

## ‘Three formats are just unsustainable’

REUTERS, London

England’s talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes announced his shock retirement from one-day cricket on Monday citing the “unsustainable” rigour of playing all three formats of the game.

Tuesday’s match against South Africa at his home ground in Durham will be Stokes’s 105th and final one-day international, the 31-year-old said in a statement issued by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

“Three formats are just unsustainable for me now,” said Stokes, who will continue to play Twenty20 Internationals.

“Not only do I feel that my body is letting me down because of the schedule and what is expected of us, but I also feel that I am taking the place of another player who can give (captain) Jos (Buttler) and the rest of the team their all.”

Stokes, who took over as the test



captain in April, was player-of-the-match when England beat New Zealand in the final to win their maiden 50-overs World Cup at Lord’s in 2019.

One of the most exciting players of his era, Stokes has battled a spate of injuries in recent times and took a break from the game last year to focus on his mental well-being.

Stokes has made ODI debut against Ireland in Dublin in 2011.

He has played 104 one-day internationals scoring 2919 runs, including three hundreds, at an average of 39.44 with a 95-plus strike rate.

With the ball, he has claimed 74 wickets and is one of the sharpest fielders in the side.

### ODI Numbers

\*In a career spanning over a decade, Stokes featured in **104** ODIs, scoring **2,919** runs at **39.44** average and scalping **74** wickets.

\*Stokes’ **84** against New Zealand in 2019 World Cup final is the fifth-highest score in a run-chase of a World Cup final.

\*Stokes is one of three English players to have slammed **10** or more sixes in an ODI.

\*Stokes could bow out with **3000** runs in ODIs if he scores 81 in his final ODI against South Africa today.



**Bashundhara Kings players chase Matin Mia (2nd from R) after the winger opened the scoring during their 2-0 win in the Bangladesh Premier League against Saif SC at the Birshreshtha Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj yesterday. (Inset) Coach Oscar Bruzon celebrates with the players and coaching staff after the win ensured a third consecutive league title for the Kings.**

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Kings’ latest triumph ‘sweetest’ for Bruzon

ANISUR RAHMAN, from Munshiganj

Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon termed the triumph of the hatrick title of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) as the ‘toughest and sweetest’ one compared to their previous two league titles.

“You know, we are facing adversity from the start of the season with injury problems. And we played most of the first-leg matches with only one foreign player. But the determination of our guys was fantastic as we have the best Bangladeshi players and the foreign players increased our squad depth. So, it has been the toughest and sweetest title,” Bruzon told the Daily Star after notching up a tough 2-0 win over Saif Sporting Club at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj yesterday.

Since their emergence in the top-flight football in 2018-19 season, under the guidance of the Spaniard, Kings won six titles – three BPLs, two Federation Cups and one Independence Cup – out of eight competitions in the last four seasons, in which one season was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The beginning of the season saw Kings remain content with a runners-up trophy after losing to Abahani before skipping Federation Cup, citing the unfit pitch at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Once BPL kick-started after Federation Cup’s completion, Kings started their campaign on the wrong foot with a defeat against newcomers Swadhinata KS. Moreover, the injury-suspension of some

key players – Tapu Barman, Brazilian Fernandes and Serbian forward Stojan Vranjes – widened their problem but Bruzon’s charges eventually sealed the league successfully with two matches in hand.

“There are two lines to the secret to success. One way is suffering. I think we have resilience, resistance, adversity-facing ability and that is what happened this year.

“There were problems with injury, pitch, calendar and controversy over refereeing

**“Apart from my personal satisfaction, all our family members, coaches, our guys and players are here to praise us live. I can tell you today I’m fully satisfied with this achievement.”**

Bashundhara Kings coach **Oscar Bruzon**

but that made us stronger,” Bruzon continued.

“The other way is the players really worked hard every day and every player knew their responsibility. We have 12 national players who are at the same level and they compete with each other every day in the training session and that is another way to do better and better in every season.”

The successful Spanish coach was also

delighted to have added another feather to his successful career.

“Apart from my personal satisfaction, all our family members, coaches, our guys and players are here to praise us live. I can tell you today I’m fully satisfied with this achievement.”

Soon after the final whistle, Kings’ supporters rushed to the center of the pitch to join in the celebration with the Kings players, who were seen to have selfies with their fans. It was literally tough for the media to separate the Kings players from their fans, who backed their beloved team throughout the away match in Munshiganj.

Defender Bishwanath Ghosh highly praised his teammates, who showed sheer determination since the league began.

“We did not think we can finish in this fashion because some key players were sidelined due to injuries but the rest of the players were confident to show their ability despite the absence of key players,” said Bishwanath adding they were also determined to wrap up the league title by winning the match against Saif SC.

Throughout the league campaign, goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico continuously displayed stellar performances and carried his form against Saif.

“I have been with Kings since 2018 and this journey has been really challenging. Now I feel really proud to be a member of Kings. We are getting success in the domestic circuit regularly and we have to get success at international level,” said Zico.

## RCAs in focus at BCB AGM today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will take place at a city hotel in Dhaka today. The board will hold its first Aim since the last BCB election that took place last year in 2021.

he amendment of the constitution for the approval of the long-promised Regional Cricket Association for the development of the country’s cricket is expected to be among the major topic of discussion in the meeting.

“We will first need to amend the constitution in order to establish regional cricket structure. There is nothing mention in the BCB constitution on regional cricket. So it is not possible to establish something new if not mentioned in the constitution. So need an approval on this from the general body,” said BCB’s media committee chairman Tanvir Ahmed Titu to the media yesterday.

“If the matter gets approved in the in the AGM then we will need to have a detailed discussion on the how to establish the Regional Cricket Associations,” he said.

the changes in the councillorship is also expected to be placed in the table along with the approvals of several budgets and projects.

“The yearlong works and projects will be presented at the AGM for discussion and approval. There will be approval of budgets and approval of overall matters of the board,” Tanvir added.



## ‘Jeez, what a week’

REUTERS, St Andrews

Australian Cameron Smith was almost lost for words after shooting a flawless closing 64 to win the 150th British Open on Sunday.

The 28-year-old world number six overhauled a four-shot deficit to claim his maiden major title, becoming the first Australian to lift the Claret Jug since Greg Norman in 1993.

“Jeez, what a week. It’s unreal to look at the names on this trophy and then see mine... I’m lost for words,” he said after receiving the trophy.

“I’m going to fall apart here I know. I want to thank the team here for all their hard work, and this one makes it worth it.

“To the R&A - a fantastic week, to St Andrews Links and everyone involved - it was absolutely awesome out there.

“The course was exactly how an Open championship should be played.”

A large group of Australians in the crowd celebrated wildly, a week after they had watched Nick Kyrgios lose the Wimbledon tennis final to Novak Djokovic.

“Lastly to you guys the fans - I had a lot of support out there, especially the Aussie guys,” Smith said.

“You guys really kept me going. Seemed like that there was a lot of you guys and you kept me plugging away. This one’s for Oz.”

## Packed schedule a double-edged sword

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh concluded their Caribbean tour on a high after defeats in the Test and T20I series with a 3-0 whitewash in the ODIs, but the team will have little time to catch their breath as they are scheduled to head to Zimbabwe towards the end of the month.

That busy schedule is something the Tigers will have to get used to in light of the news that Bangladesh have 34 Tests, 59 ODIs and 51 T20Is lined up for the 2024-2027 cycle under the proposed scheduled of the ICC Future Tour Programme (FTP).

Bangladesh are only behind England (42), Australia (41) and India (38) in terms of the number of Tests that each nation will play in the proposed cycle, reported by ESPNcricinfo. Bangladesh also have the highest number of ODI assignments and their total number of matches stands at 144, only behind the West Indies, who will play 146 matches.

Since Bangladesh received Test status, their performances in the longest format of the game has remained an area that they have looked to desperately improve. Discussions about how that could be

achieved always noted that playing more Tests was a pre-requisite and, to some extent, the BCB’s diplomatic success at the ICC table in this regard is praiseworthy.

“We have been trying to increase the number of games in our international calendar for the past eight years or so,” BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

But, similar to the previous FTP

Bangladesh have 34 Tests, 59 ODIs and 51 T20Is lined up for the 2024-2027 cycle under the proposed scheduled of the ICC Future Tour Programme (FTP).

cycle, none of Bangladesh’s 34 Tests in the proposed FTP feature matches against England or Australia.

After playing bilateral series against all Test-playing nations in the 2001-2006 FTP cycle, Australia did not play a Test series against the Tigers during the 2006-2011 cycle. Bangladesh did then host Australia and England in 2016 and 2017, but have had no Test series against the

teams since. So questions remain how Bangladesh can improve the standard of Test cricket without facing top opponents in tougher conditions like Australia and England.

On the flip side, the increase number of matches will pose a big challenge to the BCB’s aims of lifting the standards of domestic cricket. Given such a busy international schedule, top cricketers’ participation is likely to be an issue that makes domestic competitions less competitive.

“We are not doing well in Tests and T20Is. We already have a few plans for Test cricket. But the thing is that we have not able to understand what to do to make domestic cricket more competitive. The pitches are better now so I don’t think we need to make any massive changes from that aspect.

“If we need the participation of national players to make domestic cricket more competitive but we are unable to ensure that, then how can we make the domestic cricket competitive? It’s tough, but we have discussed the issue. Let’s see,” BCB president Nazmul Hassan told the media on Sunday.



**Red hot Dinesh Chandimal struck his second successive half-century to take Sri Lanka’s lead past 300 and thwart the Pakistan attack on day three of the opening Test on Monday. The hosts were 329 for nine when bad light stopped play for the day in Galle. Chandimal, on 86, and Prabath Jayasuriya, on four, were batting at close of play with Sri Lanka leading by 333 in their second innings.**

PHOTO: TWITTER