

# ICC willing to meet Dalmiya in Kuala Lumpur

LONDON: In a last-ditch effort to break the deadlock, International Cricket Council president Malcolm Gray and chief executive Michael Speed on Thursday offered to fly to Kuala Lumpur for a meeting with Indian cricket board chief Jagmohan Dalmiya.

The ICC has proposed a meeting at this neutral venue on Saturday in a bid to reach a settlement ahead of the first Test between India and England starting at Mohali on Monday, for which the ICC wants batsman Virendra Sehwag to be dropped.

The ICC has made "a number of offers" to Mr Dalmiya with a view to finding a way out of the deadlock resulting from the harsh punishments handed down by ICC match referee Mike Denness to Sachin Tendulkar and five other Indian players.

Highly placed ICC sources said that they were awaiting Mr Dalmiya's response to the offer for a meeting in the Malaysian capital.

The offer of a meeting at Kuala Lumpur was made in the course of "intense discussions" between Mr Gray and Mr Speed, both of whom are here, and the Indian board chief who is in Kolkata, the sources said.

The Malaysian capital was suggested as "a neutral venue" although the distance

between London and New Delhi is shorter, they said. The ICC's offer was cited by sources as being reflective of the governing body's desire to resolve the situation.

However, the ICC appears to be in no mood to compromise on its stand that Sehwag should not play in Monday's Test against England to serve the one-Test ban given by Mr Denness. The ICC's offers are intended to end the crisis that has engulfed cricket following India's tough stand on the punishments given by Mr Denness.

The solutions offered by the ICC remain a closely guarded secret, but sources said that the governing body wanted to find an honourable route for both sides. The fact that both Mr Gray and Mr Speed were willing to travel all the way to Kuala Lumpur is seen by observers as a positive development. (PTI)

## 'I don't want to be in the news for the wrong reasons'

SPORTS & POLITICS By Soumitra Bose  
Times News Network

JOHANNESBURG: Virendra Sehwag is unhappy that his century on debut in the first Test in Bloemfontein has paled into insignificance thanks to the row that ICC match referee Mike Denness triggered by censuring six Indian cricketers for various offences in the second Test at Port Elizabeth. The stocky youngster from Delhi has been in the news as the BCCI and the ICC continue to grapple over the validity of his ban. Sehwag spoke to TNN in his hotel room in Johannesburg on Tuesday evening. Excerpts:

**How disappointing was it to sit out of a Test match?**

It can be extremely depressing. For five days you see your teammates slog it out for six hours at a stretch daily, and I just sit with a glum face in the dressing room. That's not my way of life in a cricket field.

**How did you take the one-match ban in stride?**

I can't comment on the ban, but whether I liked it or not, I have taken it in my stride. The team kept me out (from the Centurion game) and I hope the miseries are over. I just want to play the first Test against England at Mohali. I don't want to be in the news for the wrong reasons any more.

► Detailed interview on Page 17



THE TIMES OF INDIA

9 0 NOV 2002

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# Dalmiya drives out Denness

BY LOKENDRA PRATAP SAHI AND INDRANIL MAJUMDAR

Centurion/Calcutta, Nov. 22: At the end of a day of stunning developments, the International Cricket Council (ICC) seemed to be heading for a split.

Faced with a pullout threat from the Indians and worried over earning its own government's displeasure, the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) this evening took the unprecedented step of replacing controversial match referee Mike Denness.

The former England captain's place has been taken by South African Denis Lindsay, who also is on the ICC's panel.

Less than an hour after the UCBSA move, a snubbed ICC retaliated by saying that official status to the third and final Test from tomorrow had been withdrawn. This means the one-match suspension of Virender Sehwag carries over beyond this match.

Late tonight, the possibility emerged that the Indians "may" approach Lindsay to "check" whether Sehwag can be fielded.

For Jagmohan Dalmiya, the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, it was a stunning turnaround from a situation that had looked fragile after the ICC yesterday rejected his demand to sack Denness.

"I've gone through one of the most trying circumstances of my life since the reputation of the country was at stake," he said.

Basking in the success, Dalmiya held a news conference in Calcutta to announce that the match was on and that it would be an official Test. "Both boards (Indian and South African) feel that the decision has met with all parameters that govern the official status of a Test," he said.

Derecognising the Test — an act that affects players whose performances won't be recorded — will have to be ratified by the ICC's executive board at its meet-

ing next March in Colombo. As things stand, in a showdown, India should have the support of six of the other nine Test-playing nations.

Apparently, Dalmiya has received some assurance from "friends". Sources said only England, Australia and New Zealand are expected to endorse the derecognition. Dalmiya, by virtue of heading the BCCI, now sits on the ICC executive board.

The day began with Dalmiya speaking to UCBSA president Percy Sonn and unambiguously stating that India would not take the field if Denness remained match referee. An alternative was sought from the UCBSA. The South African government also got into the act through sports minister Ngconde Balfour.

By the UCBSA's own admission, Balfour "instructed" it to take "whatever action is necessary" to ensure the final Test is not called off. That was when a series of calls were made between Johannesburg and London.

The ICC, though, refused to relent and Denness declined to stand down.

Caught in the BCCI-ICC cross-fire and, more important, under pressure from its own government (upset, apparently, by demonstrations in India), the UCBSA replaced Denness.

Its chief executive Gerald Majola said he had informed the ICC that the board had "no alternative but to ask Mr Denness to excuse himself". If Denness did not agree, the board "was unable to allow his access to the match referee's position".

Balfour later described the decision as "pragmatic" and said he had "tremendous respect for the ICC".

Dalmiya also explained that the decision should not be seen as defiance of the ICC. "We were left with no other alternative. We're not challenging their authority. We're only supplementing their efforts."

See Pages 15, 16



Jagmohan Dalmiya at a press conference in Calcutta. Picture by Santosh Ghosh

## Sehwag bomb ticks in Mohali

FROM AMIT ROY

London, Nov. 22: The International Cricket Council (ICC) adopted a tough line tonight in London against the effective sacking of Mike Denness as match referee and said the third Test between India and South Africa would not be recognised as official.

In another move, which is potentially more controversial, the ICC said Virender Sehwag, who is facing a one-match ban, would not be eligible for selection in the first Test between India and England in Mohali in December. If India insists on picking him, there is a prospect that Nasser Hussain's side would have to return home.

Malcolm Speed, the ICC's chief executive who is seen as the architect of the new "get tough" policy, said: "Denness was properly appointed by the ICC for this series and approved by both South Africa and India. No cricket board has the authority to remove him." He added: "To remove him under this kind of pressure would be to disregard the rules agreed to by all member countries and set an unacceptable future precedent."

According to the ICC, a replacement match between India and South Africa "would not be recognised as a Test match. It would not be officiated by an ICC referee or umpire and neither the result nor statistics would be included in Test match records".

The ICC made it clear that "the disciplinary action taken by Denness in

Port Elizabeth will continue to stand. Specifically, this would mean that the one-match ban served to Virender Sehwag would now apply to the first Test match against England in Mohali in December".

The ICC spokesman, Mark Harrison, said the game of cricket had now entered "uncharted territory". He added that the decision by the South African board to ask Denness to excuse himself was "unprecedented".

By saying that the one-match ban on Sehwag will be carried over to Mohali, the ICC has laid a trap for the BCCI. It has left it to the Indian board to decide if it wants another confrontation with the ICC by selecting Sehwag for the Mohali tie or wants to leave the Johannesburg standoff behind.

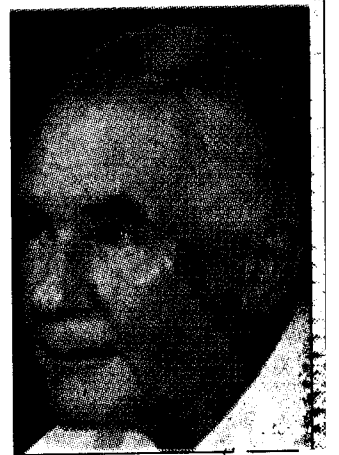
The ICC, however, tried to sound reasonable and said it understood the compulsions of India and South Africa. If it was public pressure in India that forced its board to take the stand it did, its South African counterpart would have lost around \$3.5 million if the match did not take place.

Asked if India and South Africa could be censured by the ICC, Speed said: "There's no direct provision."

But there was speculation over the venue of the 2003 World Cup, scheduled to be hosted by South

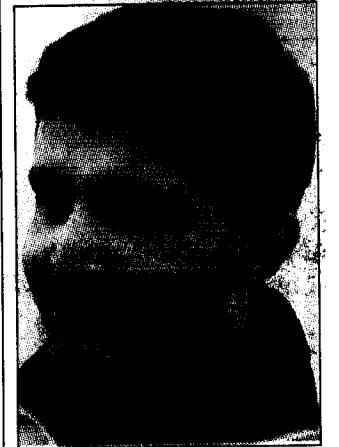
Africa. Ali Bacher, executive director of the 2003 World Cup, told Reuters: "Nobody should assume that that right is automatic. The World Cup — the event — is owned by the ICC."

STUMPED!



It's disappointing. I certainly won't be going to the ground tomorrow but that is all that I can say.

MIKE DENNESS



Explain that to me again (on hearing Denness' sacking). We'll be up for the match.

SOURAV GANGULY

AD-10 SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2001

## CRICKET AND POLITICS

IT IS A matter of supreme irony that, just when India and Pakistan have agreed to hold a landmark political summit, a controversy should have broken out over the former playing cricket against the latter. Even as Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf prepare the ground for their meeting next month, doubts have been raised about whether the match between India and Pakistan, a part of the Asian Test Championship, will take place as scheduled in Karachi this September. The person responsible for this irrational state of affairs is none other than Ms. Uma Bharti who, as Union Minister for Sports, has treated cricket less as a game and more as a political playground. Rather than adopt the constructive view that cricket could foster ties between the two nations, Ms. Bharti seems to behave as if playing cricket with Pakistan is a wrongdoing, an act which reflects a lack of pride or patriotism.

The Sports Minister's censure of the Board for Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) is irrational and groundless. Ms. Bharti seems to think that the BCCI took excessive liberties in unilaterally announcing a trip to Pakistan, but the Board's decision does not violate even the questionable guidelines laid down by the Sports Ministry in any way whatsoever. While bilateral matches are prohibited, the Indian Government has acknowledged that India may continue to play Pakistan in multi-nation tournaments staged at "regular" venues. What the Sports Minister has failed to recognise (or wilfully ignored) is that the Asian championship is indeed a multi-nation meet, to be played between the four Asian Test playing nations in the region — India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Being a part of the championship, the India-Pakistan match at Karachi is not a bilateral match and falls outside the restrictions imposed by the Government. Karachi does not fall into the

"non-regular" venue category and therefore the BCCI's acceptance does not fall foul of this stipulation either.

All things considered, it is hard to understand the basis for Ms. Bharti's disquiet or, for that matter, the force of her logic when she claims that the BCCI should have asked for and received special consent from the Sports Ministry to play Pakistan at Karachi. It would be a shame if the Indian cricket team is now prevented from taking part in a tournament by a Sports Minister who is (at best) totally confused or (at worst) completely unreasonable. Millions of cricket fans on both sides of the border, who enjoy nothing better than India-Pakistan contests, will be both disappointed and saddened if her Ministry takes such a decision. It could also put the BCCI into something of a financial spot as it is a signatory to an Asian Cricket Council (ACC) ruling which imposes hefty fines on teams which refuse to play matches.

At a different and larger level, it is inexplicable why the issue of playing cricket with Pakistan should arouse such political passions in this country. The two countries maintain a range of other sporting contacts and there is no earthly reason why this should not be extended to include cricket which, after all, is just another game. The Indian cricket team has not played in Pakistan since 1989 and — as the two countries prepare to engage in bilateral dialogue at the highest level — this is as good a time as any to lift the restrictions imposed on India-Pakistan cricketing encounters. A country that is readying to roll out the red carpet for General Pervez Musharraf has no reason to be flustered at the thought of a cricket match being played in Pakistan. Why is it that politicians such as Ms. Uma Bharti choose to see this in such a different and jaundiced light?

THE HINDU

## Musharraf to discuss cricket ties

ISLAMABAD, MAY 31. Besides Kashmir, Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, will take up the deteriorating cricket relations between India and Pakistan during his visit to New Delhi, Pakistan's Sports Minister, Mr. S.K. Tressler, said here.

"Although the issue of Kashmir will top the agenda, the Chief Executive will also talk about cricket relations," Mr. Tressler told the local media here on Wednesday night. The immediate issue would be the India-Pakistan Test Match to be held in September as part of the Asian championship.

Last week, the Indian board agreed to play the Test in Pakistan after a gap of 12 years. The commitment to play the match was given in writing by the Board for Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) chief, Mr. A.C. Muthiah, at an Asian Cricket Council (ACC) meeting in Lahore. The commitment was explained to be part of the Indian Government's policy of not restraining its team from playing against Pakistan except in bilateral series and at non-regular venues.

Doubts have arisen now about the match to be played in Karachi from September 13 to 17 after the Sports

Minister, Ms. Uma Bharti, pulled up the BCCI for agreeing to play in Pakistan without the consent of the Government.

Gen. Musharraf, an ardent lover of cricket and who time and again expressed his wish to see normalisation of cricket relations, was expected to take up the issue with Indian leaders. He has said in the past that cricket provided great entertainment to people on both sides of the border and offered the best way out for normalisation of relations.

Earlier this year, cricketing relations between the two countries appeared heading for a complete breakdown, when reports of the Indian Government's decision not to play Pakistan in Sharjah last April evoked strong reactions from the Pakistan Cricket Board chief, Lt. Gen. Tauqir Zia, who threatened to sever all links with India in retaliation.

But Lt. Gen. Zia, a serving Corps Commander and a close confidant of Gen. Musharraf, mellowed down after the military ruler reportedly asked him to tone down his anti-India rhetoric. Though India later said it would not play against Pakistan in any bilateral matches, the PCB expressed its happiness over India's decision to play in multilateral tournaments.

Referring to the Indian Government's sharp reaction to BCCI's announcement, Mr. Tressler said Ms. Bharti's statement further complicated the issue. He said there appeared to be no co-ordination between the BCCI and the Indian Government, making it difficult for others to accept or reject their proposals. Mr. Tressler said Mr. Muthiah, at the ACC meeting, had shown a letter from the Sports Ministry, confirming India's willingness to participate in all tournaments, in which besides Pakistan and India one more team took part.

"What's happening in India? First, the BCCI officials show a letter from their Government confirming their team's participation in the Asian Test Championship and then they start saying something else. On the one hand, the Government has given permission to its board to play against Pakistan and, on the other, it is rebuking the BCCI over confirmation of India's participation in ATC," Mr. Tressler said.

Meanwhile, the Urdu daily Jang reported that Gen. Musharraf's wife, Ms. Sahba, may visit Lucknow to meet her friends and relatives. —  
PTI

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## No cricket with Pak for now:

*Sports & Fun*  
**Uma Bharati**

*MS* *Quadrant*  
**Kadambari Murali**  
New Delhi, May 28 *HTI*

CONTRARY TO expectations, the Indian Government's stand on cricketing ties with Pakistan remains as rigid as ever. Not only is there no change in their policy in anticipation of Gen Musharraf's likely visit to India, the Indian Government has not yet cleared the team's visit to Pakistan in September for the Asia Cup.

Minister for Youth and Sports Affairs Uma Bharati said today neither she nor the department of Sports had received a formal request from the Board of Control for Cricket in India to allow them to play Pakistan in Karachi from September 13-17.

"The BCCI has to go through us, as we are the nodal agency. They have to send me a note and I have to send it to the Ministry of External Affairs with my comments. I have not got a request," Uma Bharati said on her return from a visit to Bhopal.

BCCI president A C Muthiah had said there would be no problem with India playing Pakistan in this regard, before leaving for the Asian Cricket Council meet in Pakistan last week. He said the Asian Test Championship was a multilateral event and that was within the ambit of the guidelines they had received from the ministry.

Bharati reiterated that at the moment, there was no change in the Indian policy on playing bilateral matches with Pakistan. "There have been incidents involving other teams (the recent visit by the Indian volleyball team to Pakistan was allegedly marred by unsavoury incidents) and I am sure that the MEA will take that into account before deciding on any matter. Whatever the BCCI says right now, they are saying in their own right. They have not taken any advice from us on the matter," she said.

Bharati said she would not be meeting the Prime Minister in this regard just now, as there was no directive from the MEA.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

29 MAY 2001

# Pitch set for Test in Pak

FROM IDREES BAKHTIAR /  
AND AGENCIES

Karachi, May 26: A day after Atal Bihari Vajpayee formally invited Pervez Musharraf for talks, cricket officials of both countries announced that India would play their first Test in Pakistan in nearly 12 years.

The officials said the rivals could square off in the Asian Test Championship in September. The draw for the four-nation tournament — between September 1, 2001, and February 19, 2002 — was released after an Asian Cricket Council meeting at Lahore.

Cricketing ties between the neighbours have been strained following Delhi's refusal to allow a team to visit Pakistan since the 1999 Kargil flare-up.

However, the game's managers said the Pakistan tour is in line with the Indian government's policy. "The government has clearly said for a multilateral tournament it has no objection at all," Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president A.C. Murhiah told Reuters from Lahore.

(India did not officially react to the proposal, but sources said that unless "something goes terribly wrong" after the Musharraf-Vajpayee summit, the government should clear the Test, adds our special correspondent in Delhi.)

The venue is yet to be finalised, but Karachi is tipped to be the favourite for staging the showdown. "Karachi is most likely to be the venue but we will further discuss it with our Indian counterparts before announcing it," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Tauqir Zia said.

The PCB said it has been given a commitment by Indian officials that the team would play in the tournament, which also includes Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

"We have been given a firm commitment by the Indian officials that they will appear in the Asian test championship match," Zia said. "I think the match will revive cricketing relations between the two Asian powerhouses."

India last appeared in a Test on Pakistani soil in 1989 and returned in 1997 for a three-match one-day series. After the 1989 tour, India has cancelled four visits to Pakistan, the latest earlier this year because of restrictions by the government which refused permission for bilateral matches.

India pulled out of the Sahara Cup bilateral one-day series in Toronto in 1999 and 2000 and cancelled a scheduled tour of Pakistan in December. It also skipped the one-day triangular tournament in Sharjah in April, a move that angered Pakistan's cricket authorities who had said they would boycott the Indian team in future.

Pakistan captain Waqar Younis welcomed India's decision to take part in the match. "It's good for Asian cricket," Waqar, currently leading his side on a two-Test series in England, said.

■ See Page 16

THE TELEGRAPH

27 MAY 2001

27 MAY 2001

# Indo-Pak ties may figure in ACC talks

Islamabad, May 23

29/5

INDO-PAK CRICKET ties are likely to figure in the discussion between the presidents of the respective boards at a meeting of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), which starts in Lahore tomorrow.

Though both countries maintain that the meeting will finalise proposals to initiate development projects in the region, it is widely believed that Indian government's decision not to play Pakistan in a bilateral series and at non-regular venues will come up for discussion.

This is the first time BCCI president A C Muthiah and PCB chief Lt Gen Tauqir Zia are meeting and also the first high-level interaction between the boards since Indian pulled out of last month's triangular one-day series in Sharjah.

"We will be basically looking at proposals to initiate development projects like training programmes in the region," BCCI secretary Jaywant Lele and treasurer Kishore Rungta said over phone from Lahore.

There could also be general

15-15

discussions on the status of investigations into match-fixing by ICC's Anti Corruption Unit (ACU), they said. ACU chief Sir Paul Condon is arriving in Lahore on Friday.

ACC secretary Zakir Mohammad Sayeed said the meeting would discuss the proper utilisation of the \$6.5 million provided by the ICC. The money would be used for 13 countries in the region, which needs assistance to promote the game.

Sayeed welcomed India's decision to participate in the Asia Cup, to be hosted by Pakistan, next year. "We greatly welcome the Indian decision to play Pakistan in regular tournaments. This will certainly improve the sporting relations between the two countries," he said.

The official, however, was not sure whether Pakistan would raise objections to the Indian government's decision of not playing in bilateral series.

The meeting which will also be attended by Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will finalise dates for the Asia Cup and the Asian Test championship.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 MAY 1987

HD-1  
26/4

# Don't advise us, Minister tells BCCI

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 25.** Without mincing words, Ms. Uma Bharati, today showed the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) its place.

Reacting to the BCCI stand — that unless the Government announced clear cut guidelines on playing with Pakistan, it would not participate in any multilateral tournaments — Ms. Bharti said, "There is no need for any clarification. They (the Board) are very much aware of the reasons for the decision."

After meeting officials of the External Affairs Ministry, Ms. Bharati addressed the media briefly at her residence, and also issued a statement. "No pressure tactics will work with the Sports Ministry. We don't want any advice from the BCCI on our foreign policy. In future, they should not give us such advice."

Ms. Bharti said, "No request for any clarification or issue of general guidelines regarding the Government policy on playing with Pakistan has been received from the BCCI. Therefore, the question of issuing any clarification does not arise. As and when the request of the BCCI is received, necessary clarification will be issued."

On why some other teams were being cleared to play Pakistan,

she said, "I repeat, cricket is not an ordinary game. Cricket has come into the category of an extraordinary game. It has begun representing the sentiments of the people. We see cricket as not just a game, but as a symbol of the nation's sentiments."

"For us, the honour of the country is everything. If the BCCI people say that in future they won't play in the World Cup or any continental championship, it is their headache."

On the hosting of the 2002 ICC knockout tournament, Ms. Bharati said, "When Mr. Malcolm Gray (ICC President) was here recently, I gave him all assurances. I asked him whether our decision not to play in Sharjah would have any bearing (on the hosting of the ICC Trophy). He said, 'It is your internal matter. It will not come in the way of the decision of granting the ICC knockout tournament to India.' He was so understanding."

Ms. Bharti's statement said: "The Government decides its policy on the basis of national interest and not on extraneous considerations. The Government has, at no point of time, taken a view or advised the BCCI that India will not play in any multilateral tournaments amongst test-playing nations and countries recognised by ICC for playing one-day Internationals."

THE HINDU

26 APR 2001



# BCCI threat to pull out of ODIs

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, April 24. - The BCCI today threatened to pull out of the World Cup, ICC Knock-Out Tournament and the Asia Cup unless the government came up with 'clear-cut guidelines' on participation at non-regular venues.

"The BCCI has decided to participate in only bilateral series and triangular tournaments with Test playing nations and not to take part in the World Cup, Asia Cup and ICC Knock-Out Tournaments until the government announced clear cut guidelines," board president Mr AC Muthiah said after a meeting of the BCCI Working Committee.

The meeting discussed the government's letter banning participation of the Indian team in non-regular venues like Sharjah, Toronto and Singapore for at least three years. Mr Muthiah said the Board would shortly write a letter to the government seeking "clear cut guidelines" in this regard. He said a committee, to be formed under him, would also meet the sports minister and other senior ministers on the issue.

Asked why the board had decided not to participate even in tournaments like the Asia Cup, ICC Knock-out Championship and World Cup, Mr Muthiah said: "We do not know whether we would be allowed to play against a particular opposition, Pakistan, though the government letter only talks about venues ... In these championships, we might be required to play against Pakistan."

Going by what Mr Muthiah said, the chances of India hosting the ICC Knock-Out Tournament next year also seem very remote. "The government has to take a decision on matters of tax exemptions, sought by ICC, by 30 April. ICC has told us clearly to get the tax exemptions by that date or else the tournament will be allotted to some other country," the BCCI chief said.

The government is already fighting a case for extracting taxes from the earnings of Pakistan India Lanka Committee that organised the 1996 World Cup in these countries.

"If the government agrees to tax exemptions in the case of the ICC tournament, it would weaken its case against PILCOM," said a senior Board official while virtually ruling out India hosting the tournament next year. "The next choice would most likely be Australia," he added.

THE STATESMAN

5 APR 2001

5-10 NOT CRICKET! 17/4  
Government playing spoilsport

SOMEONE from the cricketing establishment needed to speak out against the Centre's schoolmarish policy which has banned India from playing in Sharjah for three years and in Pakistan, indefinitely. Raj Singh Dungarpur, therefore, deserves special mention for risking the wrath of Uma Bharti. She has said that the Indian team should not play in Sharjah, and places like Toronto and Singapore, because they are "non-regular" venues. This is obviously a code for saying that cellphone-toting, sunglass-flaunting bookies find access easier in such places and can induce Indian cricketers to perform even more unpredictably than they usually manage themselves. This argument is a fulltoss which deserves to be contemptuously hit for a six. First, who is the minister fooling by assuming that bookies flourish only in the so called non-regular venues. Unless one makes the case that the air in Sharjah induces Indian cricketers to be more venal, the government's ban makes no sense.

Second, the ban shows that the government is willing to extend its remit deep into territory that belongs to autonomous sport administration. As Dungarpur says, whether venues are regular or not is a matter for the domestic and international cricket officials to decide. Sharjah as a venue may indeed attract patrons considered unsavoury by the Indian government. That, however, is a matter for Indian law enforcement agencies, not Indian cricket. The latter surely has the right to send the team anywhere it deems fit apart, perhaps, from countries with whom India does not have diplomatic relations. By the same token, India should play in Pakistan as well. Islamabad has more than a point when it says that New Delhi's ban on cricketing relations is a breach of international cricketing conduct. And it's only because the International Cricket Council is usually too chicken-hearted to assert itself, that India has not attracted sanctions. But it should. The third and most compelling reason against the current ban rests on the implication that the government does not trust the cricketers. If there are good grounds for mistrust, the government should make its concern plain and ask the cricket board to institute strong penalties. To try and create a safe haven of cricketing activities is both impossible and insulting. It is instructive to ask why the South African government, for example, have not banned its team from playing anywhere, including India, where the team's ex-captain met his nemesis. Why has the Indian cricketing establishment not protested enough?

THE STATESMAN

17 APR 2001

## Tit-for-tat table tennis

### pullout

19/4 2000  
New Delhi, April 13 (PTI): Pakistan today pulled out of the 15th Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships hours before they were to start from home, in an apparent retaliation against India's refusal to play cricket in Sharjah.

The Pakistan team, which was cleared by the Indian government to participate in the tournament, was scheduled to arrive here this evening by bus from Lahore. However, the Table Tennis Federation of India received a message conveying the country's withdrawal at the last minute.

Federation sources said here that they received a phone call from their Pakistani counterparts this evening, informing them of the withdrawal from the championships starting here tomorrow. No reasons were given, the sources added.

India had refused permission to its cricket team to play in a triangular one-day series currently on in Sharjah, also featuring Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

A government statement had said its team would not participate in any tournament at "non-regular venues" like Sharjah, Toronto and Singapore for three years. The government feels that betting is rampant at these venues and by staying out of these tournaments, it will help lessen the punters' interest.

India had earlier pulled out of a bilateral annual one-day series in Toronto in 1999 and 2000 and a scheduled tour to Pakistan late last year, citing its neighbour's continued support to cross-border terrorism as the reason.

India finished third in the men's team event of the last championships.

THE

10TH

10 APR 2000

# 'After Sharjah, will govt fix batting order too?'

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

DUBAI, April 13. — This is "the beginning of an encroachment on the national sports body's autonomy", is how Mr Raj Singh Durgarpur today described the government's decision to ban the Indian cricket team from playing at venues like Sharjah.

The former Board of Control for Cricket in India president, here for the tri-nation Sharjah cricket tournament, said: "What frightens me is that some day government ministries will tell us what the batting order should be."

Mr Durgarpur told the Gulf News: "I'm confused that the government should have taken such a decision" and disagreed that Sharjah was a non-regular

venue. "This place (Sharjah cricket stadium) has staged the maximum number of One-Day Internationals... There's not one country that hasn't played here."

India banned its cricket team from playing at Sharjah for three years, prompting the organisers to invite New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the other two teams in the tournament this year.

Earlier, India had pulled out from the Toronto One-Day series in Toronto in 1999 and 2000 and a scheduled tour to Pakistan late last year citing Islamabad's continued support to cross-border terrorism as the reason.

India had said its team would not participate in any tournament at "non-regular

venues" like Sharjah, Toronto and Singapore.

Countering the government's argument that the International Cricket Council looked "askance" at Sharjah, Mr Durgarpur said: "How can the ICC disassociate itself from Sharjah when it appoints umpires and match referees for tournaments organised by the CBFS... You can't appoint the principal of a school and say you don't recognise the school. If the government is so keen to cleanse the game, it must look within."

India-Pakistan clashes had taken the gloss off the Ashes (England-Australia) series, he said. And by not letting the Indians play at Sharjah, the government had deprived millions of his countrymen the

opportunity to see India break the Sharjah jinx and emerge victorious.

"I can assure you that India is right now at its best since its 1982 entry into the international game," Mr Durgarpur said. India could have won at Sharjah easily, given its present form. He said there was evidence of the film industry's connections with the underworld, but the government hadn't done anything to cleanse the industry. "Where there is evidence of underworld connection, there is no action and where there is no proof, the government has taken the harsh step of barring cricketers from playing at Sharjah."

"If India and Pakistan can play... hockey, squash, chess and so on, why not cricket?" Mr Durgarpur said.

## Pak spins one over TT table

PTI & SNS

NEW DELHI, April 13. — Pakistan pulled out of the 15th Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships today, just a day before its start, in an apparent retaliation to India banning its cricket team to play in Sharjah.

The Pakistan team, cleared by the Indian government to play in the TT tournament, was scheduled to reach New Delhi this evening by bus from Lahore. But the Table Tennis Federation of India got a message from its Pakistani counterpart conveying its withdrawal. No reasons were given for the withdrawal.

**Publicity stunt:** It was all a publicity stunt. They had come prepared with placards and not one but two Pakistani flags, apparently to burn them near Ambedkar Stadium. Their anti-Pakistan slogans drew pedestrians' attention. But the Shiv Sainiks' and National Akali Dal's

efforts were in vain. How could the Pakistani team reach Delhi when it had pulled out of the C'wealth championship? That, however, didn't hamper the Sainiks' spirit; they tried hard to be on TV and still cameras.

NAD members were the first to assemble, with placards and two Pakistani flags. Reason: if the first one couldn't be captured in camera while burning, the second would be set ablaze. They did exactly that.

The seven NAD members said they would launch a nationwide campaign against Pakistani atrocities. The NAD president and members were arrested and locked up unceremoniously in a Delhi Transport Corporation bus after its passengers were asked to get off. As soon as the bus from Pakistan arrived, the Sainiks (about 35), till then hiding behind a public call office, "began" their agitation. And then they were arrested.

THE STATESMAN

# 3-year ban on Sharjah, Toronto

FROM OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 1: Not only Sharjah, but also Toronto and Singapore have been struck out of the Indian cricket calendar for the next three years.

An official release issued here today at the behest of the sports ministry said the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has been informed of the government's decision not to allow the Indian team to travel to Sharjah for the tri-series beginning later this month with Pakistan as one of the participants.

Pakistan reacted strongly, reaffirming its threat to boycott India in all future tournaments. Munawwar Rana, director of the Pakistan Cricket Board, told PTI the decision not to play India in future would be forwarded to the government for approval.

The Cricketers Benefit Fund Series (CBFS), organisers of all tournaments at Sharjah, expressed anguish at New Delhi's decision but said the tri-series would go ahead as scheduled from April 8 with New Zealand replacing India.

"We regret that the government of India has made this decision. The CBFS would like to thank the BCCI for their support and understand their predicament due to this unusual breach of contract forced upon them," UNI quoted the Sharjah organisers as saying.

India is under contractual obligation to play in Sharjah until April.

The release issued by the government in Delhi said: "(the) Indian cricket team should not participate in cricket tournaments at non-regular venues such as Sharjah, Singapore, Toronto, etc, for at least three years."

The home ministry believes a three-year bar would ensure that the role played by the underworld in tournaments like that in Sharjah would gradually diminish. The underworld does not stand to make money if Pakistan does not play India.

Home ministry sources had made it clear earlier that it was against tournaments in Sharjah because of the way the underworld got access to mingle with cricketers. After careful deliberation on inputs from its own intelligence agencies, the ministry said the situation in Sharjah remained unchanged even after the match-fixing scandal. It expressed opposition to allowing the team to play there at this point of time on these grounds.

Rejection of Toronto and Singapore as venues is a new development. Sources said: "If India is going to play cricket with established cricket-playing nations in regular venues, we have no objection."

THE TELEGRAPH

2 APR 2001

## Cricket relations over, says Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy.

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 26. In an angry reaction to the reported decision of India not to participate in the Sharjah Cup, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief has said that Pakistan would snap its cricket relations with India. *NO-14*

The PCB chief, Gen. Zia, senior Pakistani military commander, has said Pakistan would not cross the borders if the governing body allocated the International Cricket Council knockout tournament to India. "We have had enough and we are not going to have a rethink. Our cricket relations with India are over."

Pointing his finger at the Indian umpire, Mr. Ramaswamy, the PCB chief said, "tell the Indian Board that we will no more play against India anywhere".

Gen. Zia complained that the ICC has done nothing when Pakistan took up the matter with it.

THE HINDU

27 MAR 2001

27 MAR 2001

# Govt passes cricket buck

## OUR BUREAU AND AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb. 4: As Islamabad prepared to toast a diplomatic walkover from Delhi, the Centre today sought to point fingers at an "over-enthusiastic" cricket establishment and bureaucrats for the Sharjah series controversy.

Highly-placed sources said the Centre was "cut up" with the way both government and cricket officials supported the tour to Sharjah without taking into confidence the political establishment which had earlier blocked the Indian cricket team's tour to Pakistan.

It is learnt that an informal probe is on to find out why the officials proceeded without a formal government clearance.

If the Asian Cricket Foundation had not called off the series tonight, the government would have taken a decision tomorrow after foreign minister Jaswant Singh returned from Egypt.

Pakistan expressed dismay at the confusion. "Frankly, it seems incomprehensible," foreign minister Abdus Sattar said in Islamabad. Rubbing in the salt, he added: "I would not like to bring cricket into state affairs. Our cricket board is autonomous."

Pakistan Cricket Board today said it would raise India's reluctance to play at the International Cricket Council's conference in Australia this month. "We are left with no choice other than to raise the matter at the ICC meeting and we would not approve the ICC's 10-year programme of cricket schedules," PCB chief Tauqir Zia said.

Home minister L.K. Advani had yesterday asked sports minister Uma Bharti not to allow the Indian team to go to Sharjah, a venue where Dawood Ibrahim is known to wield considerable clout.

The home minister is understood to have told Bharti that the Gujarat relief operations can do

without money linked to Dawood. Advani also had a word with foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh.

The sources said supporters of the series could have thought that the government green signal was a foregone conclusion after Pakistan's relief offer was accepted and Pervez Musharraf spoke to Vajpayee for a few minutes.

But they pointed out that the ground situation in the diplomatic standoff has not changed much. While Advani today renewed the attack on Pakistan in Assam, Musharraf returned fire from Islamabad. The home minister had toned down his criticism of Islamabad after the unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir.

In a statement on the eve of the "Kashmir solidarity day" in Pakistan, Musharraf iterated his country's "moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri's struggle to achieve the right to self-determination".

THE TELEGRAPH

5 FEB 2001