

# Fund allotted for the opening ceremony of the IPL to go to the families of the Pulwama Martyrs

## No IPL inaugural ceremony in 2019.

The CoA chairman, Vinod Rai has said that the money allotted for the opening ceremony of the IPL this year will go to the families of the Pulwama attack victims.

“We will not have any inaugural function for the IPL and the money budgeted for that goes to the martyrs’ families,” The budget for the IPL opening ceremony last year was Rs 30 crore,” he said.

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The cries – ‘Snap ties with Pakistan’ are getting louder by the day.

The BCCI has officially written to the cricketing world to sever ties with Pakistan in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack that killed more than 40 CRPF personnel. In a letter to the global cricket body, the BCCI has also expressed concern over the “safety and security” of players and match officials for the World Cup in the UK, starting May 30.

India, however, needs a broad consensus in the cricketing world to isolate Pakistan. According to the ICC constitution: “A member may have its membership terminated if the Board of Directors considers that the member’s breach of its obligations as a member is sufficiently serious to warrant termination.”

Reflecting the current sentiment in India, former India captain Sourav Ganguly has called for cutting off all sporting ties with Pakistan, which former off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has echoed.

In its communication with the ICC, the BCCI has voiced concerns following the terror attack on Indian soil by a Pakistan-based terror outfit.

It also has mentioned the global diplomatic support that India has received after the attack. BCCI has urged the cricketing community to sever ties with countries from which terrorism emanates.”

“The BCCI also mentioned its concerns over the safety and security of fans of Indian cricket at the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup 2019. The BCCI trusts that the ICC and ECB will ensure that the most robust security is provided to players, match officials and fans of Indian cricket for the upcoming World Cup,” it said.

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## **David Warner Was The Mastermind Of Ball-Tampering Plot, Confirms Cameron Bancroft**

Cameron Bancroft, who is serving a nine-month ban for his involvement in the ball-tampering scandal, revealed on Wednesday that David Warner asked him to alter the condition of the ball in South Africa. Bancroft added that he went along with it “to fit in”.

“Dave suggested to me to carry the action out on the ball given the situation we were in the game and I didn’t know any better,” said Bancroft, whose ban runs out this coming weekend.”I didn’t know any better because I just wanted to fit in and feel valued really. As simple as that.

“The decision was based around my values, what I valued at the time, and I valued fitting in ... you hope that fitting in earns you respect and with that, I guess, there came a pretty big cost for the mistake.”

Bancroft was caught on camera using sandpaper to rough up the ball.

Bancroft last week admitted he nearly walked away from the game to become a yoga teacher in the wake of the vitriol that met the tampering scandal.He is expected to make his return for the Perth Scorchers in the Big Bash League on Sunday.(With AFP Inputs)

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## **Ricky Ponting shocked by timing of Steve Smith, Cameron Bancroft interviews**

*Ricky Ponting said that Smith will return to the Australian Test captaincy once his leadership ban is over. (File)*

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Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting revealed that he was shocked after interviews of Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft were aired on Tuesday. The tainted duo of Smith and Bancroft were interviewed separately by former Australian wicketkeeper

Adam Gilchrist on Fox Cricket on Boxing Day.

However, the 42-year-old doesn't believe that the current Aussie side will be distracted by ball-tampering saga dominating the headlines again. Ponting also backed Steve Smith to return to the Australian Test captaincy once his leadership ban is over.

"From a wholly journalistic approach, you can understand the reasons why it was aired today," Ponting was quoted as saying by [cricket.com.au](http://cricket.com.au).

"You've probably got a big percentage of the population watching the cricket today and they'll be reading about it tomorrow. I can understand how that could happen," he added.

"I'm not sure how happy the players would be about it or Cricket Australia, because it's a pretty special moment in Australian cricket on a day like today. So, we'll see what the reaction is," Ponting said.

"I've seen a couple of headlines (since the interviews), which I've been shocked at, I must admit. Some of the things that have been said have been quite shocking to me," he said, adding, "We're nine months on from this stuff and there's still a lot being spoken about what happened in Cape Town.

"Now that those stories are out there, it's going to be interesting to see what the reaction is tomorrow in newspapers and news channels. There's enough in those stories to raise a few eyebrows," he concluded.

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# **“It Wasn’t Easy To Check Emotions And Focus”: Mayank Agarwal On Debut**

Mayank Agarwal now knows how mentally taxing a Test debut in Australia can be. Mayank Agarwal, who had to wait for his India debut for the past one year, said that he found it difficult to focus when he finally made his debut at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

“It was a tremendous feeling to get the India Test cap. I had a lot of emotions (running through mind) when I got the cap. I will cherish it for the rest of my life. The first thought was 295 (his India cap number),” Agarwal said after his impressive 76 at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground.

But the occasion does get better at times, especially when someone scores a mountain of runs and is kept waiting for that elusive India cap. “It wasn’t easy to get hold of those emotions and focus there, but it needed to be done. I just stuck to my plans and just kept telling myself, ‘there is a plan that I have to go through and I am just going to stick to that’. Even though it was overwhelming, it was good and I am happy with the way I started,” Mayank Agarwal added.

Agarwal felt good that the seniors came up and egged him to leave a mark on his debut. “It’s a big stage, and a big opportunity, and I had the seniors walk up to me, telling that bigger the day, bigger the opportunity to leave a mark,” said Agarwal, who became only the seventh Indian opener to score a half-century on Test debut and also registered the highest score for a debutant Indian batsman on Australian soil. “I am happy but obviously I would have liked more (runs). I would definitely take 76 rather than take something less than that. That said I would have liked to go on, and score more runs and

stay not out at the end of the day," Agarwal seemed content.

For the past one year, it has been a case of living in hope for the 27-year-old but he never felt disheartened as he was constantly playing domestic and A-tour matches, which kept him in good stead."Well, I was very happy when I got picked against West Indies. It was a big moment for me. From then on, it wasn't in my hands. Deciding whether I am going to play or not, or getting picked or not is not in my hands."But the good thing was that there was a lot of domestic cricket, and a lot of India A games. So, you make sure you go out there and give your best. Once you keep playing, you know those things don't keep coming to your mind because you are focusing on that game and trying to win that game for the side," Agarwal explained his mindset during the period."You do think about it (selection) but then you are professional and you tell yourself "that's no something you can control".

So you move ahead, move on and see what's next for you, prepare for that and once you are in, give your best," he said. Agarwal feels blessed that he made his debut at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and also crossed every step towards international cricket with flying colours. "I just want to say that whatever happened and whatever kept happening, I feel very, very special. I am very lucky because I made my debut at MCG."Every player has to go through scoring runs in Ranji Trophy and doing what he has to do. I did that and I am very happy about that.

And I learnt a lot as well. When you play Ranji Trophy for five years and play in all parts of India, you learn a lot from that. You face different situations, and it's always a great learning," he said. Asked about a flat pitch at the MCG, which showed some variable bounce as the day progressed, Agarwal replied, "I won't complain about the pitch. I thought it was good to bat on. It did do a bit early on and it was slow. And as the day progressed and when we batted after lunch, it got a little quicker."Obviously, I didn't think too

much about the wicket. I just wanted to stay blank and take it as it comes. I thought while I am at the wicket, let me assess the wicket and see how to go about this,” Agarwal said.

(With PTI inputs)

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# Australia v India – Third test

MELBOURNE (Reuters) –

India tour of Australia, 2018-19; Venue: Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne || Dec 26-Dec 30

The 3rd Test has begun.

## IND 215/2 (89.0 Ovs) Stumps. Day 1.

India found a new opener- Mayank Agarwal.

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# **'I have more than one-wicket left in me.' : Dale Steyn**

Dale Steyn, senior South African pacer, is currently joint eleventh in the all-time list of wicket-takers in Test cricket. Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, who retired in 2010, heads the list with 800 while the top fast bowler is current England opening bowler James Anderson with 565 Test scalps.

35-year-old Dale Steyn is on the verge of breaking Shaun Pollock's Test record of 421 wickets, ahead of the first match against Pakistan, starting on December 26. Steyn currently shares the record of South Africa's highest wicket-taker in Tests with Pollock. He, however took 88 Tests to reach that mark, in comparison to Pollock's 108.

But Steyn believes that he has more than one-wicket left in him and at the end of the day he has a bigger goal to achieve. "I have a lot more wickets in me than just one more," he said. "I haven't saved myself just to take one more wicket than Polly (Pollock), there is a bigger goal at the end of the day."

He admitted that the past two years, during which he has had several setbacks had been frustrating. "I do think it will be a beautiful thing to happen, if it happens. It has taken a long time and these records are great things to achieve. "I will be highly honoured but I will get back to my mark and try to take the next one."

Dale Steyn, who will be playing in his 89th Test, seemed set to take the record when he played in two Tests in Sri Lanka earlier this year but could only take two wickets to tie with Pollock. "It's just nice to have a red ball in my hand again," he said.

“Sri Lanka was tough conditions for the fast bowlers, but by the looks of things – the way the nets have been playing out in the middle – there is some spice.”I am looking forward to getting out there and playing five competitive days of cricket.”