

## Pawar set to remain president

PTI, Kolkata

Incumbent Sharad Pawar is virtually assured of being elected unopposed as president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), even as the opposition group led by Jagmohan Dalmiya continued to play a guessing game on whether it would put up candidates for top posts in the BCCI AGM slated for September 27 and 28 in Mumbai.

The Dalmiya group on Tuesday held hectic parleys here to formulate a strategy on the possibility of throwing a challenge to the ruling faction in elections for post of secretary, treasurer and joint secretary.

Former BCCI Joint secretary Gautam Dasgupta, who would represent the Dalmiya led Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) at the AGM, did not give a categorical reply when asked whether he was being considered a candidate for secretary post.

"Nothing has been decided as yet," Dasgupta told PTI tonight.

Meanwhile sources close to Dalmiya said that the group had not been able to find a suitable candidate from the west zone to take on Pawar.

## BFF looks

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the transfer and start of the inaugural Professional Football League.

Helal, who is convener of the committee, said they will inspect the ground this morning and will sit to draw a conclusion about the situation after talks with the officials of National Sports Council, which is looking after the renovation works.

The federation has already cancelled the transfer of the Pro League twice due to uncertainty of the availability of the Bangabandhu Stadium.

## India want

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not be allowed to travel to India, the ICC may be forced to keep Hair at bay.

The ICC was scheduled to name the umpires for the tournament last week, but delayed the announcement till after the hearing against Inzamam.

Earlier this month, Hair was quoted in Australian media reports as saying that he expected to stand in the Champions Trophy.

"I am down to umpire in the Champions Trophy and I expect to fulfil that appointment," Hair was quoted as saying. "I'm not sure what matches I'll be doing but I'm looking forward to it."

It now seems that statement was premature, and indeed may have only served to rile some of those who have stood behind him so far.

Given the way that the ICC board members usually operate, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Zimbabwe will, in all probability, support India and Pakistan should it come down to an executive vote, and it is therefore hard to see how the ICC could name Hair without there being extremely serious ramifications.

"I know England have had some injury problems with Flintoff, Ashley Giles and Steve Harmison but there are six weeks to the first Test and I am sure they will be fit for that."

Warne reckons that not being involved in next month's ICC Champions' Trophy or the 2007 World Cup, having retired from limited overs cricket, will help him now that he has reached the veteran stage.

"I will play three or four games for Victoria early on and then again after the last Test in Sydney so I will be ticking over."

Warne plans to return to Hampshire for the 2007 season, the final year of his contract, and to bring an Australian teammate with him as the other permitted overseas player.

"I have spoken to Shane Watson, Michael Clarke and Simon Katich who have all played for Hampshire before and they all want to come back if they can."

"I will speak to them again over the summer and see what can be done. It depends to some extent on Hampshire's priorities."

Under Warne's captaincy, twice interrupted by visits home including one for Buchanan's controversial Test squad 'boot camp', southern side Hampshire finished third in the county championship and were promoted to the first division of the limited overs Pro-40 competition.

"My plans are to go back in 2007. I thoroughly enjoy playing for Hampshire. We have a lot of young players and I like to think I have helped them and done what I can for the club," Warne explained.

"I treat the players as adults and as professionals in the way I like being treated myself. Everyone knows where they stand with me and I am proud of the way we have performed."

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## Smooth start for Ancic

AFP, Mumbai

World number 11 Mario Ancic of Croatia opened his campaign in the inaugural ATP Mumbai Open with a fluent win over Igor Kunitsyn of Russia here on Monday.

Ancic, seeded second in the 380,000-dollar event and expected to clash with world number seven Tommy Robredo of Spain in the final, won 6-3, 6-2 at the Cricket Club of India courts.

The lanky Croatian broke the 122nd-ranked Kunitsyn in the fourth game of the first set and then marked his supremacy by leading 4-0 and 5-1 in the second set.

Ancic, 22, returned to the circuit last week after a two-month absence due to a back injury by reaching the China Open final where he lost to Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus.

Robredo, who turned out for Spain in the Davis Cup play-off against Italy at home in Santander over the weekend, will play his first match on Wednesday.

Standing in the way of a possible Robredo-Ancic final are world number 13 Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic, Russian Davis Cup hero Dmitry Tursunov and the evergreen Carlos Moya of Spain.

Qualifier Gouchi Motomura of Japan produced a stirring comeback against Jasper Smit of the Netherlands before winning his opening round in three sets.



PHOTO: AFP

Mario Ancic of Croatia about to serve to Russian Igor Kunitsyn during their first round tie of the Mumbai Open on Monday.

# Warne keen on revenge

Cricket

AFP, Southampton

Shane Warne believes that Australia's defeat in England last year has proved the ideal catalyst for coach John Buchanan's ageing side ahead of the latest edition of the Ashes.

Warne returns to his Melbourne home this week after a season in English county cricket as captain of Hampshire and will build up to November's first Test in Brisbane by playing for Victoria in Australian first-class cricket.

But the legendary leg-spinner, 37 earlier this month, admits he can hardly wait until then to face Andrew Flintoff's youthful England team.

"Ever since we lost the Ashes we have all been looking to improve our games and to win them back," Warne said.

"Some of us are not getting any younger and this may be the last chance to get them back in our playing time," added Warne, one of 16 active Australia internationals on the 'wrong' side of 30.

Warne, Test cricket's most successful bowler with a current tally of 685 wickets, admitted: "I think losing the Ashes had the desired effect. We won back-to-back series against South Africa and winning 3-0 in South Africa was a great achievement."

"I am really looking forward to the (southern) summer. There should be some great cricket."

"I know England have had some injury problems with Flintoff, Ashley Giles and Steve Harmison but there are six weeks to the first Test and I am sure they will be fit for that."

## Mourinho

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"The combination of Didier Drogba and Shevchenko works," said Mourinho.

"Chelsea are winning matches, Chelsea are scoring goals. He is a team player."

Mourinho acknowledged that while Shevchenko, who had a quieter than expected World Cup finals though he had been injured prior to it, retained his confidence there was only one remedy that would improve the former European player of the year's morale.

"I know a striker's happiness is more about scoring goals. That day has to arrive and he will score goals."

"Sheva is such a top player in the world, he has nothing to prove."

"He knows I trust him. He knows he did not score against Fulham on Saturday (a 2-0 win that pushed Chelsea to the top of the Premiership) but he will play on Wednesday because I am happy with the contribution he gave us," said Mourinho, who pushed him back into midfield but only because the Portuguese said he was better with the ball at his feet than Drogba.

## I am so good

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in the championship since October 2005.

"I had a good pre-season. I am going to continue to work, because there is always room for improvement. The goals will come," added Raul, who is the record all-time goalscorer in the Champions League with 51.

Raul, who albeit in an injury ravaged season scored just five goals in the championship last term in comparison to 19 a decade ago, received the support of coach Fabio Capello.

"Raul is playing well, and is a role model for his teammates."

## Lankan sprinter denies doping charge

AFP, Colombo

A Sri Lankan woman sprinter denied Monday taking performance enhancing drugs during the 10th South Asian Games in Colombo last month, investigators said.

Jani Chathurangani de Silva, a double medallist at the Games, tested positive for the anabolic steroid nandrolone and was summoned before an official inquiry committee.

"She told this morning's inquiry that she had not taken any banned drugs," Doctor Geethanjana Mendis, the head of the government's sports medicine unit, told AFP.

"She had only taken some medicine as treatment for a leg injury."

Mendis said her statement would be referred to another inquiry committee and its recommendations would then be forwarded to the disciplinary committee of the Athletics Association of Sri Lanka.

If proved guilty, Silva would lose both her 4x100m relay gold medal and the 100m silver.

## Inzy returns

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be Oval match referee Mike Procter and ICC umpires and referees manager Doug Cowie, who was at the match on the day in question.

Cowie was also the recipient of a subsequent e-mail from Hair, in which he offered to resign in exchange for 500,000 dollars.

Pakistan's representatives are expected to include coach Bob Woolmer and board chairman Shaharyar Khan as well as Inzamam. London-based Mark Gay will head their legal team.

## Nistelrooy

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with Portugal deeming him to be 'better' than the former PSV Eindhoven star.

"After the finals I felt, which was confirmed by what followed, that I would not be recalled by van Basten," commented van Nistelrooy.

"However I am not going to give up on ever appearing for the national side again."

"I think that the Dutch public has the right to see a team made up of the best players."

"And I believe I still belong there."

## Inter, Bayern

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Bayern's most notable absentee will be Owen Hargreaves. The England midfielder suffered a fractured leg earlier this month and is unlikely to return for several weeks.

Bayern, who like Inter are top of their domestic league, began their Champions League campaign with a 4-0 win over Spartak Moscow.

The only previous meeting between Inter and Bayern was in the third round of the UEFA Cup in 1988-89 when Bayern went through on away goals after the tie finished 3-3 on aggregate.

# Don't panic: More

Cricket

REUTERS, Mumbai

India's outgoing chief selector Kiran More says there is no need to panic ahead of next month's Champions Trophy, despite the team coming in for severe criticism after a poor showing at a tri-series in Malaysia last week.

India were expected to cruise into the final of the Kuala Lumpur event, which also involved Australia and the West Indies, but won just one of their four matches.

Former players have slammed the team for a poor batting display, which they say was caused by unnecessary experimentation with the batting order.

"This is only one tournament. They are trying out different things," More, whose term as selector ends later this week, told Reuters.

The board will announce the new selection panel after the two-day

annual general meeting concludes on Thursday.

"We are preparing for the World Cup. There is no need to panic," he said.

"We are not the only team experimenting. Everybody is trying out something. Australia experimented with Shane Watson who had not opened in one-dayers before the Malaysian tournament."

India have experimented with their batting order since last year seeking flexibility going into the World Cup in March.

The shuffling of middle-order batsmen Yuvraj Singh and Mohammad Kaif and the promotion of paceman Irfan Pathan up the order last season had been a unique move, and one that bore results.

But coach Greg Chappell has come under intense criticism for persistently opening with skipper Rahul Dravid, India's mainstay in the middle-order, and pushing dynamic opener Virender Sehwag down the order in the Malaysian series.

Dravid has not scored a half-century in his last nine innings – after opening in seven of them – since the second one-dayer against the West Indies in May. India lost the away series 4-1.

Sehwag opened in only India's the final match in Malaysia and had a poor tournament, scoring just 28 runs.

India fell 18 runs short in their must-win match against Australia after having bowled out the eventual champion for a paltry 213.

"It's time Chappell stopped his experiments with the team," former India all-rounder Ravi Shastri told Dubai-based Gulf News after the Kuala Lumpur defeat.

More said there was no confusion within the team and that Sehwag was aware the experimentation was necessary to try to find flexibility.

"I don't think there is any confusion," he said.

"It did not click. But we can always go back to the original order."

# Ball change was disagreed

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan's defence against the charges of ball tampering and subsequent forfeiture of The Oval Test against England will rely heavily on the initial disagreement between Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove, the two on-field umpires, over the changing of the ball, Cricinfo has learnt.

Hair and Doctrove changed the ball in the 56th over of England's second innings at on the fourth afternoon. Hair then awarded England five penalty runs, indicating that the ball had been tampered with.

But Cricinfo has learnt that Doctrove, as written in his match report on the incident, was initially of the opinion that the umpires allow play to carry on for a few more overs to help identify the cause of the change in the ball's condition. Eventually, though, Hair is thought to have reasoned that if both umpires were in agreement that the condition of the ball had been altered then they

should change it immediately. Doctrove then agreed and the ball was duly replaced.

Legally, this development has no effect on the case; the fact that both umpires consulted and eventually agreed on the final action means that they have acted in accordance with Law 42.3, on ball tampering, which states that umpires shall change the ball "after consultation."

But Pakistan's lawyers, DL Piper, are expected to seize upon this initial difference in opinion to argue that Hair had acted in haste. "This is a key aspect of the defence and it is a strong point in favour of Pakistan that the tampering charges are unjustified," a source pointed out.

As no specific incident was highlighted and no individual accused, Inzamamul Haq, as captain, faces the charge on behalf of the team. Backed up by the lack of any incriminating video evidence though it isn't required, definitively proving any misconduct becomes additionally problematic, as the source pointed out: "It is difficult for the ICC to prove ball tampering unless they actually

catch someone doing it."

If the ball tampering charge is not proven, then Pakistan are likely to argue in favour of dropping the second charge against Inzamam, of bringing the game into disrepute by refusing to play. Pakistan's contention will be that one led to the other, that they were first falsely accused and thus had no choice but to protest.

It has also emerged that Mike Procter, the ICC match referee, failed to inform Pakistan of their forfeiture soon after the decision had been taken by the umpires in the afternoon. "Hair instructed Procter to tell Pakistan that they had forfeited the game in the afternoon. Procter failed to do so and officially, much later at around 10 pm, did they learn that the Test had been forfeited," claimed the source.

The ICC has refused to confirm or deny these revelations. A spokesman told Cricinfo that "Ranjana Madugalle will look at all the evidence provided to him by various parties and make a judgment based on that."

# 'Captain Shane a big miss'

Cricket

REUTERS, Sydney

Shane Warne could have been one of Australia's great captains if he had been given the chance to lead the Test side, according to former skipper Ian Chappell.

The blonde leg-spinner, Test cricket's leading wicket taker, is still an integral part of the team, but at the age of 37 appears to have missed the chance to captain his country.

"It is one of my greatest disappointments as a cricket person and former Australia captain that Wamie has never had the chance to lead the team," Chappell told Reuters.

"The first time I saw him captain was for Victoria in a Super 8 competition a few years ago. He just made it so

bloody exciting. Rather than think 'how can I save runs here?' it was put in a catching fielder and let's see if we can get another wicket."

Chappell, 63, said he immediately rang his close friend Richie Benaud, another former Australia captain, to tell him about the potential for another great leg-spinning captain.

"That's how exciting he made it for me. To me that's the sad part, I think the public would have loved him to have captained the side." Chappell thinks it does rankle with Warne that he never had the chance to lead his country despite the experience gained from playing 140 Tests, though he appreciates it would have been a brave move to appoint the controversial spinner.

"I think it probably does, he's a competitive person," Chappell said.

"Having said that I understand that it would have been a pretty gutsy decision by the board to appoint him."

Chappell believes Warne could keep playing Test cricket for a few more years, though he has doubts about whether he can retain the necessary motivation. Warne has been critical of Australia coach John Buchanan over matters including last month's boot camp, which he was forced to attend.

"Warne is a very old time common sense cricketer," Chappell said. "He bowls a lot. That's what he was saying about the boot camp: 'I don't need to be pushing cars up hills, I need to bowl.' 'To play at your best you've got to love what you're doing and if a little bit of love for the game is killed off then suddenly it goes."

## WI need

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next year, which the West Indies are hosting.

King hopes that the new stadiums being built will prove to be the backbone for the future of West Indian cricket. But he is still awaiting assurances.

"What the World Cup will bring us is good venues but those venues need to be upkept, to be at the beck and call of the cricketers for training," he said.

"Those are the questions we have been asking and at present we haven't had answers."

"A lot of governments own the stadiums. Will they charge for West Indies series? I don't know. Will they have full-time groundsmen to look after the wickets? I don't know. No one can answer me these questions."

He added that some cricketing countries, like Australia and India, understand that sport can boost tourism and bring in revenues, but the West Indies seem to have lost sight of that.

"Some governments take more of a vested interest in their sport because it helps attract tourists. It helps the nation look like a strong nation," he said.

"But in the West Indies, well, those are questions that the West Indies governments need to answer."

Despite the lack of resources and financial backing, King retains confidence in the current squad, which lost in the final of the DLF Cup tri-series to Australia on Sunday.

"I'm like a compass and I try and point them in the right direction but ultimately it is what the players do on the field that matters and how they approach their training," he said.

"We can try and motivate them as much as we like but ultimately the players themselves have to be the ones to bring it home for us."