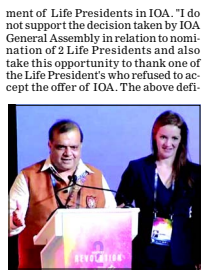


Batra quits as IOA associate vice-president in protest

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 -- Senior functionary Narinder Batra on Friday resigned as the associate vice-president of the Indian Olympic Association as a mark of protest against the IOA for not taking back its decision to appoint scam-tainted Suresh Kalmadi and Abhay Singh Chautala as honorary life presidents.

Strongly expressing his reservations over the appointments, Batra, who recently became the International Hockey Federation (FIH) president, said he was strongly against the backdoor entry of Kalmadi and Chautala to the IOA.

"Keeping in mind that you IOA have not taken any action in withdrawing the nomination of Life President of IOA even after 3 days of the AGM, hence as an expression of my protest and objection against the decision, I hereby submit my resignation from the post of Associate Vice-President of Indian Olympic Association," Batra wrote in a letter addressed to IOA president N Ramchandran and secretary general Rajeev Mehta. "I have checked up with quite a few members and none of them have confirmed having received/seen any information 7 clear days prior to the 27th December, 2016 AGM of IOA in relation to appointment of Life Presidents in IOA. I do not support the decision taken by IOA General Assembly in relation to nomination of 2 Life Presidents and also take this opportunity to thank one of the Life President's who refused to accept the offer of IOA. The above definition is also not allow for any backdoor entry," said Batra, who was the former Hockey India chief. "I thank everyone for whatever brief association we may have had with each other in IOA. Kalmadi and Chautala were elevated to the honorary position at the IOA's Annual General Meeting in Chennai on December 27, shocking the Indian sporting fraternity and leaving the Sports Ministry fuming.



Narinder Batra speaking at a podium during a press conference.

The Sports Ministry has issued a show-cause notice to the IOA, threatening de-recognition of the sports body unless it reverses its decision. IOA has been given time till Friday to reply to the show-cause notice. Soon after the tainted duo's elevation to the honorary posts, Batra had expressed his reservations and threatened to quit as the IOA associate vice-president if the appointments were not reversed. While Kalmadi has declined the offer, Chautala continued to be defiant. In his letter to the IOA top office-bearers, Batra also said that he was disturbed by the appointments which were taken in a haste without the consent of all the members. He also mentioned statues of the IOA Constitution, which clearly states that it doesn't approve the appointments of any chargesheeted individuals. "I am disturbed about a development in IOA AGM. I am told by the members present in the AGM that this particular discussion i.e. nomination of Life President took place as last item and was proposed and approved in a total of one minute without any discussion and after that the AGM was declared closed and while taking the decisions the statues of IOA seem to be have been overlooked," he said. (PTI)

Not getting engaged Virat on engagement rumours with Anushka

DEHRADUN, DEC 30 -- Cricketer Virat Kohli has quashed reports of his engagement with girlfriend, actress Anushka Sharma, saying they are not getting engaged on New Year's Day. There were reports which suggested that a star-studded engagement ceremony will take place on January 1 in Narendranagar near Rishikesh where the couple are currently holidaying. The arrival of Amitabh Bachchan in town along with wife Jaya Bachchan and industrialist Anil Ambani further fuelled the speculation.

However, Virat has now ended the confusion on Twitter and said that when the couple decide to get engaged, they would not hide it. "We aren't getting engaged and if we were going to, we wouldn't



We aren't getting engaged & if we were going to, we wouldn't hide it.
Since news channels cant resist selling false rumours & keeping you confused, we are just ending the confusion

hide it. Simple... Since news channels cant resist selling false rumours & keeping you confused, we are just ending the confusion," Virat posted on Twitter. Anushka also re-tweeted the cricketer's post on Twitter. The actor and Virat, both 28, arrived at Hotel Ananda in Narendranagar last Saturday to ring in the New Year and have been in his dictionary from a cricketer's vacation on their social media accounts. They are said to have visited an ashram at Ambuwala village in Pathri area of Haridwar district on Tuesday for their prayers. Anushka has her roots in Dehradun where her grandmother Urmila Sharma still lives.



Australia celebrate their victory

Virat Kohli picked to lead McGrath's Test team of the year 2016

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 -- Australian fast bowling legend Glenn McGrath has picked Virat Kohli to lead his Test Team of the Year. The legendary bowler also picked Ravichandran Ashwin in the 12. The Australian named three Australians -- David Warner, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, apart from England's Joe Root, Ben Stokes, Stuart Broad and Jonny Bairstow, Kiwi Kane Williamson, Pat Cummins, Yasir Shah and South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada in his 12. Kohli was earlier named captain of the International Cricket Council's ODI Team of the Year 2016. Cricket Australia also picked him to lead their ODI Team of the Year.

Australia Vs Pakistan: Mitchell Starc stars in hosts' stunning last day win

MELBOURNE, DEC 30 -- Mitchell Starc spearheaded Australia to a stunning final day innings victory over Pakistan with a mercurial bat and ball performance to claim the series in Melbourne on Friday. The fast bowler smashed 84 off 91 balls with a record seven sixes and then captured four wickets for 36 to lead Australia to a resounding 189-run victory over the hapless tourists. Skipper Steve Smith set the ball rolling for a dramatic victory when he declared Australia's first innings at 624 for eight just before lunch. That gave Australia a 181-run lead and a minimum of 70 overs to bowl out Pakistan. In the end the Australians needed only 53.2 overs to pull off an emphatic victory and, with their 89-run win in the first Gabba Test, to clinch the three-Test series. While Smith was named man-of-the-match for his unbeaten 165, it was Starc who put his stamp on the game with his sensational effort with bat and ball. Starc clubbed seven sixes, the most in an innings in a Melbourne Test, and was severe on Yasir Shah, belting the leg-spinner for five sixes. He then got into the act with the ball and took the wickets of Babar Azam, Sarfraz Ahmed, Wahab Riaz and Yasir Shah to clean up the Pakistan tail for Australia. "It finished a lot better than it started," Starc said. "It's fantastic for us to get that result. The belief was there and it was a fantastic way to finish. We knew we only had two sessions to get those 10 wickets and together as a bowling unit we've done really well. It was an astonishing collapse by the tourists, who appeared safe from defeat after amassing 443 for nine declared in their first innings over the first three rain-affected days before losing control of the match.

The defeat was Pakistan's 11th straight test loss in Australia after their win in Sydney in 1995. Skipper Smith set up the exciting finish with a calculated declaration shortly before lunch. He called a halt to a massive first innings at 624 for eight -- remaining unbeaten on 165 off 246 balls -- to give his fast bowlers a crack at the Pakistan openers just before the interval. Starc's seven sixes surpassed the record in an innings in a Melbourne Test held by Andrew Symonds with six in his 72 against South Africa in 2005. "I was hanging in there with Smithy and having a good time and got a few sixes away as well," Starc said. Starc put on 154 runs for the seventh wicket with Smith off 172 balls and upon Nathan Lyon's dismissal Smith said that was enough and raced from the ground.

I don't mind if I have to start from scratch again: Wriddhiman

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 -- Wriddhiman Saha, who appeared in a Test cricket before his untimely injury, hopes to make a comeback on the strength of a good domestic performance, even if he is dropped for the time being. That's the reason that the word "insecurity" is not in his dictionary from his formative years as a cricketer. Wriddhiman missed out on the last three Tests against England suffering from tendonitis (thigh strain) and his replacement Parthiv Patel made full use of opportunities scoring two half-centuries. "No one would like to miss out on a Test series. It's only natural that one would be disappointed if you would have to sit out due to an injury. Now Parthiv has come and done well but I see no reason to feel insecure. At worst, I might be happy if I will not be selected for the next Test series. So what is my job? To make a good comeback in domestic cricket post injury and produce good performances, which is in my control," Wriddhiman told PTI during an interaction. Ask him if it's that simple, he would reply: "At least for me it is that simple! I have never let either success go into my head nor has failures affected me. I believe I have been able to maintain that balance till now. And I have been like this since my childhood. I have never been overly emotional about things. You need to keep life simple," says Wriddhiman. Is it something that he has learned from MS Dhoni, having shared the India and Chennai Super Kings dressing room with him for a number of years, he cuts you short. "I am not like this because I have learnt these traits from Dhoni but I am like this because I am Wriddhiman. Let me tell you one thing, your approach towards life is something that you devise on your own. Everyone is his own coach. These are things you don't learn from anybody," said the introverted batsman, who has been overly emotional to competition. Wriddhiman said that his rehabilitation is complete and he will be playing for his club side Mohun Bagan this weekend. "I completed my rehab program at the NCA five days back. I can resume playing competitive cricket. At the NCA, they worked on a specific muscle tissue that had got weak due to the injury. The next big assignment will be the M. S. Ranjitsinghji Trophy (national T20) for Bengal," he said. "Now I will be playing a few matches for my club side Mohun Bagan. I have started usual net sessions and it feels good. I am working with our club coach Palash Nandy. Also with a lot of former Bengal players like Sanjeev Sanjay, Subhomoy Basu and Arindam Ghosh in our ranks, the training sessions have been fun." He is a touch sad that Bengal could not make it to the knock-out of the Ranji Trophy which might have given him a few more top quality matches. "I (Bengal) started a few matches for my club side Mohun Bagan. I have started usual net sessions and it feels good. 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