

## No recall for Stokes as England name unchanged third Test squad

## India agonises over 'humiliating' Lord's disaster

NEW DELHI, Aug 13, (AFP): India's media on Monday lashed out at "abysmal batting" that led to a crushing innings defeat by England in the second Test at Lord's.

Mail Today called India's performance a "humiliating defeat" while The Hindu newspaper's headline said "Another abysmal batting display sends India to its doom" after the team were bowled out for 107 and 130.

The tourists lost by an innings and 159 runs to go 2-0 down in the five Test series. Indian writers lambasted India's batsmen while hailing England's pace spearhead James Anderson who took nine wickets in

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the match.

A Hindustan Times headline read: "India shamed at Lord's as batsmen surrender again".

"For the World No. 1 Test team that vowed to play aggressive cricket, its credentials in tough overseas conditions lay tattered amid a batting crisis," the newspaper added.

The Times of India headlined its story "India turn paupers at Lord's." It hailed Anderson as England's "crafty maestro."

India's batting legend Sachin Tendulkar praised the England pacemen and Chris



India's Ravichandran Ashwin dives back to his crease as England's Jonny Bairstow attempts to take his wicket on the fourth day of the second Test cricket match between England and India at Lord's Cricket Ground in London on Aug 12. (AFP)

Woakes for his 137 not out.

"An all-round performance by England. Excellent spells of fast bowling by @jimmy9 and @StuartBroad8, with a fine performance by @chriswoakes," Tendulkar wrote on Twitter.

"We've got to pull up our socks and produce better cricket India."

While India's captain Virat Kohli offered no excuses for the capitulation, Indian commentators highlighted how the Indian top order has faltered in all four Test innings so far with opener Murali Vijay getting a pair at Lord's and Test specialist Cheteshwar Pujara failing to fire.

Former Test batsman V.V.S. Laxman

said on Twitter that "caught in unfavourable conditions, not reading what the opposition threw, saw India lose the Lord's Test tamely without showing a fight."

"Hopefully lessons are learned quickly and the rest of the batsmen start applying themselves going forward."

Veteran commentator Harsha Bhogle said: "The new ball is a big factor overseas. When the openers blunt the new ball, they give life to the middle order."

"India is getting nothing from its openers and that is where the comeback, if there is one, has to start."

The third Test starts at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Ben Stokes was again omitted as England named an unchanged 13-man squad on Monday for the third Test against India at Trent Bridge starting Saturday, where victory would see them clinch the series.

Stokes' ongoing trial on a charge of affray in Bristol saw him left out by England as they thrashed India by an innings and 159 runs in the second Test at Lord's on Sunday to go 2-0 up with three to play in the five-match campaign.

However, a brief statement issued by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said they would review Stokes' position following the conclusion of the trial, which is expected to end before the third Test starts.

"The ECB will make an assessment of Ben Stokes' availability after the trial in Bristol has concluded," the statement said.



Stokes

Fellow pace-bowling all-rounder Chris Woakes, who took Stokes' place, starred with both bat and ball in a man-of-the-match display at Lord's.

Woakes made 137 not out, his maiden Test century, and also took four wickets as England overpowered India, the world's top-ranked Test side.

By naming the same squad, England retained uncapped Essex paceman Jamie Porter and off-spinner Moeen Ali, both of whom missed out on a place in their XI that played at Lord's.

England squad for the third Test against India at Trent Bridge, Aug 18-22:

Alastair Cook (Essex), Keaton Jennings (Lancashire), Joe Root (Yorkshire, capt), Ollie Pope (Surrey), Jonny Bairstow (Yorkshire, wkt), Jos Buttler (Lancashire), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), Sam Curran (Surrey), Adil Rashid (Yorkshire), Stuart Broad (Nottinghamshire), James Anderson (Lancashire), Moeen Ali (Worcestershire), Jamie Porter (Essex)

## Ashrafal eyes B'desh return as ban ends

## Sri Lankan great Sangakkara has 'no ambitions' to be next Imran

COLOMBO, Aug 13, (AFP): Sri Lanka's batting legend Kumar Sangakkara Monday said he had no intention of making a foray into politics after local media reported he was eyeing next year's presidential elections.

Sangakkara's comments came amid a media frenzy comparing him to Imran Khan, the cricketing great who is set to be sworn in as Pakistan's prime minister on Saturday.

"I would like to put to rest speculation and rumour once and for all, confirming that I do not harbour any ambitions for political office," Sangakkara, 40, said in a statement.

"I never have, and, with enormous certainty, I can say I never will."

Sri Lanka's ruling coalition as well as the main opposition are yet to name their candidates for next year's presidential election.

Several cricket legends in the country have successfully switched to politics.

Sri Lanka's World Cup winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga is a minister in the current government, while former skipper Sanath Jayasuriya served as a deputy minister after he retired from the international game.

Sangakkara quit Test cricket in August 2015 after aggregating 12,400 runs from 134 matches with 11 double centuries.

The former skipper, considered one of the all-time greats, steered his side to the final of the 2011 World Cup before losing to India.

Former Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashrafal said Monday that has set his sights on a comeback with the national side after his five-year ban for match-fixing ended.

"I am feeling really nice as I was waiting for this day for the last five years. (I told myself) when August 13, 2018 came I would be available for national team again," Ashrafal told AFP from Britain.

"Over the last five years I never felt I wouldn't be able to come back. I never lacked this confidence. I always felt I would come back," he said.

Ashrafal was fined and banned for eight years - cut on appeal to five - in 2014 for match and spot fixing during a T20 tournament in Bangladesh in 2013.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board partially lifted his ban in 2016, allowing him to play domestic first-class and List A cricket.

But he was still suspended from international and franchise-based Twenty20 cricket for another two years.

Ashrafal, who turned 34 in July, showed a glimpse of his talent in domestic 50-over Dhaka Premier League competition last year when he scored five centuries in 13 matches to accumulate 665 runs at an average of 66.50.

Bangladesh chief selector Minhajul Abedin told reporters in Dhaka on Sunday however that Ashrafal must prove his form and fitness.

Ashrafal, who played 61 Tests, 177 one-day internationals and 23 Twenty20 internationals, acknowledged he has a tough road ahead to revive his international career.

"Of course it will be tough to get a chance in the Bangladesh team,"

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he said.

"Still I think if I can perform. There is plenty of room for me to serve Bangladesh team. This is what I believe," said Ashrafal.

He said he believed he would face little problem in the dressing room if he was picked again, since he always maintained a good relationship with his former teammates.

Bangladesh last week completed a T20 series victory over the West Indies in Florida.

## Smith reclaims top spot in ICC rankings

DUBAI, Aug 13, (AFP): Banned Australian batsman Steve Smith reclaimed top spot in the ICC Test batting rankings from India's Virat Kohli on Monday, despite not having played since March.

The 29-year-old was suspended for a year and stripped of the captaincy by Cricket Australia following his part in the infamous ball-tampering scandal against South Africa, but his ranking points have not changed.

India skipper Kohli had taken the number one place after scoring 200 runs in his team's first-Test defeat by England, but slipped back after managing only 40 in the second match of the series at Lord's last week.

Smith is currently playing T20 cricket in the Caribbean Premier League as he prepares for a possible return to the international game next year.

England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker James Anderson remains top of the bowlers' rankings after taking nine wickets in their crushing innings victory in London.

## Koepka 'holds off' Woods to win PGA Championship

ST LOUIS, Aug 13, (RTRS): Brooks Koepka fought off an inspired challenge from Tiger Woods to win the PGA Championship on Sunday, giving the big-hitting American his second major title this season.

Koepka withstood stifling pressure and sweltering heat to card a four-under 66 good enough for a two-shot victory over Woods, who was chasing his first major title in a decade and came close by returning a 64, his lowest final round in a major.

Adam Scott, carrying the added motivation of winning for friend Jarrod Lyle who died earlier in the week, battled Koepka toe-to-toe but finished third after a bogey at the last left the Australian with a final round 67 and three strokes adrift.

Koepka, who finished on 16-under-264, has now won three of the last seven majors and became the fifth golfer and first since Woods in 2000 to capture both the PGA and US Open in the same year.

"Other than me, my team, everybody was rooting for Tiger," said Koepka. "It kind of pushes you to step up your game."

"I mean, you have to because you know he's right there if you fall."

While Koepka stumbled with bo-

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Tiger Woods of the United States plays his shot from the 18th tee during the final round of the 2018 PGA Championship at Bellerive Country Club on Aug 12, in St Louis, Missouri. (AFP)

Scott finishes third after bogey at last



Brooks Koepka of the United States kisses the Wanamaker Trophy on the 18th green after winning the 2018 PGA Championship with a score of -16 at Bellerive Country Club on Aug 12, in St Louis, Missouri. (AFP)

geys at four and five he showcased his mental toughness as he undid much of the damage with a run of three consecutive birdies going into the turn.

Woods, however, pounced with four birdies and a bogey on his front nine to get within one of the lead and with the 42-year-old in the running to win his first major since the 2008 US Open, Tiger-mania was at a fever pitch.

The 14-time major winner, who had whipped the massive gallery into a frenzy on the front nine, sent them into absolute hysteria with two more birdies at 12 and 13 that again vaulted him within one of the lead.

"You could hear them," smiled Woods. "They were loud and they stayed around and ... it's been incredible with the positiveness that everyone was saying and they wanted to see some good golf and we produced some."

While Woods and Scott were mounting charges on the way home, Koepka, who has only one other victory on the PGA Tour at Phoenix in 2015, stalled with five consecutive pars.

But when Scott grabbed a share of top and with Woods nipping at his heels one behind, Koepka again showed his steel with birdies at 15 and 16 to regain control, even if Woods kept up the pressure until the end by rolling in a 20-foot birdie at 18.

## Lengthy stretches

## May move means PGA is no long 'Glory's Last Shot'

ST LOUIS, Aug 13, (RTRS): The PGA Championship celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sunday before heralding a new era in which golf's neglected major will no longer be known as "Glory's Last Shot".

A reshuffling of the calendar which will be rolled out next season with the PGA Championship, traditionally the last of the four majors, moving from August to the mid-May slot following the US Masters.

While not exactly a makeover, the shift will give the PGA a new look in a slot where fans are gearing up for the golf season rather than gearing down.

"We're excited about the move to May," PGA of America's Chief Commercial Officer Jeff Price told Reuters.

"But the opportunity to start next year at Bethpage in May from a golf calendar perspective being the second major on the schedule is a wonderful opportunity."

"We are heading into the core of the golf season so for getting people inspired to play the game the timing of that couldn't be better so on any number of levels we are thrilled about what the opportunity in May will bring."

From Walter Hagen to Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus to Tiger Woods many of golf's greats have hoisted the Wanamaker Trophy but it has never carried the same prestige as slipping into a Green Jacket or kissing the Claret Jug.

Ask any golfer which major he would want to win and the cliché answer would be any but push them and the PGA Championship tops very few lists.

Sports Illustrated asked 50 professionals in 2012 which major would they

most like to win and half said the Masters (50 percent) followed by the British Open (25), US Open (23) and PGA (2).

Not much has changed over the years. Thesandtrap.com did a similar survey in July with the Masters (43 percent), US Open (29), British Open (24) and the PGA holding steady at 2.

For much of its 100-year existence the PGA Championship has been the orphan of golf majors.

Since it was established in 1916 it has been played in nine different months and for two lengthy stretches from 1959-70 and 1972-2018 rounded off the major season.

Golf's return to the Olympics has

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also been problematic for the PGA of America which once every four years has its flagship event bumped into July to accommodate the Summer Games.

Aside from the fact the PGA is a major it brings nothing unique to the table, making it in many eyes little more than a glorified PGA Tour event.

The Masters is always played at Augusta, the British Open is golf's oldest major with a course rotation that includes the sport's spiritual home St Andrews and the US Open has successfully promoted itself as golf's toughest test.

With a venue rotation widely viewed as uninspiring the PGA Championship has tried to trade on the fact that it is the season's last major, marketing itself with the slogan "Glory's Last Shot".

The move to May alone will not suddenly elevate the PGA Championship's stature but it could bring it more attention.

Price says statistics show television viewership is 25 percent higher in May than August and more eyes, if nothing else, mean more money.

## Cyclists take on 'land of a thousand hills' in Tour du Rwanda

KIGALI, Aug 13, (RTRS): Cyclist Samuel Mugisha clinched victory in the Tour du Rwanda on Sunday with a punishing cobbled climb known as the "Wall of Kigali".

That earned the 20-year-old \$2,000 in prize money and made him the youngest winner of the contest that the tiny central African nation hopes will make a mark on the global professional cycling map.

Near neighbours Ethiopia and Kenya have produced scores of long-distance runners who regularly dominate the world's top athletics contests. Rwanda wants its Tour and band of riders to make its name in another endurance sport.

Local competitors have now won the Tour du Rwanda five years running, beating a growing roster of international challengers.

This time, cyclists from a dozen other countries including France, South Africa and the United States

rode through the "land of a thousand hills", cheered on through villages, towns and farms by large crowds. Sixty riders finished according to the race results.

"You get a lot of spectators in every part of the race, so that makes it really special," said Spanish rider David Lozano from Team Novo Nordisk after

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winning stage seven on Saturday.

The government says it plans to push the sport further by sponsoring the eight-stage Tour, now in its 10th year, and by exempting imported professional bicycles from taxes. One target is to get its riders into the Tour de France, the pinnacle of competitive cycling. Organisers says next year's Rwandan Tour

will be upgraded by professional cycling's governing body (UCI) to the 2.1 road race category, enabling it to host even more international competitors.

"Rwanda (will) host big teams, world teams, those who are in big races in Europe. It means that in the presence of those teams, Rwanda will be on the map of cycling," said Aimable Bayingana, President of the Rwanda Cycling Federation.

"It's very important because it attracts many people to visit our country," said Thompson Mushimimana, one of the fans who watched the tour pass through the Northern Province of Musanze over the weekend.

Tourism is the biggest foreign exchange earner in the country, which is trying to lay to rest memories of a 1994 genocide in which 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutus were slaughtered by ethnic Hutu extremists.