



Virat Kohli amassed 9,230 runs in 123 Tests, making him the fourth-highest run-scorer for India, trailing only fellow Indian all-time greats Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, and Sunil Gavaskar.

His tally includes 30 centuries - placing him 16th on the all-time list and fourth among Indians.

Kohli also holds the record for the most double centuries (seven) by an Indian in Test cricket, with the last coming against South Africa in 2019, where he notched up his highest-ever Test score of 254 not out in Pune.

He is the only Indian to score seven Test centuries in Australia, and four hundreds in a single overseas series (2014-15 Australia tour).

Kohli, India's most successful Test captain, led in a record 68 matches with 40 wins, 11 draws, and only 17 losses, achieving a win rate of 58.82% and a loss rate of just 25%.

In the 2016-17 home season, Kohli was in exceptional form, scoring 1,059 runs - the highest by an Indian in a single home season. His performances played a pivotal role in India securing series victories over strong opponents such as England, New Zealand, and Australia.

He also holds the records of most runs in a calendar year by an Indian batter - 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2023



King Kohli's Test tale built on grit

ASHEFAQ-UL-ALAM

Right after Virat Kohli announced his retirement from Tests yesterday, tributes began to pour in on social media from across the world, as everyone -- from former and current cricketers to his millions of fans -- joined hands to serenade one of the greatest batters the game has ever seen.

Among the chorus was former India cricketer and commentator Sanjay Manjrekar, who posted on X: "Biggest brand of the modern cricket era who gave it all for cricket's oldest format. Test cricket owes that debt to Virat Kohli."

While saying that the format itself "owes a debt" to the Indian great is a little superfluous, the sentiment behind the statement holds true, as after a career spanning 123 Tests, 9,230 runs and 30 centuries, Kohli deserves his flowers.

Interestingly, however, a Test career

that ends with universal applause had begun in a very different manner, with many questioning whether Kohli even belonged in the format and, ironically, one of his biggest naysayers being Manjrekar.

"I would still drop VVS [Laxman] and get Rohit [Sharma] in for next Test. Give Virat [Kohli] one more Test, just to be sure he does not belong here," Manjrekar posted on Twitter on January 6, 2012, after India suffered an innings defeat to Australia in Sydney.

At that time, Kohli was already a star in the making in white-ball cricket but was yet to prove his mettle in the Test arena.

Having debuted in the format in 2011, Kohli by then had batted only 11 times in Tests, made 234 runs in total and averaged a mere 21.27. He had struck a couple of

below 47, made his Test stats seem even bleaker by comparison and prompted many to write him off as a white-ball specialist.

Facing such challenges so early in one's career, most would have succumbed -- but not Kohli.

In the very next Test in Perth, which India again lost by an innings margin, Kohli was India's most successful batter with knocks of 44 and 75, and in the following Test in Adelaide, he struck his maiden Test century. He finished the series as India's highest run-getter, shutting down all his critics and announcing his arrival in the format.

But Kohli's challenges in Test cricket were far from over. Throughout his red-ball career, he faced setbacks but always

As a batter, he fell well short of Sachin Tendulkar's 15,921 runs from 200 Tests, but Kohli may have carved out a stronger legacy, according to former Australia captain Greg Chappell. "... perhaps Kohli even eclipses him (Tendulkar) in terms of cultural influence and psychological impact on India's cricketing identity. Kohli, the incandescent heart of Indian cricket for over a decade, did not just score runs. He redefined expectations, challenged conventions, and symbolised the self-assured, unapologetic India of the 21st century," he wrote on ESPNcricinfo.

half-centuries but was yet to breach the three-figure mark and failed to impress in the first two Tests of that Australia tour, making 43 runs in four innings.

His success in the 50-over format at the same time, where he averaged a shade

found a way to fight back. In his first Test tour in England in 2014, he was completely found out in the corridor of uncertainty against James Anderson and company, making just 134 runs in 10 innings, averaging 13.4.

"There's something deeply personal about playing in whites. The quiet grind, the long days, the small moments that no one sees but that stay with you forever."

VIRAT KOHLI wrote about his love for the format in his retirement statement.

When Kohli returned to England with the Test team in 2018, he emerged as the highest run-getter with 593 runs -- 244 runs more than the second-highest scorer, Jos Buttler -- with two centuries and three half-centuries.

After the lukewarm tour in Australia in 2011-12, Kohli, captaining for the first time in Tests, plundered 692 runs in a four-Test series against the Aussies in his return to Down Under in 2014-15.

Under Kohli, India played bold cricket, always pushed for victories and, arguably, his captaincy set the tone for how India are playing across all formats right now.

Kohli was just 770 runs away from joining the elite 10,000-run club in Tests, and even though his form in the format has been on the decline in the last few years, the 36-year-old could have carried on for another year or two and achieved that milestone.

At the end of the day, by calling time on his red-ball career now, Kohli set an example. He left Test cricket before Test cricket left him, forcing even his most ardent of critics to acknowledge his greatness.

Ancelotti to lead Brazil's revival

AGENCIES

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) confirmed that legendary Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti will take over as manager of Brazil after his current stint with Real Madrid ends.

The 65-year-old, widely regarded as one of the greatest managers of all time, becomes the first foreigner ever to lead the five-time World Cup winners.

Ancelotti's departure from Madrid, where he enjoyed a second successful spell, marks the end of an era. Despite winning La Liga and the Champions League as recently as 2024, a trophyless 2025 campaign and a mutual desire for change have paved the way for his long-anticipated move to international management.

"Bringing Carlo Ancelotti to coach Brazil is more than a strategic move. It is a statement to the world that we are determined to regain football's top spot," CBF president Ednaldo Rodrigues said in the statement.

Brazil's national team has been in disarray since their disappointing 2022 World Cup quarter-final exit against Croatia. Successive managers failed to restore dominance, with the team recording just five wins in 14 World Cup qualifiers and struggling for form. Dorival Junior, appointed in early 2024, was dismissed earlier this year after a string of poor results.

Initially, CBF delayed naming a permanent replacement for Tite in hopes of luring Ancelotti away from Madrid--a gamble that has now paid off. Reports suggest Ancelotti has signed a one-year deal with an option to extend, making him the highest-paid national team coach in the world.

His appointment is timely. Brazil, once the gold standard in world football, has not won a World Cup since 2002 and has reached only one semi-final in their last five attempts. The humiliating 7-1 defeat to Germany in 2014 still casts a long shadow.

Yet Ancelotti inherits a talented core familiar to him--Real Madrid stars Vinicius Junior, Rodrygo, and Eder Militao have thrived under his guidance, while rising star Endrick offers promise for the future.

His track record speaks for itself: Champions League triumphs with AC Milan and Madrid, domestic titles in all five major European leagues, and a reputation for winning while maintaining harmony in the dressing room.

As Brazil prepares for critical qualifiers in June, the arrival of Carlo Ancelotti signals not just a change in leadership, but the dawn of a new chapter--one that could restore the Selecao to its rightful place atop world football.



Liton sees long-term role aiding future planning

SPORTS REPORTER

Liton Das has been a member of the Bangladesh national cricket team for a decade now. He has become a key member of the side for his batting along with his wicket-keeping duties. However, it is Liton's handling of the side as stand-in skipper in a few series that has finally seen the BCB count on him for the T20 captaincy hot seat.

Yet, captaincy comes at a time when form concerns have seen Liton excluded from important assignments such as the Champions Trophy. However, the West Indies series saw Liton lead the side with great tactical maturity. His bowling changes and field settings in particular showed how he used the conditions to the team's advantage even against a side that do not lack power-hitting prowess.

Previous forays as stand-in skipper including the triumph against India back in 2022 were accomplished without many of the pressures that regular captains carry. This time the responsibility is greater and given that he has been handed captaincy till the 2026 World Cup, the team's growth and improvement would have to come first on top of his own performances.

In his first press conference since being handed captaincy, said that future plans are on the agenda.

"If I talk about differences [compared to stints as stand-in skipper], the previous plans were series-based. Since the opportunity this time was for long-term, in every aspect I would think of the future. I would know myself that for this period of time, this is the objective. Of course series-focused plans will remain but there will be a focus on what can be done going forward,"



Liton said yesterday.

"When you take it for long term, it's a positive thing because you can think of a lot of things. What remains to be seen is how much we can organise the team in this period," Liton added.

The 30-year-old felt that captaincy could have a positive impact on his performances too.

"It's not about pressure. When I wasn't captain, I was not performing either. So it's not like captaincy would make my performances worse. It could be a plus point. Since it's a new opportunity, we think that those who think positively get the results even if after a day or two," he added.

To set the team's objectives, clear goals and plans will have to be established. While it is early days, Liton recognised communications with the team as the most important factor.

"As much as I need to communicate with the BCB, I would have to communicate a lot more with the players on what they want and in which areas they need to develop," he said.

The Tigers have often struggled in T20Is because of a lack of confidence stemming from a mix of mental and technical issues.

The Tigers are holding skill camps and Liton acknowledged that reducing dot-ball percentages alongside work with power-hitting have been on the agenda. His idea was, however, not in creating a brand but players being able to identify scenarios and playing accordingly.

Far from talking about scoring or chasing in excess of 200, he said, "Instead of a certain brand, if every cricketer understands what the team wants, we will get better results."

FROM UNPAID TO UNSAFE Bangladesh referees in freefall

SPORTS REPORTER

As Bangladesh football seems to be going through a rejuvenation following the allegiance switch by high-profile players like Hamza Choudhury and Shamit Shome, the domestic scene is creating all the negativities through crowd trouble and referee assault.

A spate of incidents has occurred within the past month where referees were assaulted over on-field decisions by club officials, players and supporters -- both in the top-tier Bangladesh Premier League and the second-tier Bangladesh Championship League.

The latest of these incidents was a blatant assault on former FIFA referee GM Chowdhury Nayan by officials and supporters of City Club following their 1-1 draw against BFF Elite Academy in a BCL game at the Fortis Ground in Jalshiri on Sunday.

Video footage of the incident shows a number of people beating up Nayan as other match officials, and even some members of City Club, tried to restrain them.

The long-time BFF referee said he and his colleagues feel helpless in the current environment, with very little security being ensured to save them from such troubles.

"I have never had such an experience in my 18-year career. But this is becoming an increasingly common trend in local football," Nayan told The Daily Star from his Chattogram home on Monday.

Recalling the whole incident, Nayan pointed to the unsecured venues as a major reason for the increasing attacks on referees.

With the Kamalapur venue unavailable due to renovation work, the BCL is taking place in three venues: Fortis Ground, Bashundhara Kings Arena's practice ground, and Shaheed Barkat Stadium in Gazipur.



PHOTO: CHANNEL24

"The matches are being held on open and unsecured grounds, and there were only two police personnel there for Sunday's match," Nayan alleged. "Our colleague Jashim, too, was heckled recently at the same venue. Nazmul was assaulted in Gazipur a week ago."

A recent incident of physical assault of a match commissioner by a national team player following a high-voltage BPL match between Bashundhara Kings and Abahani put the focus firmly on the indiscipline in BPL matches. Although the backlash from the BPL incident has resulted in suspensions and monetary punishments of a number of players and officials, the incidents in the second tier continue to go unnoticed.

The issue of physical assault is just one aspect of the referees' plight, though. The fact that BFF owes a lot of money to the referees, accrued during the former committee and during the current one, makes the hardship of referees even more unbearable.

The referees had recently threatened to boycott BPL matches over unpaid remuneration before taking to the field at

the eleventh hour following some last-ditch payment from the BFF.

But with no signs of a Referees' Committee being formed under the new governing body, and with the Bangladesh Football Referees' Association apparently turning a blind eye, there seems to be very little hope for the referees to get their grievances rightfully addressed.

A senior FIFA referee, on condition of anonymity, lamented the situation, saying: "Being a referee is a big challenge at the moment. The referees have to conduct matches with expenses from their own pocket, and then they get attacked. This is very unfortunate and a worrying sign for our football."

The widely respected referee also labelled the situation as a sign of "growing national intolerance".

"I think this has become a national trend -- taking law into one's own hands," he said. "People do not show respect to law, and they try to show their muscle and political clout with these heinous activities."

Despite repeated attempts, concerned BFF officials could not be reached for a comment over the issue.