

With captains' thumbs up, BCCI lifts saliva ban in IPL

PTI, NEW DELHI: The BCCI on Thursday lifted the ban on use of saliva on the ball in the upcoming Indian Premier League after a majority of captains agreed to its proposal, making it the first major cricket competition to do away with the restriction that was a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision was taken at the captains' meeting in Mumbai ahead of the league starting on Saturday. "The saliva ban has been lifted. Majority of captains were in favour of the move. Some had reservations about the re-introduction, some sat on the fence but majority of them supported the move," a top BCCI official told PTI.

DRS EXTENDED TO HEIGHT AND OFF-SIDE WIDES

The BCCI also approved the use of DRS for height wides and wides outside the off-stump. "Hawk eye and ball tracking will be used to decide on the height wides and wides outside the off-stump," the official added. It was also decided that one ball

will be changed in the second innings of an evening game after the 11th over due to dew. "This is not a rule change, it's just an understanding for this year between teams and umpires. The changed ball will have wear and tear," an official said.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) had banned the age-old practice of applying saliva to shine the ball as a precautionary measure during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which health practitioners advocated strict hygiene protocols and physical distancing.

In 2022, the world body made the ban permanent.

The IPL too included the ICC ban in its playing conditions in the aftermath of the

pandemic but its guidelines are outside the purview of the sport's governing body.

With the development on Thursday, the IPL became the first major cricketing event to re-introduce saliva's use after the pandemic.

The captains meeting, which was scheduled to begin at 12.30 pm in Mumbai, did not start on time due to a delay in arrival of a few team officials at the BCCI office. Now that the ban is

revoked in the IPL, the ICC too might review its stance on the subject.

On the sidelines of the ICC Champions Trophy, senior India pacer Mohammed Shami had spoken about the need to use saliva on the ball in what has become a predominantly batters' game.

The likes of Vernon Philander and Tim Southee had backed Shami's call. "We keep appealing that

we should be allowed to use saliva so that we can bring reverse swing back into the game and it becomes interesting," Shami had said during the 50-over event in Dubai, where India emerged victorious.

Also on the agenda of captains' meeting was the contentious Impact Player rule which the BCCI had already extended till at least 2027. The likes of Rohit Sharma and more recently Hardik Pandya have expressed their reservations on the playing strategy.

"While a few have raised objections on the Impact Player rule, it has benefited uncapped batters and bowlers who otherwise won't get to play," the official said.

Bonus point system likely for WTC 2025-27 cycle

PTI, NEW DELHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) is likely to ponder over a new bonus points system during its board meeting in April which could give more weightage to victories against higher-ranked teams during the next World Test Championship cycle.

The 2025-27 WTC cycle will begin with India's five-match away Test series against England in June.

As per the prevailing rules, the team winning by the smallest margin or by an innings gets 12 points, six points for a tie and four points for a draw.

But this could see a change as the global governing body, as per a report in Telegraph, is considering awarding bonus points for innings victories or for a win above a certain big margin such as 100 runs.

"In fact, issues such as

giving bonus points for innings wins etc has been in continuous discussion from the beginning of the WTC, as many teams felt that due weight is not getting for wins against big teams," a source close to the development told PTI.

"So, such topics have been a part of discussions, and this could again come up for deliberations," he said.

But this could now change as the ICC might bring in bonus points for landslide wins, and extra points could be given to victories over frontline teams such as India, Australia and England, as per their rankings.

Yeah, it's a good move if it really happens. The teams will be more motivated to go for results, as we could see some exciting games, a former India player told PTI on condition of anonymity.

The ICC is also mulling giving extra points for wins

away from home. Yeah, it will be a motivating factor for, you know, those smaller teams, Look, when New Zealand beat India last year, it was a historic win for them as not many teams came here and beat us. But they did not get any extra points for it."

While winning away from home in itself can act as a motivating factor, now the teams will have that carrot in front of them extra points, if it really happens, he added.

Other than this, the ICC board meeting might also consider the two-tier Test system, which is vocally supported by Cricket Australia.

It needs a lot of discussion before putting into practice as some teams might feel deprived of regular chances to play against strong teams like India or Australia.

Kirsty elected IOC president

First woman, first African to lead global Olympic body

AP, COSTA NAVARINO (Greece): Kirsty Coventry has been elected president of the International Olympic Committee and she becomes the first woman and first African to get perhaps the biggest job in global sports.

The Zimbabwe sports minister and two-time Olympic swimming gold medallist got a stunning first-round win in the seven-candidate contest after voting by 97 IOC members on Thursday. She gets an eight-year mandate into 2033 aged just 41 — youthful by the historical standards of the IOC.

It was the most open and hard-to-call IOC presidential election in decades with no clear front-runner before the vote. Many predicted an absolute majority could take several rounds



of votes but she got the exact total of 49 needed.

Coventry's win also was a victory for outgoing IOC president Thomas Bach, who has long been seen as promoting her as his successor. He did not use his right to vote.

"I will make all of you very, very proud and hopefully extremely confident in the decision you have taken," Coventry said in her acceptance

speech. "Now we have got some work together."

Walking to the podium, she was congratulated and kissed on both cheeks by Juan Antonio Samaranch, her expected closest rival who got 28 votes. Third-placed Sebastian Coe got just eight.

Also in the race were four presidents of sports governing bodies: Track and field's Sebastian Coe, skiing's Johan Eliasch, cycling's David Lappartient, and gymnastics' Morinari Watanabe. Also contending was Prince Feisal al Hussein of Jordan.

Coventry will formally replace her mentor Bach on June 23 — officially Olympic Day — as the 10th IOC president in its 131-year history. Bach reached the maximum 12 years in office.

Team India to get Rs 58 crore cash reward from BCCI for Champions Trophy victory

PTI, NEW DELHI: The BCCI on Thursday announced a cash reward of Rs 58 crore for the Indian cricket team that won the ICC Champions Trophy earlier this month in Dubai.

The Rohit Sharma-led India defeated New Zealand by four wickets in the final to grab their third Champions Trophy title.

The financial windfall will cover the players, coaching and support staff and members of the men's selection committee headed by Ajit Agarkar.

"Winning back-to-back ICC titles is special and this reward recognises Team India's dedication and excellence on the global stage," said BCCI president Roger Binny in a release.



Each player of the winning team and Head Coach Gautam Gambhir will get Rs 3 crore, while Assistant Coaches Ryan Ten Doeschate, Abhishek Nayar, Batting Coach Sitanshu Kotak, Bowling Coach Morne Morkel will get Rs 50 lakh each. Support staff will be given Rs 50 lakh each and the BCCI officials will get Rs 25 lakh each

Binny said the Champions Trophy triumph is a testament to India's strong cricketing eco-system. "This was also our second ICC Trophy in 2025, follow-

ing the ICC U19 Women's World Cup triumph and it highlights the strong cricketing ecosystem in place in our country," he said. In fact, it was India's

third ICC trophy in the last eight months as they had won the last year's T20 World Cup, beating South Africa in the final. BCCI Secretary Devajit

Saikia said the victory justified India's top-ranking in white ball formats.

"Their dominance in world cricket is a result of years of hard work and strategic execution. This victory has justified India's top ranking in white-ball cricket, and we are sure the team will continue to excel in the years to come," said Saikia.

"The dedication and commitment shown by the players have set a new benchmark, and we are confident that Indian cricket will keep raising the bar on the global stage," Saikia added.

BCCI Vice-President Rajeev Shukla said Indian players displayed excellent composure under pressure during the ICC marquee event.

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