

Now, FIR against Dalmiya

HT Correspondents
Mumbai/Kolkata, March 16

THE BATTLE between Sharad Pawar and Jagmohan Dalmiya is well and truly on. The BCCI lodged an FIR against Dalmiya on Thursday for misappropriating funds during the 1996 World Cup, when he was the board president. On the other hand, a lawyer close to Dalmiya filed a civil suit in Kolkata against BCCI vice-president Lalit Modi for defamation.

BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah lodged the FIR at Marine Drive police station "alleging forgery, cheating and misappropriation of funds" against Dalmiya and some other former BCCI office-bearers. The police are likely to summon them soon.

The complaint alleged that they had forged documents to draw Rs 21.76 lakh out of BCCI



accounts, police inspector Ajit Ranade said. A BCCI internal inquiry had shown that PILCOM, the committee that ran the World Cup, had deposited Rs 74 lakh in a bank account last year. The balance slipped to Rs 17 lakh in the past few months and Dalmiya and the other accused could account for only Rs 54 lakh, sources alleged.

Dalmiya dismissed the allegations as fake. "I have furnished all details asked for. The BCCI management has a single-point agenda: to malign me," he said.

One of his aides, former BCCI legal adviser Ushanath Banerjee, filed a civil suit against Modi, claiming Rs 1.5 crore in damages for defamation. Modi and Punjab Cricket Association chief I.S. Bindra had claimed that Banerjee "earned more than India captain Rahul Dravid in 2005 while dealing with BCCI cases". A notice demanding an unqualified apology from Modi had earlier gone unanswered.

The battle continued to rage in court. After being showcaused, Dalmiya had obtained a stay from a city court, but the BCCI has since then moved the Calcutta High Court, which admitted the appeal on Thursday.

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DON'T QUIT: SC TELLS SC

33 Is No Age To Retire, Says Batting Legend

By Dwalpayan Datta/TNN

Kolkata: With the doors of Team India dressing room all but shut on his face, Sourav Ganguly faces the biggest dilemma of his crickering career: Whether to chuck it all and call it quits, or fight on gamely like a disciplined soldier.

If Sunil Gavaskar is to be believed there's still some cricket left in the former India captain.

Gavaskar, who was in the city on Friday to attend a function, felt that "33 is not the right age to quit".

Urging Ganguly to carry on in spite of the tall odds, Gavaskar said: "If 33 is the figure to quit, then I would have not gone on to score my 34th hundred."

Ganguly, sharing the same dais with the Little Master smiled in acknowledgement, but when the media asked for his reaction, the former India captain chose to keep his own counsel.

His fans in the city, of course, had a lot to say. "Who are the young blood? Dravid, Sachin or Kumble?" protesters cried in resentment on the streets braving a scorching midday sun.

The state chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, too, did his best to cheer up the left-hander.

"Today, Sourav is insulted and humiliated, but I want to tell him that he should not quit at this age. He has to play and prove his worth. We are all with him," Bhattacharjee said.

The chief minister's words of encouragement, however, were not enough to enthuse the left-hander to go and play for East Zone in the Deodhar Trophy.

In spite of the Board of Control for Cricket in India's directive that the senior players should use every opportunity to play domestic cricket, Ganguly informed the CAB that he would not be playing the first match against South Zone on Saturday.

"Ganguly called me up and told that he does not want to play East Zone's tournament as opener. I have asked him to give it to me in writing and I'm expecting a fax soon," CAB joint secretary Saradindu Pal said.

The office-bearer hinted that Ganguly may not be retiring after all, saying that the left-hander had promised to play the remaining matches in the tournament.

"He must be having personal reasons. So, we didn't press him to play this game. But he has said that he would play the other matches," Pal's words were like music to Ganguly's fans who want to see him carry on the fight.

MIXED REACTIONS



Sourav Ganguly got support from Sunil Gavaskar

This is no way to treat a Test cricketer. The Board should come up with some policy like the Australian Board, where they convey their decision to the player. Steve Waugh and Ian Healy were asked to contemplate retirement. Considering Dada's age it is difficult for him to make a comeback. If he plays domestic cricket may be he can encourage talented youngsters from Bengal.

—Former wicket keeper Nayan Mongia

Taking his performance in Pakistan into account, he should have been considered for the Nagpur Test. Nobody can say Ganguly's career has ended. He can still make a comeback.

—Former opener Anshuman Gaekwad

Sourav should read the selectors' signals. There has been so much debate over this issue over the last year that one is beginning to feel sick. If Sourav is keen on playing then he should have a talk with the selectors and not the board president.

—Former left-arm-spinner Venkatpathy Raju

It is difficult to predict. But the intentions of the selectors are clear. The fact that they have picked so many youngsters shows that they are looking at the future. Sourav should get the message. If he is keen on coming back, he has to raise his current performance levels.

—Former off-spinner Arshad Ayub

I don't think he should quit. He still has some cricket left and he should try to fight back. But the way the selectors have dropped on him on Thursday, it seems that the doors are closed on him.

—Former selector Sambaran Banerjee

Sourav shouldn't lose heart. It is difficult to carry on fighting, but I'm sure his steely resolve will encourage him to carry on.

—Former opener Pronob Roy

Why should he retire? If he performs well and is fit, he cannot be kept out for a long time. He has to keep scoring big runs and must not forget that he played well in Pakistan. I am sure he will make a comeback. He must keep his motivation levels high.

—Former captain Dilip Vengsarkar

To quit or not is his personal decision. He should continue playing domestic cricket and try and score big. This way if the selectors ever need to fall back on experience they can look to him. He needs to get organised and stay focussed for domestic cricket. His future seems bleak because he is not in the selectors' plans. A comeback is difficult since he is up against some talented youngsters who are also performing at the moment.

—Former wicket keeper Saba Karim

Selectors have done a good job of choosing talented youngsters who are performing. Maybe the management have a few ideas and Sourav is not part of them. Sourav needs to



Gautam's Gambhir riposte

Delhi Opener Slams Ton A Day After Being Dropped From Test Team

ent strokemaker from Delhi played an unusually subdued knock during when he faced 227 balls and hit 15 fours. But eight of them had come last evening and only one after lunch today.

The left-hander featured in three substantial partnerships. He featured in a 98-run opening stand with Wasim Jaffer before the latter was out to the last ball of opening day's play. Gambhir then added 64 runs in association with Dheeraj Yadav for the second wicket this afternoon. Headline news involved in a more crucial



Vadodara: A patient century from Test discard Gautam Gambhir and useful contributions from Suresh Raina and the lower order saw Board President's XI gain the upperhand in the three-day match against England here on Friday.

Gambhir, dunned from the Indian team for the first Test, played an uncharacteristically subdued knock to make 108 while Raina celebrated his promotion to the five-day game with a fluent 62 at the hosts declared at 342 for eight

QUICK SINGLES

Inzamam irked

Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq has expressed his displeasure over "special variations" granted to coach Bob Woolmer and his support staff by Pakistan Cricket Board ahead of the upcoming series against Sri Lanka. Woolmer, team's trainer Murray Stevenson and physiotherapist Darryn Lifsun have gone on another vacation after the home series against India and are slated to return to Lahore next month when the training camp for the Sri Lanka tour starts around March 6.

Shabbir begins rehab

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East Zone in the Deodhar Trophy. In spite of the Board of Control for Cricket in India's directive that the senior players should use every opportunity to play domestic cricket, Ganguly informed the CAB that he would not be playing the first match against South Zone on Saturday.

"Ganguly called me up and told that he does not want to play East Zone's tour matches together," he says. "I have written it to me in writing and I'm expecting a fax soon," CAB joint secretary Saradindu Pal said.

The office-bearer hinted that Ganguly may not be retiring after all, saying that the left-hander had promised to play the remaining matches in the tournament.

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Banned pacer Shabbir Ahmed returned to a rehabilitation camp as the PCB is keen on getting his action cleared from the ICC ahead of the England tour following doubts over the fitness of speedster Shoaib Akhtar. Umar Gul and Rana Naved-ul-Hasan, Shabbir, who was banned for 12 months last December, and ICC bowling action review group (BRG) also rejected his appeal last month, joined the camp in Lahore under the supervision of former Test pacer Sarfraz Nawaz.

West in action today

West Zone will take on Central while East will tackle South in the opening round of matches in the Deodhar Trophy inter-zonal one-day league in Indore from Saturday. Each of the zones will play four matches and the winners will be decided after the completion of five round of matches. Indore and Gwalior will host two matches each while Udaipur and Jaipur will conduct three matches apiece.

SCHEDULE

- Feb 25: Central vs West, Gwalior; East vs South, Indore
- Feb 26: Central vs North, Indore; East vs West, Gwalior
- March 3: Central vs South, Jaipur; North vs West, Udaipur
- March 6: Central vs East, Jaipur; North vs West, Udaipur
- March 9: East vs North, Jaipur; South vs West, Udaipur

Smith's WC plans

South African skipper Graeme Smith said the five-match one-day cricket series against Australia was a good opportunity to prepare for the next year's World Cup. "With the cricket at World Cup just more than a year away, South Africa hopes to use the series against Australia to iron out flaws and gear them up for the event," Smith said ahead of their four opening pro-20 match at Johannesburg. Smith said the hosts would leave no stone unturned to bring about a reversal of their recent poor performance in Australia. "Already, reinforcements have been called in to assist the team in their quest to topple the Aussies," he said.



Gautam's Gambhir riposte

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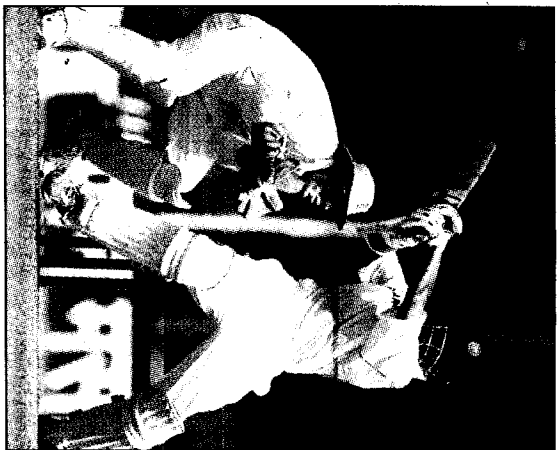
Gambhir, dumped from the Indian team for the first Test, played an uncharacteristically subdued knock to make 108 while Raina celebrated his promotion to the five-day game with a fluent 62 at the hosts declared at 342 for eight on the second day.

Combined with cheeky knocks from Ramesh Powar, 23 not out, and Vikram Rajviri Singh (13) meant the Board team gained a first innings lead of 104 with a day's play left at the IPL Sports Complex.

At stumps, England were 10 for one with stand-in captain Marcus Trescothick and nightwatchman Matthew Hoggard four each. The Board team's lead could have been even bigger had captain Venugopala Rao (25) and wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Kaarthick (19) lasted longer. But the two, as also Tamil Nadu middle order bats S Badrinath, fell to the second new ball which proved more productive for the visitors. As it were, the home team declined from 274 for three in the 89th over as they lost five wickets in the space of 15 overs.

Four of those fell to the fast bowlers, with Stephen Harmison (3-72) and Andrew Flintoff (3-74) sharing two wickets each. That was also the phase of the game when the England attack looked like taking wickets. But even then, Powar and VRY collected boundaries at will, the former more convincing in his strokes and the latter a case of hit or miss.

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Gautam Gambhir was in a punishing mood

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SCOREBOARD

England (1st innings): 238
 Board President's XI (1st innings, overnight 93-1): G Gambhir c Strauss b Flintoff 108, D Jadhav c Jones b Harmison 20, S Raina c Blackwell b Parner 62, V Rao c Flintoff b Harmison 25, S Badrinath b Flintoff 0, D Kaarthick c Trescothick b Harmison 19, R Powar not out 23, NVV Singh b Flintoff 13. Extras: (20, 14) 24.
 Total: (for 8 wks) 1034 (overs) 342
 Fall of wickets: 1-83, 2-157, 3-243, 4-274, 5-279, 6-306, 7-313, 8-342
 Bowling: Hoggard 22-8-57-0, Harjoto 24-1-72-3, Flintoff 21-4-2-74-3, Pinnell 2-0-8-0, P 2-5-5-3-1, Blackwell 17-1-61-1.
 England (2nd innings): M Teste 44, V Rao 44, A Strauss c Raina b Pald 2, M Hoggard batting.
 Total: (for 1 wk, in 6 overs) 10.
 Fall of wicket: 1-3.
 Bowling: Mural 3-4-1, NVV 2-0-3-0, Powar 2-0-3-0, Harmison 1-4-24.

Team India going up and up

By Santosh Sur/TNN

Lucknow: It is a clear reflection of the times in Indian cricket that Uttar Pradesh defeated Mumbai on the latter's home soil and then went on to win their maiden Ranji Trophy. Thus, not surprisingly there are just two players from Mumbai, while as many as four UP players find their names in the Test team to face England.

At one time, top cricket states Mumbai and Karnataka had a large presence in the Indian team, and now that honour belongs to UP. It took Uttar Pradesh over half a century to produce a home-grown Test cricketer. That was Gopal Sharma in 1965. He was among the first products of the

Sports Hostel schemes started by the UP government, where promising players were groomed for a number of years as resident scholars.

UP players have been dominating junior Indian teams for over two decades, but had failed to graduate to the highest level. There are numerous reasons for it. Mental block being the biggest. Besides, the players from UP and smaller cricket states were never wholeheartedly welcomed into the elite group.

Things started to change with the arrival of Mohammed Kaif and now that honour belongs to UP. It took Uttar Pradesh over half a century to produce a home-grown Test cricketer. That was Gopal Sharma in 1965. He was among the first products of the

backed him to the hilt even if he was from a Bimaru state.

This factor has been a turning point in Indian cricket. It has brought about a virtual revolution, as who would have ever imagined four players from Uttar Pradesh in Team India to tackle their oldest rivals.

It's not just the talent of the UP players which is noticeable, but also their attitude. Talk to Piyush Chawla, who is barely 18, and you would immediately know his mental toughness. This is clearly reflected in his performance on the field as he almost single-handedly helped India clinch the U-19 World Cup final, but ran out of partners.

The same is the case of Suresh Raina and Rudra Pratap Singh. They are not highly talented but also mentally tough. This is one factor that hindered talented UP players in the past. They chickened out on the highest stage.

When Mohammed Kaif and Raina joined the Indian team (after Test series) for the one-day games, they had an immense influence on the raising the performance of the team with their electrifying fielding and positive attitude. On the eve of the Ranji Trophy final, when asked if the young team could become jittery and nervous as most were playing their first final, this was Kaif's reply: "Don't worry the players may be young and inexperienced, but they are all tough."

It is difficult to predict. But the intentions of the selectors are clear. The fact that they have picked so many youngsters shows that they are looking at the future. Sourav should get the message. If he is keen on coming back, he has to raise his current performance levels.

—Former off-spinner Arshad Ayub

I don't think he should quit. He still has some cricket left and he should try to fight back. But the way the selectors have dropped on him on Thursday, it seems that the doors are closed on him.

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To quit or not is his personal decision. He should continue playing domestic cricket and try and score big. This way if the selectors ever need to fall back on experience they can look to him. He needs to get organised and stay focused for domestic cricket. His future seems bleak because he is not in the selectors' plans. A comeback is difficult since he is up against some talented youngsters who are also performing at the moment.

—Former wicket keeper Saba Karim

Selectors have done a good job of choosing talented youngsters who are performing. Maybe the management have a few ideas and Sourav is not part of them. Sourav needs to write down his goals. If he feels he can perform then he must take it as a challenge and keep performing as long as possible.

—Former medium-pacer Venkatesh Prasad

With so many promising youngsters in line, Ganguly just doesn't stand a chance. It is high time he quit. The writing is on the wall.

—Former off-spinner and selector Gopal Sharma

Taking the future of Indian cricket into account the move to drop Ganguly was right but if it was done considering a replacement for injured Yuvraj Singh this certainly was a wrong move.

—Former off-spinner Erappalli Prasanna

I think there is still a lot of cricket left in Sourav. From what I know of him, he is a determined person and someone who won't give up easily. The best way to answer his critics and selectors is to score a lot of runs in domestic cricket and force his way back into the Indian team.

—Former Pakistan captain Imtiaz Alam

The Sourav Ganguly chapter in Indian cricket is long over. In modern cricket, you are required to be a good fielder, which he is not. Every player should know when the time has come to say goodbye. If I were in Ganguly's place, I would have taken a lead out of Steve Waugh's book. The BCCI should have given him a decent farewell because he has done great things for Indian cricket.

—Dronacharya Awardee Desh Prem Azad

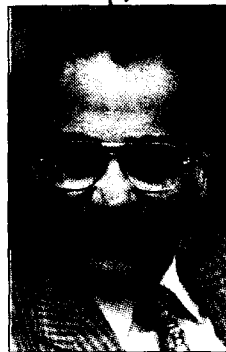


CM Buddhadev Bhattacharya (fight) was also supportive

Fraud finger at Dalmiya

VARUN Gupta
New Delhi, February 21

THE NEW custodians of India's cricket have launched what Jagmohan Dalmiya's friends and supporters would call all bad things from witch-hunt to vendetta. The BCCI on Tuesday accused the former Board president of swindling "crores of rupees" in PILCOM and TV rights money.



The Board had long been Dalmiya's own fiefdom. But ever since Sharad Pawar took over the reins last November, the powers that be, aside from making more money than any previous one, has appeared hell-bent on settling old scores with Dalmiya. Tuesday's salvo came on the sidelines of BCCI's emergency working committee meeting when vice-president Lalit Modi openly charged Dalmiya with "bungling and fraud".

"There has been pilferage of money. Prima facie this is misappropriation of funds and a blatant fraud," he said. "This is the first time that Dalmiya has been put under the scanner, as he's been ruling the roost at BCCI for quite a while. We have found grave swindling of funds. We (working committee) have bestowed president Sharad Pawar with the authority to take a decision on the matter and seek Dalmiya's explanation," Modi declared.

Dalmiya, as expected, vehemently refuted the charges and said he was ready to provide any documentation necessary to prove his innocence. PILCOM, incidentally, was the committee formed during the 1996 World Cup. Modi alleged that Dalmiya shut the PILCOM bank account on February 4 without authorisation and transferred the funds to the Cricket Association of Bengal's account. "Dalmiya is traditionally a person who has a penchant for doing side deals and is unaccountable. He has sought seven days to reply to the charges," Modi said. Money from the 1996 World Cup TV rights too was "missing", he added. BCCI treasurer N. Srinivasan said Dalmiya, who was present during the meeting, avoided giving direct answers when asked about misappropriation of funds and did not have much to say in self-defence.

Round II

BCCI says Dalmiya swindled Board of crores in PILCOM and TV rights money, shut PILCOM account and transferred funds to CAB account. Sharad Pawar would seek explanation from Dalmiya

Dalmiya says: He is ready to furnish any document to clear himself

Sparks of Benin

PM not keen on cricket diplomacy

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SNS & PTI USA

between the two countries in the ongoing series.

"There are no plans for the Prime Minister to visit Pakistan for any of the cricket matches," the external affairs ministry spokesman, Mr Navtej Sarma, told media persons. He was responding to questions about media reports from Islamabad indicating that an invitation by Gen Musharraf to Mr Singh to watch a cricket match of the

Indo-Pak series had been sent. Dr Singh is currently holding additional charge of the foreign ministry.

The Pakistan foreign office spokesperson, Ms Tasnim Aslam, said in Islamabad that an invitation to Dr Singh to visit Pakistan was already pending and it was up to him to decide. Ms Aslam pointed out that Gen. Musharraf, in his interview to a TV channel, had said in response to a ques-

tion that he would invite Dr Singh to watch the cricket matches in Pakistan.

Expressing his keenness to invite Dr Singh to watch one of the Indo-Pak cricket matches, the Pakistani President said, "Let me say I would like to invite him (Dr Singh) to Pakistan to watch any part of the series."

Gen. Musharraf said it was due on the Indian Premier to make a visit to Pakistan. "He

is supposed to visit us. He said so in New York and he has not come as yet." In the same breath, however, Gen. Musharraf said any such visit should be productive and should take the peace process forward. "I do not mind inviting him at all. I want the peace process to move forward. If he comes here and we do nothing about the peace process, I am afraid we are wasting our time."

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