

Nanavati expresses sympathy for Harbhajan

The Indian cricket board's inquiry commissioner Sudhir Nanavati Thursday expressed sympathy for off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, saying that no player has lost Rs.30 million for a single offence on field.

'Never in the history of cricket or for that matter in any sporting event in the world has a player lost Rs.3 crore for just one single incident,' he said.

Addressing an impromptu meeting organised by the Gujarat Media Club here, Nanavati, a noted lawyer who probed the fracas between Harbhajan and Sreesanth, clarified that the Indian cricket board had never asked him not to talk to the media about the investigation and it was his personal decision.

During an Indian Premier League (IPL) tie, Harbhajan Singh of [Mumbai](#) Indians slapped India teammate Sreesanth of Kings XI Punjab. Harbhajan was banned for the rest of the IPL season.

After Nanavati submitted his report to the cricket board Monday, the off-spinner was banned for five one-day internationals.

Asked about the report, all Nanavati would say was: 'You will come to know of it whenever the board decides to make it public.'

He said he received many emails and phone calls from north India, asking him to be soft on Bhajji. Nanavati added that a repenting Harbhajan and his assurances of good behaviour in the future influenced him while writing his report.

'Even during the inquiry, both of them never resorted to any recrimination. Both wanted to bury the past and go forward,' he said.

'The BCCI is fully aware what misbehaviour can do to the game, which is played three-fourth of the year,' he said.

'Whether a player assaults another player or an umpire or even a spectator, it would be viewed seriously and this the board has indeed made very clear. Misbehaviour in future will not be tolerated,' he said.

As to the quantum of punishment, he said the IPL's financial blow to Harbhajan was taken into account and this could be the reason why the board refrained from further financial punishment.

'I have stated in my report what Harbhajan and Sreesanth said to each other. I found them both friendly and their feelings towards each other with regard to the incident (was friendly),' he said.

'You can gather more about it when you read my report as and when it is made public,' Nanavati said.

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