

Kohli rested for T20Is; Dube gets call-up

Sanju Samson and Yuvendra Chahal return to National team for Bangladesh series

TEAM SELECTION

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Virat Kohli has been rested, Shivam Dube has earned his maiden call-up while Sanju Samson and Yuzvendra Chahal have been recalled to the India squad for next month's T20 series against Bangladesh.

The National selection committee, headed by M.S.K. Prasad, met at the Cricket Centre here, with captain Kohli in attendance, to pick the squad for three T20Is and two Tests against Bangladesh.

Nadeem misses out

While the Test squad that swept the series against South Africa has been retained – Shahbaz Nadeem missing out with Kuldeep

The squads

T20Is: Rohit Sharma (capt.), Shikhar Dhawan, K.L. Rahul, Sanju Samson, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wk), Washington Sundar, Krunal Pandya, Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, Deepak Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed, Shivam Dube and Shardul Thakur

Tests: Virat Kohli (capt.), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Shubman Gil and Rishabh Pant

Fixtures

T20Is: November 3 (Delhi), November 7 (Rajkot), November 10 (Nagpur)

Tests: November 14-18 (Indore), November 22-26 (Kolkata)



Tailormade: The selectors found Shivam Dube eminently suited for the role they had in mind. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

Yadav having recovered from his shoulder injury – the T20I squad has four changes from the drawn series last month.

While Sanju has come in for Kohli, the Mumbai duo of Dube and Shardul Thakur have replaced injured all-rounder Hardik Pandya and pacer Navdeep Saini. Ravindra Jadeja has made way for leggie Yuzvendra Chahal, who had been dropped for all the white-ball series after the World Cup.

Sanju, whose only international appearance was in Zimbabwe four years ago, has been rewarded for his scintillating form, including a double hundred for Kerala against Goa in the Vijay Hazare Trophy last week.

Despite his abundant talent, Sanju's inconsistency with the willow had prevented him from being picked in the National team.

Prasad said Sanju had proven his consistency in recent outings.

“The problem with Sam-



Meritorius: Sanju Samson's recent form added to his abundant talent has earned him the call. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

son – he was there in the Indian team 4-5 years ago – was inconsistency.

“In the last one year, however, he has had a fantastic IPL followed by a good India-A series against South Africa and then a wonderful Vijay Hazare as well.

“He is more consistent now and that is the reason we thought of drafting him in,” Prasad said.

Prasad was full of praise for Mumbai all-rounder Dube, who will be tried out as a like-for-like replace-

ment for the injured Hardik.

“You can see, earlier we had Hardik Pandya, then we also tried Vijay Shankar.

“All of us unanimously agreed that for the role we have, he (Dube) fits in very well,” Prasad said.

“He bats aggressively, his performances in the India-A series in the West Indies and also against South Africa in the ODIs (for India-A) were phenomenal.

“He has improved by leaps and bounds, and we are convinced about him.”

A brainstorming session with Ganguly

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

India captain Virat Kohli met the new BCCI president Sourav Ganguly at the Cricket Centre here on Thursday. Kohli had already congratulated Sourav and expressed his delight at the former cricketer being elected for the prestigious BCCI position.

Having completed the third Test against South Africa well before time, Kohli got the opportunity to meet Ganguly who, along with some

Apex Council members, was at the BCCI office to get the hang of the administrative set up.

Kohli, Rohit Sharma, named captain for the three match Twenty20 series against South Africa, M.S.K. Prasad, chairman of the senior selection committee, and his committee met Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah.

Looking forward

Before his meeting with Ganguly, Kohli spoke to the me-

dia at the launch of the new Audi A6 here. He said: “I have met him before to discuss a lot of things. I am looking forward to a good discussion.

“He is someone who has played a lot of cricket before, who knows the situation we are in, what the team needs, the requirements of Indian cricket.

“So you need a good, professional, high-level discussion. It will be a healthy discussion because I am playing currently and he has played

before, there will be a understanding of these things. I have had good discussions in the past with him and I expect the same this time.”

On Wednesday, Ganguly had said that Kohli is the most important man in the entire context of Indian cricket.

Thrilled

Prasad also appeared thrilled by the occasion of discussing things with Ganguly. “Absolutely (thrilled), a cricketer at the helm. His thought pro-

Bharat Arun credits mental switch for the bowling success

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Bharat Arun not just hones skills but understands the mind of the bowlers and gets them to combine as a potent force.

The Indian bowling coach, after the clean sweep against South Africa in Tests, shared his thoughts with *The Hindu*.

How did this remarkable change in the Indian team's thought process and approach, when they took the pitch out of the equation, come about?

In Australia in 2015 we had a team meeting and decided we would no longer complain about the pitch that was the same for both sides. Instead, we would adapt and play as if we were at home.

It was a mental switch that made the technical adjustments, such as finding the right length, easier.

That was the beginning of this exciting journey. Indeed, the pitch for the second Test against South Africa in Pune actually favoured the pacemen.

We not only have quality pace bowlers but quality fast bowlers with different skill sets.

And unlike in the past where we had one or two exceptional bowlers, we now have a bunch of pacemen who can bowl at over 140 kmph, R. Ashwin's bowling, in his



Bharat Arun. ■ AP

comeback series, was a big plus for India.

He's among the best spinners in the world, top class, and is approaching 400 Test wickets. In fact Ashwin went to England and Australia as our No. 1 spinner and then ran into fitness issues.

Ravindra Jadeja grabbed his chance, giving us control with the ball, solidity with the bat and fielding brilliantly. Away from home, if we have to pick one of the two in the eleven, it will be horses for courses looking at the conditions and the opposition.

Then we have Kuldeep Yadav who picked five with his wrist spin in his last Test, in Sydney. We have an embarrassment of riches.

How happy are you with Umesh Yadav's performance?

He's strong and quick and now he is bowling in better

channels, making the batsman play around the off-stump. He's got reverse swing, has a nasty short ball. He and Shami, who is fast, accurate and dangerous, are a potent combination.

What is the biggest change in the way you look after the pacemen?

Our workload management. The cricketers wear GPS equipment inside their vest and we have a clear idea about their workload.

Still someone as valuable as Jasprit Bumrah gets injured. Will he need surgery for his back?

Fast bowling is an unnatural activity. Despite our best efforts there can be no guarantees.

We expect Bumrah to be back sooner than later, hopefully in time for the New Zealand Test series that is our next big challenge. As of now, he doesn't need surgery.

Indian fielding has supported the bowling, particularly the close catching.

Fielding coach R. Sridhar has done a fantastic job, his drills are intense, interesting and challenge the players. This reflects on the field.

Your thoughts of Sourav Ganguly becoming the BCCI president? Sourav captained India with success and now he is leading the BCCI. It augurs well for Indian cricket.

Bangladesh players call off strike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHAKA

Bangladesh cricketers, led by star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, have called off their strike over pay and benefits after getting an assurance from the country's board that all their demands would be met, putting their tour of India back on track.

The deadlock between the players and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) ended after a two-hour meeting which went on close to midnight on Wednesday.

Sindhu, Saina in last eight

SPORTS BUREAU
PARIS

P.V. Sindhu and Saina Nehwal posted straight-game wins to enter the quarterfinals of the French Open badminton tournament here on Thursday. Sindhu beat Jia Min Yeo of Singapore 21-10, 21-13, while Saina defeated Denmark's Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt 21-10, 21-11.

In the men's section, Shesar Hiren Rhustavito of Indonesia defeated Subhankar Dey 21-6, 21-13 but Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat Indonesians Mohammad Asan and Hendra Setiawan 21-18, 18-21, 21-13.

Mumbai City takes full points

Amine Chermiti's late strike sinks Kerala Blasters

ISL

STAN RAYAN
KOCHI

Mumbai City FC's new big buy Amine Chermiti scored a late goal as the team defeated Kerala Blasters 1-0 in the Hero Indian Super League here on Thursday.

The goal came off a pass from the right from Souvik Chakrabarti and Tunisian Chermiti, who had been in an African Champions League-winning team earlier, came up with a superb finish in the 82nd minute that silenced the Nehru Stadium.

With Modou Sougou, who had hammered three goals in a 30-minute spell when Mumbai had hosted the Blasters late last year, and Chermiti, the visitor appeared to have many big guns in its ranks.

Superior

The visitor was clearly superior in the opening half.

The Mumbai boys were fast, they moved ahead with a series of short, fidgety passes that kept their rivals guessing and put the home defence under pressure. And midfielder Diego Oliveira came up with a steady stream of crosses from the right.

One such cross in the 35th minute looked dangerous but central defender Gianni Zuiverloon headed it away. The Mumbai centre backs

End of the road for selection panel?

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Ever since Sourav Ganguly was announced as president-elect of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), murmurs of a rejig in the National selection committee had been doing the rounds. A day after Ganguly's coronation was formalised, chief selector M.S.K. Prasad hinted that the future was uncertain for him and his four colleagues.

Besides selecting India's squads for the T20Is and Tests against Bangladesh, Prasad and his four colleagues – Gagan Khoda, Sarandeep Singh, Devang Gandhi and Jatin Paranjpe – had a meeting with Ganguly at the BCCI headquarters.

During his media interaction, when Prasad was asked if Thursday's was the last se-

lection meeting of his committee and what would be the legacy of his committee, the former wicket-keeper responded: “This selection committee can proudly say that we have left enough bench-strength in all the departments across all formats.”

Tweaking

The Hindu understands that the new BCCI dispensation is keen on tweaking the under-fire selection panel. It is possible that three of the five selectors, including Prasad, may be asked to step down after due processes are followed. However, the selection committee revamp may take more than a month.

According to BCCI's new rulebook, the new office-bearers will have to call an AGM with a 21-day notice.

The AGM has to appoint the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), which will then invite applications for selectors and conduct interviews before shortlisting candidates.

Two of the five selectors – Prasad and Khoda – have served four years as selectors, while the remaining three have been working for three years. According to the revised rules, no individual can be a part of all cricket committees – senior selection committee is one of the eight committees – for more than five years.

Despite the National team's consistent performances across formats, the lack of stature of the committee – with a combined 13 Test caps – has been criticised by legends, including former captain Sunil Gavaskar.

Chief selector hints at moving beyond Dhoni

Prasad says that Pant will receive complete backing



Writing on the wall: Chairman of selectors M.S.K. Prasad, right, made it clear that India was looking at a future without M.S. Dhoni. ■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The writing had been on the wall even before M.S. Dhoni failed to help India clear the World Cup semifinal hurdle but for the first time, chief selector M.S.K. Prasad admitted that the selection panel had “moved on” from Dhoni, backing Rishabh Pant as India's wicketkeeper for shorter formats.

“I have been very clear on this that after the World Cup we have started backing Rishabh Pant. So we will still back him (Pant) and see that he progresses well. Of course, he might not have the best of the matches, the way we except of him, but we can still only make a player by backing somebody.

So we are confident that he will come out successful and that's been the thought process post World Cup and we are focusing on Rishabh Pant,” Prasad said after announcing the squad for India's forthcoming series versus Bangladesh.

When pressed further on whether the selectors had moved on from Dhoni, Prasad said: “I made it very clear, post World Cup that we are moving on. We are giving opportunities to youngsters and see that they establish themselves in the side.

“With Rishabh doing so well and Sanju Samson coming into the side, I am sure, you must be understanding our thought process.”

It is perceived that Dhoni may not feature in India's squad now on but the retirement announced could be delayed since he is contemplating to wear the Chennai Super Kings' yellows for the 2020 Indian Premier League. Prasad, though, remained non-committal on whether Dhoni has conveyed his willingness to let youngsters take over.

“That is purely his personal call. Going into domestic cricket, getting his touch back or thoughts about retirement, everything is purely his personal [decision].

“We've already laid the roadmap for the future, I'm sure you can see in the way we are selecting the teams,” he said.



Hero! Amine Chermiti, right, celebrates with teammates after netting the match-winner.

■ H. VIBHU

also kept the Blasters' striker Bartholomew Ogbeche well covered.

Penalty appeal

Early in the match, Chermiti was nudged by Zuiverloon inside the box but his appeal for a penalty was turned down.

Blasters huffed and puffed initially but appeared to settle down after the half hour

mark. They enjoyed a couple of chances too, towards the end of the first half. One of them, a Jairo header off a freekick, was pushed out of danger by goalkeeper Amrinder Singh and another was sent wide by Moustapha Gning.

And shortly after the hour mark, the home side's Jessel Allan Carneiro's blistering shot, off a corner, almost

kissed the bar as it went over.

Later, Ogbeche came close to finding the equaliser in the dying minutes but his effort, after a nice turn-around, was stopped smartly by Amrinder.

The result: Kerala Blasters 0 lost to Mumbai City FC 1 (Amine Chermiti 82).

Friday's match: ATK v Hyderabad FC, Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.