

Sports Mail



Kolkata ISL franchise owners clueless about foreign players' induction

By **Qaiser Mohammad Ali** in New Delhi

YET another long court battle looms large over Indian cricket as the BCCI on Tuesday suspended the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA), soon after Lalit Modi was declared elected as RCA president in a controversial election held in December.

BCCI interim president Shival Yadav suspended the RCA as a BCCI member, "pending disciplinary proceedings against it on charges of misconduct", after the sealed envelope containing the results of the December 19 election was opened by the Supreme Court-appointed principal observer Justice (Retd) NM Kasliwal.

Modi, 50, a former IPL chairman who is living in England since his suspension by the BCCI in April 2010 for alleged misdemeanours and expelled for three years in September last year following an internal Board inquiry, won the election 24-5, beating Rampal Sharma. Somendra Tiwari was elected RCA secretary, Pawan Goyal the treasurer, and Mehmood M. Abdi, legal counsel of Modi, the deputy president. Abdi said Modi would rule via the RCA executive committee.

Modi got prompt support from his mentor Sharad Pawar, who as BCCI president had encouraged him to launch the

"I think Lalit should have waited for his [three-year] ban imposed by the BCCI to get over [on Sept 24, 2016] before fighting the RCA election and in the meanwhile have let any of his trusted lieutenants to take charge. I have no reaction to the Supreme Court order, but the case is alive and, naturally, I'll wait for a final call by the Supreme Court [on the issue of suspension of voting rights of RCA's individual members]"

— Kishore Rungta, ex-president of RCA, in whose petition BCCI intervened & sought to stop Modi from contesting

TURMOIL

IPL in 2008. The union minister said he was "shocked to hear about the decision. I think it is a very harsh decision by the BCCI". Yadav, who was appointed interim head by the Supreme Court after it ordered N. Srinivasan to keep away from the BCCI affairs following the 2013 IPL betting-fixing case invoked Regulation 32 (vii) of the Rules and Regulations of BCCI to suspend the RCA. The BCCI seems to be have been encouraged by the Supreme Court order of April 30 in the Kishore Rungta-State of Rajasthan case. Part of court order stated: "If it is found by the BCCI that any person has acted against its Rules, Regulations or Law, which is to be enforced by it, it would be open to it to take appropriate action against such a person."

In a statement, announcing the suspension of the RCA, BCCI secretary Sanjay Patel said: "Keeping in mind the interests of the sport of cricket and in order to safeguard the best interests and welfare of the cricketers playing the game in different age-groups and their future, an ad-hoc committee will be constituted shortly by the BCCI."

While it's a fact that Yadav has been appointed by the Supreme Court, it is also true that the clause that the former Test off-spinner has invoked empowers the BCCI "president" and there is no mention that the "interim president" would also enjoy the same power.

But some others opined that since the Supreme Court has appointed Yadav as interim president, he too would enjoy all the powers that an elected one would have. The Supreme Court came into the picture in the state body's election after former RCA president Kishore Rungta opposed the abolishing of individual members' voting rights following the promulgation of the controversial Rajasthan Sports Act. Modi was allowed to contest the RCA elections only because this Act does not recognise the BCCI's ban on Modi, and after two Supreme Court-appointed observers cleared his nomination for the contest.

BCCI got involved in Rungta's case by filing an interlocutory application in the Supreme Court, seeking to stop Modi from contesting as he had already been expelled from the Board. But the apex court allowed Modi to contest.

More litigation in store after BCCI suspends RCA for electing Modi as president

THE MODI SAGA

■ **2005:** Modi replaces the Rungta regime that controlled the RCA for more than three decades and becomes the president.

■ **NOVEMBER 29, 2005:** Becomes BCCI vice-president

■ **SEPTEMBER 13, 2007:** Announces the launch of the Indian Premier League (IPL)

■ **2008:** The sale of eight IPL franchises takes place

■ **JANUARY 2009:** Numerous cases of funds misappropriation comes up against Modi

■ **MARCH 1, 2009:** Modi loses RCA election but keeps his place in the BCCI as he is also a PCA vice-president

■ **DECEMBER 7, 2009:** Loses the RCA election again

■ **DECEMBER 2009:** First hints of a rivalry between Modi and N Srinivasan, then BCCI secretary

■ **JANUARY 7, 2010:** Chris Cairns announces his intention to sue Modi after the latter makes fixing allegations against him

■ **APRIL-MAY 2010:** More revelations on financial irregularities in the IPL emerge. BCCI gives him three show-cause notices

■ **SEPTEMBER 2013:** The BCCI disciplinary committee finds Modi guilty and expels him for three years as per the BCCI constitution

■ **MAY 26, 2014 :** Modi is declared president of the Rajasthan Cricket Association again. BCCI interim president Shival Yadav suspends RCA 'on charges of misconduct'



'I AM READY TO STEP ASIDE UNTIL ISSUE IS RESOLVED'

By **Qaiser Mohammad Ali** in New Delhi

NEW Rajasthan cricket boss Lalit Modi on Tuesday declared that he would take legal recourse to fight the "illegal" suspension of his association by the BCCI while offering to remain away from Board meetings till the issues are resolved.

Modi, 50, speaking from London, said he has already taken charge of the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA), held the first meeting of its executive committee on Tuesday, and nominated RCA's deputy president, Mehmood M. Abdi to represent the body at the BCCI.

"If they want to take action against Lalit Modi they can do so, but they can't do so against the RCA, which has been democratically elected and is free to do what it wants. I'm happy to step aside, in the sense that I'd not attend BCCI meetings. The RCA executive committee has already authorised the deputy president to attend BCCI meetings, till the time a solution is found," Modi told Mail Today in an interview.

"When Mr Jagmohan Dalmiya was banned by the BCCI [for alleged misappropriation of funds] he didn't attend BCCI meetings and someone else represented the Cricket Association of Bengal. So, for them to take this dramatic step

against the RCA is foolish. Somebody has to take a stand, and I have taken a stand and I'll continue to do so, on this issue," he thundered.

When asked if he has con-

INTERVIEW LALIT MODI

veyed his offer to step aside from the BCCI, Modi said: "I don't have to convey this offer to the BCCI as they have no mandate to remove the RCA. They must come to us first. On what basis have they removed us? They should have called a general body meeting to suspend us. How can one person

[interim BCCI president Shival Yadav] suspend an association? Who gave him that authority?"

It is learnt that the RCA is ready to start the legal battle on Wednesday by moving the Rajasthan High Court.

"We'll fight the battle; the battle of fixing is not a small one. To remove the fixers, it's going to be a tough fight. I'm ready to take the tough fight to its logical conclusion," he said, taking pot shots at BCCI president his bete noire N. Srinivasan.

Modi, who has been living in England since April 2010, said he would return to India depending on which party forms the next national government.

"I'll come as soon my security situation changes. I'm waiting for the election results to come out and in a few weeks we'll know who forms the new government. If I get assurance of protection I'll be there," he said.

"There are two things I have to do: first, I am fighting for my passport, which was illegally revoked. That matter is coming up day after tomorrow in Delhi High Court. I hope a decision is taken before the court closes [for summer vacation] as only the closing arguments are left," he said. "Then I'll take the next step: to wait and see who forms the new government, which is just a matter of days. Where's the hurry?"