

DP World India Championship

Tuesday, 14 October, 2025

New Delhi, Delhi, India

Delhi GC

Anirban Lahiri

Press Conference



DP WORLD INDIA CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We have a special guest here, Anirban Lahiri. 10 years ago he won the Indian Open at this very course, and now he's back here for the DP World India Championship. Welcome back to a course which has always been good for you, and you love this place. It's like a home course even though you grew up elsewhere. What's your first impression after coming back after 10 years?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Firstly, let me apologise, my throat is backed up.

I'm very excited to be back. A lot of things have changed since I last played the course. It's undergone a beautiful renovation. I was very excited to see all the new changes. It's still got a familiar feel. I think off the tee it's still the same. But very happy and excited to be back.

You said the course has always been good to me; that's not true. I've had my struggles. The last few times I've been here, it's become more of a friend, and I hope to have that relationship continue.

Q. Four wins certainly does make a great relationship. Any first impressions on the quality of the tournament, the quality of the field that the DP World India Championship has put together, the best ever I would assume?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: No, fantastic. I think this is a star-studded field. It's amazing to have so many Ryder Cup stars, Rory, Tommy, especially the year that Tommy has won the FedExCup, Rory has won the Grand Slam. You've got Viktor, you've got so many stars this week.

I think it's been a landmark year for golf aficionados in India. We have so many stars. We had a few earlier in the year at DLF, and now we have so many here this week. I think it's been a feast for the youngsters, for the next generation. I think there's going to be a massive buzz come tomorrow, and patrons are going to be loud on the golf course.

I'm really excited, and like I said, this is a great sign, and hopefully we can continue to have fantastic supporters of

golf like DP World who can keep bringing such amazing fields to such iconic golf courses. It all bodes well for the next generation of golfers to see their idols, to see their stars live in action, to hear the ball, see the ball fly and feel excitement.

I think it's all a very important part of being inspired, a very important part of motivating the next batch of superstars from India.

Q. You've just said very exciting times for young stars in Indian golf. You get to see such global stars here in action at home. You also had a mentorship programme coming up. The youngsters here and the youngsters which you hope to mentor, what does it mean for Indian golf?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think for me, it's been a wonderful journey of nearing the completion of my second decade as a pro. I've seen a lot, especially in the last 10, 12 years, since moving on and playing on the higher tours in the world.

Yeah, I think personally I feel a sense of responsibility, a sense of wanting to give back to golf, to a sport that's given me everything in life. I came from very humble origins, and I see a lot of kids out here who are exactly what I was 20 years ago, and I've also seen a lot of my friends, colleagues, compatriots who have had tremendous potential, not necessarily make it to the highest levels, even though they could and should have.

So that's inspired me and motivated me to start my own mentorship programme, which for now will be focused on juniors and amateurs, but over the last three or four years I've been talking to at least 10 or 15, maybe even more, maybe 20 pros and amateurs already, including some of the kids who are playing this week. So all the young pros that are playing this week will play on the Indian circuit, and some who have now made the Asian Tour.

Mentorship and guidance was something I was very lucky to receive myself. I think it's my duty and the duty of all my contemporaries to pass that on to the next generation so I'm just doing my bit, and like I said, I hope we have more

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and more players over the next five, ten, 15 years who are playing on the highest tours and the majors and competing and contending.

Q. I have a couple of questions. We spoke about the four wins, but before that 2011 period, you did not have a very good record over here.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Terrible record.

Q. Can you just tell us what you needed to do to tame the beast over here?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I don't know if you tame it, you just make friends with it. When you can't beat them, you join them. That's what I tried to do. You can't try and overpower this golf course. I think that was what I tried to do when I was younger and more fearless and didn't think -- I was bulletproof, so to speak.

No, I burned myself quite a few times, missed plenty of cuts, made a lot of big numbers, and then I went back to the drawing board and kind of realised what I needed to do to play consistently.

I think my goal was to find a consistency on this golf course, and that eventually led to putting myself in contention and then eventually winning a number of times.

But the whole idea for me was to try and figure out where to be aggressive, where to be conservative, and from being aggressive off the tee, to being conservative off the tee and aggressive on the second shot.

I pulled the driver out of the bag, something you'll find a lot of players doing this week. I've had a chat with some of my -- some of the caddies of my colleagues who are here for the first time, and they were picking my brain, and I'd be very surprised to see too many of the stars carrying a driver. That was one of the things I did.

But just also navigating, understanding what strategically is the best way for me to counter the challenge of DGC, which is, like I said, put myself more in play and then depending on my appetite for aggression, it will always be on the approach shot, not on the tee shot.

Q. You being a LIV Golf player and how the situation is, who do we have to thank for you to be here this week, and how did it come about?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Well, without going too much into details, I'm very grateful and thankful to DP World, the company, the organisation, for extending this invite to me. I love playing at home. I love competing in India, in DGC,

especially when the field is so good. I relish these opportunities, so I was excited when Srivanka told me earlier in the year that this event was going to happen and I was very excited.

I think it was just over two months ago that my management got in touch with DP World and they were very excited to have me, so I'm very happy and grateful to DP World for extending this invite to me.

Q. In January you were joined by Bryson and a bunch of other LIV Golfers and you talked about putting India on the map with LIV Golf. I wanted to ask, how is that panning out? Is that happening anytime soon?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Well, I don't think I get -- I mean, I'm not high enough in the organisation to be able to answer that question accurately. Does India feature in the long-term plans for LIV as an organisation? I think definitely. I think evidence to that is the International Series event that happened here, and I'm sure that that's something that's going to continue.

I hope and I'm going to put my best efforts into converting that into a full-blown LIV event in the future. So I'm hoping it happens. Is it going to happen next year? No. We already have the schedule out. I don't think India features in '26. But I'm still hopeful that in the coming years we have a pit stop here.

Having said that, I think the commitment to India and growing the game here is very much there, and I think you'll see more players and events happening here in coming years.

Q. You have competed all over the world. This is the first time Rory is coming to India in a DP World Tour event. Back in 2014 Tiger was here and played an exhibition match. How does it feel to be competing against Rory, and how significant is this moment for Indian golf?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: It's a significant moment because you're going to have a Hall of Famer -- he's a future Hall of Famer for sure. He's here, he's embracing this event in our country, and the scene is perfect. We're playing DGC; it's a historic golf course. I'm very happy to be here, to be a part of it.

I think it's, like I mentioned before, it's great for golf that we have such big worldwide names, stars, all the kids of the next generation idolise and gravitate towards, and I think it's very important in creating that next batch of champions.

I think it's a great sign. I hope more stars like him continue



to come in the future, and whatever I can do to support it, whether it's by playing and being here or by helping bring people to organise it, I'll be happy to do my bit.

Q. Speaking of the next batch of champions, you yourself have played on the PGTI. How do you see the growth of the tour and the efforts being made?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: It's good to see professional golf in India grow. I played yesterday with Shaurya Bhattacharya, Arjun Prasad and Dhruv Sheoran. I'm playing today with Yuvraj and Varun, and all six of them play on the PGTI, and they're good friends.

For me, every time I come back and play, I try and give as much time as possible playing with not just my friends but also the next batch of golfers. The four, five hours, six hours they get with me on the golf course, I encourage them to pick my brains and ask whatever it is.

I'm there in whatever capacity I can, and it's good to see the prize funds grow and the stature of the tournaments go up. Big thank you to Kapil for helming PGTI and taking it forward, and I'm very hopeful that the momentum continues and some of these young boys and others who I didn't mention start elevating themselves to the next level and performing internationally.

Q. You mentioned earlier about a lot of the players putting away their drivers for this week. Just in regards to that, I wanted to ask you a little bit about some of the players who are coming and especially Rory. They are big hitters of the ball. Will that be an advantage even if they put away their drivers?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Absolutely, yes. I mean, speed is your friend. Golf 20 years ago or 25 years ago when I first played my first junior event here in 1999 maybe, to hit the ball 240, 250 yards, some people were hitting driver, some people were hitting 3-wood. I'm just guessing here, but Rory probably gets that out of his 4-iron or 3-iron. Someone like a Bryson gets that out of his 5-iron. Is it easier to hit a 5-iron compared to a 3-wood? Definitely, because the nature of the course hasn't changed. You still have to hit it into the same areas, and some of the stronger, faster, more athletic players of today are still going to hit it in the same area, but they're going to use lesser club. So yes, it's an advantage.

Do I expect Rory to take his driver out and bomb away? I don't think so, not after my chat with Harry yesterday. I don't think so.

Q. Competing on home soil brings a mix of pride and pressure. How are you approaching this week

mentally, and what would be a strong performance for you in this tournament?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: You know, I want that burden. I've carried the responsibility of being the flag bearer now for well over a decade, so it feels natural to me. It's something that I embrace. It's something that I've become used to.

I think I'm going to thrive under pressure, if you want to call it that. I think I'm going to thrive under the energy, I'd probably use that word, and the buzz. For me personally, every time I've teed it up in DGC the last 10 or 12 times I've had some semblance of control. The goal has been the same: You just have to play the golf course the way it demands you to play it.

There's no plans C and B, there's only a plan A and a plan B, and plan B if your plan A is not working. I just have to execute.

This is the kind of execute that if you don't execute you're not going to have a good week, so the focus has to be on executing, like I said, I very simple, strategic plan, and that's my only goal.

I know from experience if I do that, I should put myself in a good position on Sunday.

What do I expect? I expect myself to focus on the plans. That's it.

Q. Baan, a few years ago you and I were having a chat and you told me about Rory McIlroy when you were in West Palm Beach, him coming to you and asking if he and Erica can come and have a master class at making curry from you. Can you just recall that incident, and what did you see about Indian curry and Rory at that time?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I mean, he's Irish, and most people from that part of the world get exposed to curries. I wouldn't called them Indian by any stretch of the imagination. I think we had just hosted a few of our friends in West Palm: Camilo and Jamie Lovemark and Keegan and a lot of them when I was living there, and obviously word got out that the curry was amazing, so I'm sure they would have heard.

Rory and I used to play and practise at the Bear's Club, so one of those days he's hitting balls and I'm hitting balls, and he came up to me because obviously he enjoys a good curry. I'm still he'll get his fill this week.

Q. I'm sure coming back to DGC, it's a little bit of recognition, a little bit of nostalgia. I remember the

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**last nine holes your caddie said you have a chance.
Do you recall that?**

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, I do recall starting seven shot backs.

Q. What exactly happened on the 10th hole? I think you had to take a penalty shot from the other fairway.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Quite possible. A lot happened. I do remember the finish. I do remember the day. It was one of the windiest days I've ever played in DGC, and I think that's what came to my aid because it was impossible to hit fairways. I don't know, I shot 2- or 3-under, which was by far the best score that day. Yeah, I remember that day like yesterday.

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