

## BCCI to grant accreditation to former office-bearers for matches

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

IN A departure from the practice followed by the now-defunct Committee of Administrators (CoA), BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and his team has decided to grant central accreditation cards to former BCCI office-bearers, presidents and secretaries of all state associations which will allow them free access for any games held in India.

The CoA had decided to cut the prescribed tickets quota of past office-bearers for international matches. Vinod Rai & Co. had given the authority to BCCI chief executive officer Rahul Johri in distribution of complimentary tickets, a decision which is also likely to be reversed.

The new BCCI constitution restricts the distribution of complimentary tickets to 10 per cent, making public sale of the other 90 per cent mandatory. The new body is going to visit this stipulation in the coming days. Last year, many state association had objected to this clause and Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association even turned down a India vs West Indies ODI.

Having central accreditation for former office-bearers and state unit office-bearer will ensure that members are treated well during a game. Often, BCCI has its own corporate box for international games and with this accreditation card, they will have hassle-free entry into the stadium.

Another decision taken by the new BCCI regime was to sent an email to all state units asking them to nominate 'match observers' for international games. This is another practice discontinued by the CoA. "Till now, BCCI staff used to hand over complimentary tickets of sponsors, stakeholders and government officials but now the board has asked state units to send names of their people whom they want as match observers. Each state unit will have to send one representative and they will be nominated as match observer. The current regime wants to ensure members that the new board is like the old BCCI," sources said.

### Kumble backs Kohli

*PTI adds:* Former India captain and coach Anil Kumble has supported Virat Kohli's view of having five centres for Test matches in order to bring the spectators back to the stadium. Kumble, in fact, wants the BCCI to go back to the old tradition of the 80s and 90s where Test matches at specific centres were held during festivities. During the 80s and 90s the BCCI calender used to have Tests on New Year in Kolkata and in Chennai at the time of Pongal. "I think that has certainly been one of the ways of promoting Test cricket. By restricting it to few centres and not just that it is also important to choose the time of the Test match," Kumble was quoted as saying by *CricketerNext*. "We all remember that in the festival time, during the festival of Pongal, the Test match used to happen in Chennai."

They play Indonesian Marcus Fernaldi

## SEHWAG ON GANGULY

# ‘Dada listened to everyone but did what he thought was right, this is great leadership’



VIRENDER SEHWAG

IN the days ahead, I expect the BCCI to be led aggressively. I say this because Sourav Ganguly is in charge now. Back in 2000, when Dada became our captain, he taught us to win abroad, and more importantly, showed us how to put up a fight on the cricket field. Now, I think he will show the same passion in his new role and push BCCI's case forcefully at the international level.

It was really heartening to hear that Ganguly wants to start from home. One of his opening statements was about improving India's domestic cricket. He is the best man to do the job. Ganguly knows the problems at the grassroots. When he was dropped from the Indian team, he spent a lot of time travelling around the country. I still remember that when he returned to the Indian team, he used to talk about what was lacking in the domestic circuit.

Seeing Dada in this new leadership avatar, my mind goes back to the days when he was with us in the dressing room. My conviction about Ganguly doing well in his second innings is based on his excellent leadership approach. He leads from the front and backs his players. In case he feels you are a match-winner, Dada will back you to the hilt. Me, Yuvraj Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Mohammad Kaif, we all realised this.

We didn't need to bother about our last innings, we were told we would be given ample chances to do well. You just go out and play, was the only instruction he gave us. Trust me, this made all the difference.

He gave a player the kind of confidence that makes him forget that he has actually flopped in the last eight to 10 innings. By some strange miracle, the player would think that he was actually performing well. And with that confidence, he would give his 100 per cent all the time and win matches. That I think was Dada's biggest strength as a leader.

I often get asked this question: How did I become an opener from a middle-order batsman? Dada had a big role to play in my shift to the top of the order. It all started with him asking me to open. My reaction was simple: "Why aren't you opening, even you open, even Sachin opens?"

He explained to me that the opening slot was vacant, so if I take it, my place in the side will be guaranteed. But in case I was against



Former India captain Sourav Ganguly took over as president of the BCCI last week.

He explained to me that the opening slot was vacant, so if I take it, my place in the side will be guaranteed. But what convinced me was his very practical suggestion that he was to give me later. He said, "I will give you three to four innings as an opener. Even if you fail, you will continue to play. And before I drop you, I will again give you a chance in the middle (order)".

the idea and wanted to stick to the middle order, he explained, I would have to wait for someone to get injured.

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as an opener. Even if you fail, you will continue to play. And before I drop you, I will again give you a chance in the middle (order)".

It was a very fair treatment. It's this clarity that makes a player trust his captain. That gave me a lot of confidence. I thought, Dada is backing me so much, so let me try. Whatever I am today, it is because of him.

Dada was a very sharp and instinctive captain. He liked to involve everyone in decision-making. A lot of times, he used to listen to everyone but do what he thought was right. He would ask the senior players - me, Harbhajan, Zaheer - about the opposition and also the conditions. Once we had given our inputs, he would have six to seven views. After that he would either follow one view or come up with his own view that was different from everyone, which he thought was good for him. This, I think, is a great leadership approach.

This meant we had a very 'open' and 'inclusive' dressing room where people could speak their minds, give suggestions, even have arguments. Not just joke with him

Tendulkar was to bat No.4 but couldn't take the field. Out of the blue, Ganguly was asked to go out and bat. This was a comeback series. But the way he batted, the way he handled pressure and tension, sirf wo hi kar sakte the. (Only he could do.) That day we all agreed in the dressing room that if anyone among us can become BCCI president, it's Dada.

freely, we could tell him anything. Even now when we do commentary together, one can see that I joke a lot. I have seen a lot of captains but Dada was a rare leader with whom you can say anything or joke about anything. There was a great comfort level between him

and the players he backed and over a period of time, the bond only grew stronger.

If someone unfamiliar with cricket got in the dressing room, he could have never guessed that Ganguly was the captain. He was like one of the boys. I learnt a lot from him. When I became captain — be it for Delhi in the Challenger Trophy or IPL, I tried to keep the same atmosphere in the dressing room. It was very important, especially in IPL where there are players who haven't even played for their states. It is important to talk to them, make them comfortable. I made myself available to them, improved my "tuning" with them. This went a long way in us reaching the IPL semifinals.

It's because when I was a young player, Dada would speak to me, we would have dinner together. As BCCI president, he will do the same, I expect he will take everyone along with him. I have no doubt that he would play a big role in turning the clock back to the time when BCCI had a big say in ICC.

Because of the bond he had with his team mates, Dada always had backers.

Even when he was dropped, the players were behind him. See, he was out of the team not because he was a bad player. So even when he was not in the team, we used to talk about him, talk to him. *Jab hamara kharab time tha tab unhone hum se baat ki thi, to phir jab unka time kharab tha hum bhi unse baat karthe the, unke baare mein baat karthe hain.* (During our bad times, he used to talk to us, so when he was going through bad times, we used to talk to him and about him.) We all felt that Dada deserved a good farewell. He should retire while he was playing. So we all felt great when he retired. We were so happy when he got his last match.

But even in his tough times, Dada never looked shattered. That's his greatness, that's what we learned from him. There will be ups and downs but *dukhi nahi hona, confidence rakhna hai, self-belief nahin khona.* (Don't feel sad, maintain confidence, don't lose self-belief).

Actually, when I first heard about Dada becoming president, I recalled an incident during the 2007 South Africa tour. It was a Test in Cape Town where me and Wasim Jaffer were out early. Tendulkar was to bat No.4 but couldn't take the field. Out of the blue, Ganguly was asked to go out and bat. This was a comeback series and there was pressure. But the way he batted, the way he handled pressure and tension, *sirf wo hi kar sakte the.* (Only he could do.)

That day we all agreed in the dressing room that if anyone among us can become BCCI president, it's Dada. I said he can even be the Bengal chief minister. *Ek bhavishyavani poori ho gayi, aur ek baaki hai* (One of my predictions has come true, let's wait and see about the other one).

AS TOLD TO SANDEEP DWIVEDI

## Shakib could pay price for ambush advertisement deal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DHAKA, OCTOBER 26

BANGLADESH'S DOMESTIC cricketers might be reaping benefits from the players' protest but their national captain Shakib al Hasan has been caught off-guard, with the board mulling legal action for violation of central contract. With Bangladesh set to leave for the all-important India series in the next few days, the BCB's strong stance could certainly affect the morale of the team.

According to a report in *Cricbuzz*, Shakib has signed a deal with noted telecom company 'Grameenphone', which is in violation of the central contract clause. "He cannot make this agreement (with a telecom company) and why he cannot make this agreement is clearly stated in our contract paper," BCB president Nazmul Hasan was quoted as saying by the Bengali daily *Kaler Kantho* on Saturday.

"Robi [Telecom] was our title sponsor and Grameenphone did not bid and instead they grabbed few cricketers by paying them TK

One or Two Crores. What happened in the end? The board lost TK 90 Crores in three years," he said. "We are going into legal action. We cannot spare anyone in this regard. We will ask for compensation. We will seek compensation from the company as well as from the player," Hasan said.

"I heard about it on (October 23) and asked to sent legal notice to Grameenphone to claim compensation. I asked to send a letter to Shakib for explanation. We must give him a chance to show he didn't break the rule. To us it seemed that it was something like 'give a damn to the board' and if that is the case we will take tough action," he added.

Shakib along with senior cricketers Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyadh led the players protests 11-point demand, ranging from increase in domestic match fees, daily allowances, players' transfers in both national league and BPL. According to leading Bengali daily, *Pratham Aalo* reported that in the first division League, players will be getting taka 70,000 instead of the earlier taka 35,000.

## Smash hit: Satwik-Chirag enter Paris final

SHIVANI NAIK  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

THE REAL fun began after Satwiksairaj Rankireddy had boomed his customary smashes, Chirag Shetty had played his clever set-ups and the Japanese opponents had lived upto their general motto : of never making life easy for Indian shuttlers. There was no Nozomi Okuhara on the court, and yet there had to be a mammoth 50-shot rally as Yuta Watanabe / Hiroyuki Endo, seeded 4th, ranked 6th in the world collapsed to a 21-11, 25-23 loss, sending the sensational Indian pairing into their first ever Super 750 final.

Paris is where Satwik-Chirag really come into their own. Pluck them from injury, fatigue, poor form, viral, or all of those and plop them into Paris, and oui, the Indian pairing will set the courts on fire.

After two wins against World No 8 and World No 2 (reigning world champs), it was the turn of the efficient Japanese to blink and then never stop blinking as the Indians went ballistic in the semifinals.



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (L) and Chirag Shetty have reached their first-ever Super 750 final.

Gideon-Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo in finals. But it was a Saturday to remember. Dying minutes of Saturday back in India, in fact, and a never-say-die pair of Indians. Chirag Shetty had a sturdy start to the match — a rare occurrence as he takes time to settle. In

the semis though, the 22-year-old started with such assurance that he was a treat to watch as he puppeteered from the front.

Very little can go wrong with the Satwik smash - it's pretty much a two step routine, wind-up, thwack. That bit was on the money, even as the Indians rotated smoothly to pocket the first set 21-11.

Fast-forward to the endgame, for the Japanese were not going to go down without a fight.

They led 3-0, 6-4 in the second before the Indians reappeared in the rearview mirror, vrooming their engines noisily and taking the midgame lead. The Japanese would be level at 14-14, and despite falling back to 20-18, go right upto 20-all. Chirag was scything in taking this to match point. The first one, that is.

It was on their second match point that the short, snappiness and whacking power-play paved the way for a thrilling drama of desperate retrieves and dogged defence where you wish no team deserves to lose (a passing feeling for a partisan of course, easily shrugged aside).

The four titans would play out an

almighty 40-shot rally with crisscrosses and a trail of sweaty effort before it would end in the only way unfairness can wink and chuckle - a net chord for the Japanese.

Chirag was paving, and Endo kept saving in what was a tug of war by the wiry warriors. This would've counted as the moment of the match except the next time Indians had a match point — it went 10 shots, five back-and-forths further.

This time it was a 51-shot rally and the stadium was buzzing, the crowd loving a pairing they've only watched playing thrillers, while knocking down reputations.

The Indians might be in Top 10 range, but they've needed a week like this last one to really be counted amongst the biggies. That 50-shot rally saw Indians match the higher-ranked pair in poise and plunder. And finally, they would close out the match at 25-23; now firmly a bonafide top pair, also an exciting one. So, many anxious moments later and with a good helping of some solid poise, hardened in a foundry that's Parisian, India have Super 750 finalists.

Expect fireworks on Sunday from Indian badminton's best entertainers.

## Ahead of WWE debut in Saudi Arabia, Fury sets sights on MMA

GAURAV BHATT  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE ONLY thing surprising about lineal world heavyweight champion boxer Tyson Fury competing in the WWE was it took this long for it to happen. After all, no individual in combat sports is as natural a fit to the fantastical world of professional wrestling as the fast-talking 'Gypsy King' from Manchester. During an international media conference call on Friday, Fury sold an 'ankle injury' suffered during a skit to build up his upcoming wrestling match — "It is going to be fine by the time the fight comes up, won't affect my performance" — as seriously as the actual gnarly cut, courtesy opponent Otto Wallin in last month's bout.

"Definitely fearful of the cut opening up again," Fury said of the 47-stitch eye injury. Not allowed to compete or train for three months, the restless 31-year-old chose to fulfill a longtime wish, for a reported \$12m payday. Fury — who faces former competitive strongman Braun Strowman at WWE's

Crown Jewel event next Thursday — is the last true remaining showman in boxing, a sport searching for larger-than-life names post Floyd Mayweather Jr's (apparent) exit. There's Filipino veteran Pacquiao, technical wizard Lomachenko, ferocious middleweights Canelo and GGG. Also fellow heavyweights, big-hitting Wilder and the enviable pedigree of Joshua. But nobody comes close to fitting the bill like Fury.

Fury has dressed up as Batman to annoy former champion Wladimir Klitschko, strutted down to James Brown's 'Living in America' a la Apollo Creed from Rocky IV, and donned a luchador mask in the build-up to the Wallin fight.

In 2015, Fury ended Klitschko's decade-long reign as the top dog, after the technically-correct Ukrainian had put the division and the numbers to sleep. Fury then went on a cocaine-fuelled exile during which he ballooned to 180kg and battled suicidal thoughts. He returned to the spotlight with an entertaining draw against Wilder, dominating the bout and shrugging off two vicious knockdowns.



Heavyweight boxer Tyson Fury dressed up as Apollo Creed from Rocky IV. AP

### Student of the game

Boxing and pro-wrestling have a storied history of cross-promotion and huge paydays. Muhammad Ali went to Japan, Mike Tyson was instrumental in the rise of 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin and Mayweather competed at Wrestlemania. Fury, a long-time

Austin fan who has also studied the Ali-Inoki showdown, is taking his one-night gig seriously.

"Coming into this I didn't know what to expect. Now I really know it's one of the hardest things I have ever had to do," Fury told Ariel Helwani's MMA Show. "People say 'it's

fake'. I say please come here and see how fake it is. I am getting thrown around the ring, it's hard. The ropes are like barbed wire, my back is in bits, I am sore in places I didn't think I could be sore in."

According to Fury, promoter Frank Warren "was mad" at him for putting the potential Wilder rematch in February at risk on account of the aforementioned cut.

"He said 'I think this is a really bad idea'. Frank along with everyone else in my team was like 'concentrate on your job, you are not a showman or a movie star'," Fury told Helwani. "He said you could get injured and what happens if the cut re-opens or if you get injured shoulders. If we lived our lives on 'what if' we would never do anything."

Along with Fury, yesteryear superstars Hulk Hogan and Ric Flair will also be present at the Crown Jewel event in Riyadh. It is the third show WWE has put on in Saudi Arabia as part of a big-money deal, which has been criticised due the country's human rights record. Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman has used cinema, concerts and sporting events in a bid to

change the nation's conservative image. Fury's rival Anthony Joshua will look to avenge his knockout loss to Andy Ruiz in December, a bout which is reported to make the Brit richer by \$75million.

Fury believes his involvement in the Saudi show is simply as "a prizefighter".

"As for the Saudi Arabia thing, I'm just a fighter. But if you want to be involved in change in a country, you should go there," said Fury. "That's why I go there and want to deliver a great fight."

The boxer also knows what cookie-cutter responses and buzzwords will make headlines, and dealt with questions about amateur boxing's troubles and Vijender Singh's prospects as pro-boxer accordingly. And if Frank Warren thought WWE was a bad idea, here's what Fury wants to do next.

"I'm looking to have an MMA match before Christmas this year," said Fury, who has also indicated that he might retire after next year. "I am willing to fight in the UFC very soon, hopefully."

**Live: WWE Crown Jewel on SONY TEN 1 & 3 on October 31 at 9.30pm IST**