

Stokes reveals England coaching ambition



England's Ben Stokes gestures having given an interview during the post-match activities (file photo)

AFP | London

Ben Stokes has revealed his ambition to coach England in the future, but ruled out any chance of ending his shock retirement from international cricket.

Stokes quit as England Test captain and retired from the international stage after a 2-1 Test series defeat by New Zealand in June.

The all-rounder had been dropped for the second Test against New Zealand after he and team-mate Gus Atkinson broke a team curfew in a nightclub incident following the opening match of the series.

Stokes said his turbulent four-year reign as captain had left him exhausted.

He famously reversed his one-day international retirement to play in the 2023 World Cup and England managing director of men's cricket Rob Key last week said he "wouldn't be surprised" if Stokes were to return to Test action.

But Stokes, 35, said he is "definitely" not coming back to the Test arena while speaking on the 'For the Love of Cricket' podcast.

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I'm doing my level three coaching now while I'm still playing, because when the day comes that I'm not playing anymore, I'd love to be able to have all that stuff signed off and done

BEN STOKES

coaching now while I'm still playing, because when the day comes that I'm not playing anymore, I'd love to be able to have all that stuff signed off and done," Stokes said.

On his coaching plan, Stokes added: "I know what I want to do in terms of staying within the game, which is to be a coach.

"And would I love to be coach of England one day? Absolutely. I just really like the idea of being in some form of leadership away from playing."

Joe Root has been reappointed as England's Test skipper after Stokes' exit, with Harry Brook -- who has served as vice-captain -- overlooked for a promotion.

Khaldiya usher in Tomic era ahead of new season



Al Khaldiya's squad before departing for Turkey

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Al Khaldiya officially began a new chapter yesterday after confirming the appointment of Croatian coach Goran Tomic as the club's new head coach, with the team already in Turkey for a pre-season training camp ahead of the 2026-27 campaign.

The overseas camp, which runs until August 19, forms a key part of Khaldiya's preparations for the new season following another campaign in which they challenged for major domestic honours.

Tomic arrives with experience across Europe, Asia and the Gulf, having previously managed Croatian clubs HNK Šibenik, NK Istra 1961, NK Lokomotiva Zagreb and HNK Rijeka, as well as China's Beijing Baxy, Tianjin Songjiang and Zhejiang Yiteng. He also enjoyed spells in the UAE with Al Nasr Dubai and Al Bataeh.



Goran Tomic

He takes over from Tunisian coach Lassad Al Chabbi, who guided Khaldiya throughout last season.

Khaldiya finished second in the Nasser bin Hamad Premier League, ending the campaign just one point behind champions Muharraq after remaining in the title race until the final day.

The club did, however, finish the season with silverware after defeating Muharraq 3-0 to lift the Bahrain Super Cup. They also reached the King's Cup quarter-finals, where they were edged out by Riffa on penalties following a 3-3 draw, while their Khalid bin Hamad Cup defence ended in the semi-finals against the same opponents.

The Turkey camp includes four friendly matches, beginning against UAE side Fujairah on August 8. Khaldiya will then face Kuwait's Kazma on August 10 before taking on an opponent yet to be confirmed on August 13. Their final warm-up fixture will be against Kuwaiti club Al Qadsia on August 17.

Founded in 2020, Khaldiya have quickly established themselves among Bahrain's leading clubs. They have won two Nasser bin Hamad Premier League titles, claiming back-to-back championships in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 seasons, along with two King's Cups, four Bahrain Super Cups and the inaugural Khalid bin Hamad Cup in 2025.

On the continental stage, Khaldiya featured in last season's AFC Champions League Two but exited in the group stage. Under Tomic, they will now be aiming to build on their recent success and mount another strong challenge on multiple fronts.

Coventry sign Brighton 'keeper Rushworth after successful loan



Carl Rushworth reacts during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Premier League new-boys Coventry signed Brighton goalkeeper Carl Rushworth in a deal worth a reported club record £22.5 million (\$30 million) yesterday.

Rushworth enjoyed a successful loan spell at Coventry during the club's promotion-winning campaign last season.

The 25-year-old made 46 appearances in the Championship and kept 17 clean-sheets as Coventry won the second tier title, convincing boss Frank Lampard to sign him on a permanent basis.

"I'm really happy, there's

so many emotions, said Rushworth, who has signed a "long-term" contract with Coventry.

"There's excitement, I can finally relax knowing it's done and that I'm back with the boys and at a club I loved being at.

"I'm excited to have this new challenge in the Premier League and to be able to call this place home is a big thing I've been looking forward to."

Lampard added: "It's great to have Carl back with us on a permanent basis.

"He's a top professional, a great character and he had a huge impact on the team to help us get promoted last season."

Barca's Ter Stegen joins Ajax on loan

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen joined Ajax on loan for the 2026/27 season yesterday.

"Ajax has reached an agreement with Barcelona and Marc ter Stegen," said the Dutch club in a statement.

The 34-year-old, who has been at Barcelona since 2014, has missed much of the last two seasons with serious injury issues.

With Joan Garcia established as Barca's number one, the Catalans loaned Ter Stegen to Girona in January but in February he suffered a hamstring injury on his second appearance for the

club, ruling him out for the rest of the campaign.

The Germany international was not selected as part of his country's World Cup squad.

Ter Stegen, who won the Champions League and seven La Liga titles with Barca, has a contract until June 2028 at Camp Nou.



Marc-Andre ter Stegen

Shafique, Babar lead strong Pakistan reply against West Indies

AFP | Port of Spain

Abdullah Shafique struck his sixth Test century and Babar Azam closed in on a hundred as Pakistan reached 266-2 in reply to West Indies' 344 on day two of the second Test in Trinidad.

Just days after flying into the Caribbean as an emergency replacement, Shafique ended the day unbeaten on 107 off 185 balls with 10 fours and two sixes decorating his authoritative innings at Queen's Park Oval.

Babar, the only visitor to emerge with any credit from a disastrous second innings of the first Test when he finished unbeaten on 58, was again unbeaten on 86.

His calm, classy innings has so far occupied 126 deliveries, embellished by 10 fours and one



Pakistan batsman Abdullah Shafique (R) celebrates his century

six.

Putting aside those batting woes of a 90-run loss at the Brian Lara Stadium a few miles away, captain Babar and the recalled Shafique made the most

of ideal batting conditions and pleasant weather, gathering runs in style in an unbroken third-wicket stand of 168.

Recalled after Shan Masood's finger injury, Shafique looked at

ease in the unfamiliar position of number three when he replaced Imam-ul-Haq, who was dismissed by Shamar Joseph.

It was his first opportunity since losing his place after the South Africa series at home last October.

He put on 64 attractive runs with Azan Awaiz, the opener playing 10 fours in a 71-ball 55 before being adjudged lbw on television review to left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican.

Babar got into stride almost immediately and with the West Indies hampered by the unavailability of first Test match-winner Justin Greaves with a leg injury and captain Roston Chase ineffective with his off-spinners because of a lacerated finger, the tourists' task was made that bit easier.