

Rice keen to help out Indians

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Stephanie Rice is looking to making a difference to swimming in India, via partnerships with private bodies and associations.

The Australian, who won three gold medals with world record timings at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and coach Michael Bohl are ready with plans to help out swimmers with potential, besides working with junior and senior swimmers.

The 31-year-old Swimming Hall of Famer is in the city to explore partners for opening the Stephanie Rice Swimming Academy (SRSA). "World-class training can help talented Indian swimmers aim for medals at the Olympic Games.

"From my own experience, I appreciate the contribution of good coaching. I want swimmers here to benefit from my training, knowledge and experience," noted Stephanie.

Indian juniors shine

SHOOTING

SPORTS BUREAU
ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN)

Abhay Singh Sekhon won the junior men's skeet bronze in the ninth Asian Shotgun Championship in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on Tuesday.

Yuan Shuaijun of China beat Eduard Yechshenko of Kazakhstan 4-3 in the shoot-off after the two were tied on 54 in the final.

Bronze for Parinaaz

Parinaaz Dhaliwal won the bronze in the junior women's skeet behind the Chinese Sun Yashu and Lu Yikai.

India won the team silver behind China in both the junior men and junior women's events.

India did not field shooters in the men's and women's events.

The results:
Skeet: Junior men: 1. Yuan Shuaijun (Chn) 54(4) 116; 2. Eduard Yechshenko (Kaz) 54 (3) 115; 3. Abhay Singh Sekhon 44 (114); 6. Ayush Rudra-raj 15 (110); 10. Gurnihal Singh Garcha 102.

Team: 1. China 339; 2. India 326; 3. Kazakhstan 324.

Junior women: 1. Sun Yashu (Chn) 49(4) 114; 2. Lu Yikai (Chn) 49(3) 116; 3. Parinaaz Dhaliwal 39 (112); 4. Asees Chhina 32 (106); 7. Darshina Rathore 105.

Team: 1. China 339; 2. India 323; 3. Kazakhstan 300.

Ramkumar downs Muller

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
ORLEANS, FRANCE

Ramkumar Ramanathan beat Alexandre Muller of France 6-4, 6-4 in the first round of the €137,560 Challenger tennis tournament here on Tuesday.

Ramkumar, who served nine aces and converted three of seven breakpoints that he forced, will play the seventh seed Gregoire Barrere of France in the second round.

In the ATP Tour event in Zhuhai, China, Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Momir Kecmanovic of Serbia were beaten 10-6 in the super tie-break in the doubles pre-quarterfinals by Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen of Belgium.

In the ITF women's event in Tabarka, Tunisia, Jennifer Luikham beat third seed Noella Zeballos of Bolivia 6-4, 6-3 in the first round. She will play compatriot and qualifier Humera Shaik who led 6-3, 2-2 when her opponent Margaux Rouvroy of France retired.

In the ITF men's Futures in Italy, the reigning national champion Siddharth Vishwakarma was beaten 6-3, 7-5 by Marco Corino of Italy in

'Need a sporting model'

Athletes must benefit the most from a positive culture: Yuvraj

GENERAL

SPORTS REPORTER
NEW DELHI

"Every individual should focus on playing some sport in life. Cricket, as a sport, has had a major impact on my life," said Yuvraj Singh at The Sports Movement event organised by India On Track here on Tuesday.

"It's astonishing that only 2% of the total population plays sports despite it having massive number of fans in the country. To encourage young children play is the biggest challenge these days. They need role models in their desired sport, along with proper training, facilities and various programmes to get them out and playing," Yuvraj advised.

The former India all-rounder emphasised, "I have always stressed on the fact that India needs to have a sporting model where athletes are the ones who are benefiting the most from a positive sporting culture and



Yuvraj Singh. ■ FILE PHOTO

environment.

"When you look at the top sporting countries around the world, they all have had a model where the athletes are championed and celebrated. We need to be an 'athlete first' nation and all federations, leagues, brands in sports need to have their best interest in mind."

Huge sensation

Dipa Karmakar became a huge sensation after the Rio Olympics and became the face of gymnastics in India. She changed the mindset of numerous people regarding

her sport.

Dipa reflected, "People used to think Tripura is in Bangladesh and had this pre-conceived notion that gymnastics is like circus. I am happy now I have changed their perspective that (they have realised) gymnastics is a proper sport. Children come to me and say we want to win a medal in Olympics."

Yuvraj observed that the process of developing a child's talent started at the grassroots level, only after identifying the skills.

"They need a proper platform to showcase their talent but every sports person is not able to make a name in their concerned sport which worries the parents. It is one of the major factors why parents are not willing to send their children to academies, and aren't letting them spend so much time in a day towards sport, because apparently, unlike education, there is a risk factor in having a career in sports."

Australia's tour of Bangladesh postponed

ANI
DUBAI

Australia's Test tour of Bangladesh, part of the ICC World Test Championship, has been postponed to June-July from February next year for undisclosed reasons.

"According to the FTP, we were supposed to host two Tests in February, but now the Test series will be played in June-July 2020," ICC quoted BCB's cricket operations chairman Akram Khan as saying.

The Aussies' T20I series against the Tigers initially planned for October this year, will now take place in 2021 ahead of the T20 World Cup hosted by India.

"Initially, we were expecting to host Australia for a two-match T20I series in October, but now they have agreed to play three T20Is and it will be played ahead of the World T20 in India, though we are yet to finalise the date," Akram said.

CWG has no standard: Batra

Says India should compete in events of better quality

N. SUDARSHAN
BENGALURU

Terming the Commonwealth Games (CWG) a sub-standard competition, IOA president Narinder Batra strongly pitched for India's withdrawal from the 2022 edition in Birmingham. India has been seething over the axing of shooting from the competition but Batra sought to go beyond and stated that India should be competing at events of better quality in order to improve. He spoke to the media on the sidelines of the Asian Age Group Swimming Championships here on Tuesday.

On boycotting CWG: I never used the word boycott. But my personal view, not the IOA's, is that Commonwealth Games has no standard. We get 70, 100 medals in Commonwealth and when it comes to Olympics we get two medals. You have World Cups and other events where you can have better competition. If CWG says it spent 22 million GBP



Batra. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

[on shooting at Glasgow 2014] and can't have it now because of money, please shut shop and call it quits. If you don't have money, why are you wasting time? Don't make it a joke.

On IOA's official line: We will meet the government. My personal view can't be everyone's view. But if you need sports to improve in this country, you need to think straight. We are not here to make anybody happy. Once we were part of this large British empire. We are not slaves any more. We se-

cured independence in 1947. There are 30 countries of Commonwealth who don't play CWG. It is a political decision. We have asked the government to guide us. But I feel playing CWG is a waste of time. If you want to develop and win medals in 2028, 2032, CWG is not the games.

On the suspension of NDTL: There are about 50 odd parameters and they were missing out in two. They were all minor things but you are supposed to follow. It has nothing to do with testing. I think they must have sorted it out. They have a protocol. So if they've suspended you today, then it will take 5-6 months (to revoke).

On preparations for Tokyo 2020: Regarding those athletes and teams that are in my mind, I'm happy. We are only focusing on where the medal chances are [strong] and I can say I know 95% of the athletes who are going. Hockey, we have to see what will happen on November 1 and 2 [against Belgium].

CoA reschedules BCCI election dates

It will now be held on October 23

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Following the Supreme Court order of September 20, which stated categorically that the disqualification rule to contest election to the Apex Council of the State Associations would apply only to the office-bearers, and therefore in order to enable the State Associations (BCCI members) to comply with three Apex Court orders (July 18, 2016, August 9, 2018 and September 20, 2019) the Committee of Administrators (CoA) has changed the election date deadline from September 28

to October 4.

The CoA has also rescheduled the BCCI election date to October 23 because of the election schedule of the State Legislatures in Maharashtra and Haryana (Oct. 21 to 24).

In an advisory issued on Tuesday, the CoA said: "The member State Associations are directed to conduct the election in accordance with the constitution approved by the CoA in terms of the Supreme Court order of August 9, 2018, and the relaxation granted by the same court in its order dated September 20, 2019."

Badminton coach Kim resigns

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

National women's coach Korean Kim Ji-Hyun, who played a vital role in helping P.V. Sindhu win the 2019 badminton World Championship gold, has resigned from her post to be with her ailing husband.

As a result she is unlikely to be with the Indian team ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

"Kim has informed us that she would not be able to come back within the next six months as she has to attend to her husband," chief National coach P. Gopi Chand told *The Hindu*.

"Her original contract was up to the Olympics in Tokyo and with she herself ruling out returning to India, it is near certain that she will not



Special bond: Kim Ji-Hyun, seen with Gopi Chand, shared a wonderful chemistry with P.V. Sindhu. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

be with us," he said.

"The option of Kim joining the team after six months remains open.

"But that might be too

close to the Olympics, and by which time the preparations would have reached a different level," Gopi Chand said.

Tri-series final washed out

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA

The final of the tri-series T20 tournament between Bangladesh and Afghanistan was washed out without a ball bowled on Tuesday.

The trophy was shared between the two teams after the wash-out. It means hosts Bangladesh got a hand on the trophy of a T20 tournament involving more than two teams for the first time.

India names 29 probables

FOOTBALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Indian football team coach Igor Stimac on Tuesday named 29 probables for a preparatory camp ahead of the FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Bangladesh.

The squad: Goalkeepers: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Kamaljit Singh. **Defenders:** Pritam Kotal, Nishu Ku-

mar, Rahul Bheke, Sandesh Jhingani, Adil Khan, Narendar, Sarthak Golui, Anas Edathodika, Anwar Ali Jr., Mandar Rao Dessai, Subhasish Bose, Jerry Lalrinzuala. **Midfielders:** Udanta Singh, Nikhil Poojary, Vinit Rai, Anirudh Thapa, Abdul Sahal, Raynier Fernandes, Brandon Fernandes, Halicharan Narzary, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Ashique Kuruniyan.

Forwards: Sunil Chhetri, Balwant Singh, Manvir Singh, Farukh Choudhary.

Tokashiki — guiding Japan's fortunes

The skipper is returning from ankle injury

BASKETBALL

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

Japan's chances of recording a four-peat in the FIBA Women's Asia Cup basketball tournament rest heavily on forward Ramu Tokashiki.

The pressure of leading her side is sure to test Ramu to the full, as she is making a comeback from an ankle in-

jury. But there is no doubting Ramu's exceptional talent.

NBA experience

The 28-year-old was named Most Valuable Player in the 2013 and 2015 editions of the tournament, and has also featured in the prestigious WNBA for Seattle Storm.

Ramu is thrilled to be back on the court for her national team, having last worn the Japan jersey in the 2016 Rio

Olympics. "It's been a long time since I played for Japan. I want to show that I can do well at this level," Ramu said.

Ramu draws confidence from her three-year WNBA stint (2015-17). In her debut year, she averaged 8.2 points per game and 3.3 rebounds per game to be named in the WNBA All-Rookie Team.

The next two seasons, however, were a disappoint-

ment, being named in the starting five in just two games.

Playing in the United States of America presented challenges both on and off the field.

Differences

"American players are taller, stronger and generally more self-confident than Japanese players. Americans also focus on keeping possession,

while Japanese basketball is all about speed. Of course, there are cultural differences too, but I am quite flexible and I can adjust easily.

"The other big difference is that in Japan, the women's league is not entirely professional. But in America, immediately after a WNBA game, a player can be suddenly cut from the team. The competition is severe," the 6'4" hoopster said.



Exceptional talent: Ramu Tokashiki is thrilled to be back on court for her national team. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

From conflict of interest to confluence of interests

Cricket administration is both politics and business in India, so officials believe they are twice entitled



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

If we accept that cricket is a reflection of society, then we shouldn't be surprised that daughters and sons and brothers of powerful former rulers are bidding to join the family business. Our politicians and businessmen see it as their birthright to promote their kin, and keep the levers of power in their own hands. Cricket administration is both politics and business in India, so officials believe they are twice entitled.

When he took over as the boss of Saurashtra cricket, Niranjan Shah, later secretary, Board of Control for Cricket in India, said this was a move to bring in democracy. He enjoyed democracy so much that he stayed in power for four decades. And now he feels his son Jaydev Shah is ready to take over. The loving father has pushed his son before. Jaydev has played 120 First Class matches, his batting average in the 20s

. He has led in more games than any other Ranji captain. He also led an India A team and was contracted to play in the IPL for various teams. He is probably kind to animals and

treats children well, but it would have been interesting to see how far he might have got without the family name.

One of Niranjan Shah's famous quotes is: "Moral grounds don't exist in the BCCI."

Glass ceiling?

In Tamil Nadu, former president Narayanswami Srinivasan, now ineligible to stand for election, will be represented by his daughter Rupa who in all likelihood will be elected unopposed and thus become the first woman to head a cricket association in the country. Had the circumstances been different, this would have been a memorable thing, and Rupa feted for cracking the glass ceiling.

If sons and daughters are too young or don't exist, then there are siblings and more distant relatives to count on. Another former president, Anurag Thakur will be represented by his brother Arun in Himachal Pradesh while there is talk of Sourav Ganguly's uncle coming through in the Cricket Association of Bengal.

That word "represented" is no accident. Legally, the new generation will represent their respective associations in the BCCI; but in a larger sense they represent their relatives, allowing them to carry on ruling in the manner that has worked for them for decades. This might sound unfair, but administration should not only be absolutely above board but seen

to be above board; relatively won't do.

Not illegal

None of this is illegal, of course. Each case falls within the rulings of the Supreme Court, and after all, this is a free country. Yet, can anyone shake off the feeling that all this is old wine in new-generation bottles? Or that the coterie will not retain power, thus stymieing one of the things the Supreme Court order was trying to avoid — too much power in the hands of too few? And the perpetuation of a one-family rule?

It is entirely possible that the younger folk deserve to take on the mantle of their fathers and brothers, and might have inherited their best qualities. Men like Srinivasan have been spending money from their own pockets for local cricket for many years, which explains their popularity in their states.

But a new-look association, hoping to be free of the accumulated ills and dictatorial styles of functioning cannot afford to be indistinguishable from the old one.

Still, the fact that these newcomers face no opposition merely shows the grip that the older generation has on the system. Conflict of interest is being replaced by confluence of interests.

Endgame

Still, after nearly six years of acrimo-

ny and court rulings and ego-driven problems and match-fixing issues, there is some hope that the endgame is near. When Vinod Rai of the Committee of Administrators characterised his role as that of the night-watchman, it did sound overly optimistic. The BCCI versus BCCI battles were then reflected in the CoA versus CoA ones, and at one point it was difficult to distinguish between the two.

With the elections to the BCCI slated for next month, an imperfect system might be better than no system at all.

At the national level, however, it might not be just the relatives who try to get a foot into the governing body. Politicians and friends of politicians are likely to emerge as contenders too.

Many of them see sport as politics by other means, and see a position in the BCCI as an impressive addition to their bio-data. Politicians have been board presidents before — the late Madhavrao Scindia being a good example. He loved his cricket, and that's not something you can say for most politicians.

The choice cannot be between a pumped-up relative and an agenda-driven politician. This is the very thing the Lodha Committee Report — on which the Supreme Court based its rulings — was trying to avoid. Going forward to the past is seldom a good move.