid Hridoy and Anamul Haque.

Newly-appointed batting coach David Hemp had talked to the captain regarding what appeared to be his head position. The transfer

trying to correct it for a while and it's getting better slowly and there is more to improve," Shanto said when asked about his session.

What was important was finishing off the game at his own tempo, not taking undue risk while adjusting his game to the match situation.

"It's not important to score fifty. What's important is how effective it is what I am doing for the team. So I was able to do that and the best thing was that I was able to finish the game," Shanto said, having ended the game with a big six to clinch the winning runs during an unbeaten 38-ball 53.

There were less mistakes from the bowling unit too, with line and length and the variations always keeping Sri Lanka guessing.

"I feel that in the middle part of the innings, our bowling plan was very good on what we wanted to do," the 25-year-old said.

Asked about the unchanged eleven, he said: "It was important [to keep faith in the same eleven]. We lost one game in the final over, so there was not much lacking which is why myself and the coaching staff didn't think of a change."

It was important to show that faith to the team as Shanto gets moving ticking the right boxes.



### SHORT CORNER



#### Messi's Barca napkin contract up for auction

To the untrained eye, it might look like just another used napkin. But the serviette, expected to fetch up to \$635,000, was actually soccer legend Lionel Messi's springboard to greatness at FC Barcelona, and records the promise of a contract made to him at the tender age of 13.

#### Shabnim Ismail bowls fastest delivery in women's cricket

Former South Africa pacer Shabnim Ismail created history on Tuesday when she bowled the fastest delivery ever recorded in women's cricket. Ismail broke the record with a delivery that clocked the speed of 132.1km/h (82.08mph) when bowling for the Mumbai Indians in their Women's Premier League (WPL) clash against the Delhi Capitals at Arun Jaitley Stadium.

#### Spain prosecutors seek jail term for Ancelotti

Spanish prosecutors on Wednesday called for Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti to be jailed for four years and nine months for allegedly failing to declare earnings to the tax office. Madrid state prosecutor's office accused the 64-year-old Italian of having deprived Spain's treasury of over one million euros in earnings from image rights in 2014 and 2015.

\*\*Read full stories on The Daily Star website



Bayern Munich top scorer Harry Kane struck once in either half to steer the Germans to a 3-0 win over Italy's Lazio on Tuesday and into the Champions League quarterfinals with a 3-1 aggregate victory, reigniting title hopes among their fans. Kane headed in for the lead in the 38th minute, which was also his first Champions League knockout stage goal in five years, to cancel out Lazio's first leg 1-0 advantage and then tapped in their third goal on the rebound in the 66th after Thomas Mueller's first-half stoppage time effort had made it 2-0.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Eyes on big four as hockey league rolls today

SPORTS REPORTER

All four title contenders - Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club, Abahani, Mohammedan SC and Usha KC - are quietly confident about winning the title but showing enough respect to the oppositions as the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League gets underway today at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

On the opening day, holders Mariners will take on promoted Usha KC at 4:00pm before last edition's runners-up Abahani take on Dilkusha SC at 6:00pm in the 11-team league. The title race once used to be confined between Mohammedan, Abahani and Usha before Mariners joined the race by splashing money to become league champions in 2016.

Even though all the Big 4 teams fielded foreign players in their Club Cup matches, they are set to bring either wholesale or partial changes in foreign players' roster in a bid to strengthening their squads or recover from the weakness.

"The league is not going to be an easy one because the Club Cup was a trial for all the teams and they found their weaknesses there. The other teams must have analysed Mariners' style of play and will come out strongly. Of course we will also try to adapt accordingly," Mariners coach Mamonur Rashid told The Daily Star.

"I think Abahani are ahead of all the teams on

paper even though they could not win the Club Cup. I have heard that an Indian coach and four new Indian players are going to join Abahani. However, we are confident about defending the title but we not overconfident," Rashid said, adding that they will replace two foreign players.

"There is no point being the top team on paper unless you perform on the pitch. We lacked finishing and coordination in the midfield during the Club Cup and we are working to fix the problem and we are hopeful of performing better in the league," Abahani coach Hedayetul Islam Razib said.

Mohammedan coach Shahidullah Titu said, "I think there are no clear favourites for the title because no one can guarantee becoming champions until performing well on the ground. We have taken better preparation this time around compared to the Club Cup."

Titu informed that they are going to replace all of their four foreign players to strengthen their squad.

"I think foreign players will make the difference but Usha are ready to fight till the end," said Usha coach Ashikuzzaman, who kept Mariners ahead of Abahani, Mohammedan and his team.

Even though the focus will be on four big teams, the mediocre ones like Ajax SC and Shadharan Bima may also cause an upset or two to derail the title contenders.

