

## India pursuing Bhaji's case

PTI, New Delhi

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) was wholeheartedly backing off-spinner Harbhajan Singh who was reported for suspect action and was awaiting ICC's reply on reviewing his action, a top BCCI official said on Thursday.

"We have raised a genuine query. Harbhajan twice underwent the (review) process and we are ready that he goes through that for the third time also. But what more we have to do (for any doubts about his action to be removed)," BCCI president Ranbir Singh Mahendra told PTI here.

"The ICC is yet to get back to us," he added.

Harbhajan Singh was reported twice in three months for suspect bowling action this season. The Punjab player, who underwent corrective measures in 1998, was reported in December after the second Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong and again in March, in the second Test against Pakistan in Kolkata.

It made Harbhajan the first bowler to be reported under ICC's new regulations dealing with suspect bowling actions.

Under the revamped bowling review process, bowlers are allowed to straighten their arm upto 15 degrees while delivering.

Also, the bowler reported will be directly dealt with by the ICC and has to go through a review process within 21 days from the date of being reported. The bowler needed to receive a favourable report from a biomechanics expert so as to continue playing.

That deadline for Harbhajan is well past.

## India wrap up blind cricket series 4-0

PTI, New Delhi

Spurred on by opener Ganesh Gamvit's brilliant 79, India wrapped up the Petro Cup series for blind cricketers with a seven-wicket win over world champions Pakistan in the fifth and last match here on Thursday.

India had already clinched the five-match series on Wednesday when they won the fourth game by three wickets. The third match was abandoned due to rain.

Chasing Pakistan's 294 for nine, India rode on man-of-the-match Gamvit's superb batting which saw him hit 13 boundaries as he plundered 79 off just 37 deliveries.

Subhash Boya came up with an equally flamboyant 62 off 22 balls while Rajender Verma scored 60 off 54 balls to comfortably take India to 298 for the loss of three wickets in just 27 overs.

Earlier, Tariq Samuel (51 off 36 balls), all-rounder Abbasi (39), Sultan Shah (34) and Adnan Ahmad (33) helped Pakistan to set a competitive total.

## Elliott can go to Victoria

AFP, Melbourne

Former Australian Test opening batsman Matthew Elliott was Thursday cleared by a Cricket Australia tribunal to switch states and play for South Australia in next season's domestic cricket competition.

A tribunal heard telephone evidence from Elliott, who is playing English county cricket for Glamorgan, before allowing the left-hander to switch states from Victoria to South Australia for the 2005-06 season.

Victorian officials had attempted to prevent Elliott's move interstate but a three-man grievance tribunal headed by a judge upheld his appeal against Victoria's decision to deny him clearance.



Anjan Chowdhury Pintoo, managing director of sponsors Square Toiletries, briefs the press at the NSC conference room in connection with the Meril 27th National Table Tennis Competition on Thursday. On the left is Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation president Solaiman Chowdhury and Rafiqul Islam Tipu, the general secretary of the federation, is on the right.

## Nat'l TT from today

SPORTS REPORTER

A record 53 teams will take part in the Meril 27th National Table Tennis Championships which begin today at the Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

This is the first time the Indoor Stadium will be used for a national TT championship instead of the NSC Woodenfloor Gymnasium.

Square Toiletries will provide 3 lakh Taka out of the estimated 4 lakh Taka budget.

About 400 paddlers from across the country will take part in 14 events with the encouraging number of entries in the junior levels.

Defending men's singles champion Mahbub Billah, who has won four out of previous five titles, will

start as hot favourite to retain the Masud Ahmed Rumti trophy. He will also lead Bangladesh Biman's charge for team glory veteran Mosaddekul Haque Rochi, the most successful player in Bangladesh's history with 11 national titles in his career.

Biman's main rivals will be Bangladesh Ansar, featuring last year's singles runner-up Pavel Biswas Pappu and ex-national champion Nasimul Hassan Kachhi.

In women's competition, Biman will struggle to hold on to their crown as Ansars -- last year's losing finalists -- will field the top three seeds in the domestic game with national champion Saleha Parveen, Sonam Sultana Soma and Farhana Parveen Tumpa.

## CHAMPIONS TROPHY-2006

## BCCI seeks PM's help



AFP/PTI, New Delhi

India's cricket chiefs sought Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's intervention to prevent the 2006 Champions Trophy tournament from being shifted to arch-rivals Pakistan.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) had said in March that the biennial limited-overs tournament, the second biggest after the World Cup, could be taken away from India and handed to Pakistan if the Indian government did not exempt the event from tax.

The government imposes income tax on all earnings, including gate receipts and sponsorships, for international sporting events held in the country.

President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Ranbir Singh Mahendra and former ICC chief Jagmohan Dalmiya met Prime Minister Singh here on Thursday in a bid to resolve the impasse.

"The Prime Minister has assured us he will look into the matter," Dalmiya told reporters after the 15-minute meeting at Parliament House.

"It was a very positive meeting. We are hopeful of getting the tax exemption."

"We are quite satisfied with the meeting and are hopeful that we will get the tax exemption," he said.

The ICC has given India a June deadline to confirm the tax waiver.

India was originally scheduled to

host the Champions Trophy in 2004, but the event was shifted to England and India was made provisional hosts for 2006 after the Indian government dithered on the tax waiver.

The tournament, which raises funds for the ICC's development programme, is contested by all the 10 Test-playing nations and two qualifiers from associate members of the ICC.

India, with millions of cricket-mad viewers, is the world's biggest market for the sport. At least four of the ICC's six global sponsors are India-specific.

The ICC's tax waiver policy was not enforced when India co-hosted two World Cups in the past, in 1987 with Pakistan and in 1996 with both Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

India also wants to host the World Cup in 2011, provided the government grants a tax waiver.

ICC president Ehsan Mani and top BCCI officials had earlier met Finance Minister P Chidambaram and Sports Minister Sunil Dutt to pursue their case.

The last ICC Champions Trophy was held in England in 2004.

**Milan survive**

FROM PAGE 16

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