



India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (R) prepares to bowl as bowling coach Venkatesh Prasad looks on during a training session on the eve of the fourth one-day international against Australia in Chandigarh on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Don't stop scoring!

PTI, Bhubaneswar

Orissa girls scored 50 goals in two matches of the 37th Junior Women's National Hockey Championship at Gwalior which has made the hockey association functionaries of the state a worried lot.

The Orissa Women's Hockey Association's had promised cash prize of Rs 1,000 for each goal scored by the team in the championship.

The Orissa team thrashed Tripura by 42 goals in the Pool-E league match on Friday. They followed it up with a triumph over Maharashtra by eight goals on Saturday.

Worse, the Association had a zero balance in its bank account, its secretary Lalendu Das said.

"We have to find sponsors for the cash award. The Association President Frida Topno and I had promised the girls of the cash prize the girls boarded the train to Gwalior on October two," he said.

Das however, added a rider. The cash prize would be given only if they lifted the trophy.

The Association would be happier if the girls earned Rs one lakh from the tournament, he said.

## Ponting digs

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sive cricket is all about. What you say on the field doesn't count for anything. That doesn't win you a game of cricket."

Ponting was apparently referring to the behaviour of Indian fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth during the series, which has been marred by heated verbal exchanges on the field and claims of trash talk off the field.

Sreesanth has had angry run-ins with Matthew Hayden and Andrew Symonds but has failed to dominate the Australians, who are leading the series 2-0. From three matches, he has picked eight wickets while giving away 180 runs.

Indian skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has accused Ponting himself of using "harsh words", while Harbhajan Singh pointed fingers at the Aussies for being unsportsmanlike.

Indian batsman Robin Uthappa defended his team's conduct, saying: "Yes, we have been aggressive but we know where to draw the line and we respect the rules of the game too."

## Zola turns

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Florent Malouda did not celebrate laying on Joe Cole's first-half equaliser, and Didier Drogba swiftly muted his reaction to scoring Chelsea's late winner. Post-match, the African striker attributed the win to the team's quality and spirit, crediting Mourinho for creating that, while neglecting even to mention Grant by name.

"We did it last year with Jose," said Drogba. "You know, people will say we don't need him, but the quality we have is the same quality we have last year, two years ago, three years ago. The man we all respected is gone and now there is someone else coming, but the players are the same. So I don't know why the quality will go like this."

"Everybody knows what Jose did for me. Not only for me, for all the players he brought here and all the players who were there when he arrived. That was a difficult period for us but now the best thing to do is to keep playing like this. If we played bad like we did the last few games I don't think he would be happy in front of his TV."

Smith said his team was ready

## Murali eyes a thousand

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Spin king Muthiah Muralidaran has delivered a veiled swipe at Shane Warne's world bowling record, claiming his dream of reaching 1000 Test wickets is more important.

Muralidaran will arrive in Australia later this month for the two-Test series, in Brisbane (November 8-12) and Hobart (November 16-20), needing nine wickets to reach 709 and pass Warne's all-time high mark.

But the Sri Lankan off-spinner said he had loftier ambitions than reclaiming a record he briefly held in 2004 before Warne took it over.

"I have had the record before," Muralidaran said.

"I did it last time. It's just another wicket, 1000 will be the big one if I can get that. I think I can achieve a little bit more than the world record."

"I hope to play until the next World Cup in 2011 and the challenge is that before I retire I am thinking of taking 1000 Test wickets."

"If I put my mind to it, I can do it."

Stung by the relentless vitriol directed his way by Australian crowds on past tours, the man with cricket's most controversial bowling action said he was ready for any public sledging.

"If they do, I don't listen to

them," he said.

"I just bowl, that's it. It's OK. I have learnt to deal with it. It's all in the past. That happens but that was a long time ago. Hopefully it's good times now."

Muralidaran, 35, has never played a Test in Brisbane or Hobart, and has managed only the three on Australian shores since debuting in 1992.

His Test record in Australia isn't impressive, claiming only eight wickets at 63.12 (career average 21.33).

While many cricketers consider a tour of Australia the ultimate test of mental and physical ability, Muralidaran doesn't see it that way.

"There is nothing to prove. What shall I prove?" he said.

"I have taken wickets almost everywhere. I have done everything in cricket."

"If I do well, that's good, but I have nothing to prove anymore in cricket. Just to try and win matches."

Ricky Ponting's team has made a pact to try to stop Muralidaran from eclipsing Warne's record on the retired leg-spinner's home soil.

But Muralidaran said conditions may suit him, and points to Warne's strong record at the Gabba. In 11 Tests in Brisbane, Warne flourished on the traditionally bouncy deck, claiming 68 wickets at 20.30.

"It depends how well I will bowl," Muralidaran said.

"Everyone says there will be a little bit of bounce and a little bit of

spin in Brisbane, it will be a good challenge. Time will tell."

Muralidaran is recovering from a torn bicep in his bowling arm which kept him out of the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa, but said he would be fit for the Australian tour. He said his toughest task was dismissing Ponting, the game's No.1 ranked batsman.

Ponting has improved enormously against spin in recent years, and Muralidaran has privately admitted the Australian team reads his variations better than any other.

"The greatest challenge will be to get Ricky Ponting out, the best batsman in the world," Muralidaran said.

"He is hard for everyone."

Damien Martyn and Darren Lehmann were the two batsmen, who successfully attacked Muralidaran when the nations last met in a Test series, in Sri Lanka in 2004.

Muralidaran took 28 wickets in that campaign, but the host nation endured a 3-0 whitewash.

Now Martyn and Lehmann are no longer around, Muralidaran hopes to weave his spell on a new-looking batting line-up.

"It depends on the day. If somebody plays well, they can pick me. But it depends on the day," he said.

Under new Australian coach Trevor Bayliss, the Sri Lankans begin their tour with a three-day match against a Cricket Australia Chairman's XI in South Australia from October 27.

## Hamilton crashes out

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down and he had no option but to climb out and trudge down the pit-lane.

Both Ferrari and McLaren took note and called Raikkonen and Alonso in for dries immediately, with the Spaniard emerging just a car length in front of Massa, who had changed tyres two laps previously.

The effect was that Robert Kubica, who had made his switch to dries earlier, was left behind as a hard-fought fourth.

The battle had also included Schumacher, who was among the series' fastest drivers during the wet period but spun twice more during the race, once after contact with Liuzzi and again at the final corner when, unsighted by the crashed Spyker of Adrian Sutil, he spun and stalled in the incident that eliminated him from the race.

But as the track dried out, the ball fell very much into the court of the Toro Rosso duo of Sébastien Vettel and Vitantonio Liuzzi and Jenson Button.

British driver Button was nowhere in the early stages, but saw his machine re-invented once dry tyres were fitted and passed both Williams', both Renaults and both Toro Rosso to move up to fourth.

He and the equally charging Giancarlo Fisichella, were both short-fuelled however and had to make final stops with 15 laps to go.

That handed fourth place to Vettel, and he duly erased the memories of his Japanese disaster last weekend to finish there, taking the

best result of his career and of Toro Rosso's Formula One history.

Button came home fifth for his and Honda's best result of the season while Liuzzi held off a determined charge from Nick Heidfeld's BMW Sauber to claim the best result of his career in sixth.

David Coulthard scored points for the second race in a row with eighth place for Red Bull, holding off Heikki Kovalainen's Renault over the final few laps, while Mark Webber completed the top ten in the second Red Bull.

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## Malik hopes to win

FROM PAGE 17

the subcontinent since they beat India 2-0 in 2000. The South Africans also beat minnows Bangladesh 2-0 in 2003.

"We have to play positive cricket and our mindset is to win the series 2-0," said Smith.

"We have given ourselves a great chance of winning a series in the subcontinent and it's something we are hungry to achieve. Victory in the first Test was a fantastic confidence booster for us," he said.

Smith said his team was ready

for Inzamam, after saying that his return in Lahore could prove a distraction for the home team.

The 37-year-old batsman needs just 20 runs to surpass Javed Miandad's record of 8,832 runs to become Pakistan's all-time top run scorer in Test cricket.

"We are pretty comfortable. They are class players (Inzamam and Yousuf) but every team these days has world-class players and we are ready to face them," Smith said, noting the Proteas have few injury worries heading into the

## Atapattu slams selectors

AFP, Colombo

Former Sri Lanka captain Marvan Atapattu on Sunday hit out at the national selectors, saying he had no faith in them although he planned to play for at least two more years.

Chief selector Asantha de Mel said last week he had hoped to meet Atapattu to sort out any differences, but the former captain told AFP he was not keen to see the officials.

"I did not want to waste my time meeting de Mel. You saw what happened at the World Cup," said Atapattu, who did not figure in a single match despite being in the squad in the Caribbean.

De Mel said last week the selectors wanted Atapattu's experience for next month's Test series in Australia because of his ability to graft runs.

But the former skipper, in a separate interview with the Cricinfo website, said he did not have faith in the selectors.

"I notified Sri Lanka Cricket that, consequent to the despicable manner in which I was treated in the recent past...I neither have trust nor faith in the present national selection committee," he told the website.

"It is my considered view that having any discussions with these selectors will be an absolute waste of time and a fruitless exercise.

"I have no respect for them considering the distasteful manner in which they have treated me in the past eight months or so. This is the problem I have had with them since the issues arose from the 2007 World Cup.

"I have plans to play cricket during the next two years, either in Sri Lanka or abroad."

Atapattu said he had not been approached by the official Indian Premier League (IPL) or the breakaway Indian Cricket League (ICL), dismissing de Mel's comments that he may have been contracted by the ICL.

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