

‘ICC security assessment proves Bangladesh can’t play in India’

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Online Desk : Youth and Sports Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul has said that the International Cricket Council’s (ICC) own security assessment has conclusively demonstrated that there is no viable environment for the Bangladesh national cricket team to participate in the T20 World Cup in India. Speaking at a press conference, Asif Nazrul said the government has already sent two letters regarding Bangladesh’s participation in the tournament and is awaiting responses from the ICC.

In the meantime, he said, the ICC’s security team has sent a letter to the Bangladesh Cricket Board outlining circumstances under which security risks to the Bangladesh team would increase. According to Asif Nazrul, the letter identified three factors that would heighten security concerns: if left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman is included in the Bangladesh squad; if Bangladeshi supporters move around wearing the national team jersey; and if the tournament takes place closer to Bangladesh’s national election, which, the ICC security team warned, could further raise security risks.

Asif Nazrul said these conditions clearly show that Bangladesh cannot realistically be expected to play the T20 World Cup in India. “If the ICC expects us to form a team by excluding our best bowler, to ask our supporters not to wear the Bangladesh national jersey, and to postpone Bangladesh’s national election in order to play cricket, then there can be no expectation more absurd, unrealistic, or unreasonable than this,” he said.

He argued that the prevailing situation in India, marked by what he described as an “extreme communal environment” and sustained anti-Bangladesh sentiment over the past 16 months, has made it impossible for Bangladesh to play cricket there. The concerns surrounding Mustafizur Rahman and the subsequent security letter, he said, have removed any remaining doubt on the matter. Asif Nazrul further said that no single country should have a monopoly over cricket or the fate of an international tournament.

“A sport or a tournament cannot be decided solely on the basis of market management,” he said, adding that if the ICC is truly a global organisation and not subservient to India’s wishes, Bangladesh should be given the opportunity to play the T20 World Cup in Sri Lanka. “We will not make any concessions on this issue,” he said. Providing an update, Asif Nazrul said the ICC’s cricket department has informed Bangladesh that the tournament will not be shifted to Sri Lanka, but that two venues within India—reportedly in Kerala and another location—may be changed. He rejected this proposal, saying that a venue change within India does not address Bangladesh’s core concern.

“If the venue is changed from Kolkata to somewhere else, that does not solve the problem. India remains India,” he said. He added that he had seen media reports claiming Pakistan had offered to host Bangladesh’s matches, though he could not confirm their authenticity. “Holding the tournament in Pakistan would be acceptable, as would the United Arab Emirates,” he said. “But where a player from our team cannot be allowed to play, and where India’s national cricket board bows to extremist communal forces and says that player should not be allowed to play—what greater proof does the ICC need?”

Asif Nazrul said the ICC security team’s letter clearly establishes that there is no safe playing environment for Bangladesh anywhere in India. He added that the government would release a copy of the letter to the media at an appropriate time.