

**INZI UNDER SCRUTINY**  
**New PCB chief talks tough**  
 PTI, Karachi

The new chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has indicated that the powers enjoyed by cricketers and some officials in the board would be cut down to ensure there is discipline all around.

Nasim Ashraf, a government advisor on human development who took over as PCB chairman last week from Shaharyar Khan, said he would not compromise on discipline.

"I have been appointed to ensure there is discipline and transparency at every level of our cricket set-up and that is my priority," he said.

He also made it clear that although Inzamamul Haq was appointed captain until the end of the year by the previous set-up, his captaincy would be reviewed after the home series against the West Indies.

"After the home series against the West Indies, we will sit down and review things and the person who has form and fitness would be named captain for the tour of South Africa and the World Cup," Ashraf said.

Speculation has been rife that the change in the board came about as the chief patron of the board President Pervez Musharraf was not happy with The Oval incident and the conduct of the players, particularly that of Inzamam.

**Not fitting**

concerned fielder and then discussed the decision amongst them. But the former national captain then walked in and engaged in a discussion with the umpires -- a clear breach of player conduct.

Eventually Sharif was given out, leaving his team at 143 for eight. Masudur Rahman Mukul, a squad member of Beximco, was also involved in the whole fiasco. He was reprimanded and given a suspended suspension by match referee Raquibul Hasan, which carries on to future matches after he was found misbehaving, having questioned the decision of theumpire.

Akram received only 'a reminder of the norms of a cricket player' for an offense that is quite unpreceded and which usually sees heavy penalty.

If any player of the playing eleven walks on to the ground (barring the case of a runner for an injured batsman), it is a serious misdemeanor.

As a senior figure in Bangladesh cricket, it was most upsetting to see him questioning the umpires' decision in such a manner. Let alone breaking a law, his actions failed the young cricketers in the ground. Sometimes even the greats forget that their gestures can spark a lot of trouble.

**Asif ponders**

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 unbearable. Still, I cannot walk properly due to pain."

Asif and Shoebuzzaman both had their first physiotherapy session yesterday at another hospital in Mohakhali. The other injured shooter, Ali Hossain Shipu, was due to have an operation on a broken finger last night.

It seemed that the National Shooting Federation (NSF), criticised for delaying in taking steps to send the injured shooters abroad, finally woke up and took the Asif's passport to make arrangements for better treatment in Bangkok.

It was learned that the NSF has sought the help of BOA regarding this matter.

Other than giving financial help, the BOA officials must have to try convince Asif not to give up one of the most prestigious medals won by a sportsman, who is not only going to miss the Asian Games in Doha next December but also unlikely to take a rifle in hand in six months.

**Azzurri gather**

FROM PAGE 24  
 defends eight minutes later.

The hosts probed away on the edge of the Italy penalty area without any joy until the ball was laid off to Shashashvili, whose fierce angled drive flew past Gianluigi Buffon.

The visitors should have restored their lead in the 35th minute.

Di Natale and Gianluca Zambrotta combined to slice open the Georgian rearguard, but when the ball was worked to Toni the Fiorentina marksman screwed his shot wide with only Lomaia to beat.

Georgia almost went ahead a minute before half-time when Shashashvili's rasping left-footed shot came back off the post.

After Kankava was sent for an early bath, Italy exploited their numerical supremacy in less than a minute as Camoranesi applied the finishing touch to Di Natale's left-wing cross.

Perrotta ensured no way back for Georgia when his deflected shot wrong-footed Lomaia.

## Looking for champions



AFP, Mumbai

"It's time the real action starts."

A worried ICC is already thinking of revising the format of the beleaguered tournament, considered by the sport's world governing body as the second-most important event after the four-yearly World Cup.

"There is a proposal to have only eight teams at the next Champions Trophy," ICC media manager Brian Murgatroyd told AFP.

The ICC has played around with the format of the tournament which was launched in 1998 with the aim of generating revenue and popularising the game in developing countries.

The first two editions in Bangladesh in 1998 and Kenya in 2000 were knock-out events, but that was unsatisfactory since one bad match sent favoured teams, such as Australia, packing.

There were nine teams in 1998 and 11 in 2000, but the ICC increased the number to 12 in the last two tournaments in Sri Lanka (2002) and England (2004).

The 12 teams were divided into four groups of three, with the winners qualifying for the semifinals.

The competitive spirit remained elusive with the presence of Bangladesh, Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Netherlands in 2002 and the United States in 2004 ensuring plenty of mismatches.

This year's format has the top six

teams on April 1 -- Australia, South Africa, India, Pakistan, England and New Zealand -- gaining direct entry in the main tournament.

Sri Lanka and the West Indies were always expected to come through the qualifiers, but the ease at which Zimbabwe and Bangladesh were overcome ensured a lacklustre start.

All that, however, should change from Saturday when Sri Lanka and the West Indies clash at the Brabourne Stadium here to determine the final placings in the main tournament.

The winner will join Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa in Group B. The loser goes to group A to play Australia, India and England.

"There will be a lot to play for on Saturday because neither team will want to be in group A with Australia and India," said former Australia captain Ian Chappell.

Two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals and the prospect of the world's best jostling for the next round is finally set to draw full houses at the four venues of Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Mohali.

"I'd love to open an innings on sub-continent pitches, but I think it will not be easy now as I have been playing down the order for quite some time," said Afzali, 26.

He smashed a 45-ball century in India last year, joint third-fastest with West Indies skipper Brian Lara in one-day internationals. He also holds the world record of a 37-ball hundred, against Sri Lanka at Nairobi in 1996.

Afzali has scored four hundreds and 26 half-centuries in 230 matches.

"I have adjusted myself according to the team's requirements. I don't know what number I will bat (in this tournament), but my job is to play for the team and contribute to its success," said Afzali.

reasons.

Younis, named captain in place of suspended Inzamamul Haq, stepped down a few days before the team's departure for India. He was later reinstated.

The Pakistan Cricket Board also appointed Nasim Ashraf as its new chairman in place of Shaharyar Khan, who stepped down in the debacle.

"Inzamam's absence all the senior players including me have to shoulder the responsibility and rally around Younis," said Afzali, who has so far scored 4,860 runs and grabbed 192 wickets in one-day internationals.

Afzali said he was looking forward to playing on Indian pitches where he had done well both as a batsman and an effective leg-spinner.

Pakistan cricket has recently been in news for all the wrong

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## Will Freddie bowl in CT?

REUTERS, Jaipur

England skipper Andrew Flintoff is unsure whether he will be able to bowl in the Champions Trophy (CT) as he continues to make his comeback following ankle surgery.

"I'm not certain I'll bowl in the Champions Trophy, though I'm feeling stronger in the nets," Flintoff told reporters on Thursday.

England's inspirational all-rounder is in a race against time to regain his form with bat and ball with the Ashes tour in Australia starting in November.

However, Flintoff scored 59 in a warm-up game on Thursday.

He batted at number three, after a long batting stint at Wednesday's nets, to strengthen speculation he could open the innings during the Champions Trophy to cash in on fielding restrictions.

The Sri Lankan has been batting in what in tennis parlance is known as 'the zone' where a player can do nothing wrong. He has already hit four hundreds and two half-centuries in his last nine one-day internationals since June.

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