

ICC leaders in Pakistan to secure World Cup participation

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Online Desk: Senior International Cricket Council (ICC) officials have travelled to Pakistan to secure the country's participation in this year's 50-overs World Cup in India which has been in doubt for political reasons. Bilateral cricket has been a casualty of the soured relations between India and Pakistan over the last decade and the neighbours play each other only in multi-team events at neutral venues.

India have declined to tour Pakistan for September's Asia Cup and want the entire tournament be held in a neutral country, which has prompted a tit-for-tat response from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Its chairman Najam Sethi told Reuters this month there was a "very real possibility" of Pakistan boycotting the World Cup in India should PCB's proposal to stage at least some Asia Cup matches on home soil not be accepted.

The PCB said in a statement ICC Chairman Greg Barclay and CEO Geoff Allardice would arrive in Lahore on Tuesday to meet Sethi and others cricket officials during their two-day visit. "That's something that's obviously ongoing at the moment," ICC General Manager Wasim Khan told a virtual press conference on Monday when asked about Pakistan's participation in the World Cup.

"Geoff Allardice, our CEO, and Greg are in Pakistan at the moment discussing a number of areas with the PCB hierarchy. "But that's certainly up to the two countries and the hierarchy within the ICC to discuss them and come to some conclusions," added former PCB CEO Khan.

Indian board secretary Jay Shah heads the Asian Cricket Council, which is likely to reveal the Asia Cup dates and venue this week. Dates and venues for the World Cup, to be played in October-November, will be announced after the World Test Championship (WTC) final in London from June 7.