



England pacer Stuart Broad proudly holds up the cherry as his teammates applaud his 500th Test scalp, that of West Indies opener Kraigg Brathwaite, on the fifth day of the third Test at Old Trafford yesterday. The 34-year-old later accounted for Jermaine Blackwood, the last man to fall, to claim match figures of 10-67 as the hosts won the match by 269 runs and clinched the series 2-1.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## ‘Incredible to watch, an inspiration for everybody’

AGENCIES

England fast bowler Stuart Broad took his 500th Test wicket on Tuesday when he trapped West Indies batsman Kraigg Brathwaite leg before wicket on the last day of the third and final Test at Old Trafford.

Broad is the second England bowler after James Anderson and the seventh in the overall list of highest wicket takers, which is led by Sri Lankan legend Muttiah Muralitharan with 800 scalps, followed by Shane Warne (708), Anil Kumble (619), Anderson (589), Glenn McGrath (563) and Courtney Walsh (519).

“The way Stuart has bowled in the last two games has been absolutely phenomenal. He’s a

credit to himself, the work he’s put in over the last couple of years. Incredible to watch, an inspiration not just for younger members of the team but for me,” said Anderson.

After he was dropped from the Southampton game at the start of this month, a miffed Broad said: “I’ve been frustrated, angry, gutted –

Stuart Broad became the seventh bowler and second Englishman after James Anderson to get 500 Test wickets, reaching the landmark in his 140th Test.

because it’s quite a hard decision to understand. I’ve probably bowled the best I’ve ever bowled in the last couple of years. I felt like it was my shirt, having been in the team

Stuart Broad ended with 10 wickets as England bowled the West Indies out for 129, winning the third Test by 269 runs and clinching the series 2-1. Chris Woakes chipped in with five second-innings wickets.

through the Ashes and going to South Africa and winning there.”

“The way he dealt with [being left out], he looked like he had a real point to prove and he has proved that. I’m always amazed by how he gets in a spell and just blows people away. I don’t think either of us is that fussed about the wickets tally. We love bowling together in Test matches... we enjoy winning games for England. There’s a very good chance he’ll end up with more wickets than me,” Anderson added.

Former skipper Michael Atherton said that Broad had shown that he still has “fire in the belly”, asserting that the “champion sportsman” has the potential to claim 600 Test wickets.

“The mark of a champion sportsman is not when you get knocked down, but how you bounce back and we’ve seen that in this series with Stuart Broad,” Atherton wrote in a column for Sky Sports. “When you get left out, that’s when you find out a little bit more about yourself. Some players, when they get to that stage and get left out, they might just say, ‘Well, I’ve done enough with my career.’

“But clearly Stuart Broad, with that fire in the belly he showed, has got more to come and he doesn’t just want to get 500 wickets - he wants to get up to 600 as well,” Atherton added.

## More cricketers likely for second phase of individual training

SPORTS REPORTER



The first phase of the individual training sessions, arranged by the Bangladesh Cricket Board [BCB] after repeated requests from cricketers, ended yesterday with players seeming to gain in confidence despite the coronavirus pandemic.

The individual training sessions had started with ten cricketers on July 19 and were scheduled to conclude on July 26. By the end of that time, 13 cricketers were working on their fitness and skills at four venues across the country, including the home of cricket in Mirpur. The sessions were then extended by two days following requests from cricketers.

The arrangement is being considered the BCB’s first step towards resumption of cricket, which was halted in the country in mid-March due to the pandemic.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan was among those who joined the sessions at Khulna’s Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium from the start alongside Mahedi Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

“The arrangement was very good and it was a good opportunity in itself that we got to go to the field after a long break. Of course, enthusiasm was not at the level that it would be at if we had practised with a team, but considering the situation, it was the best that could be arranged. I am happy to have been able to come to the field and shake the rust off. We are not expecting everything to get back to normal right away but this can be a first step to resumption,” Nurul told media yesterday.

2020 was supposed to be a busy year for the Tigers, but the pandemic has led to five of their bilateral series being postponed and major events like the Asia Cup T20 and ICC World T20 being cancelled.

As far as domestic cricket is concerned, the Dhaka Premier League was suspended after the first round, which has started to hurt local players who rely on the domestic circuit for their livelihood.

Nurul believes offering individual practice sessions encouraged many cricketers to take to the field and that there would be a rise in numbers after the Eid-ul-

Adha holiday.

“We were told that this setup might be there even after the Eid vacation. That way we can hope that the game will slowly also return to its place. At the start, the situation seemed very critical and everything seemed uncertain. But as you can see now, life is getting back to normal. People are courageous enough to fight the situation that we are in, going out and doing their regular business. So, this is actually building hope [in cricketers] that we will get to see the game back on the field in a few months,” said Nurul.

“I have heard more cricketers will join this arrangement after the Eid vacation; this shows the intention of the cricketers to slowly get back to normal. And other countries slowly returning to the game is also encouraging. Although there might be a difference in terms of dealing with the situation and measures, these are still encouraging,” he added.



## Sarfaraz back in squad for England Tests

REUTERS

Former captain Sarfaraz Ahmed and fast bowler Wahab Riaz have made the cut in Pakistan’s 20-man squad for the three-test series against England starting next week, the PCB has said.

Pakistan are scheduled to play three Tests and three T20Is in August-September in a bio-secure environment in England.

The PCB had named a 29-man combined squad for the matches.

Wicketkeeper Sarfaraz was sacked as captain from all formats last year and his last test was against South Africa in January 2019. Mohammad Rizwan has been the first-choice glovesman since.

Wahab, whose last test appearance was in October 2018, decided last year he was taking an indefinite break from the format.

## PREMIER HOCKEY LEAGUE

# Uncertainty to remain even after pandemic

ANISUR RAHMAN



After the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) elections in April 2019, there were high hopes that the new leadership would get the Premier Hockey League (PHL) back on track but those fond hopes have proved to be unfounded so far, and the coronavirus pandemic has plunged the league into further uncertainty.

After being elected to the post of BHF general secretary, with backing from the Dhaka clubs, Mominul Haque Shaheed promised to stage the PHL -- last held in 2018 -- in October but fled the country after his alleged involvement in the casino scandal of ‘Motijheel Club Para’ last September. Shaheed was supposed to give financial assistance to five to seven clubs, and so his continued absence has dealt a big blow.

BHF officials have since been engaged in less important activities at the expense of the PHL -- the lone income source for players, who have been experiencing hardships in the midst of the pandemic.

The game’s governing body initially focused on preparations for the U-21 team for the now-suspended Junior Asia



Cup in Dhaka and holding the school hockey tournament. The federation has finally started shifting focus to the Premier Hockey League for post-pandemic times, but that depends on the will of participating clubs, some of which always seek more time and delay the process, citing financial inability.

“Actually, there is no benefit in running tournaments other than Premier Hockey League. We, a group of officials, told the BHF president [Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Semiatat] that our first task should be to stage the

league when hockey activities resume and the president also wants that,” said BHF Vice-president Zaki Ahmed Ripon, who is also the secretary of Abahani’s hockey committee.

Ripon added that he does not want to stage any other tournament as the chairman of BHF’s tournament committee.

Since Shaheed’s departure in September, the BHF took nearly five months to form the league committee, which then asked clubs to send representatives but in the wake of the

pandemic could not even sit together for a single meeting.

BHF Vice-president Abdur Rashid Shikdar, a close ally of Shaheed, believes some clubs and the federation itself were affected by Shaheed’s absence but insisted that every stakeholder must now come forward to stage the PHL.

“It will be tough to hold the premier league if the clubs don’t want to participate. All stakeholders, including the clubs, sponsors and players must come forward and make some personal efforts to get the premier league running,” said Shikdar, also the president of Usha KC, which was relegated to the first division after failing to form a squad in the last edition.

“In the post-pandemic period, sponsors won’t be able to donate like they did before because of the coronavirus pandemic. The clubs won’t be able to take part in the league without donations from sponsors or individuals. So, I request sponsors and individual patrons to come forward with whatever amount they can donate and the clubs should also come forward with whatever amount they manage. Finally, the players have to agree to receive amounts that are less than they

received in the last edition,” explained Shikdar.

BHF Treasurer and Bangladesh Sporting Club General Secretary Hazi Mohammad Humayun said that his club also want the league to take place but they need financial assistance from the government.

“We will also take part in the league if every club participates, but we don’t know how to manage funds in the current scenario. If the government gives small clubs like Bangladesh SC financial incentives to form squads, it will help us to take part in the premier league,” said Humayun.

Asked whether the federation could provide financial assistance to the premier league clubs, Abdur Rashid Shikdar said, “The federation is not financially solvent, but it helped clubs in second and first division leagues.”

Now rolling the premier hockey league on the turf solely depends on the willingness of the clubs, who the title contenders can easily cut their expenditure by banning the foreign players this time and everything will be cleared once the league committee starts with the club representatives to learn their view regarding the league.



While Kylian Mbappe was relaxing in a pool after an ankle injury ruled him out for three weeks, fellow PSG superstar Neymar was in his usual jovial mood at a training session ahead of Friday’s French Cup final, which precedes their Champions League quarterfinal tie against Atalanta on August 12 in Lisbon.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



## ‘It was like meeting the Pope’

Klopp says of breakfast with Sir Alex Ferguson after winning award

AGENCIES



Liverpool boss Juergen Klopp was named League Managers’ Association (LMA) manager of the year on Monday after guiding the Merseyside club to their first top-flight title in 30 years.

Klopp’s Liverpool side won the Premier League title with seven games to spare and finished the season 18 points clear at the top of the table.

The German coach pipped Leeds United boss Marcelo Bielsa, Wycombe Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth and last year’s winner Chris Wilder of Sheffield United to the Alex Ferguson Trophy -- named after the former Manchester United manager.

“I’m absolutely delighted to be named the winner ... for this wonderful Sir Alex



Ferguson Trophy, named after a man that I admire so much,” Klopp said. “I know it’s not 100 per cent appropriate as a Liverpool manager but I admire him. I remember he was the first British manager I met.

“We had breakfast. I’m not sure how

much he remembers but I remember because for me this moment was like meeting the Pope. It was absolutely great and from that first season we clicked. I didn’t think at this moment I would have a trophy in my hands named after him.”

“Jurgen, fantastic,” Ferguson said on Sky Sports. “We speak about Leeds spending 16 years in the Championship, but Liverpool 30 years since winning that league, incredible. You thoroughly deserved it. The performance level of your team was outstanding. Your personality runs right throughout the whole club. It was a marvellous performance.

“I’ll forgive you for waking me up at 3.30am to tell me you have won the league! Thank you, but anyway, you thoroughly deserved it. Well done.”