

## BCCI & ICC reach truce

BBC ONLINE, undated

Doubts over India's hosting of the 2011 World Cup have been eased after a new contract was agreed with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

India's cricket board had objected to the members' participation agreement (MPA), covering major tournaments.

But concessions were agreed during an ICC board meeting in Mumbai.

"The board achieved a successful resolution of the outstanding issues involving the MPA with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)," said a statement.

"ICC management will now write to the full member chief executives to confirm the new draft of the agreement."

India are scheduled to host the 2011 World Cup final, with Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh sharing other games in the tournament.

The new members' agreement is set to run from 2007-15 and cover 18 major events, including two World Cups, three Champions Trophy tournaments and the first two Twenty20 World Championships.

The deal is vital as the ICC looks to finalise negotiations with television broadcasters, expecting to improve on its existing 550-million-dollar deal.

The BCCI also agreed to withdraw its own bid for the broadcast rights after legal opinion indicated it would be a conflict of interest.

## Ponting cries foul

PTI, Melbourne

Australian captain Ricky Ponting wants the International Cricket Council to take action against the West Indies cricketers for giving a miss to the ICC Awards' function hours before their Champions Trophy final.

Ponting, who was visibly disappointed at the Caribbean trick, said Brian Lara's men deliberately stayed away from the show held in Mumbai because they were preparing and wanted to get extra rest before the D-day.

"Obviously, it's all just to do with their preparation and what they feel is their best preparation to be right for the game," said Ponting.

"That's what they decided to do but I'll definitely be looked at by the ICC. There'll be some sort of breach there I would imagine, but that's for them to decide," he was quoted as saying by the Australian media.

Ponting's team was not too keen to attend the function so close to the final, especially when it needed around an hour-long drive to reach the venue.

"We all had to go. No choice. No option. The agreement that we signed said we had to attend one official function through the course of the month and that function was last night. We all got there and we did what was required of us, and others didn't," he said.

However, the West Indies blamed their absence on the baggage problems following their hour-long flight although they had sent coach Bennett King to the black-tie function.

"We travelled from Jaipur and did not get our luggage until Friday night," said team spokesman Imran Khan.

"We couldn't attend without our clothes. We also had to change hotels after getting to our first hotel. It did give the boys an opportunity to rest up. But that was not the reason for not going," he said.

## Blake cashes in on Haas injury

AFP, Paris

America's James Blake became the eighth and last Masters Cup qualifier on Saturday when Germany's Tommy Haas was forced to retire from the Paris Masters.

Haas, who needed to win the Paris title to make sure of his place in the China showpiece, quit because of gastro-enteritis when he trailed Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia in the semi-finals 6-4, 1-0.

Blake joins Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, David Nalbandian, Ivan Ljubicic, Andy Roddick, Nikolay Davydenko and Tommy Robredo in the Shanghai tournament which starts on November 12.

Meanwhile, Hrbaty, the 17th seed, will take on fourth-seeded Davydenko for the Paris title on Sunday.

The Russian has a 3-1 advantage in career matches with the latest meeting coming in the fourth round of the Australian Open this year when Hrbaty lost after leading by two sets.

"I like to play best-of-five matches," said Hrbaty who is playing in his 69th Masters event.

"When we played in Australia, I just ran out of energy because I played five-set matches in the first three rounds."

"Both Nikolay and I have similar styles, we like to play fast and long rallies. I think it will be a long match."



England captain Andrew Flintoff (R) speaks at a press conference alongside media manager Andrew Walpole in front of the Opera House in Sydney on Sunday.

## England down under

Forget the past, says Flintoff

AFP, Sydney

England's cricket squad arrived here Sunday as captain Andrew Flintoff said his players come to Australia without bearing the scars of previous heavy Ashes Test defeats.

Star all-rounder Flintoff said he was leading a young side, eager to prove that last year's series win was no fluke as they arrived to begin preparations for the opening match of the five-Test series which gets underway in Brisbane on November 23.

"Our team has not been scarred by previous defeats, it's a young side that's looking to impress and looking to perform," said Flintoff, the star of the 2005 Ashes with 402 runs and 24 wickets in England's 2-1 series victory.

"The one thing that happened last time (2005 series) was to have a successful time that we all performed well at the same time and we're going to need to do that over the next few months."

"We've come here open-eyed, looking forward to playing in different conditions against the best team in the world."

"It is a young side and every challenge that's been put before

them they have responded well to. I don't expect this series to be any different," he told his first press conference of the Australian tour.

Flintoff, chosen ahead of opening batsman Andrew Strauss to lead England in the injury absence of last year's skipper Michael Vaughan, said his ankle operated on this year is sound enough to enable him to bowl whatever is asked of him in the Ashes series.

Flintoff's recovery from ankle surgery has been one of the big talking points as England attempt to hold on to the Ashes urn they won in last year's unforgettable series at home.

England last year played Flintoff as a bowling all-rounder, batting at No. 6, to enable the team to play five bowlers — four pacemen and a spinner.

Flintoff said he had no fitness doubts and if asked to shoulder the same responsibility again in this year's series, he would do so.

"I'll bowl as much as the game dictates. From my point of view I'm going to get some overs under my belt," Flintoff said.

"My body is not a concern and I'm just going to go into the games and bowl as I normally do and get some miles in the legs."

"The dynamics of the side is something we'll discuss with the coach (Duncan Fletcher).

"I'm a bowler and I'm not worried about the ankle. I've got the all clear."

"I'm pleased where I'm at. The India (Champions' Trophy) trip was important for me, having not played a lot of cricket in the (northern) summer."

"To get outside and bowl in the nets and to bowl against the West Indies, albeit for five overs, showed me where I'm at."

"Now I can just crack on, I can bowl in the nets, I feel 100 percent and the more I can play in the warm-up games here will show me that I'm in pretty good nick, so I'm pleased where I am at the moment."

Flintoff said all players in the squad were in the mix for selection for the opening Test at the Gabba.

"All 16 players are playing for a place in the first Test. One of the strengths of the team is competition for places in every department," he said.

"People have performed over the last few years and anyone in the squad can play in that first Test match."

"That's a nice position to be in and I'm sure over the next few weeks it will all unfold going into the first Test in Brisbane."

England's opening match on the tour will be a one-dayer against a Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on Friday.

## Zimbabwe could return to Test next year

BBC ONLINE, undated

Zimbabwe could resume playing Test cricket in November 2007, the International Cricket Council (ICC) says.

But the country must re-establish a credible domestic first-class structure and its national team must play against A-sides from top-ranked nations.

Zimbabwe Cricket has also been asked to elect a board which is "inclusive".

The ICC said: "In-fighting has clearly contributed to disenchantment and disenfranchisement felt by players and administrators who have much to offer."

The Zimbabwe government took control of the cricket board in January and one of its first decisions was to withdraw the national team from the Test arena for the rest of 2006.

Several leading players, including captain Tatenda Taibu, quit the side in the months leading up to the suspension in protest at pay and the way the game was being run.

ZC chairman Peter Chingoka said a new draft constitution would be circulated on 6 November and a Special General Meeting would be called for 18 November to adopt it.

## Australia clinch

FROM PAGE 17  
away just two runs in his next five before being replaced by Watson.

Watson struck in his second over when Marlon Samuels (seven) flicked a catch to Ponting who had stationed himself at mid-wicket for that particular shot.

Australia gained two further wickets off as many balls as Watson trapped Carlton Baugh leg-before with the final delivery of the 25th over and spinner Brad Hogg dismissed Dwayne Bravo (21) in similar fashion in the next over.

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the ICC Champions Trophy final between Australia and the West Indies at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai on Sunday:

WEST INDIES			
Chanderpaul b Bracken	27		
Gayle b Bracken	37		
Sarwan c Hogg b Bracken	7		
Bravo lbw b Hogg	21		
Lara c Gilchrist b McGrath	2		
Morton c Gilchrist b McGrath	2		
Samuels c Ponting b Watson	7		
Baugh lbw b Watson	9		
Bradshaw b Lee	7		
Taylor not out	5		
Collymore run out	0		
Extras: (lb-5, nb-2, w-7)	14		
Total: (All out in 30.4 overs)	138		
Fall of wickets: 1-49, 2-65, 3-80, 4-88, 5-94, 6-113, 7-125, 8-125, 9-136.			

Bowler				
Lee	7.4	0	49	1
Bracken	6	0	22	3
McGrath	7	3	24	2
Symonds	3	0	16	0
Watson	3	0	11	2
Hogg	4	1	11	1

AUSTRALIA			
Gilchrist c Gayle b Bradshaw	2		
Watson not out	57		
Ponting lbw b Taylor	0		
Martyn not out	47		
Extras: (lb-4, w-5, nb-1)	10		
Total: (For 2 wickets in 28.1 overs)	116		
Did not bat: Hussey, Symonds, Clarke, Lee, Hogg, Bracken, McGrath.			
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-13.			

Bowler				
Gayle	1	0	5	0
Taylor	7	0	42	1
Bradshaw	6	0	21	1
Collymore	6	1	19	0
Samuels	5	0	9	0
Sarwan	3.1	0	16	0

Result: Australia won by 8 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Shane Watson.

Man-of-the-series: Chris Gayle.

## Usha going

FROM PAGE 17  
Kamal and Rajan failed to connect from the goalmouth after two fine combined moves but Usha, who were a man down in the last five minutes after Tuhin was given a yellow card, converted only their second penalty corner of the match to steal three points.

## Mancini admits

FROM PAGE 20  
about these things."

Meanwhile, Mancini has welcomed a fit Adriano back to the club after he was given a week's rest to help recover full fitness.

"I am happy he's back," he said. "I saw Adriano and he seemed relaxed, he just needs to train without pressure and rediscover his form."

"He mustn't feel rushed, so I hope he managed to truly take a break during this time away. Inter need him, after all."

Supremo Massimo Moratti added: "He's a really good guy."

"He must find the right form and come back in a good way."

Moratti also confirmed that he wants Portuguese legend Luis Figo to remain with the club after he was linked with a move to Russia.

"I think it would be a good thing if he remains with us," he said.

"He's a humble person and a really big champion. He deserves to remain and I hope he has this idea too."

## India honours Azhar

AFP, Mumbai

Mohammad Azharuddin was freed from the stigma of disgrace after India's cricket chiefs honoured the banned former captain for his services to the sport.

Azharuddin, now 43, was among 16 Indian captains honoured by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Saturday night during a function to inaugurate its new headquarters at the Wankhede Stadium.

Some 15,000 guests, who included the top brass of the International Cricket Council, warmly applauded Azharuddin as he went on stage to shake hands with BCCI president Sharad Pawar.

"I am deeply humbled by the honour bestowed on me," Azharuddin later told reporters. "It makes me a very happy man."

Newspapers on Sunday flashed photos of a beaming Azharuddin being hugged by current superstar Sachin Tendulkar.

The ceremony came on the day

the ICC lifted a life ban on former Pakistani fast bowler Ata-ur-Rehman for his involvement in match-fixing in the sordid scandal that hit cricket in the 1990s.

Azharuddin was banned from the game for life by the BCCI in 2000 after a federal inquiry found him guilty of hobnobbing with illegal bookmakers to fix matches.

Azharuddin denied the charges and is awaiting judgement on a suit he filed in a court in his home city of Hyderabad challenging the life ban.

The BCCI has publicly stated that Azharuddin, who led India in three World Cups between 1992 and 1999, had been punished enough and deserved to be pardoned.

The ICC, which professes a policy of "zero tolerance" towards corruption in the sport, had earlier debated whether to attend the ceremony but later accepted the BCCI's invitation.

"Azharuddin has been banned from cricket, not from leading a life. It is great the BCCI has honoured him for his services to the game," ICC president Percy Sonn said.

Azharuddin played the last of his

99 Tests against South Africa in Bangalore in 2000. He scored 6,215 Test runs with 22 centuries and 9,378 runs in 334 one-dayers.

The ban on Azharuddin is for all cricket-related activities, including playing official cricket, coaching, assuming an administrative role or doing media work.

In 2005, the ICC forced Sri Lanka to revoke Azharuddin's media accreditation for a limited-overs tri-series in the island, saying he would not be allowed to cover international cricket.

While pardoning Pakistan's Rehman on Saturday, the ICC insisted any player who wanted his ban lifted had to submit an application to the sport's world governing body.

"The ICC is keen to stress that this decision does not represent a precedent in respect of other banned players and any subsequent applications for reinstatement would be considered on their individual merits," the ICC said in a statement.

The BCCI could now move the ICC to have Azharuddin's ban lifted.

## PCB claims 'victory'

AFP, Mumbai

BBC ONLINE, undated

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman has hailed Darrell Hair's removal from the panel of international umpires as "a victory for cricket".

The International Cricket Council (ICC) took the decision to end Hair's career at the top level at a meeting in Mumbai.

Pakistan had lodged a formal complaint about Hair's handling of the fourth Test against England in August.

"After a long deliberation, the ICC unanimously decided in our favour," said PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf.

"It was all because of him that the match was forfeited and there was such a big loss to cricket."

The Test ended prematurely when Hair and fellow umpire Billy Doctrove awarded it to England by forfeit when Pakistan failed to take the field at the scheduled time after tea on the fourth afternoon.

They were protesting at a decision by the two officials to penalise them for ball-tampering, a charge which was rejected at a subsequent disciplinary hearing involving involving captain Inzamam-ul-Haq.

"Inzamam never refused to carry on with the game at The Oval, but was late by a few minutes. As things stand now, Hair was the real culprit," Ashraf added.

There was a more measured response from Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer, however.

He said: "There have been a lot of

casualties from law 42.3. Shaharyar Khan, the chairman of Pakistan cricket and also darrell hair. I think they are two very good men who have suffered because of the actions of August 20. My board are against him continuing in m.atchs with pakistna so I would go along with that but I ma v sad for cricket generally.

Former Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga welcomed the decision to remove Hair.

He had a run-in with Hair in 1995 after he no-balled spin bowler Muttiah Muralitharan seven times.

"He was a wrong man from the beginning to be in the cricket ground. I am happy that he is finally out," said Ranatunga.

Australia, however, have been quick to voice support for Hair.

Former captain Bobby Simpson described the decisions as a "tragedy" and added: "He has shown great courage in making decisions which other umpires are not brave enough to make."

Current Australia skipper Ricky Ponting was "surprised" and "disappointed" by Hair's removal from the list.

Ponting said he did not believe Hair was seeking headlines by penalising Pakistan for ball-tampering in August's controversial Test at The Oval.

"He's done what he believed was right at the time for the good of the game."

Cricket Australia has issued an open invitation to Hair to return home and continue his career at domestic level.

"Darrell Hair is without doubt one

of the world's top umpires," said director of communications Peter Young.

"Subject to what he wants to do, Cricket Australia would welcome him back with open arms."

Whether Hair decides to take them up on the offer is doubtful as he now lives in England.

Simon Taufel, who was named top umpire for the third successive year at Friday's ICC awards, has also given his backing to Hair.

Speaking before the decision about Hair's future was announced, Taufel said of the controversy at The Oval: "It was both umpires who made those decisions on the day to award the penalty runs and also to award the match."

"It wasn't just one umpire and those umpires actually followed the laws of the game."

"What's really important is that umpires continue to learn, continue to be better and continue to add value to the game."

Hair offered his resignation to the ICC in exchange for US\$500,000 in the wake of the Oval match.

And former umpire Dickie Bird described that as his "biggest mistake".

He told BBC News 24: "I think that's gone against him. I think if it had not been for that I think he would have been OK, but I thought then his job would be on the line."

The ICC have not taken any action against Doctrove, who remains on the elite list and can continue to stand in Tests and one-day internationals.



Beximco's star Sri Lankan recruit Kumar Sangakkara (L) receives the man-of-the-match's crest from GrameenPhone's head of marketing Rubaba Dawla Matin (2nd from L) after the second semifinal of the Corporate Cricket League against Partex at the Dhanmodi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

## Rehman thanks ICC

AFP, Karachi

Former Pakistan paceman Ata-ur-Rehman Sunday thanked the world cricket authorities for lifting a ban on him, saying they had given back the missing half of his life.

"Lifting the ban on me is like giving my half-life back. I am happily living my life with my wife and my daughter, but cricket was missing from it," Rehman told AFP from Manchester, England.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) Saturday revoked a life ban placed on Rehman on charges of perjury during a match-fixing inquiry in May 2000.

"I was given punishment for perjury and since I wanted to play county cricket in England, I applied for the ban to be lifted. It is great news because it will allow me to resume my career, and I

also want to coach," said Rehman, 31.

An ICC review committee comprising television commentator Richie Benaud, British lawyer Michael Beloff and Bangladesh's Ajmal-ul-Husain considered Rehman's application and lifted the ban, allowing Rehman to be reinstated from May 1 2007.

"The ban spoiled my career, and at my age I don't see any chance to play for Pakistan, but if my country needs me I will be there anytime, anywhere," said Rehman, who last represented Pakistan in a one-dayer against England in Birmingham on August 31, 1996.

Rehman played 13 Tests and 30 one-day internationals between 1992 and 1996, claiming 31 Test and 27 one-day wickets before losing his place in an inquiry into match-fixing allegations.

During the 1999 inquiry,

Rehman said former teammate Wasim Akram had offered him 300,000 rupees (around 5,000 dollars) to underbowl in a one-day match during Pakistan's 1994 tour of New Zealand.

But at a subsequent hearing he took back the allegation, saying he had been pressurised to give his earlier statement.

Lahore High Court's Justice Malik Mohammad Qayyum, who was investigating the allegations, imposed a life ban on Rehman.

A commission appointed by the Pakistan Cricket Board revoked Pakistan in a one-dayer against England in Birmingham on August 31, 1996.

"I have British citizenship so I am eligible to play county cricket and I still have a lot of cricket left in me, so I will definitely play," he said.

"Since I have also done coaching courses, I will also turn to it once I finish playing."

## Sangakkara charms

FROM PAGE 17

In reply, Partex lost wickets in regular intervals and national wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud's 111-ball 68 could only reduce the margin of the defeat.

New-ball pair Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Nazmul Hossain gave Beximco the perfect start