

## BCCI men off to Australia to settle tax issue

PTI, Mumbai

A Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) team, including tax consultant PB Srinivasan, is flying to Australia to resolve the Indian players' tax problem on the current tour.

The other members of the team include the board treasurer N Srinivasan and secretary Niranjan Shah.

"I am leaving for Australia tonight (Monday night) and will be joined there by Srinivasan and our tax consultant PB Srinivasan. We will discuss the issue of tax asked to be paid by our players with Cricket Australia officials and we are confident the matter will be sorted out, BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah told PTI on Monday.

The problem has arisen due to the recent change in tax laws in Australia which make it mandatory for the visiting sportspersons to pay tax on money earned in the country.

The Indian players would be earning match fees for playing Tests and ODIs during the ongoing tour and according to media reports the tax burden collectively would be around USD 1.5 million.

The officials have been asked to deal with the problem by BCCI chief Sharad Pawar, who has also asked them to utilise the visit to honour Sourav Ganguly who is set to join the short list of 100-Test Indian club members when he turns out in the opening Test against Australia starting at the MCG on December 26.

Ganguly will be presented with a silver salver by the board, Shah said, adding he would also take the opportunity to discuss the Australians tour to India for a full-Test return series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with the CA officials.

## SL has been a lesson for Panesar

AFP, London

England spinner Monty Panesar is convinced his miserable tour of Sri Lanka can help him become a world-class bowler.

Panesar, 25, took only eight wickets as England lost their recent three-Test series in Sri Lanka 1-0.

The Northamptonshire star's lacklustre displays were interpreted as a sign that he is stagnating after an impressive start to his international career.

But Panesar believes it is inevitable he will suffer at times against the world's best players and he expects to bounce back against New Zealand in the New Year.

"There has been a lot of focus on my bowling in this series but let me tell you straight away that I am looking at the whole experience in a very positive way as I head home to reflect and rest before we go to New Zealand at the end of January," Panesar told the Daily Mail.

"I want to experience tough conditions and I want to bowl a lot of overs at high-class players of spin in their own country, to test myself against them and see where I am in my career. That is what has happened to me here."

"I may not have taken as many wickets as I would have liked but I see this tour as a crucial part of my learning curve. I needed the examination of my progress that this tour has brought."

"There have been times here in Sri Lanka when I have beaten the bat, taken a few edges which have not quite gone to hand and caused problems by bowling into the rough from over the wicket. So it has not been all bad."

## Sultan right

FROM PAGE 17  
to support the fact and no date has been set for a meeting yet," he added.

The BFF has not announced when its adjourned meeting of December 15, cancelled due to Sultan's so-called 'illness', would resume.

The saga, meanwhile, is expected to continue. The post-Eid speculations are that a few more BFF members would step down soon.

A press report yesterday claimed that "FIFA has rejected Sultan's resignation as it has no jurisdiction over this". The report added that a faxed message has already arrived at the BFF regarding this.

A BOA (Bangladesh Olympic Association) high up confirmed that the BFF has indeed received a FIFA letter which has clearly said that the president must tender his resignation to the executive body of the federation.

If the FIFA's refusal is confirmed, Sultan must come out of hibernation and if he really meant to resign, he should do the 'job' properly.

The controversies surrounding the issue could well be settled before the New Year with BFF expected to call the meeting by December 30.

## Tennis

PTI, Mumbai

After a breakthrough year which gave her a career-best ranking, Sania Mirza yesterday said she would start her new season with the belief that she can upset the top players, including World No 1 Justin Henin of Belgium.

"If I have a choice I'll beat Henin. After defeating Martina Hingis (Hingis, at Los Angeles) you feel that you can beat the best in the game," she said after signing a contract with sports goods major Adidas.

Having missed the action for two months due to a knee injury this year, Sania said her priority in the new season would be to stay fit.

"My first goal is to remain injury-free throughout the season and avoid getting involved in any freak accidents. I feel fit right now and is good to start off the year without an injury," said Sania who reached a career high of 27 this year.

She also contracted an unrelated virus in July that forced her withdrawal from Australia's Fed Cup tie against the Ukraine and ruined her US summer campaign.

Sania was unable to compete on the WTA Tour for most of the last half of the year and said she was not fit enough to compete on the Australian summer circuit, due to start this weekend.

"I am very disappointed I won't be able to compete during the Australian summer," Stosur said.

The 23-year-old was hospitalised in Florida in September after being diagnosed with viral meningitis, an illness which inflames the soft tissue membranes surrounding the brain.

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