

# Adil's late equaliser saves India's blushes

Saaduddin cashes in on Gurpreet's misjudgement, scores for Bangladesh

## WC QUALIFIER

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA  
KOLKATA

Adil Khan found the equaliser two minutes from time to help India hold Bangladesh 1-1 in their Group E match of the FIFA World Cup 2022 qualifying match at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Tuesday. A near-capacity crowd failed to provide the impetus as an error-prone host dished out an uninspiring performance before managing to escape with a draw.

Bangladesh went ahead late in the first half when India goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu's error in judgement allowed Saaduddin hoist the lead for Bangladesh.

India, with two points from three matches, remained fourth in the five-team group while Bangladesh, which bagged its first point of the tournament, remained at the bottom.

### Defensive trap

India was caught in the defensive trap thrown by Bangladesh right from the start. Playing its second match at home, the team fumbled in the strike zone, squandering many scoring opportunities despite head coach Igor Stimac fielding his best attacking combination.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Day seemed to have analysed



Notding home: When all seemed lost, Adil stepped up for India. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

the Indians well as he employed a patrol for the Indian attackers, especially captain Sunil Chhetri. The latter had the best chance in the fourth minute but failed to beat Bangladesh goalkeeper Ashraf Rana.

While Chhetri was tightly marked, Manvir Singh – his colleague in attack – failed to provide the finish. Even as

India continued to fumble in the attacking zone, Bangladesh came up with effective counterattacks and scored off a set-piece in the 42nd minute. Gurpreet misjudged a free-kick from Bangladesh captain Jamal Bhuyan and the ball went to Saaduddin who nodded home the opening goal.

In the second half, Stimac

made two changes in attack, bringing in Brandon Fernandes for Mandar Rao Desai and Raynier Fernandes for the off-colour Anirudh Thapa. In the 88th minute, Fernandes' corner kick was headed home by Adil, bringing the crowd to his feet.

**The result:** India 1 (Adil Khan 88) drew with Bangladesh 1 (Saaduddin 42).

**Bangladesh was resilient and we did not react well and conceded a silly goal. India is trying to play modern and technical football. There is still much more to do**

IGOR STIMAC  
India coach

# Bowlers do the job for India

Team in fine nick for West Indies tour starting next month

## SA WOMEN IN INDIA

ASHWIN ACHAL  
VADODARA

On the eve of the three-match women's ODI series between India and South Africa at the Reliance Cricket Ground here, South Africa head coach Hilton Moreeng stated that his batters must stand their ground for his team to do well.

His call went unheard, allowing India to complete a 3-0 sweep. The Indian spin trio of Ekta Bisht, Poonam Yadav and Deepti Sharma proved too tricky for the visitors, while the pacers Jhulan Goswami and Shikha Pandey did well on the slow, low pitch by keeping a tight line.

### Teasing flight

Left-arm spinner Ekta finished with seven wickets – the highest of the series. Her generous flight posed a severe test of patience and technique, and the Proteas were simply not up to the task.

Rajeshwari Gayakwad – called up for the dead rubber (third ODI) – came to the party as well with a crucial two for 22 spell.

The bowlers effectively won the series for India by keeping the visitors down to sub-par scores – 164 and 140 – in the first and third ODIs respectively.

### Keeping the pressure

The best performance was



On cloud nine: Harmanpreet Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues and Taniya Bhatia are delighted after India won the third and final ODI on Monday. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

reserved for the third ODI, when India defended just 146. The bowlers kept the pressure on throughout the innings, until the South Africans finally folded.

The batters came to the fore in the second ODI. Brilliant knocks from Punam Raut (65), Mithali Raj (66) and Harmanpreet Kaur (39 not out) powered India to its highest-ever ODI chase, underlining the batting depth.

The strong middle-order ensured that the absence of regular opener Smriti Mandhana did not affect the side a great deal.

Smriti's replacement, Priya Punia, started with a solid 75 on her ODI debut, though

the next two visits yielded only 20.

Priya, however, displayed good technique and temperament for 50-over cricket, and is bound to be in the long-term plans of the team management.

Priya's opening partner Jemimah Rodrigues added to her reputation as an exciting talent with a 65-ball 55 in the first ODI. The fearless Jemimah has all the shots in the book.

The Indian team is in great shape going into the limited-over away series against West Indies, which commences in two weeks. The tour consists of three ODIs and five T20Is.

# 'Will secure domestic players' future'

ICA will be the bridge between the administrators, cricketers and cricket, says Gaekwad

G. VISWANATH  
MUMBAI

The first meeting of the Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) will take place at the Cricket Centre here on Wednesday.

The process of electing the ICA team was completed recently. Those elected were Ashok Malhotra (president), Hitesh Majmudar (secretary), V. Krishnaswamy (treasurer), Yajurvindra Singh, Ms. Rajesh Nayyar (Walia), both member representatives, Aunshuman Gaekwad and Shanta Rangaswamy (male and female representatives to the BCCI Apex Council) and Surinder Khanna (representative on the IPL GO). The ICA is likely to nominate male/female representatives to fill vacancies in the State Apex Councils.

"The ICA will be the bridge between the BCCI administrators, cricketers and cricket" said Gaekwad while talking to *The Hindu* on Tuesday. *Excerpts:*

**The ICA has become a reality after the Supreme Court accepted the Justice Lodha Reforms in cricket. One third of the BCCI Apex Council will be cricketers: Sourav Ganguly, Shanta Rangaswamy and you...**

It's a good thing. Absolutely. There will be a lot more thinking from the cricketers' side. It was all about admini-

nistration so far, now there will be a balance between the two: administration and cricket. The BCCI needs to address issues; and with Sourav being there and Shanta and myself, we will understand things better, more practically.

**Sourav has already talked about looking at the match fee of domestic players. The senior tournament fee per day is around ₹35,000...**

It's not that we want to make them millionaires. We would like to secure their future. Probably they get enough when they are playing. Everybody cannot play for India. Junior and First Class cricket is equally important, players have sacrificed a lot.

They have been part of the system, they, players of my time and before, have contributed to the development of the game in India.



Aunshuman Gaekwad. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

# Ganguly vows to restore BCCI's prestige

'When it is tough, you believe you are good enough to do it'

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

Sourav Ganguly, the president-designate of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said on Tuesday that restoring the Board's prestige would be his top priority.

On his return to his home city after being unanimously chosen as the next BCCI president in Mumbai, Ganguly said, "With everybody's help, hopefully we can turn the Board around."

### Biggest powerhouse

Ganguly, who cut a cake as part of the felicitation function organised by the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB), told reporters at the Eden Gardens here: "India is the biggest powerhouse in cricket and should get due respect. Not only financially, but also as a cricket team it is probably the best in the world."

The former India captain was happy to take over at a tough time. "The most satisfying thing is that when I became India captain, Indian cricket was in difficult times and they gave me the responsibility. Now the administration has been through a major crisis. It is emergency. I am happy to get the responsibility to turn it around.



Relishing responsibility: Sourav Ganguly said he is happy to helm the BCCI at a difficult period. ■ FILE PHOTO

When it is tough, you believe that you are good enough to do it.

### Young team

"I am here to do a job for everyone – to make Indian cricket cleaner and administration-wise get the backroom smooth and going along with all the members of the apex council. I have a very young team. It's new for them also. We will do our job to the best of our ability. There will not be lack of effort."

Ganguly said he expected the Indian team to realise its potential. "The team's performance overseas is satisfactory. The only thing is that they need to win big

tournaments. It's not possible to win every time but they have gone through seven big tournaments without winning one. They are a much better side than that. That's one area Virat (Kohli) has to address, and that does not happen in the board room."

He said the BCCI headquarters would remain in Mumbai. "The BCCI operations are a lot more organised than that of the State associations. It will be a mix and match."

Ganguly reiterated that the interest of First Class players and the contentious conflict of interest issue would be addressed on priority.

# CoA's parting status report irks some BCCI members

G. VISWANATH  
MUMBAI

The Committee of Administrators (CoA), in a week's time and after the conclusion of the BCCI AGM and Election of the nine-member Apex Council, will demit office.

Submitting a three-volume 11th status report, the CoA, comprising Vinod Rai, Diana Edulji and Ravi Thodge, has petitioned the apex court to discharge them from their duties after the election is held on October 23.

The report, though, has raised the hackles of a few BCCI full members, with an old guard of an association sending a text, saying that the CoA is casting aspersions on the integrity of the BCCI and State Associations.

The CoA has recommended to the Supreme Court that the right to appoint the grievances department officials, the ombudsman and ethics officer be taken away from the BCCI Apex Council and that the BCCI should constitute an independent committee consisting of a former Chief Justice of India and male and female cricketers nominated by the Indian Cricketers Association to select the same.

The CoA has further suggested that the State Associations should constitute an independent committee consisting of the BCCI om-



Vinod Rai. ■ FILE PHOTO

budsman and a male and female cricketer, preferably hailing from the particular State, should select the ombudsman and ethics officer for the State.

The CoA has also suggested to the apex court that it may pass an order approving the actions of the CoA, all agencies and individuals assisting it and restrain the BCCI or any other person from taking action against in relation to the discharge of its functions. The CoA has also indicated that the BCCI CEO, CFO, IPL-COO, and the staff have lent valuable assistance to it.

In what will be its last Status report to the Supreme Court, the CoA has made a strong pitch to review the conflict of interest issues and that certain inclusion of clauses in the BCCI Constitution is proposed "to ensure that former as well as current cricketers (except those in annual contract with the BCCI) can occupy posts in the cricket committees."

# Sourav Ganguly has done it before; he can do it again if allowed to

Needs to deal with effects of previous regime's intransigence and CoA's reactions that were indistinguishable from those of the organisation it was trying to clean up



## BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

It does not matter. If Sourav Ganguly met Home Minister Amit Shah, and even worked out a deal to become the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, it does not matter. Perhaps he might campaign for the BJP in the elections in West Bengal, perhaps not. It does not matter.

In another ten months, he will no longer be president (he begins his three-year cooling-off period then), and is free to do what he wants. If Ganguly then dips his toes into politics, that shouldn't take away from the here and now.

In fact, it is after he steps aside that

the political manoeuvres in the BCCI will get even more interesting. Jay Shah, son of the Home Minister, also has roughly the same period of time as secretary before his cooling-off period kicks in. It might mean that Brijesh Patel, who was inches away from the top job before Ganguly breezed through, might get it as reward for pulling out of the race.

The Lodha Commission, the Supreme Court, the Committee of Administrators, the rule changes, the uncertainties and confusion, the irrelevancies and tough talk merely held BCCI politics in a state of suspended animation before things returned to being feudal and familial. But it was fun for a while contemplating the prospect of change.

All those holding their breaths can exhale now; the suspense is over, things are back to 'BCCI normal', which is different from the regular normal.

The elevation of Ganguly is cause for celebration, though. He brings to the

job a combination of youth (he is 47) and independence that augurs well for a governing body that has often been mired in age and inter-dependence. He can make cricketing decisions without having to justify it to those who haven't had his experience on the field of play. He is, for example, in favour of day-night Tests, and has called it "inevitable".

In the past, the authorities have resisted the idea. This approach, says former England captain Mike Brearley in the recent edition of *Wisden India Almanack*, is "narrow-minded, short-sighted and selfish". Especially when Test cricket needs to do everything it can to bring people back into the stadiums.

Ten months is a good period to focus on changes, especially if there is no pressure to form fresh alignments for the future. BCCI office-bearers have usually been in permanent election mode, pleasing one lot of people for

their votes, ensuring politicians are kept happy and generally doing everything to hang on to their seats. Justice Lodha's recommendations have put an end to that.

### Other possibilities

Or so it seems at this point. Yet, there is always the possibility that a Sports Bill could be passed in Parliament that could alter everything; or a united BCCI could work towards changing its new constitution even if it means more legal battles.

Ganguly's stated intention to better the lot of First Class cricketers – he can also include umpires and groundsmen – is commendable. He will count on the support of his secretary and the Apex Council. Perhaps they realise already, like their predecessors did, that they ought to hang together lest they hang separately.

Secretary Jay Shah, in his 30s, brings down the average age further. He gets a

chance to show that being a minister's son is not his only qualification for the job, although it helped. He was the joint-secretary of the Gujarat Cricket Association where his father was president.

Ganguly, who encouraged players from non-traditional cricketing centres and made a success of his job as captain will now have a team from non-cricketing traditional backgrounds (politics, business, etc.) in his new avatar. As captain he was responsible for cleaning up the mess following the match-fixing scandal that kept Indian cricket on edge at the turn of the century.

### Conflict of interest

He has promised to look into the question of conflict of interest which he thinks has deprived Indian cricket of the services of past players. As a practical man, he will know that sometimes when there is, technically speaking, a conflict, it shouldn't matter so long as it

does no harm. As suggested in these columns, the phrase "material difference" can be introduced into the rule thereby acknowledging the conflict of interest, but making it clear that it does no harm.

The CoA itself appointed the same man as both ethics officer and ombudsman, for instance, but was quick to pounce on conflicts of interest elsewhere.

One of its members continued over the age of 70, but didn't think the rules applied to him. Such things tended to confuse rather than clarify.

Ganguly will have to deal with both the effects of the previous regime's intransigence as well as the CoA's reactions that were indistinguishable from those of the organisation it was trying to clean up.

It will not be easy, but if, till the issues are resolved, the BCCI leaves politics at the door, then Sourav Ganguly will have a cricket-crazy nation's gratitude. Once again.