

## No home pressure: Dravid

PTI, Mumbai

Skipper Rahul Dravid has brushed aside suggestions that Indian players would be weighed down by the pressures of performing in front of home crowd in the Champions Trophy, saying his team was looking forward to the ten-team event beginning today.

"The Indian team and the whole country is really excited about the ICC Champions Trophy and we cannot wait to get into the competition, to play and see the excitement of the crowds and the public," Dravid was quoted as saying by the ICC's 'Cricket Quarterly'.

"It's exciting to be the home team in an event of this magnitude but we don't look on that as creating added pressure. All we are looking to do is play good one-day cricket and achieve the right results," the Bangalore stalwart said.

But the Indian skipper is wary of putting the cart before the horse, by focusing on the end result before they start their campaign (at Jaipur against England on October 15), which he thinks might put unnecessary pressure.

## Faisal given all clear

REUTERS, New Delhi

Pakistan batsman Faisal Iqbal has been cleared to replace banned skipper Inzamam-ul Haq in the squad for the ICC Champions Trophy starting in India on Saturday.

The tournament's technical committee cleared the request after Inzamam was banned for four one-day matches over the Oval Test fiasco in August, an ICC statement said on Thursday.

Inzamam was cleared of ball-tampering but penalised for bringing the game into disrepute after his team refused to return to the field in protest at a decision by umpires Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove to dock them runs for tampering.

The Committee said Australia's request to call up off spinner Dan Cullen for injured fast bowler Stuart Clark in the 14-player squad was expected to be approved later.

Zimbabwe have also been allowed to replace batsman Vusi Sibanda with 19-year-old Tafadzwa Mufambisi, who has played just three one-dayers.

The 22-year-old Sibanda, with 42 one-dayers to his credit in an inexperienced team, is playing club cricket in Australia.

All Champions Trophy games, day-night affairs, would start 15 minutes later at 1430 hours local time (0900 GMT) to help the broadcasters, it said.

The tournament runs from October 7 to November 5.

## Hasina beside

**FROM PAGE 17** today in front of the National Shooting Complex everyday.

Meanwhile, the national cricketers now in India, expressed their shock and disappointment over the incident. Captain Habibul Bashar on behalf of the entire squad strongly condemned the brutal attack that has left the career of Asif — one of the country's top sportsmen — in jeopardy.

The players are deeply saddened by the incident and consider such action on sportsmen as inexcusable. The team wished Asif a speedy recovery from his physical and mental trauma.

Although all concerned persons have come forward in support of the ailing, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman's silence for five long days has stunned the sports arena. Surprisingly, the sports minister has not only made any comments but also failed to visit them.

## Tigers eyeing

**FROM PAGE 17** game," said the soft-spoken Sri Lankan skipper during the press briefing at the venue.

"And most importantly we were beaten by them in recently. We are totally aware of that loss, so we'll play as hard as we played against the other teams. Our main target is to make a winning start in the competition and then qualify to the main stage," said Jayawardene who informed that they are almost decided about the final line-up but wants to take more time to declare it.

Coach Tom Moody was excited with his side's recent success and expressed his hope that they will continue it in today's match.

"Yes, we did lose to India here but as a group, the current team have been playing very good cricket. We have a good mixture of experience and young players," said the Australian who has taken the fact of playing the preliminary round positively.



PHOTO: AFP

West Indies captain Brian Lara (C) wears a traditional Ghandhian thread garland during their visit to the Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad on Friday.

## Mohali matches in jeopardy



CRICINFO, undated

Just two days before the Champions Trophy kicks off at Mohali, the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) has said it will not sign the Host Venue Agreement with the International Cricket Council (ICC) unless given definite assurance of compensation for losses incurred. Mohali will host five matches — Saturday's qualifying fixture between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, three league games, and a semifinal — but Inderjit Singh Bindra, the PCA president, has warned that unless the ICC agreed to his association's terms and conditions the matches would have to be played elsewhere.

According to Bindra, the PCA would lose approximately 197,000 dollars for each match since the television and the ICC held in-stadia rights. "It is not possible for us to bear such heavy losses. Most of the rights are with them, the only thing

we have is the ticket money," he told reporters. "As of now, the match [on Saturday] will go on. Since the ICC is going ahead with the match, this explicitly means that they have accepted our stand. The ICC wants us to make certain commitments which we are not ready to accept. We have made our points clear to them, but they have not accepted these conditions in writing."

The Host Venue Agreement states that 70 per cent of the revenue from seats sold goes to the host venue, and the rest to the ICC. Bindra, however, was worried that the PCA would not be able to recover the costs spent on conducting the matches as all advertisement rights, including in-stadia and media rights, lie with the ICC.

Mohali has been chosen in accordance with the Indian board's rotation policy, but Bindra stated this had set the PCA back by a further 18,600,000 dollars.

"The Champions Trophy matches have been thrust upon us and we stand to suffer a huge loss because we lose an international match according to the BCCI's rotation system," Bindra said. "An ICC event would fetch us nothing."

Though he did not publicly explain the conditions, Bindra was clear in his ultimatum: "Either you accept [our conditions], or choose another venue".

The timing of the PCA's statement has raised eyebrows because all four Champions Trophy venues were named more than six months ago based on the fact that these stadiums had no contractual or hospitality conflicting with the ICC's commitments. An ICC spokesperson reacted with surprise: "We cannot comment on this at the moment as we don't know exactly what the PCA's bone of contention is. All we know is that the PCA had agreed to fulfill its commitments when the ICC was looking for 'clean' venues."

In related news, the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) looks likely to receive 770,000 dollars towards operational costs and security arrangements for the tournament. The Rajasthan government, which funded the setting up of floodlights, will be charging the RCA 548,000 dollars for each of the six matches being held there.

I'm not surprised at all," added Federer.

In the semifinals, he will play either Benjamin Becker of Germany or Jarkko Nieminen of Finland.

Earlier, Tim Henman and Mario Ancic set up a quarterfinal clash against each other after the Briton beat Juan Martin Del Potro of Argentina 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 and the Croat ended the hopes of Germany's Rainer Schüttler 6-2, 4-6, 6-4.

Henman hit seven aces against Del Potro's two, and said he was happy with the way he was playing.

"Even when I was a break down in the first set, I was hitting the ball well. I created a lot of opportunities. So I just stayed patient. I played better and better as the match went on, so I'm really pleased," said the 32-year-old.

"I really think the conditions suit me well."

## Doctrove knew

**FROM PAGE 17** "It's not a surprise to me," Doctrove told the BBC Caribbean Service.

"I was told of that decision even before I went to the ball-tampering hearing in England two weeks ago."

Hair, perceived as the senior umpire at The Oval, had been expecting to officiate at the Champions Trophy, but was recently removed from the list for what the ICC described as safety and security reasons.

He and Doctrove awarded the Test to England by forfeit after Pakistan protested at their earlier decision to penalise them for ball-tampering.

At a subsequent hearing, Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq received a four-match ban for bringing the game into disrepute but was cleared of a ball-tampering charge by adjudicator Ranjan Madugalle.

Doctrove insisted his conscience about the matter was clear and that he had been assured his part in the affair was not the reason he was left out of the Champions Trophy.

"I was informed it was not and I trust the ICC," he said.

"I was informed that not all the elite umpires would be chosen. Not everybody can be chosen for every tournament or every series.

## Back to 2 points

PTI, Mumbai

Absence of bonus points, a win fetching only two points as compared to four or five in a regular ODI series featuring more than two countries and a bowl out to determine the winners in case of a tie in the semis or final are some of the novelties which would be seen during the ICC Champions Trophy commencing today.

Another condition states that an hour before start of play, the rival teams should provide a list of the eleven players and the nominated 12th man in writing on the team-sheet provided by the ICC for this purpose to the ICC Event Co-ordinator.

But the teams are entitled to change their players at any time prior to the toss provided it is done so in writing to the ICC Event Co-ordinator or the ICC Match Referee.

Immediately prior to the toss, the ICC Match Referee shall check with both team captains that the players nominated on the team sheets are correct. But no player may be changed after the toss without the consent of the opposing team captain.

A win in the league phase would be worth 2 points while a tie or no result would fetch one point.

## Sixteen obtain

**FROM PAGE 17** division clubs are interested in them as well. We also plan to take them in other districts to play matches as a team in the near future," said Debabrata Paul, one of the organisers and a familiar face in domestic cricket.

The selected players are: Mohammad Rubel, Shahan Shahriar, Sajedul Alam, Abhijit Baidya, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Rana, Mohammad Ilyas, Sheikh Syed, Shafiqul Islam, Shahnewaz Khan Shawon, Rashedur Rahman, Jami Sahabuddin, Shahin Alam, Omar Faruq, Ehsanul Huq and Sanowar Chowdhury.

## England

**FROM PAGE 20** how often we can get him into that final third, too."

McClaren must decide who will replace the injured Owen Hargreaves in the holding role at the weekend.

Manchester United midfielder Michael Carrick is the favourite to stand in for the Bayern Munich man, who is currently sidelined with a broken leg.

## Time to turn

**FROM PAGE 20** Italy midfielder Simone Perrotta, who is suspended for the Ukraine match, pulled a hamstring in Wednesday's training session and is struggling to be fit in time for the trip to Tbilisi.

Ukraine are still unsure whether Andrei Shevchenko, who left AC Milan to join English champions Chelsea this summer after seven years in Italy, will play.

"On Tuesday evening Andrei had a temperature," Ukraine coach Oleg Blokhin told a news conference on Wednesday. "Maybe he has caught a cold or a viral infection."

"He may miss the match with Italy if our team doctors fail to lower his temperature in the next few days."

Shevchenko used to terrorise defenders week-in, week-out in Italy, scoring 127 goals in 208 Serie A matches.

## Reputations

**FROM PAGE 20** from Cyprus on Wednesday, on assault charges.

It is the latest incident in a controversial career that has seen him fall out with teammates, managers and fans off the field while being dogged by red cards on it.

But Toshack is standing by his decision to hand Bellamy the armband in the absence of injured Ryan Giggs.

"I am not so sure that Craig's on-field record is too much of a problem," said Toshack.

"It's not something I have considered or felt the need to think about with regard to making him captain. But his desire in the red jersey cannot be questioned."

World Cup winners Italy are second from bottom of Group B with just one point from two games but midfielder Andrea Pirlo insists the world champions will come through Saturday's crucial test against Ukraine in Rome.

Pirlo was at the heart of the Italy team at the World Cup, and believes the team is looking like world-beaters once again despite a draw against lowly Lithuania and defeat to France.

"This is the real Italy, the Italy that won the World Cup, and we will show it on Saturday," Pirlo said.

Spain are also feeling the pressure after their 3-2 loss to Northern Ireland left them third from bottom in Group F.

They face group leaders Sweden in Stockholm with the home side boasting a perfect record from two matches.

Coach Luis Aragones has dropped veteran Real Madrid star Raul placing his faith in David Villa and Fernando Torres.

# Coach wants change in outlook



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's cricketers must change their attitude to succeed, coach Bob Woolmer said Friday after Younis Khan's "sad" refusal to captain the side.

With the dust barely settled from captain Inzamamul Haq's ban for bringing the game into disrepute, stand-in skipper Younis caused further chaos on Thursday when he said he did not want to be a "dummy captain."

"Younis's decision to turn down the captaincy shows a lack of attitude and we need to change this attitude if we want to be world-beaters," Woolmer told AFP.

"I fought for him in the team and helped him fight for his place against all odds, but his decision left me sad and disappointed. It seemed he

could not take the pressure of captaincy."

The Pakistan Cricket Board on Thursday named batsman Mohammad Yousuf as captain after Younis dropped his bombshell. The side fly out to India for the Champions Trophy on Saturday.

The 58-year-old Woolmer, a former England batsman who also coached South Africa, said he was now looking to the future.

"I am a firm believer that things happen for the good but we must learn quickly because the people of Pakistan have high expectations of this team and the World Cup is getting nearer," said Woolmer, referring to the four-yearly tournament, taking place in the Caribbean next year.

Pakistan must also mature or else they will face tough times in the post-Inzamam era, Woolmer said.

Master batsman Inzamam is set to return after serving his ban of four one-day internationals for leading



BBC ONLINE, undated

Former Pakistan skipper Asif Iqbal says the country's cricket bosses are to blame for the current captaincy furore.

Younis Khan was asked to lead the team in the absence of Inzamamul Haq but surprised everyone by refusing.

The Pakistan Cricket Board turned to Mohammad Yousuf instead, but Iqbal said the situation was a mess and accused the board of failing its players.

"The PCB hasn't done enough to groom these cricketers to know how to conduct themselves at this level," he said.

"I honestly believe the blame has to be taken by the Pakistan Cricket Board, not only for this but for the fiasco that took place a few weeks ago."

"They have to conduct their own business in such a way that the players have enough confidence in the board to accept their decisions."

"It's all about grooming. They are international cricketers, they are ambassadors and very high-profile people."

"It's not good enough to walk out on to the pitch and score runs or take

wickets. It's more to do with how you represent yourself and how you represent your country."

Inzamam received a ban of four one-day internationals for leading his team's refusal to play in the fourth Test against England at The Oval in August.

Younis was then appointed as stand-in for the ICC Champions Trophy but on Thursday said he did not want to be a "dummy captain" and relinquished the position.

It is thought the decision is linked to his displeasure at the conduct of certain players in the squad.

But Iqbal said the way Younis went about announcing his decision had further damaged Pakistan cricket.

"I believe it's nothing to do with being a dummy captain, it is more to do with something that he hasn't disclosed yet," Iqbal told Five Live.

"When it was announced it was time for him to say, 'No thank you very much'. Obviously something has happened between then and now and it's very unfortunate for Pakistan cricket."

Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer, meanwhile, has suggested that the attitude of some of the players was preventing them realising its full potential.

"Younis's decision to turn down the captaincy shows a lack of attitude and we need to change this attitude if we



AFP, Madrid

The Netherlands maintained their unbeaten record in pool games after eeking out a 0-0 draw with Germany in the women's field hockey World Cup here on Wednesday.

They will face Argentina in Friday's last four after the South Americans fell 3-0 to a resurgent Australia in their final pool B match.

The Aussies will next play Spain, who earned their first ever semifinal spot after a stunning goal from Monserrat Cruz gave the hosts a 1-1 draw with England.

Australia scored early through Wendy Beattie who quickly added a second when she deflected home an Anglie Skirving corner flick around the defence.

Argentina had no conversions

from 10 corners and Coach Gabriel Minadeo will be concerned that his set play combination is not working.

Sarah Taylor then put the game beyond the South Americans with a goal from a corner rebound.

Australia coach Frank Murray is feeling confident about his side's chances of lifting the trophy.

"You don't beat a team like Argentina 3-0 everyday so our form is good. The match on Friday against Spain will be tough, congested and we are ready."

Dutch coach Marc Lammers was also in an understandably buoyant mood about his team after they secured top spot in Pool A.

"The mood is very good in our team and all our players are fit except for a bruise here or there," said Lammers.

The match between the Dutch, who finished on 13 points to top pool A from Spain, and the Germans was

keenly contested.

Neither side gave an inch, and the game featured some skilful, end-to-end play that saw German goalkeeper Yvonne Frank called into action to produce some excellent saves in the first half.

Germany ended fourth in Pool A on seven points, and are destined for the 5-8 play-offs on Friday.

England needed to beat Spain to make it into the last four but Cruz's goal put paid to that.

She ran wide to the right, sneaked around two defenders and hammered the ball in from a wide angle.

A draw suited Spain but they still came out firing and attacked England when everyone expected them to defend.

England's prospects looked a little bleak and their bad luck with injuries continued when Jennie Bimson joined her Captain Kate Walsh on the sidelines, both with an injured knee.

That meant that Beth Storey had to take off her goalkeeper kit and play left striker.

The match came alive with five minutes to go when England's Mel Clewlow fired home a penalty corner to level the scores.

Immediately England forced another corner however the initial push failed under pressure and Spain were off the hook.

England Coach Danny Kerry said, "We are very disappointed although we have exceeded expectation. You do not get a chance to play in a World Cup semi final very often."

England now move to the 5-8 playoff on Friday and will meet Japan, who outclassed South Africa to seal an emphatic 3-0 win in Pool B, while Spain will play either Argentina or Australia in the semis.

Japan opened brightly with Tomomi Komori scoring in the third minute and Keiko Miura scored from a corner in the ninth minute to bury a South Africa side unable to change their game plan.

Komori made the game safe just on the stroke of half-time with another corner goal.

USA play Germany after taking third place in Pool B, behind Australia and Argentina, after defeating South Korea 1-0.

China won a bottom-of-the-table Pool A clash with India 1-0 thanks to a 25th minute goal by Fu Bao Rong from a narrow angle.



PHOTO: AFP

Australia's Wendy Beattie (C) celebrates after scoring against Argentina during their Women's World Cup Field Hockey clash in Madrid on Wednesday.