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Indian board on collision course with ICC over support-staff diktat

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 29

THE BOARD of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is set to protest the International Cricket Council's (ICC) decision to drastically reduce the number of support staff accompanying teams at ICC events.

Overruling the Cricket Committee's recommendation to keep the upper limit for support staff per team at 14, the ICC Board, at a meeting in October, decided to bring it down to eight. The BCCI feels the change was made to "hit" India, England and Australia, and accordingly it has decided to take its protest to the world body.

"With regards to the support staff that has to go with the team, the Cricket Committee of the ICC recommended that 15 players plus 14 support staff per team (for ICC tournaments). The ICC (Board), however,

has reduced the number of support staff to eight. This is not done. Once the Cricket Committee has decided something which is related to cricket, the next level (of committees — Chief Executives' Committee and the Board — have to approve that. When you are going against the recommendation of your own Cricket Committee, why do you have the Committee? When we are spending for them (support staff), then you can't take a call (based) on some teams that may not require or may not afford (a bigger contingent of support staff)," a top BCCI official told *The Indian Express*.

According to the official, the reduction targets the Big Three, who usually send a bigger contingent of support staff — coaches, logistics manager, throwdown specialists, masseurs, etc.

"It was done clearly to hit countries like India, England and Australia that send specialist support staff because we feel they

need to accompany the team given the competitive nature of cricket today," the official said.

The standard procedure in the ICC is that any recommendation from the Cricket Committee, which is headed by Anil Kumble, goes to the Chief Executives' Committee and from there to the Board. The Cricket Committee had its full meeting in May and then there was a further call prior to the October Board meeting.

At its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, the BCCI is likely to nominate its representative to the ICC and former Board president N Srinivasan appears to be a strong contender. The AGM will consider a proposed amendment to the BCCI constitution that debars a person aged 70 years and above to be the Board's representative at the ICC.

"See, representing the BCCI at the ICC is not a regular job that one has to do. It's not like holding the post of an office-bearer. So,

an experienced person who knows the ICC and has contacts can act in the best interests of the BCCI and Indian cricket," said a Board official.

Few takers for CAC job

Meanwhile, ahead of the AGM, the BCCI is finding it difficult to form a new Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), with a large number of former players being reluctant to take up the job because of the potential conflict of interest issue. As per the BCCI constitution, only the CAC is authorised to pick cricket committees, including selection committees. It is learnt that even two days ahead of the AGM, the BCCI hasn't been able to make a CAC shortlist.

"The appointment of the CAC is an item on the agenda. But do we have any takers for the job? Last time around, the likes of Kapil Dev, Shantha Rangaswamy and Anshuman Gaekwad also had to resign for

some alleged conflict or other. So let's see, who are eligible, given the (BCCI) constitution and its conflict of interest clause," a BCCI official told this paper.

The cricket board has contacted some former players to check if they are available. So far, the response is lukewarm.

The CAC, since its inception in 2015, has been a high-profile committee. Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman were part of it, to start with. Tendulkar recused himself from the Committee after conflict-of-interest allegations were made against him. The BCCI ombudsman-cum-ethics officer Justice (Retd) DK Jain subsequently cleared the former India captain of any conflict.

The ethics officer, however, had found Ganguly and Laxman to be in conflict of interest for their multiple cricketing roles. Ganguly is now the BCCI president, while the conflict-of-interest issue is before the

Supreme Court, as a plea has been made to reconsider its rigidity.

ICA's demand

The BCCI apex council will meet in Mumbai on Saturday and it is learnt that the representatives of the Indian Cricketers' Association (ICA) to the apex council, Gaekwad and Rangaswamy, will place their demand during the meeting. Sources said Gaekwad will ask for pension for all retired first-class cricketers and a one-time benefit for the players who played between 1950 and 1975. The former India opener also wants medical insurance and pension for the windows of the former first-class cricketers.

Rangaswamy will highlight the wage disparity between male and female cricketers. The ICA has requested for a Rs 10-crore annual budget from the BCCI to run the association.

Ton, ton: Alarm bells ring for Pakistan

Gabba centurions David Warner, Marnus Labuschagne score hundreds again as Australia post 302/1 in D-N Test at Adelaide Oval

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
ADELAIDE, NOVEMBER 29

DAVID WARNER and Marnus Labuschagne both plundered back-to-back centuries as Australia stamped their authority on the opening day of the day-night second Test in Adelaide Friday. At the close on a rain-interrupted day, the home team were a dominant 302 for one with the pair building an ominous 294-run partnership, leaving Pakistan with a huge battle to stay in touch.

Warner was not out 166 and Labuschagne unbeaten on 126, following on from their 154 and 185 respectively in the first Test at Brisbane. Their Adelaide partnership was the highest ever in a day-night Test.

"It's a bit surreal at the moment. It was just amazing to be out there with Davey and to just put on a really big partnership," said Labuschagne. "Really happy. We were running hard, I love the intensity of the crease."

Warner paid tribute to the maturity of his partner, who is playing in only his 11th Test. "Credit to Marnus for the way he came out and took the bowlers on again, he picked up where he left off at the Gabba," he said. "We're just thrilled to get through that tonight and want to come out tomorrow and put some more runs on the board."

Pakistan need to win to square the two-match series. The odds were heavily stacked against them before the game began, having lost 13 consecutive Tests in Australia, and their chances are even slimmer now. Over the years, taking wickets in Australia has been a challenge for Pakistan and they shuffled their bowling attack for the pink-ball Test in a bid to make the most of the conditions.

Veteran seamer Mohammad Abbas, who tormented Australia when he took 17 wickets in two Tests in the UAE last October, returned in place of Imran Khan while 16-year-old pace sensation Naseem Shah was rested. That handed a debut to 19-year-old medium-fast right-arm Muhammad Musa, but, like in the first Test at Brisbane, none of them could tame Warner and Labuschagne, with the ball hardly doing anything under the lights to trouble them.

After Australian skipper Tim Paine won the toss and chose to bat, Pakistan had a flicker of hope when Joe Burns was out for four, but a stubborn Warner and Labuschagne dug in and they went to tea at 70 for one.

Solid form

The players were forced to remain in the dressing room for an extra two hours from the scheduled resumption due to persistent light drizzle, but when they returned Warner quickly brought up his 31st half-century. The opener got an inside edge for two runs, with his 50 coming courtesy of four careless overthrows — the first time in five day-night Tests he has passed the mark.

He continued to pick off runs, reaching his 23rd Test century with a single off spin-



David Warner (166*) added 294 runs for the second wicket with Marnus Labuschagne (122*) on Day One of the second Test against Pakistan. AP

ner Yasir Shah in a near faultless innings that included 12 fours. It has been a big turnaround for the former Australian vice-captain, who managed just 95 runs in 10 innings during this year's Ashes series in England.

At the other end the impressive Labuschagne quietly went about his business, notching his sixth 50 in his 11th Test with a boundary off Musa. The South African-born right-hander showed solid form during the Ashes, benefitting from a stint with English county side Glamorgan, but he has really come of age against Pakistan.

The 25-year-old bagged his second Test ton with a two off Yasir, punching the air in joy after reaching three figures from 169 balls with 14 fours.

Earlier, on an overcast afternoon and with the floodlights on from the first ball, Shaheen Afridi, Pakistan's standout bowler, bagged the wicket of Burns. With the ball moving off the seam, he got an edge to Mohammad Rizwan behind the stumps and was out for four, with that breakthrough proving to be the only ray of sunshine for the visitors.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia (first innings) 302/1 in 73 overs (David Warner 166 not out, Marnus Labuschagne 126 not out; Shaheen Afridi 1/48) vs Pakistan.

Latham punishes England on rain-hit day

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
HAMILTON (NZ), NOVEMBER 29

Tom Latham's unbeaten hundred and his century stand with Ross Taylor laid a solid foundation for New Zealand before rain brought an early end to day one of the second Test against England in Hamilton on Friday. Latham was on 101 when the rain swept in just three deliveries after the resumption of play from the tea break. It was the left-handed opener's 11th century and lifted him to equal sixth on the New Zealand century-makers list headed by Kane Williamson with 20.

Williamson, however, was off his best this innings when he was dismissed for four in a rocky start for New Zealand after Jeet Raval was removed for five. But from two for 39, Latham and Taylor put on 116 for the third wicket when Taylor went for 53 to have New Zealand three for 155. All three wickets were to catches by England captain Joe Root at first slip.

Ben Stokes, at second slip, did not have such safe hands and dropped Latham on



Latham brought up his 11th Test ton.

66. Adding to Stokes' worries, he felt pain in his left knee after bowling two overs and will be assessed overnight to see whether he can bowl again during the innings.

Taylor also received a let-off which proved costly for England when he was hit on the pads by Stuart Broad and given out. After conferring with Latham, Taylor appeared to believe there was a ball direction issue and sought a review. TV umpire Bruce Oxenford

overturned the decision when slow-motion video replays detected a faint sound after the ball passed the bat but had not reached the pads. Oxenford believed it could only have come from an inside edge which Taylor did not feel and overturned the dismissal.

A relieved Taylor batted on to bring up his 32nd Test half-century with a four and was dismissed on the next ball.

Root won the toss and put New Zealand in to bat, citing Seddon Park's history of favouring the side bowling first. But after the cheap wickets of Raval and Williamson, it was the batting of Latham and Taylor that dominated for nearly 34 overs. Latham has 15 fours in his 101 off 164 deliveries while Taylor faced 100 balls for his half-century which included eight boundaries.

Woakes, brought in to give England five seamers at the expense of spinner Jack Leach, had figures of two for 41 while Stuart Broad had one for 33.

BRIEF SCORES: New Zealand (first innings) 173/3 in 54.3 overs (Tom Latham 101 not out, Ross Taylor 53; Chris Woakes 2/41) vs England at Seddon Park.

Ombudsman accepts DDCA prez's resignation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 29

THE DELHI and Districts Cricket Association ombudsman Justice (Retd) Badar Durrez Ahmed on Friday accepted senior journalist Rajat Sharma's resignation from the position of DDCA President, nearly a fortnight after putting a stay on it.

Sharma had resigned on November 16, citing "various pulls and pressures" within the organisation. His resignation was stayed by Ahmed a day later but has finally been accepted after a fresh request from the media personality.

"I wrote to him in the morning and told him to relieve me of my responsibilities," Sharma told PTI.

In his letter to Ahmed, Sharma stated that he could not continue in an organisation, which is in a "chaotic" state.

"I resigned on November 16 from post of President DDCA for the reasons stated in

the letter. I however continued to honour the directions of the ombudsman and later reiterated by the High Court. However, the situation in DDCA is completely chaotic and I find it impossible to continue any further as President," he wrote.

Sharma's nearly 20-month tenure was a tumultuous one marred by public differences with general secretary Vinod Tihara, who enjoys a fair amount of support base in the organisation.

Tihara won the DDCA elections contesting for Sharma's group but had a fallout with the president within a few weeks on various cricket and administration-related issues. It included allegations that Tihara

Sharma had resigned on November 16, citing 'various pulls and pressures' within the organisation.

tried to control recruitment process in the DDCA without following protocol.

Tihara was then suspended by the executive committee on disciplinary grounds which he subsequently challenged in the Delhi High Court.

"I find it impossible to work with people who have no respect for the Ombudsman or the High Court or the constitution," Sharma wrote in his letter to Ahmed.

Within hours of Sharma's resignation on November 16, CEO Ravi Chopra also put in his papers.

The two-member Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising Sunil Valsan and Yashpal Sharma, too tendered resignation.

A day later, Ahmed ordered Sharma to continue and stopped suspended general secretary Tihara's reinstatement.

"It is clear that Rajat Sharma has expressed his desire not to continue as President of DDCA. This entire controversy surrounding his resignation does not survive any more," Ahmed said on Friday.

There's absolute clarity on Dhoni, you'll find out in time: Ganguly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 29

THE BCCI President Sourav Ganguly on Friday said that there's enough time to decide on Mahendra Singh Dhoni's future and things will get clearer in a few months time.



Sourav Ganguly

When Ganguly was asked to comment on India head coach Ravi Shastri's reported remarks that IPL 2020 will give a clear picture on Dhoni's future, he said: "We will see what happens, there's enough time. Of course it will get clear (within three months)."

Dhoni, who has not played after India's

semifinal exit in the World Cup in July, has so far refused to talk much regarding his future.

At an event in Mumbai on Wednesday, Dhoni had said questions regarding his return to cricket should only be asked after January 2020.

But Ganguly said there was "absolute clarity" among the team think-tank on how to deal with Dhoni's future.

"No no, there is clarity, but certain things cannot be said on public platform. There is absolute clarity on MS Dhoni and you'll find out in time," Ganguly said on the sidelines of a felicitation ceremony organised by Ajanta Shoes.

"There's transparency between the Board, MS and the selectors. When you deal with such champions — MS Dhoni is an unbelievable athlete for India — certain things have to be kept within the closed doors. It's very transparent and everybody knows where they stand."

BRIEFLY

Chandimal back in Sri Lanka squad for landmark tour of Pak

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Friday gave former skipper Dinesh Chandimal a new chance to fight his way back into the national team by naming him in the squad to play a landmark two-match Test series in Pakistan. The matches will be the first Tests played in Pakistan for more than a decade because of security fears. The 30-year-old Chandimal, who played his last Test in Australia in February, will be in a squad now led by Dimuth Karunaratne, the cricket board said. He was in a squad that played New Zealand in August but did not play a match. Half of the 16-man squad refused to go on a tour of Pakistan in October citing security fears. Sri Lanka lost the three One-Day Internationals but won the three T20 matches. New skipper Karunaratne was one of the eight players who stayed away from the tour. Pakistan's last home Test match was against Sri Lanka in March 2009. The tour was halted by a militant attack on the Sri Lankan team bus. The first Test of this series will be in Rawalpindi from December 11. Sri Lanka leave for Pakistan three days earlier.

Squad: Dimuth Karunaratne (capt), Oshada Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dinesh Chandimal, Kusal Perera, Lahiru Thirimanne, Dhananjaya de Silva, Niroshan Dickwella, Dilruwan Perera, Lasith Embuldeniya, Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, Kasun Rajitha, and Lakshan Sandakan.

WI complete win over Afghanistan in 3 days

Lucknow: West Indies handed Afghanistan a crushing 9-wicket defeat within three days in the one-off Test. Resuming Friday on 109-7 with a lead of only 19 runs, Afghanistan were bowled out for 120 in their second innings within 30 minutes on the third morning. Captain Jason Holder (3-20) polished off the Afghanistan tail as he got the outside edges of Rashid Khan and Afsar Zazai's bats and bowled Yamin Ahmadzai. The West Indies hurried to 33-1 with John Campbell remaining unbeaten on 19 when he smashed left-arm spinner Amir Hamza over mid-off for a winning boundary. The only blot in an otherwise comprehensive win for West Indies was the form of Kraigg Brathwaite, who fell for eight runs to Hamza to continue a barren run in the Test format. **Brief scores:** Afghanistan 187 & 120 (Holder 3/20) lost to West Indies 287 & 33/1 by nine wickets.

Top BCB official barred from leaving country

Dhaka: Bangladesh's anti-corruption commission has barred a top cricket official from leaving the country as it steps up an investigation into the sport's national body, a spokesman said on Friday. Mahbubul Anam is one of at least two senior Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) directors under suspicion. "An investigation is underway against him (Anam) for amassing illegal wealth. The concerned authorities have been instructed to ensure he cannot leave the country," commission spokesman Pranab Kumar Bhattacharjee said. The commission told immigration police in a letter on Thursday that Anam was under investigation for manipulating tenders and appointments and abusing his power in the selection of cricket board sponsors. "It was learnt that this person is trying to flee the country with his family. For proper investigation it is essential to stop him from going abroad," said the letter. Anam, a former BCB general secretary and vice-president, denied any wrongdoing. "I am not involved with any BCB tender process or sponsorship. The allegation is not true," he said. The BCB has faced regular corruption scandals. **AFP**