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# Sanjiv Goenka backs up on Smith, Stokes and 'numerology' this IPL season

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Armed with new talent and some advice from a numerologist, [Sanjiv Goenka](#) expects better things from his [IPL](#) team this year

The song on the phone, as you wait for Sanjiv Goenka to come on the line, is an old Hindi melody that takes you back in time.

But the chairman of the RP Sanjiv Goenka Group wants to move forward.

Last year's humbling seventh-place finish of his IPL franchise — Rising Pune Supergiant — is water under the bridge.



Sanjiv Goenka, Chairman of the RP Group and owns the IPL franchise — Rising Pune Supergiant.



[Steve Smith](#) has been brought in to replace Dhoni. (Image: Reuters)

Goenka is looking ahead to the second season, which begins in a few days.

"I was disappointed with our performance last year," Goenka says from Kolkata around tea time on Monday, a tinkle of crockery audible over the phone. "But what is over is over.

I realised we needed a younger and fitter team. We have a new captain now Steve Smith in place of Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

It's a new season."

## Change at the top

It must have been tricky for the team management to scale down Dhoni's role. He is one of the great captains in history.

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*A tough decision to scale down Dhoni's role. (Image: BCCL)*

Goenka doesn't want to discuss the subject. But there talk about that incident. Yes, one is an Indian first, but he's [Smith] a great leader.

The way he's moulded the Aussie team into a young, fighting unit is admirable."

### **Buying Big Ben**

The team made the most expensive purchase of this year's IPL, paying `14.5 crore for the English allrounder [Ben Stokes](#).

"We needed a match winner and Ben is the best all-rounder in the world today," says Goenka.



*Ben Stokes was snapped up at a record price of Rs. 14.5 crore. (Image: AP)*

"[Coach] Stephen Fleming and Smith believe in his ability to deliver.

These are decisions they take." Goenka says their price cut-off for Stokes was `15 crore.

### **Numerology factor**

Cricket followers have noticed a small change in the name of the team. It was Supergiants last year. It's Supergiant now.

The logic, Goenka says, is numerology.

"A numerologist from Varanasi told me last year, 'Yeh Supergiants chalega nahi [The name Supergiants won't work for you]'," he says.

"So it's Supergiant now." Goenka, however, says he doesn't consult the gentleman very often.

Smith would prefer it that way.

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