

PTF appeals ITF decision, delays India squad announcement

SHAHID JUDGE
PUNE, NOVEMBER 11

INDIA'S GROUP 1 Davis Cup tie against Pakistan in under three weeks from now, but the International Tennis Federation is yet to announce the venue. Last Monday, the world body declared that the tie, which was to be held in Islamabad on November 29-30, would be shifted out of that country and gave the host association five working days to nominate a new venue.

The Pakistan Tennis Federation, in turn, appealed against the decision, and the ITF is yet to get back to them.

"The PTF has appealed. So the ITF will first

have to declare the result of the appeal and then decide the venue," said All India Tennis Association secretary general Hironmoy Chatterjee. "The ITF has said that they will get back to them by November 18 at the latest."

The delay in the naming of the venue has further pushed back the announcement of the Indian team for the tie.

At the moment, AITA is awaiting the result of PTF's appeal, and will select the team accordingly.

"We will decide the team based on the country and the surface," Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali had told *The Indian Express* last week. "We plan to play this tie with the best team possible."

India will have a full squad of players –



Will decide on team based on country and surface: Zeeshan Ali

except Prajnesh Gunneswaran and Divij Sharan who are unavailable due to personal reasons – if the tie is held at a neutral venue. However, if the ITF reverses its decision and declares Islamabad as the venue, the likes of Rohan Bopanna, Ramkumar Ramanathan, Sumit Nagal, along with Prajnesh and Sharan, will be unavailable for the tie owing to security concerns.

Since security concerns prompted the Indian players and AITA to write to the ITF asking for a delay in the tie (back in August) and recently for a neutral venue, the PTF is contemplating asking the international body to let the Indian team decide the venue.

"We may tell the ITF that we'll not nominate the neutral venue. We'll request it to

ask AITA to choose where its outfit wants to play," PTF president Salim Saifullah Khan told PTI. "We have a very good chance of beating India on our grass courts and the Indians know this, that is why they are using all tactics to delay and shift the tie."

Pakistan was unable to host Davis Cup matches for 12 years, but were allowed to compete at home from 2017.

Since then, they have played and won three of their four home ties – all in Islamabad – led by 39-year-old pair Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan, who are also strong grass-court players.

AITA has till November 19 to announce the squad, a day after the ITF is expected to announce the venue and 10 days before the tie.

Hope hits ton as West Indies complete clean sweep

ASSOCIATED PRESS
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SHAI HOPE'S unbeaten 109 anchored West Indies to a five-wicket victory over Afghanistan on Monday, giving Kieron Pollard a 3-0 sweep in his first one-day international series as captain. Opening batsman Hope's seventh ODI hundred included eight fours and three sixes and came off 145 balls as West Indies cruised to 253-5 in 48.4 overs. Roston Chase, who batted at No. 7, remained unbeaten on 42 off 32 deliveries. Earlier, after being put in to bat, Afghanistan posted its highest total of the series – 249-7 – after half-centuries by former skipper Asghar Afghan (86) and Mohammad Nabi (50 not out).

"We've been waiting for this series win for a long time, so it felt good," Hope said. "Someone had to put his hand up and bat through the innings. Felt good to be able to do it. It's just about reading the situation, and as long as someone batted through, we were always going to win the game."

Hope stood firm against the early threat of offspinner Mujeeb Ur Rehman (2-49), who had Evin Lewis (1) and Shimron Hetmyer (0) trapped leg before wicket in his second over.

Jamaican debutant Brendon King used his feet well against spinners, hitting five fours and a six in 39, before Rashid Khan's googly clean bowled him. Hope went on to share half-century stands with Nicholas Pooran (21), Pollard (32), and the match-winning 71-run partnership with Chase to reach the target with eight balls to spare. "We came here with a mission and specific roles for players, and all the players deserve credit," Pollard said after West Indies recorded its first ODI series sweep in five years. West Indies' last sweep was in 2014, 3-0 against Bangladesh at home.

"This was an opportunity for us to show we have that kind of venom inside us," Pollard said. "We knew we had to rally as a team, and we proved we can bat 50 overs. Once we do that, we can win games."

Afghan and Nabi shared a 127-run stand for the sixth wicket after seamer Keemo Paul, playing his first match of the series, claimed 3-44 and Afghanistan slumped to 118-5 in the 29th over. Afghan's nearly run-a-ball knock included six sixes and three fours. He was caught at short third man while looking for a big hit against seamer Alazarri Joseph (2-59) in the penultimate over.

"The kind of finishing we got from Asghar and Nabi, it gave us a chance to win the game," Khan said. "We should have defended this total, but Hope played without giving us any chance." The series whitewash stretched Afghanistan's losing streak to 12 matches in ODIs. The teams will start a three-match Twenty20 series on Thursday at the same venue. It will be followed by a one-off test this month.

BRIEF SCORES: West Indies 253/5 (Hope 109*, Chase 42*, Mujeeb 2-49) beat **Afghanistan 249/7** (Asghar 86, Nabi 50*, Zazi 50, Paul 3-44) by five wickets.

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KIERON POLLARD ON SHAI HOPE

LOSING STREAK

12 Afghanistan has now lost their last 12 ODIs, a streak that had begun with the 2019 World Cup.

Sports bosses reject new deal

Remove cooling-off, tenure limits and allow kin to hold posts: IOA on the draft sports code

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 11

THE INDIAN Olympic Association has demanded the removal of the cooling-off period and tenure limitations from the draft of the revised Sports Code circulated by the government.

Calling the restrictions imposed on politicians and their families as 'discriminatory' and 'unfair', the IOA has proposed wide-ranging changes to several contentious issues in the draft National Sports Code for Good Governance (NSCG) 2017 in its feedback submitted on Sunday. If accepted by the ministry, these proposals could benefit officials in several positions, including the Board of Control for Cricket in India as they too are likely to come under the ambit of the new code as per sports minister Kiren Rijiju.

The draft code, which ruffled more than a few feathers, had made several recommendations that could have far-reaching impact on sports administration in the country. The IOA, however, has cited international precedents and a few other loopholes while raising objections to some of the clauses.

Among the main suggestions the IOA has made relate to the tenures of board members and the cooling-off periods. It had been suggested in the sports code that an office-bearer can enjoy two consecutive terms of four years each before a cooling-off period of four year sets in.

The IOA has argued that it takes 'years to build rapport and grow as a sports administrator to the national and international level.' "In effect as per this Code, if a person during his first or second term in a local club/District sports organisation does not become office-bearer in the State Sports Association, National Sports Federation and International Federation, he/she should completely quit service in sports administration for the next four years, and then start all over from the club/District level after the cooling period," it said in its feedback.

Stating that this 'disruption' would mean there would be 'no or fewer' Indian officials in Asian or International Federations, the IOA has proposed to 'remove the limitation of cooling period' altogether.

Further, the Olympic body has also suggested there should be 'no limitation' on the tenures of board members.

Coincidentally, as reported by *The Indian Express* on Sunday, relaxation of cooling-off periods for office-bearers is on the agenda of the BCCI's Annual General Meeting that will be held in Mumbai on December 1.

As things stand, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly will have to go for a three-year cooling-off break in July next year, as he had been an office-bearer of the Cricket Association of Bengal for over five years.

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'DISCRIMINATORY, UNFAIR': IOA'S COUNTERPOINT TO SPORTS CODE

CODE: An office-bearer can enjoy two consecutive terms of four years each before a cooling-off period of four year sets in.

IOA: It takes 'years to build rapport and grow as a sports administrator to the national and international level.' "In effect as per this Code, if a person during his first or second term in a local club/District sports organisation does not become office-bearer in the State Sports Association, National Sports Federation and International Federation, he/she should completely quit service in sports administration for the next four years, and then start all over from the club/District level after the cooling period."

CODE: During the tenure of an official, no 'immediate relative' can hold a position simultaneously

IOA: There is "no law of the land to the

best of our knowledge that restricts election or appointment to the Board of autonomous organisations based on an individual's relationship."

CODE: It recommends that no minister, MP, MLA or government official can be an office-bearer or board member of a federation.

IOA: Citing examples of politicians in China, Japan and South Korea playing crucial roles in sports administrations in their respective countries to challenge the point. "... It is not years of service after retirement but prime years of service of politicians and government officials that is required for the advancement of sports in India."

The IOA has also suggested that the age limit for office-bearers be increased to 75, or brought in sync with the respective international federations.

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Another point raised by the IOA, which could end up benefitting the BCCI should

it come under the ambit of the sports code, is in relation to the involvement of 'immediate relatives' in a federation.

The NSCGG has proposed that during the tenure of an official, no 'immediate rel-

ative' can hold a position simultaneously. It also barred a relative from holding office during the official's cooling-off period. This point was included to make sure officials don't rule by proxies.

The IOA, however, has challenged it, saying there is "no law of the land to the best of our knowledge that restricts election or appointment to the Board of autonomous organisations based on an individual's relationship." Another key issue raised in the sports code that has been challenged by the IOA relates to disqualification of politicians and bureaucrats from holding office. The code recommends that no minister, MP, MLA or government official can be an office-bearer or board member of a federation.

The IOA has cited examples of politicians in China, Japan and South Korea playing crucial roles in sports administrations in their respective countries to challenge the point. "... It is not years of service after retirement but prime years of service of politicians and government officials that is required for the advancement of sports in India," the IOA has argued.

Rijiju, too, had hinted that this point could be diluted when the new committee meets to redraft the sports code. Speaking at *The Indian Express Idea Exchange* recently, he had also said that "once we come out with a proper refined sports code, everything will come under it, including cricket."

[SPORTS BAR]



Morata continues rich form, Atletico go third

Alvaro Morata hit his sixth goal in as many games in all competitions as Atletico Madrid moved third in La Liga with a 3-1 win over struggling Espanyol on Sunday, while Sevilla kept pace thanks to a derby win over fierce local rivals Real Betis. Morata thumped home his fifth league goal of the season just before the hour mark to put Atletico in front in Madrid after Sergi Darder had shocked the hosts with fine opener seven minutes before the break. The 27-year-old also set up Angel Correa to level the scores in first half stoppage time as he continued his superb recent form which has seen him find his shooting boots after not scoring since the first game of the season. Koke rounded off the victory in added time when he collected Diego Costa's low cross to slot the third past Espanyol goalkeeper Diego Lopez.

Canada's Raonic pulls out of Davis Cup Finals

Canada's Davis Cup Finals hopes suffered a blow when Milos Raonic withdrew from the team on Monday with a back injury. The 28-year-old former world number three will be replaced by 94th-ranked Brayden Schnur for the week-long event in Madrid. Even without Raonic, Canada have a strong squad with world number 15 Denis Shapovalov and fellow youngster Felix Auger-Aliassime, ranked 21st, both making the trip. Canada are one of 18 nations contesting the first edition of the Davis Cup since its radical revamp. They have been placed in Group F with the United States and Italy.

Paes out of top-100 for the first time in 19 years

Veteran tennis star Leander Paes on Monday dropped out of the top-100 bracket for the first time in 19 years, slipping to 101 after losing five places in the ATP doubles chart. With 856 points, Paes is now the fourth-highest ranked Indian player behind Rohan Bopanna (38), Divij Sharan (46) and Purav Raja, who re-entered the top-100 by jumping eight places to 93. The last time the 46-year-old Paes was placed outside top-100 was in October 2000 when he was ranked 118. Prajnesh Gunneswaran continues to be India's top-ranked singles player though he dropped a rung to 95 and was followed by Sumit Nagal (127, +2).



Denver Nuggets' Nikola Jokic (right) in action in Minneapolis on Sunday. AP

Jokic hits last-gasp winner for Denver Nuggets

Nikola Jokic hit a 15-foot jumper with 3.3 seconds left in overtime, and the Denver Nuggets beat the Minnesota Timberwolves, 100-98, in Minneapolis on Sunday. Jokic finished with 20 points and hit a last-second game winner for the second consecutive game. Paul Millsap had 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Will Barton scored six of his 13 points in overtime and added 12 rebounds. Denver has won four straight, despite allowing a 16-0 Timberwolves run in the final 6:43 of regulation to force overtime. Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points, 16 rebounds and six assists, Andrew Wiggins also scored 25 and Josh Okogie had 17 points for Minnesota. The Timberwolves played without their two top point guards, Jeff Teague was out due to illness, and Shabazz Napier sat with a right hamstring strain. In another match, Pascal Siakam scored 24 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, and short-handed Toronto Raptors used a second-half surge to beat Los Angeles Lakers, 113-104, for the 10th straight time.

Sundar, 2 others secure Paralympics quotas

Sundar Singh Gurjar overcame a shoulder injury to defend his World Para Athletics Championships title in the men's F46 javelin throw event while also securing Tokyo Paralympic Games quota, along with the bronze winner Ajeet Singh and Rinku, in Dubai. Gurjar came up with his season's best effort of 61.22m to claim top spot. Singh sent the spear to a distance of 59.46m to clinch the bronze while Rinku finished fourth. The top four ranked athletes in each of the individual medal events on the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Programme (excluding Marathon) will each obtain one qualification slot.



Bairstow reprimanded for 'audible obscenity'

Star England batsman Jonny Bairstow was on Monday reprimanded by the International Cricket Council for his "obscene" reaction after being dismissed in the series-deciding T20I against New Zealand at Eden Park in Auckland. Bairstow, who was the man of the match for his whirlwind 18-ball 47, also received one demerit point after being found guilty of a Level 1 breach of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel. The incident happened on Sunday when Bairstow used an "audible obscenity" after his dismissal in the seventh over, which was picked up by the stump mic and heard on TV. After the day's play, Bairstow admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by match referee Andy Pycroft and, as such, there was no need for a formal hearing.

Salazar knocks on CAS door against doping ban

Disgraced running coach Alberto Salazar has lodged an appeal against a four-year ban for doping offences, the Court of Arbitration for Sport announced on Monday. Jeffrey Brown, a Texas endocrinologist who treated many of Salazar's athletes at Nike's Oregon Project training hub in Portland, has also appealed against his suspension. CAS said it has "registered the appeals" against decisions rendered by the American Arbitration Association, North American Court of Arbitration for Sport Panel "in which they were found to have committed anti-doping rule violations and sanctioned with a four-year period of ineligibility."