

Shoaib's appeal to be heard Sunday

Cricketer Shoaib Akhtar's appeal against a five-year ban imposed on him by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for defaming the board and its chairman Nasim Ashraf will be taken up by the Appellate Tribunal in Lahore Sunday.

'Yes, we are meeting tomorrow to review the interim decision on an application,' Tribunal chairman Aftab Farrukh confirmed to IANS.

A civil court in Lahore started hearing a case filed by Ashraf against the fast bowler for making allegedly defamatory statements during a television interview April 2.

It was after the interview that the PCB imposed ban on the cricketer also known as Rawalpindi Express.

PCB's legal advisor Taffazaul H. Rizvi, on behalf of the chairman, had served the controversial player a legal notice seeking damages of Pakistani Rs.220 million (\$3.5 million) for his 'defamatory statements'.

Civil judge Hina Muzaffar Saturday issued notice to Akhtar to appear before the court and adjourned the hearing till May 16.

Rizvi Saturday moved another application in the court saying Akhtar should be stopped from selling his property until the case is decided.

The tribunal in its interim order has said that Akhtar can play outside Pakistan but the decision on the ban to play in Pakistan will be taken up in June.

Tribunal chairman Farrukh had said that decision was taken so that Akhtar could play in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL).

However, after IPL chairman Lalit Modi's statement that Akhtar will not be allowed to play in the Twenty20 tournament despite being cleared by the PCB, the tribunal decided to meet on Sunday - a holiday.

'Our stand is clear,' Modi said. 'We will adhere to domestic guidelines of any country's board. A player can play only when his country clears him. He can play only when he is cleared and eligible to play for his country.'

Akhtar was signed up by [Kolkata](#) Knight Riders for \$425,000 but was barred from appearing in the tournament by the IPL council after the PCB banned him on disciplinary grounds last month.

By Muhammad Najeeb (© IANS / India eNews)