

Mary Kom nervous about expectations

The record, six-time gold medallist heads to Russia next week for the World Championships

BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

She is the most successful boxer in the history of the amateur World Championships, but India icon M.C. Mary Kom said she was a shade "nervous" heading into her ninth appearance at the showpiece event, not because of the competition but due to the overwhelming expectations at home.

Mary Kom has to her credit six gold medals and a silver in eight World Championship appearances, the last of which was in New Delhi in 2018.

Statistically, she is the most successful boxer in the event and has also earned the moniker 'Magnificent Mary' from the International Boxing Association (IBA).

In the upcoming edition, from October 3 to 13 in Ulan-Ude, Russia, the seasoned Manipuri spoke about the nerves that can get triggered by expectations despite her wealth of experience.

No guarantee

"I say it all the time, I will give my best but cannot guarantee a medal. I tell myself that too but the pressure is always there and so is the



Here I come! Mary Kom will be eager to make the big leap in the 51kg division where she is yet to win a World crown. •PTI

stress of handling it. It can make you nervous," the 37-year-old said.

Mary Kom and the rest of the Indian team will leave for the mega-event early on Sunday.

"The World Championship is a familiar space for me but the competition is always new. I am looking forward to it," she said.

The mother of three will be competing in the 51kg category, which is on the Olym-

pic roster. Her last World title came in the 48kg division.

She has dominated 48kg like no one else and has also managed to get the results even in the higher category, the best being the 2012 London Olympics bronze and the 2014 Asian Games gold.

Rare blemish

But none of her World titles have been in the 51kg division. In the 2012 and 2016 editions, she competed in

the 51kg category and lost in the quarterfinals on both occasions. That's one rare record she would be aiming to improve next week.

"I have good results in both (48kg and 51kg) and in 51kg, the challenge has always been strength. That's been my focus even for the upcoming World Championships and I am ready for it. It's not a new category for me, but again the results can never be predicted," was her

assessment of how the tournament might pan out.

"I just want to give my best and if I am able to do it, gold is never a problem," she added, breaking into a giggle.

This year, Mary Kom won gold medals in the India Open and President's Cup in Indonesia. She skipped the Asian Championships to prepare for the World event.

"I have a good feeling about it. My body feels better than before and the training trip in Italy has also helped immensely. I am keeping my fingers crossed," she said.

Most memorable?

With a soon-to-be nine appearances at the premier event, which one of them would she count as her most memorable?

"I think the one last year. I won a gold, in front of my family, friends and supporters, and proved so many critics wrong. It was quite special," she said.

"But, yeah, that kind of emotionally overwhelming experience makes you realise how much people expect from you. I hope I can deliver this time too," she said. "The rest of the things, I will speak after the World championships," said Mary.

TNCA has no option, but to modify its Constitution: Rai

CoA had pointed out 21 diversions with reference to two apex court orders

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Even as many BCCI member associations went through their elections during the week-end to enable them to take part in the election at the annual general meeting of the BCCI here on October 22, the cricketing fraternity in the country is watching the response from the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) after it was told by the Committee of Administrators (CoA) that there are 21 diversions in its amended Constitution and hence the State is not compliant of the Supreme Court judgement of Aug. 9, 2018 and Sept. 20, 2019. Both orders relate to the Justice Lodha Reforms in Cricket Report.

After examining the TNCA Constitution sent to the CoA by former secretary R.I. Palani on Sept. 25, the CoA said that "various amendments have been made by the TNCA on a deliberate misinterpretation of the order of 20th Sept. 2018" and that it needs to accurately amend its Constitution.

The CoA told the TNCA to revert with a registered Con-



Vinod Rai • FILE PHOTO

stitution compliant with the two Supreme Court orders, before Oct. 4.

Responding to current situation that the TNCA is in, the head of the CoA, Vinod Rai told *The Hindu* that "the TNCA has no option, but to modify its Constitution" in order to be in terms with the two apex court orders.

Following the Supreme Court order of Sept. 20, the TNCA conducted its election on Sept. 26 and elected Rupa Gurunath as its president, unopposed.

The TNCA elected two vice-presidents, an anomaly the CoA has noted and said the Supreme Court order only allowed it to elect an assistant secretary in addition to the other five office-bearers.

The CoA defined office-bearers as president (I), vice-president (I), secretary (I), jt. secretary (I), treasurer (I) and assistant secretary (I).

Rai further said: "If 30 odd other members can do it, why not TNCA?"

In the event of the TNCA disagreeing to amend its Constitution as directed by the CoA, Rai said: "We can only take the horse to the water, but can't make it drink."

"If the TNCA does not

Paes all praise for Nagal

Calls for consistency from young crop

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

Sumit Nagal's US Open main draw debut was a fantastic achievement, says tennis ace Leander Paes. Contemporaries like Ramkumar Ramanathan and Prajnesh Gunneswaran need to come up with quality performances on a consistent basis, he says.

Paes was speaking on the sidelines of an event linked to the second Tennis Premier League, featuring eight teams and to be played here in December.

Nagal is one of the young Indians on the circuit, whose big chance came at the US Open opposite Roger Federer.

Paes said: "To qualify for the US Open is fantastic. Going up against Federer on the main court at Arthur Ashe Stadium is a daunting task."

"I thought he handled himself very well. The challenge will be to sustain that performance consistently."

The Indian lost, in four sets, but earned appreciation from the Swiss ace for composure on court.



Leander Paes. • FILE PHOTO

For all these talented, hard-working boys, consistency is the way forward

TPL mentor and co-owner of city franchise team Leon Army, Paes dwelt on the difficulties faced by youngsters competing on the pro circuit.

"Indian boys and girls are going out there, on tour week after week and spending from their own pockets to get the right coaching. "Spending money to travel internationally to tournaments is not an easy task. These athletes, who are self-employed, are out there spending more money than they earn," he said.

On TPL's role, he said: "It's our job to get them the marketing, the publicity, the limelight and motivation to maximise their careers."

Players confirmed for TPL-2 include internationals Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, Saketh Myneni, Purav Raja, Vishnu Vardhan, Ankita Raina, Y. Pranjala and Rutuja Bhosale.

Cycle Polo League from Nov. 5

Plan is to bring the game to the masses

ANANT KAUR
NEW DELHI

The first ever Cycle Polo League (CPL) will be played at the Rajasthan Polo Club in Jaipur starting from November 25 to 29. Five teams will be playing in the inaugural edition which includes 40 Indian and 10 foreign players. The Indian Air Force (IAF) and Cycling Polo Federation of India's member State associations will help in bringing the game to the masses.

Cycle Polo, an exhibition sport in 1908 London Olympics, was played in summer months by Royal families of Jaipur, Baria and Patiala, to name a few.

Air Marshal P.P. Bapat pointed towards India's performance in the World Cycle Polo Championships and the importance of this league, "It's a very important development for the game of cycle polo in India. After participating and winning medals in seven World Cycle Polo Championships it was high time that the game got its due recognition. I believe the Cycle Polo League is the first step in that direction."

Veteran cycle polo pro-



Let's do it: Assarudeen Sha, who switched from football to cycle polo, pleaded for government support.

ducer, Yashwant Singh of Alwar, was delighted. "This is great development for this exciting sport. I am so happy there is money to be made by the players now. I am sure it will catch up with the masses because the equipment is not expensive."

There is a lot of difference between polo and cycle polo. In polo it's all about controlling the horse and hitting the ball. However, in cycle polo, the challenge is to ride and control the bicycle on your own. Popular player Assarudeen Sha shared his

experience of playing cycle polo.

"I was a national football player from Kerala but when I played this game I fell in love with it. It's all about balance, agility and mental sharpness. Our feet are in the air, we have to control the cycle and manage to make our shots. We need to be in action all the time." Sha also pleaded for government support.

An Indian team will travel to Argentina in December to participate in the World Championship.

Mendiratta on the mark

SHOOTING

SPORTS BUREAU
ALMATY

Bhowneesh Mendiratta beat Li Siwei of China 44-41 for the junior men's trap gold in the ninth Asian Shotgun championship here on Saturday.

It was a double delight for Bhowneesh, as he won the team gold with Vivaan Kapoor and Vishwa Kundu, who also made the finals but placed fourth and fifth respectively, behind the Chinese. It was a memorable day for Bhowneesh, a student of Sri Venkateshwara College, who lives in Faridabad, as he qualified on top

with 116, following rounds of 25, 21, 23, 24 and 23. Vishwa Kundu had shot 115 in qualification, the same as Li Siwei of China, but the latter shot up to the silver, leaving the bronze to compatriot Zhai Jiongyan. Kirti Gupta had won the individual gold in junior women's trap earlier and the girls had won the team silver.

Earlier, Indian juniors had won two individual skeet bronze medals, and the team silver.

The results: Junior men: 1. Bhowneesh Mendiratta 44 (116); 2. Li Siwei (Chn) 41 (115); 3. Zhai Jiongyan (Chn) 30 (110); 4. Vivaan 25 (110); 5. Vishwa 22 (115). **Team:** 1. India 341; 2. China 322; 3. Kuwait 288.



Champions: Vivaan Kapoor, Bhowneesh Mendiratta and Vishwa Kundu won the team gold •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Paes, Krishnan to guide CLTA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Chandigarh Lawn Tennis Association (CLTA), at its annual general meeting here on Saturday, constituted a technical committee comprising Leander Paes and Ramesh Krishnan to guide in the growth of the game.

Vishwajeet Khanna was elected president, while Sudhir Rajpal and Gurkirat Kirpal Singh were elected secretary and treasurer respectively for a four-year period.

The newly-formed technical committee will take inputs from internationally acclaimed players as well as distinguished individuals associated with the sport in the region.

In another important decision, it was finalised to have 44 more rural trainees from Punjab. Thus, there will be one boy and one girl chosen from each of Punjab's 22 districts. These children will be supported by the Punjab government and their training, housing and education will be arranged by CLTA.

The CLTA also has a tie up with Montemar Academy in Alicante, Spain.

Gujarat CA drops president from polls

Nathwani's choice as VP raises eyebrows

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

For reasons not known, the Gujarat Cricket Association did not elect its president to succeed the outgoing GCA president, Amit Shah, the Union Home Minister.

At its AGM in Ahmedabad on Saturday, its members chose Dhanraj Nathwani as vice-president.

Nathwani, according to the All India Football Federation (AIFF) website, is the president of the Gujarat State Football Association. Even the GSFA website says so. Nathwani is the son of Parimal

Nathwani, the outgoing GCA vice-president and an independent Rajya Sabha member from Jharkhand.

In an election notice served to its members on Sept. 11, the former joint-secretary of the GCA Bharat Dudhia and Electoral Officer Varesh Sinha had clearly said that a candidate can file nomination for election if he/she "does not hold any office or post in a sports or athletic association or federation apart from cricket."

Justice Lodha's reforms in cricket report, accepted by the Supreme Court, highlight-

ed the above point and Ahmedabad locals who follow cricket are clueless as to how Nathwani was elected.

Apart from Nathwani, others elected were: Ashok Brahmabhatt (secretary), Anil Patel (jt. secretary) and Bharat Zaveri (treasurer), all unopposed.

Jay Shah, son of Amit Shah, is expected to represent the GCA at the BCCI AGM on Oct. 22. The AGM was also attended by Dhiraj Jogani, who is on the payrolls of the GCA, and according to the associations account books, he is the GCA's CEO.

Haria — enamoured by classical billiards

Awestruck by Advani's allround skills

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Dhvaj Haria firmly believes one can make a career in any sport, not just cricket, chess and badminton.

The man from Gujarat, employed by Indian Oil, swears by traditional billiards, which he says is a very pure form of the green baize sport. He counts legends like Wilson Jones, Michael Ferreira, Geet Sethi and Pankaj Advani among those who inspired him to take up cue sports.

Haria prefers billiards, but does not altogether neglect snooker, which has a bigger base and fan following.

"I prefer billiards and the long format as against the 150-up. The 150-up is like a T20 match, it's fast and attacking, while the longer format is like a Test match that brings in tactics and involves playing all the shots," he says.

"In the 150-up, every visit counts. You cannot relax. Now a lot of snooker players play the 150-up. There is more of potting, safety and accuracy. The longer format



Dhvaj Haria. • FILE PHOTO

is all about stamina and how you play. I prefer billiards, it's given me better results. Snooker is a harsh game," says Haria.

Applauding Pankaj Advani's success in all formats — billiards, snooker and Reds — Haria said: "He plays back-to-back, billiards and snooker. I don't know how he does it. He gets to know the table quickly. And in any given condition, he performs. Once you know the environment, get a feel of it and play in it, you perform. Pankaj does that."

Haria has wins against some of the greatest billiards players like Mike Russell and Peter Gilchrist.

I struggled to hold back my tears: Chahal

Leggie recalls turning emotional after Dhoni's dismissal in WC semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand in July still fresh in his mind, leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal said he struggled to hold back his tears when M.S. Dhoni got out in that match at Old Trafford.

Chasing 240, Chahal walked into bat after Dhoni fell in the 49th over against New Zealand in the rain-affected semifinal, which India lost by 18 runs.

Dhoni stitched a 116-run stand with Ravindra Jadeja to get India close after it was tottering at 92 for six at one stage. But Dhoni's dismissal, run out on 50, crushed India's hopes of reaching the final.

Depressing

"It was my first World Cup and when Mahi bhai got out and I was going in (to bat), I was trying to hold back my tears. It was so depressing," Chahal said at the 10th edition of *India Today* Mind



Yuzvendra Chahal. • REUTERS

Rocks Youth Summit here.

"We played so well for nine games but suddenly we were going out of the tournament. Rain wasn't in our hands and so it won't be right to say anything (about the interruption). It was the first time that we really wanted to go back to the hotel as soon as possible from the ground."

India had earlier topped the league stage with seven wins from nine games.

Since the 50-over World Cup, Chahal has played only one ODI and has also been ignored from India's T20 scheme of things ahead of next year's T20 World Cup.