

# Wisden attacks Indian cricket leadership

The editor of the 162nd edition of Wisden has issued a withering attack on the game's Indian leadership.

Writing in his editor's notes for the Cricketers' Almanack, to be published this week, Lawrence Booth decries the promotion of Jay Shah to chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) last year at a time when India were refusing to play Champions Trophy matches in the ICC-appointed host nation of Pakistan.

Booth says 2024 would be remembered as the year cricket gave up any claim to being properly run. He writes: "India already had the mono-

poly; now they had hotels on Park Lane and Mayfair. At 11.59 on the night of November 30, Jay Shah was still honorary secretary of the BCCI [Indian cricket board] who were refusing to send a team to Pakistan in February for the ICC's Champions Trophy. And when the clock struck midnight, he was transformed into... the chair of the ICC, who had been frantically trying to resolve the problem caused by the BCCI.

"A few weeks earlier, when India confirmed their no-show, a meme on social media depicted a man holding two phones, one to each ear — 'Jay Shah (BCCI) informing Jay Shah (ICC).'

Cricket administration, seldom a laughing matter, was now supplying the punchlines. The reactions to Shah's ascent were telling. From the BCCI came a gushing email about a 'journey to the top that has been nothing short of inspirational' — as if this were some rags to riches tale worthy of Cinderella. (Of Jay's dad, the second-most powerful politician in India, there was no mention, nor of the BCCI's evolving relationship with the ruling BJP, who were implacably opposed to restoring relations with Pakistan.)

"From Shah's predecessor, New Zealander Greg Barclay, came a plea to

ensure cricket did not fall under the 'yoke of India', which felt a bit late in the day. From everyone else came, well, not a lot. After all, Indian administrators and broadcasters already ran the show, took the main chunk of the financial pie, ensured World Cups were scheduled to suit their vast TV audience — even when the tournament was on the other side of the world. Why poke the bear? The communal shrug confirmed a sorry truth: 2024 was the year cricket gave up any claim to being properly administered."

Elsewhere in Wisden, Surrey provided three of the five Cricketers of the

Year, with Gus Atkinson, Jamie Smith and Dan Worrall honoured alongside Hampshire all-rounder Liam Dawson and England spinner Sophie Ecclestone while India's Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana were named the Leading Cricketers in the World.

The five Cricketers of the Year are awarded based on performances during the English summer and recipients can only win the award once. Seamer Atkinson made his Test debut last summer against West Indies taking 12 wickets at Lord's. Smith also made his debut in the same Test and went on to make a century against Sri Lanka.