



Russell Domingo: New coach, new challenge

# ‘Both teams don’t quite know what to expect’

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BANGLADESH HEAD coach Russell Domingo on Tuesday welcomed the decision to play their maiden Day-Night Test against India, saying both teams’ inexperience of playing with pink ball might give the visitors an edge over the hosts. The Test is scheduled to be held at the iconic Eden Gardens from November 22-26 and will be the second game of the two-match series.

The development ended days of speculation after new BCCI president Sourav Ganguly managed to convince the Bangladesh Cricket Board, which initially faced resistance from its players. “As a coach I think it’s a great opportunity. I don’t think India played a pink ball Test before, we too haven’t played a pink ball Test either. It’s going to be a massive occasion at the Eden Gardens. It will be a new experience for both teams. So we’re very excited,” Domingo said. “We know India are a good Test team. Probably they are the number one team in the world, but there will be uncertainty among players of both the teams of playing a pink ball Test. Both teams don’t quite know what to expect, so it could work in our advantage, could work in our favour,” he added.

The South African further said it will be a level-playing field for both the teams in terms of preparation for their first-ever Day-Night Test. “It’s going to be a great occasion under lights in Kolkata against one of the best team of all formats. So we’re really looking forward to the challenge. For sure there will be challenges because we’re not going to have a lot of time to prepare with a pink ball,” Domingo said.

“It’ll be the same for both the teams, not a lot of preparation time, but an exciting event. It’s new for both of the teams, so it can get the teams a little bit closer. And just the way the game is going, we’ve got to look at trying new things at certain times.”

Domingo said Bangladesh players were initially reluctant to the idea because of lack of preparation time.

“I’ve spoken to the players. For sure there were some concerns. Some guys actually said ‘we don’t know what to expect. A little bit of preparation is needed, there will be only two-three days between the first and the second Test. How much time are we going to have to get used to it?’ (But) during my time with South Africa, we played a pink ball match in Adelaide. We had a warm-up game before that with a pink ball, we had a few sessions. It’s a little bit less time this time for India,” he said.

**Domingo said Bangladesh players were initially reluctant to the idea because of lack of preparation time.**



## Andonovski is new US women’s football coach

Vlatko Andonovski was named the new head coach of the United States’ women’s football team, taking over from two-time World Cup winner Jill Ellis. Andonovski, 43, moves into the job after spending several years coaching in the National Women’s Soccer League. He was head coach at Reign FC — Megan Rapinoe’s current team — for the 2018 and 2019 seasons. He won two championships during earlier stints with FC Kansas City, where he coached between 2013 and 2017, twice winning coach of the year honours. “We are thrilled to welcome Vlatko to the US Soccer family,” United States Soccer Federation president Carlos Cordeiro said. “As one of the most accomplished coaches in the NWSL history, he’s proven he can help world-class players reach their peak, inspire his teams and win championships.”

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 29

INDIA WILL host their first-ever pink-ball, day-night Test at Eden Gardens from November 22, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has confirmed. This follows the Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) decision to accept the BCCI’s proposal of playing a day/night Test in Kolkata. Bangladesh will play two Tests during their upcoming tour of India apart from three T20 internationals. The Indian Express was first to report that the Eden Test could be a day/night affair. The first Test at Indore will be played from November 14.

“I’m pleased to announce that our long-term partner BCB has graciously agreed to play a day-night Test match. This is the beginning of something special in Indian cricket. It is a priority for the newly-elected office-bearers and members of apex council to take Indian cricket forward. For me, as former captain of India and as the current president of BCCI, Test cricket is of utmost priority and we at BCCI will leave no stone unturned to bring this format back to its feet,” Ganguly stated.

He thanked India captain Virat Kohli and BCB president Nazmul Hassan for their co-operation and added: “In this effort of ours, day-night Test cricket is a huge step forward and we believe it will bring back the crowd into stadiums and a whole lot of young children to the sport.”

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah described it as “a great day for Indian cricket” and that the BCCI under its present dispensation would work towards “revolutionizing Test cricket”.

### 1 pm start expected

According to sources, the match is likely to have a 1 or 1.30pm start and the BCCI will now decide if the pink SG balls would be used for the game or Kookaburra. Pink Kookaburra had been used in the Duleep Trophy but didn’t receive a positive response from the domestic cricketers. The SG pink, on the other hand, is yet to be tried in Indian domestic cricket, although during an interaction with this paper last week, Sanspareils Greenlands (SG) owner Paras Anand had said the company was ready and the SG pink ball could be directly used in a Test without a domestic trial.

The BCCI general manager, cricket operations, Saba Karim will take the matter forward after receiving a communication from the Board president.

Bangladesh players were initially reluctant to play a day/night Test. They start their World Test Championship campaign with the series against India. But the BCB convinced them to look at the bigger picture. “The players haven’t played pink-ball cricket. So naturally they were a tad hesitant. But eventually, as the BCB spoke to them, they saw the bigger picture, an opportunity to be a part of history. Also, they realised that pink-ball, day/night Test is the future. Everyone agreed,” Bangladesh national selector and former captain Habibul Bashar told *The Indian Express*.

On the face of it, a day-night Test on a grassy pitch – required for pink ball – will give India a big advantage, given the pace attack they have. Also, Bangladesh will be without their two most experienced cricketers – Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan – for different reasons. Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo, however, has preferred to take this as an opportunity.

“As a coach and some of the players or the senior players, we think it’s a great opportunity. I don’t think India played a pink-ball Test before. We haven’t played a pink-ball Test. It’s a massive occasion at Eden Gardens. It will be a new experience for both teams. So we are very excited. It’s going to be a great occasion under lights in Kolkata against one of the best teams of all, probably the best Test team in the world... So we are really looking forward to the challenge. For sure there are some challenges, because we are not going to have a lot of time to prepare

# Pink is the new red

Following concerns about waning popularity of Test matches, Bangladesh agree to play under lights at Eden Gardens



Ganguly played an instrumental role in convincing Bangladesh to play D/N Test.

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with a pink ball. But it’s the same for India,” Domingo said.

He agreed that Test cricket should embrace the changes. “Just the way the game is going, we have got to look at trying new things at certain times. So we are excited about it. We know it’s going to be a big challenge. Like I said, we haven’t done much of it, but sometimes changes are the best thing.”

### Eden excited

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) secretary Avishek Dalmiya expressed his delight on Eden Gardens hosting the country’s first day/night Test.

“It’s also great news for all the cricket lovers. Eden has been privy to a lot of history. It would be another feather in its cap,” Avishek said, adding: “CAB would leave no stone unturned to ensure that it is a successful event. The presence of dignitaries and distinguished guests, cultural shows and felicitation of former players would add to the grandeur of the event.”

Ganguly deserves a lot of credit for introducing day-night Tests in India at such short notice. After becoming the BCCI president on

October 23, Ganguly made day-night Tests one of his priorities as an antidote to dwindling stadium attendance in the long-form. During his first meeting with Kohli, the newly-elected BCCI president raised the subject and received a positive response from the skipper.

“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,” Ganguly had said during his felicitation at Eden Gardens last week, adding: “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.

### Daily ticket Rs 50

*PTI adds:* The CAB is also trying its best to make it a full house in the 68,000-capacity stadium on all the five days by offering a daily ticket starting as low as Rs 50. A final clearance will come from the BCCI in consultation with the broadcasters.

“We will send the tickets for printing as we get the timing confirmation from BCCI and broadcasters. We are planning to bring in school children from the districts and local schools and we don’t want any inconvenience. Ticket denominations will be of Rs 50, 100, 150 on daily basis. We will try our best to pull in as many crowd as possible. We hope it will be a success,” Dalmiya added.

# Extra coat of lacquer means more swing during twilight

EDEN GARDENS curator Sujan Mukherjee will use his previous experience – the 2016 CAB Super League final between Mohun Bagan and Bhowanipore was a multi-day, day-night, pink-ball affair – to prepare the pitch for India’s first-ever day-night Test, commencing on November 22.

In a conversation with *The Indian Express*, Mukherjee gives a low-down on the requirements and conditions.

The ball starts to move a little more during that period, a reason why the batsmen struggle a bit. Then again, a Test batsman is expected to overcome the odds.

**Explanation:** As dusk melts into evening and floodlights take over, the air just above the pitch becomes more stable, aiding extra swing. As per stats though, the average wickets fall per session in day-night Tests is on and around three.

**The pitch needs to have a fair amount of grass cover for a pink-ball Test?**

Not necessarily. Eden arguably has the liveliest of pitches in the country and in any case, we keep a certain amount of grass on the pitch for every Test at this venue. That will do. Nothing extra is required.

**Explanation:** Some grass is required on the pitch to protect the colouring of the pink ball. The lush green Eden outfield helps matters.

**In the Super League final, pink Kookaburra was used and it swung a little more than the red ball, isn’t it?**

Yes, the nature of the pink ball is that it swings a little more.

**Explanation:** The only difference between a pink ball and a red one is that the former has an extra coat of lacquer to help retain its colour a bit longer so that the players can spot it comfortably under lights. And because of this extra coat of lacquer, the ball swings a little longer. And obviously, a pink ball will swing more than a red ball if it is overcast.

**It is said that the pink ball gets softer quickly. So it could be a problem for the bowlers especially in the evening, given the November dew in Kolkata.**

I don’t think so. As because the Test has a 1pm start, only the last two or two-and-a-half hours would be played in the evening. Yes, it’s early sundown in November. But from my experience I can tell you that the dew factor is unlikely to come into play before 7.30pm. So it’s manageable. And we have enough people for roping the ground during breaks and we also use sprays to minimise the dew factor.

**Explanation:** Dew factor is an issue. And this is one reason why the batting teams usually don’t declare in the final session, for the ball could become like a soap cake, making life difficult for the bowlers.

**There’s something called the ‘twilight zone’ in day-night Tests, when batting becomes difficult.**



Eden Gardens all set to make history by hosting India’s first-ever pink ball Test.

## SIMPLY PUT

**Does a day-night Test allow spinners to come into play?**

Why not? What I have seen in the Super League match, some spinners got decent purchase as the game progressed.

**Explanation:** On the face of it, India might lose home advantage in a day-night Test, given that spin traditionally has been their strength. Then again, India at the moment boast of one of the best seam attacks in the world even without their x-factor, Jasprit Bumrah. The success of Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma in the recently concluded home series against South Africa, where pitches by and large had a tilt towards the batsmen, attested that.

In 2017, Adelaide had hosted the first-ever day-night Ashes Test, where off-spinner Nathan Lyon had a six-wicket match haul.

All said and done, it would be a luxury to play two spinners in a day-night Test and the conditions might prompt the Indian team management to include three fast bowlers in the playing XI and a spinner. Against South Africa, India fielded five specialist bowlers. At Eden, however, an extra batsman might come at the expense of a bowler.

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY

### GULF IN CLASS

There’s a gulf in class between India and Bangladesh, which all but cancels out the unpredictability and the risk factor. India are the world’s No. 1 Test side for close to three years now. Bangladesh, on the other hand, are ranked ninth and to make matters worse, they would be without Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan. Bangladesh also don’t have a tearaway quick. The visitors’ challenge would be to put up a fight.

## [SPORTS BAR]

## Ravinder in last four of U-23 Wrestling Worlds

Ravinder emerged as the shining star for India on the second day of the UWW U-23 World Championships after securing his place in the semi-finals of the 61kg category in Budapest on Tuesday. The 22-year-old put on a commanding display to notch up a 12-1 win over Hungary’s Marcell Budai Kovacs in his opening bout. The Jhajjar grappler continued his heroics against 2019 Russian National Freestyle Championship bronze medallist Dinislam Takhhtarov with an 11-0 win to storm into the last-four round. Ravinder is aiming for his first medal from the championship after losing in the semifinals in 2017.

## Dutch beat UAE to seal spot in ICC World T20

The Netherlands on Tuesday sealed their berth in the ICC men’s World Twenty20 in Australia next year with an eight-wicket win over United Arab Emirates in the qualifying playoff in Dubai. Brandon Glover returned with a four-wicket haul, while Paul van Meekeren and T van der Gugten claimed two wickets each to restrict UAE to 80 for nine in the stipulated 20 overs. The Dutch overhauled the target, reaching 81 for two in 15.1 overs, riding on a 53-ball 41 by opener Ben Cooper. The Netherlands thus became the third team, after Papua New Guinea and Ireland, to book a place in the T20 World Cup.



Utah Jazz guard Donovan Mitchell (right) in action in Phoenix on Monday.

## Jazz make up 7-pt deficit in 9 mins to beat Suns

Bojan Bogdanovic hit four 3-pointers en route to 29 points, and Donovan Mitchell added 25 points and made the first of two free throws with 0.4 seconds left in the game to give the Utah Jazz a 96-95 victory over hosts Phoenix Suns on Monday. Rudy Gobert contributed 15 points and 18 rebounds, and made eight consecutive free throws in the fourth quarter to help the Jazz overcome a seven-point deficit in the final nine minutes for their eighth straight win in the series. Devin Booker had 21 points despite playing through foul trouble, Kelly Oubre Jr scored 18 points, and Ricky Rubio had 10 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists. Mitchell’s dunk after a Suns turnover tied the game at 92 at 2:06 remaining. Bogdanovic made a dunk and ensuing free throw after another turnover with 1:45 remaining for a 95-92 lead before Jevon Carter’s 3-pointer with 47.3 seconds to go tied it at 95. After the Jazz took over with seven seconds remaining, Mitchell drove the lane and was fouled by Booker. He made the first shot, which was all Utah needed.

## Jamshedpur on top after beating Hyderabad 3-1

Hosts Jamshedpur FC registered their second win on the trot by defeating Hyderabad FC 3-1 in an Indian Super League match on Tuesday. Farukh Choudhary tapped a loose ball home in the 34th minute to convert his team’s dominance into a goal. Marcelinho scored an unlikely equaliser in the 45th minute but Jamshedpur regained control after the break with goals from Aniket Jadhav (62nd) and Sergio Castel (75th). The result took Antonio Iriando’s men to the top of the table while Hyderabad are yet to open their tally. Farukh and Keegan Pereira also had their efforts kept out before the final whistle.



## Khaka should apologise for reaction, says Emery

Arsenal coach Unai Emery said Granit Khaka should apologise after his confrontation with supporters and refused to confirm whether the Swiss midfielder will retain the club captaincy. Khaka’s substitution during Arsenal’s 2-2 draw with Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Sunday was met with sarcastic cheers from the home fans at the Emirates Stadium. The Arsenal skipper was incensed by the supporters’ reaction, cupping his hand to his ear before taking off his shirt and storming down the tunnel amid boos. “Yes (he should apologise). We make mistakes, we need to apologise and we suggested for him to do that,” Emery told reporters on Tuesday. “He is now devastated – devastated and sad. We spoke yesterday, and also on Sunday night. It is not easy for him and for the team.”