

Ganguly 'forced out'

AFP, New Delhi



Sourav Ganguly is set to be replaced as president of Indian cricket, with the former captain's backers claiming he has been forced out for refusing to join the ruling political party.

Ganguly is widely regarded as one of the sport's greatest captains and has been in charge of the powerful Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for the past three years.

He had been widely tipped to earn a second term as president when the board holds its annual general meeting next Tuesday. But Ganguly, 50, is said to have declined to join Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

This week the 1983 World Cup winner Roger Binny filed his nomination to replace Ganguly and will likely be elected unopposed next week, board vice-president Rajeev Shukla told reporters.

Politicians from Ganguly's home state of West Bengal alleged that the former batsman was forced out.

It was a "political vendetta" by the government, opposition lawmaker Santanu Sen said on Twitter.

"We are with you Dada," he added, referring to Ganguly by his nickname.

Ganguly's political allegiance has been a regular source of media speculation in recent months and the country's home minister Amit Shah visited him at home earlier this year.



Malan stars as England beat Aus by 8 runs

AFP, Canberra

Dawid Malan's 82 and disciplined bowling from England helped the visitors win the second Twenty20 international against Australia by eight runs Wednesday to seal the series and give them a confidence boost heading into the World Cup.

Malan shared a crucial 92-run stand in Canberra with Moeen Ali (44) as England compiled 178-7 against a full-strength Australian attack.

Despite Mitchell Marsh hitting 45 off 29 balls and Tim David 40 off 23, the hosts fell short.

Sam Curran took 3-25 to ensure England won the three-match series 2-0 with a game left on Friday in a setback to the World Cup champions.

"Really satisfying win after losing the toss as well and setting a target," said England skipper Jos Buttler.

"I think we showed great character and Malan played fantastically well to anchor the innings."

Malan hit seven fours and four sixes in his 49 ball knock to rescue the visitors after they slumped to 54-4 in the ninth over.

Ali was also impressive after Australian captain Aaron Finch won the toss and chose to bowl, making five changes to the side that also lost by eight runs in Perth.

PACE spearheads Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood, along with spinner Adam Zampa all returned for the hosts after being rested for the first T20.



Shakib Al Hasan tried his best to haul New Zealand's mammoth total of 208 with a 44-ball 70, but the Bangladesh captain got little support from the other batters as the Tigers lost their third consecutive match of the tri-nation series and were out of contention

PHOTO: AFP

Lack of accountability leading to unsettled plans

SPORTS REPORTER

The term 'settled team' seems to be a pipedream in the context of Bangladesh cricket. With just a handful of days until the T20 World Cup in Australia, it appears that anyone can come into the side at any moment. Worse still, there is no accountability when such changes are made and no one from the fabled team management raises their hand to take responsibility for those failures in planning.

The shortest format of the game is all about how confident players can rise to the occasion and take responsibility for their designated roles, but Bangladesh's stop-gap planning, touted to be 'experiments', have not provided that needed momentum heading into a showpiece event.

"Whoever you see going out into the field tomorrow, let it be... I would leave that up to Sri [Sridharan Sriram] and the selectors," pace bowling coach Allan Donald said yesterday at the press conference following a 48 run loss to New Zealand, doing so while raising his hands to indicate he was steering clear of the discussions around selections and batting plan.

"I am very pleased with where we are at the moment as a group. But it's the last five overs (with the ball) that I am worried about," he said about the bowling department.

Why Donald came to the

press conference after the heavy thrashing is unclear, but perhaps the 208 runs conceded against the Kiwis saw him pushed into the hot seat yesterday.

However, the current state of the team is neither Sriram nor Donald's burden to bear. Donald should not be concerned about batting roles and Sriram only joined before the Asia Cup. It is the supporting cast, the rest of the team management, who should answer for continued failures of planning and lack of execution from the player profiles they have in the squad.

Jamie Siddons was impressed with one Sabbir Rahman stroke off a free hit. Sabbir's profile was handed to Sriram when looking for top-order solutions. That responsibility lay with the think-tank, which carried on from way before Sriram joined.

No explanation was provided about the Sabbir experiment, or what made it viable in the first place.

Team director Khaled Mahmud dictated which players could be left at, yet it took a long time for Liton Das to once again open the batting in T20Is. A settled opening partnership should have been the first thing on the agenda but it took a long time for said 'experiments' to actually start.

Mehedi Hasan Miraz was finally taken off makeshift opening duties, but it took a long time and for the team management to realise that

someone cannot fit into a role outside their profile.

When looking at a player profile, the team management should have an idea of what roles each player can fit into, but yet Soumya Sarkar's stop-start career continues. This time he was used at number three.

Soumya did not get into the side through performance, but he showed the right aggression at the top in away conditions. He suffered gravely on home pitches that were not conducive to stroke play but should have been an option at the top even before the World Cup preparations began.

Neither Soumya nor Najmul Hossain Shanto are sure how 'settled' their roles are ahead of a big tournament, but changes are indicated even now.

Liton too needs to get hardwired to his opening duties so the opening slot can be a position of confidence and not the state of influx it is currently in. Even Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad's positions had been untenable for a while but they were only excluded very late.

"Like most other teams, we tried to play around a lot of combinations," Donald said. But little has been made of the process through which changes are made -- processes that falls under the jurisdiction of the board and the rest of the team management preceding him.

NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE

Tense finish awaits in Khulna

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Metropolis require 41 runs to win against hosts Khulna on the fourth and final day of the National Cricket League's (NCL) Tier 2 fixture at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium today.

Chasing a target of 167, Dhaka ended the third day on 126 for six after Khulna were bundled out for 191 in their second innings. Marshal Ayub was run out after scoring 40 while Zahiduzzaman, who remained unbeaten on 24, is expected to play the key role for Dhaka in what could be a nervy chase on the final day.

Earlier, resuming second innings on 108 for five, Khulna lost wickets at regular intervals. Off-spinner Sharifullah bagged a fiver for Dhaka while Rakibul Hasan took three wickets.

Ziaur Rahman top scored with 53 and stitched 77 runs for the sixth wicket stand with Tipu Sultan, who contributed with 28 runs. However, Khulna ultimately lost their way following the departure of the two batters.

Meanwhile, in a Tier 1 encounter at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, hosts Chattogram are set to resume today on 169 for four, trailing by two runs in their second innings. Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal, who scored 31 in the first innings, missed out in the second innings as the lefty could score 20 runs before getting trapped in front by left-arm spinner Nabil Samad, who scalped three wickets for Sylhet.

Sylhet were all out for 312 earlier in the day after adding nine runs to their overnight total and, in the process, took a first-innings lead of 171 runs against the port city side.

Elsewhere, the third day of the other Tier 2 game between hosts Rajshahi and Barishal at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium saw no action due to overnight rain.

Sheikh Hasina Stadium contract signed

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has signed a 48-month contract with Populous Pte. Ltd as the international consultant for the Sheikh Hasina Cricket Stadium during a ceremony held at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

Andrew Frederick James, director of Populous Pte. Ltd, gave a virtual presentation of the stadium in presence of other dignitaries.

The entire construction process has been divided into three phases and the company is expected to hand over the stadium to the BCB in 48 months.

"Bangladesh Cricket Board has completed the first phase of constructing the Sheikh Hasina Cricket Stadium. Populous has been given 48 months to complete the job. In the first six months they will work on the design and then in the next 30 months in constructing the venue. In the remaining 12 months they will work on the maintenance," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told the media yesterday.



Real Madrid's German defender Antonio Rudiger (R) scores with a brave header to make it 1-1 against Shakhtar Donetsk in their UEFA Champions League fixture in Warsaw on Tuesday. The injury time equaliser helped the defending champions earn a place in the knockout rounds.

Sk Russel int'l chess starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Sheikh Russel Cup Invitational Team Chess Championship gets underway today at the Bangladesh Chess Federation with six countries from South Asia taking part in the championship.

Hosts Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan will play in a round-robin league basis, with the top three teams fighting it out in the Super League to decide the title. Champions will be awarded US \$4,000 while the runners up will bag US \$3,000.

Hosts Bangladesh are tipped as favourites as the team includes three grandmasters -- Niaz Murshed, Ziaur Rahman and Enamul Hossain Rajib -- and two international masters whereas the second-best side, Sri Lanka, boast only one IM and one FIDE master.

