

BRIEFLY



Don't judge me on just three bad T20 games: skipper Azam

Karachi: Newly-installed Pakistan captain Babar Azam admitted his team will face a stern test during next month's tour of Australia, but vowed his players will go for victory. Azam last week replaced Sarfaraz Ahmed, who was dumped as skipper and left out of the squad following the shocking 3-0 rout of the Twenty20 side—ranked number one in the world—at the hands of Sri Lanka earlier this month.

Azam, who will be country's youngest skipper in Twenty20 cricket at 25, said Australia will pose a huge challenge. "Every tour is tough and Australia is always a challenging place because of the extra bounce, but we will go for wins as we always do," he said a day before the team's departure. Azam, the number one batsman in Twenty20 rankings, said he feels honoured to have the chance to lead his country, 12 years after he entered a stadium as a ball picker. "I am proud that now I am the skipper," he said.

The Sri Lanka debacle, in which he managed scores of 13, three and 27, did not appear to have dented his confidence. "Don't judge me on just three matches," he said.

"I have toured Australia as skipper of Pakistan Under-19 (2012) and with the Pakistan team three years ago, so I have experience of those conditions." Pakistan will also be without senior stalwarts Shoaib Malik and Mohammad Hafeez, who were not selected for the tour. **AFP**

Du Plessis calls for coaching 'clarity'

Johannesburg: South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said on Friday that full-time appointments concerning the national team's coaching staff and selectors needed to be made urgently. Speaking on the team's return from a three-Test trouncing in India, Du Plessis said uncertainty over key positions was "a massive red flag". Cricket South Africa fired coach Ottis Gibson, his back-up staff and the selectors after a poor World Cup campaign.

They announced a new structure headed by a director of cricket and a team director. Former one-day international player Corrie van Zyl and 37-year-old Enoch Nkwe were appointed in an interim capacity, with Nkwe in charge of the team in India. Du Plessis said he was committed to continuing as captain despite going through what he described as "the toughest period in my cricket journey".

Williamson to miss England T20 series

Wellington: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson will miss next month's home Twenty20 series against England due to a hip injury, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said on Friday. Fast bowler Tim Southee will lead the Black Caps in the five matches against England starting in Christchurch on Nov. 1. "We've been monitoring the injury for a while now and it's the same issue that ruled him out of the final test against Bangladesh."



MEET THE PREZ

Sourav Ganguly flanked by VVS Laxman and Mohammad Azharuddin during a CAB function. Partha Paul

# Releasing soon: Day & Night Test

Board president Ganguly says he has Kohli's nod; could happen as early as the Bangladesh series

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 25

VIRAT KOHLI is "agreeable" to day-night Tests and SG, the manufacturer of the cricket ball for Test matches in India, are "ready", should the BCCI decide to hold a Test under lights against Bangladesh next month.

Day-night Test was on the agenda when the newly-elected BCCI president Sourav Ganguly met India captain Virat Kohli in Mumbai on Thursday. BCCI secretary Jay Shah and Kohli's deputy in limited-overs internationals Rohit Sharma, too, were part of the meeting. On Friday, during his felicitation at Eden Gardens, Ganguly said he received a positive feedback from Kohli, with regards to playing day-night Tests.

"I must say that Virat Kohli is agreeable to it. There are reports that he doesn't want to play day-night Tests, which is not the fact. So once the captain of India is agreeable to it, life becomes a lot easier. We will see how we can push it. The game needs to go forward," said the BCCI president.

"We all are thinking about this and we will do something about it. I'm a firm believer in day-night Tests. I don't know when will that happen. But till the time I am around, I will be pushing for it," he added.

This paper reported that the BCCI under Ganguly is contemplating on holding a pink-ball Test, when Bangladesh tour India for a two-match series next month. The first Test would be played at Indore from November 14, while Kolkata play host to the second Test from November 22.

To make one of those—read, the Eden Test—a day-night affair, the proposal needs the ratification of the BCCI's apex council and also the consent of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). But the real issue about holding a pink-ball Test in India in such a short space of time is that the ball manufacturer needs to be ready.



India is the only country that hasn't played a day-and-night Test.

"Yes, we are ready. See, pink-ball technology is very similar to the white-ball technology. And we have been making white balls for decades now. The feedback so far has been very positive. I don't see any difference between the white and the pink ball. So if need be, we will be ready with the pink ball, if that is required," owner of Sanspareils Greenlands (SG), Paras Anand, told *The Indian Express*, asserting that the company would be able to supply the pink ball of required standards if a Test against Bangladesh is played under lights.

The company, though, hasn't received any official communication from the BCCI yet, which can only happen after the apex council gives the go-ahead.

Dwindling stadium attendance for Test cricket is a serious concern in India. But the SG pink-ball hasn't been used in Indian domestic cricket yet. Pink Kookaburra balls had been used for the Duleep Trophy, which received a lot of criticism from the domestic cricketers.

Ganguly's push, Kohli's approval and

the apex council's ratification notwithstanding, a lot of dots are still need to be joined before a day-night Test can be organised inside a month. Two white balls are used in a 50-over ODI game. In Test cricket, a ball has to last at least 80 overs before the second new ball becomes available. In Australia, Test cricket is played during Southern summer. In India, November dew could be an impediment. Also, it could be a tad risky to use the SG pink balls directly in a Test before conducting a trial.

"We are confident. Even the red ball also, sometimes you notice, whether your are playing in England, Australia or South Africa, there are phases where the bowlers get frustrated for whatever reason—it could be the ball, it could be the wicket, it could be, you know, somebody batting really well... The ball is changed. There's nothing very drastic about it. But as far as the pink-ball is concerned, whatever trials we have done, we are pretty confident (the ball will last for 80 overs)," Anand said, informing that trails were done in local matches in Meerut.

According to him, the SG pink-ball doesn't need a domestic trial before it is used in a Test. "Personally I don't see any reason that it needs domestic trial and the rest, I think the technical committee in charge (of the BCCI), they will take the right decision."

India will not be playing a home Test this season after the Bangladesh series. And as per the existing BCCI constitution, Ganguly's term as the cricket board president ends in July next year before he goes to a mandatory three-year cooling-off period. From that point of view, unless there's an amendment in the cooling-off clause, which is subject to the Supreme Court's approval, the Eden Test against Bangladesh could be Ganguly's only opportunity to introduce a day-night Test in India.

The Eden Test assumes greater significance because Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina and the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee are likely to in attendance. A pink-ball Test will offer a great spectacle. Whether it can be organised in such a short time remains a big question.

'IPL not inferior to EPL'

Meanwhile, Ganguly put the IPL on a par with the English Premier League in terms of its popularity. "The IPL is probably is biggest league in the world. That two-and-a-half months are no way inferior to the English Premier League. In terms of TV rating and eyeballs," the BCCI president said.

In charge of the Indian cricket, he spoke about trying to "make a difference" and reiterated that he didn't want to lose the legends to conflict of interest.

The newly-elected Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) president and former India captain Mohammad Azharuddin and Ganguly's former India team mate, VVS Laxman, were present at the felicitation. Laxman suggested that the BCCI should revamp the National Cricket Academy (NCA) and make it a Centre of Excellence.

# Strike over, Bangladesh players hit the nets

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
DHAKA, OCT 25

MEMBERS OF the Bangladesh cricket team joined an intense training camp for next month's important tour of India on Friday, formally ending their strike for better pay and benefits. The players called off their strike late on Wednesday as the Bangladesh Cricket Board accepted most of their demands, including a 50 percent pay hike for first-class players, expansion of national pay contracts and a share in BCB's revenue.

Announced by national Test and Twenty20 captain Shakib Al Hasan, the strike had cast doubt on Bangladesh's tour of India featuring three Twenty20 internationals and two Tests. Shakib had to skip the opening training session due to illness but other players joined the session, attended by South African head coach Russell Domingo.

Former New Zealand captain and all-rounder Daniel Vettori also joined as Bangladesh's spin bowling coach on Friday, replacing India's Sunil Joshi, who has been their consultant for a long time. Vettori, the Black Caps' record wicket-taker who retired in 2015, will work for 100 days leading up to next year's World Twenty20 in Australia.

The arrival of the new spin coach was eagerly welcomed by Arifat Sunny, who was recalled for the India Twenty20s after three years in the wilderness. "As a left-arm spinner, I always followed his bowling. He is a great left-arm spinner. He is my coach now. Today is his first day, so let's see, we have more practice sessions coming," said Sunny.

Sunny has not played for Bangladesh since he was suspended during the 2016 ICC World Twenty20 for an illegal bowling action. He also spent two months in jail after posting intimate photos of his girlfriend on social media. "He was an international player and also did coaching in IPL. So maybe if I talk with him and get some advice on how I can improve, it will be better for me," Sunny said.

Bangladesh will start their India tour with the first Twenty20 international in Delhi on November 3. This is the first time they're playing a two-Test series in India, where, despite their geographical proximity, they have toured just once for a solitary Test match. The team are expected to depart on October 30.

This happened after severe talks between the boards of the two countries and severe pressure piled on by the new BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, who was the captain of the Indian team that Bangladesh played against in their inaugural Test.

Sourav Ganguly, who took over as BCCI president on Wednesday, was confident that the tour would go ahead as per schedule. "I hope so because two days before, I spoke to the honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh and she has agreed to come and visit for the Test match when India play Bangladesh on November 22," Ganguly told reporters. "I'm sure when the Prime Minister has given consent, I don't see the national team not turning up."



Daniel Vettori's addition as spin coach is expected to reap benefits.

# Former sports editor and author of 31 books passes away

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 25

VETERAN JOURNALIST and former sports editor at the Indian Express KR Wadhwaney passed away late Thursday night at his residence in Delhi. Wadhwaney, 90, was suffering from old age-related ailments. He is survived by his wife Asha, son Rohit and daughter Sneha — a former national level swimmer married to former India wicketkeeper Vijay Dahiya.

Wadhwaney was born in Karachi and migrated to Lucknow after the partition in 1947. He moved to New Delhi in the 1960s and remained active as a sports journalist for almost 50 years.

After working in top organisations, Wadhwaney later went on to become the

Sports Editor of *The Indian Express* newspaper. Wadhwaney was remembered by former colleagues for his news sense and diligence. "Besides heading the sports desk, Wadhwaney sahaib was also airport reporter. He gave total freedom to his colleagues to write on any issue," said journalist

ist Norris Pritam, who worked with the editor at *The Indian Express*. "In an analogue era, from early sixties to early nineties, he knew everything happening on the sport field or even outside without the advantage of having tools of modern technology. In today's world of twitter he would be trending with several thousand followers."

Post retirement, Wadhwaney worked as a freelance writer for several newspapers. He also authored 31 books on sports and its various aspects.



KR WADHWANEY  
1929-2019



BISHAN SINGH BEDI

VERY EARLY in the morning today, I got a message from Vijay Dahiya, ex-India Test cricketer and the devoted son-in-law of Kishen Wadhwaney, the dedicated former sports editor of *The Indian Express*. The redoubtable Wadhu — KRW to the sporting fraternity — was no more...

Only a couple of months ago, Vijay had organised a wonderful evening with Wadhu

at his Press Enclave residence. I was in good company of another journalist friend G Rajaraman, who decided to be a fly on the wall and listen to some glorious tales being churned out by Wadhu's alarmingly fresh memory; from cricket to hockey, to the bane of politics in just about all of India's sports federations.

We enjoyed every bit of Wadhu's hospitality, as if he had rewound himself by a few decades. It appeared that he hadn't been so talkative in a long time. His daughter Sneha and Vijay had taken great care of him, and had moved the senior couple from first floor to ground floor a few days back for matters of very genuine convenience, attention & accessibility. But sadly it didn't quite work out.

I called Wadhu the 'bionic man', for he had to have his knee, shoulder and hip replaced,

and also undergo a heart surgery. I'd known him for close to five decades. He was a voracious writer, authoring several books. He also covered the historic Indian tour to South Africa in 1992, and was quite impressed by the facilities there.

Wadhu was a decent medium pacer, but never played for Uttar Pradesh. He would bring his club side from Lucknow for matches in Amritsar, and would play fairly competitively. That is the one edge he might have had over his colleagues in the press box, but he never really gloated about his personal cricket experience. He let his pen/typewriter do that with loads of information and freedom of thought & expression, which is so rare in the modern context. Please bear with me all ye Fourth Estate!

We were friends and foes alike in those days. Wadhu and his close friend late R Sriman of *Times of India* gave yours truly scathing stick from time to time, but there was never a moment when I questioned their motive/professional deliverance. It made me more determined to create worthy events for my twin

critics to be wiser after them! Despite occasional opposing views and him being very critical of my performances, we never had a fallout. And that was the secret of very long lasting friendship.

How can I ever be ungrateful for the backing of Wadhwaney and Sriman over many issues in DDCA and the BCCI. They were never fair-weather friends and knew the strength of their professional courage to take a stand for or against the player-versus-establishment situations. I am inclined to believe that their bosses also knew the worth of independent coverage reaching out to the masses. As in any other walk of life, comparisons are odious. Ditto the Fourth Estate. But I can safely conclude that I am glad my playing days coincided with Wadhu and Sriman at their best with their rickety old typewriters. It didn't matter that their gadgets were outdated. Their intentions and love for Indian sport were never dilapidated.

Rest in peace, Wadhu. Your presence in the press box was inimitable.

THE WRITER IS FORMER INDIA CAPTAIN

