

Conflicting loyalties: nationalism and religion in India–Pakistan cricket relations

The story of India and Pakistani cricket relations is not a bilateral one but a triangular one. It involves not only the cricketers and administrators of the two countries but also India's huge Muslim population. Their position, and in particular what the majority Hindu community perceive to be their attitude, is part of this three-sided story.

Early personalities and rivalries

Early India–Pakistan cricket relations were shaped by two individuals who went back to the era before the British withdrawal from the subcontinent in 1947. Both had played for India and both hailed from Lahore. The first of them, Lala Amarnath, was one of India's most celebrated and controversial cricketers, the first Indian to score a Test century and the first to be sent home from a tour, following clashes with the team manager on the 1936 tour of England. On the Pakistani side was Abdul Hafeez Kardar, who had played for India before partition, being a team-mate of Amarnath on the 1946 tour of England. Then, Muslims had formed a sizeable proportion of the Indian Test team. Nearly all of them were from Punjab, a northern Indian state, and nearly all of them were from the Indian lower-middle classes. India's partition resulted in the division of Punjab, with Lahore going to Pakistan, and the loss of a great many Muslim cricketers, particularly fast bowlers. Kardar, a strong supporter of Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah and a believer in the two-nation theory that Muslims needed their own homeland, played a huge part in creating and developing Pakistani cricket. He was not only Pakistan's first captain but became an administrator and then a politician.

Appropriately, both Amarnath and Kardar were captains of their countries when the two nations met for their first ever series in India in 1952. The series also marked Pakistan's debut as a Test playing country. The series featured several other firsts. For the first time India won a Test series 2–1,

winning the first and third Tests in Delhi and Mumbai but losing the second Test in Lucknow. That victory set a trend for the Pakistani team, who henceforth always managed to win at least a Test in their first series against an opponent. Two years later, in 1954, on their first visit to England, they won the last Test at the Oval. No other country has ever achieved this on their first visit to England (it took India seven visits to win a Test in England). Pakistan repeated this feat against West Indies three years later, whereas it took India six series to win its first ever Test against West Indies, the victory eventually coming in the Caribbean in 1971.

In his biography of his father, *The Making of a Legend*, Lala Amarnath's son Rajender, giving his father's side of the story, describes how in constructing his win over Pakistan Lala had had to overcome the machinations of his own team members. Lala was in no doubt what caused the defeat in Lucknow. The Indians, probably to make their visitors feel at home, had chosen this as a venue, the city having been one of the great centres of Muslim culture and power. It also had a matting wicket, on which Pakistani players were more used to playing. Their opening bowler, Fazal Mohammed, made the most of it. To add to Indian problems they were without two of their main batsmen, Vijay Hazare and Hemu Adhikari, and their great all-rounder Vinoo Mankad. All three had major roles in the victory in the opening Test in Delhi. Rajender quotes Lala as saying that the players had opted out because they wanted to damage Amarnath, reflecting the bitter internal battles that have always marked subcontinental cricket. These players, Lala alleged, did not 'understand the mental trauma that had affected the displaced players due to Partition. I could because it had affected me.'¹ Whether Lala was right in making this charge is impossible to assess, as all the participants are dead, but the Lucknow crowd did not take kindly to defeat. The Indian team bus was stoned and Lala had to wade into the crowd with a lathi, an Indian stick, to rescue his players.

India rectified matters in the third Test and, according to Lala's version of events, he played a major part in this. On looking at the Mumbai wicket, and anticipating it might help the bowlers due to early morning moisture, he fooled Kardar into thinking the Indians would bat. Kardar won the toss and batted, Lala himself bowled beautifully and Pakistan's first innings score of 186 meant they were never in the game and lost. With the fourth and fifth Tests drawn the Indians held on to their 2-1 series lead.

The Indians went to Pakistan in 1954-55 to play another five Tests. Not only were all the matches dreadfully dull, boring draws, there were several other problems on the tour. Amarnath, now manager, fell out publicly with Kardar and the two men exchanged blows in a Lahore hotel. Earlier the arrangements made for the team at Bahawalpur were so bad

that Amarnath threatened to take the team home. If the cricket on the field was often unmemorable there was many an off-the-field diversion. Vinoo Mankad, captain for the tour, fell in love with a Pakistani singer and was often distracted. Then, just before the last Test, Amarnath went to have tea with Kardar as a goodwill gesture and claimed he had discovered a plot by the umpire Idris Begh. Begh had come into the room and not realising Amarnath was there asked Kardar, ‘Any instructions for tomorrow’s game skipper?’ When Amarnath revealed himself Begh fled and later claimed it was a misunderstanding. Amarnath insisted the umpire be changed and Begh, who had officiated in all the previous four Tests, was replaced by Masood Salahuddin. All this meant neither country was keen to have another visit and in any case, after 1954, political relations between the two countries progressively deteriorated. Pakistan became more closely involved with the American-sponsored alliances, while India became a champion of the non-aligned world and drew closer to the Soviet Union.

Pakistan finally revisited India in the winter of 1960. The series saw all five Tests end in draws, as it had done in 1954–55. But if the cricket was again fairly routine this was the series where the third element in this relationship – Indian Muslims and their relations with Pakistan – came into play. The first Test was played in Mumbai and was a sell-out long before it started. I was a schoolboy in Mumbai and persuaded my parents to let me visit the flat of one of their friends, which happened to overlook the Brabourne stadium where the Test was staged. The route to the friend’s flat passed Churchgate railway station and the entrance to the East Stand of the stadium. On the first day of the Test I walked towards the flat and saw a whole crowd of very Muslim-looking people entering the stands. One passer-by observed the rush of the Muslims and commented, ‘No wonder these *Meibhais* [as some Muslims are called] come crawling out now. It is their team that is playing. No prizes for guessing who they are supporting.’ This bitter remark reflected the feeling of many Hindu Indians during the series – that Muslims in India were all supporting Pakistan. It was this feeling that was to prove the undoing of Abbas Ali Baig, a Muslim.

Baig had come into prominence when Indian cricket desperately needed a saviour during the 1959 Indian tour of England. He played so well for Oxford University at the start of the 1959 season that, when the main Indian batsman Vijay Manjrekar withdrew from the team because of a knee injury, the young Muslim cricketer was drafted in. He proved a splendid choice and was one of the few successes for the Indians on that dismal tour which saw India lose all five Tests. Playing in the fourth Test he repeatedly hooked the bouncers of India’s nemesis Fred Trueman. The fiery Yorkshireman had been a horror figure for Indian cricket ever since the England tour of 1952

when Indian batsmen had failed miserably against him in that series, the nadir coming in the first Test when they were reduced to 0 for 4, still the worst start to an innings in Test history.² Though Baig was hit on the head by a bouncer, and had to retire hurt, he came back to complete a fighting century – joining a select band of Indians who had scored a century in their first Test.

Baig's status as India's up-and-coming batsman was further reinforced the following winter when the Australians under Richie Benaud toured India. Though India lost the series, they won a Test match against Australia for the first time and Baig was a central figure in the Indian batting revival. In the third Test at Mumbai he scored a fifty in each innings and was rewarded by being kissed by a girl who rushed out of the stands to the middle of the pitch to peck him lightly on the cheek. Within a year, however, Baig's cricketing world had been reduced to dust. The reason was his slump in form against Pakistan.

A failure in a non-Pakistan series, or by a Hindu in that series, might have been overlooked. But against Pakistan the natural, albeit libellous, conclusion was that Baig had sabotaged his own chances so that the good of Islam, in the form of the Pakistan cricket team, could triumph. His scores in that series were: 1, 13, 19 and 1. As the magazine *Current* put it, in a review of India and Pakistan Test cricket between 1952 and 1984, 'Confidence was further shaken by a torrent of poison pen letters, telephone calls and telegrams. He opted out of the Indian team after the Kolkata Test.'³ Baig never recovered from the libellous accusations made against him during that series. After the 1960 Pakistan tour he became the forgotten man of Indian cricket and played just two more Tests, seven years later. A number three batsman who looked like becoming one of the Indian greats, Baig's fall was tragic.

The Muslim factor

It is, perhaps, not surprising that India's Muslims should have become part of this cricket story. Of India's population of nearly 1.2 billion, some 120 million are Muslims. The great majority of these are descendants of converts to Islam from Hindu society. A small minority could, possibly, claim descent from the Muslim conquerors that arrived in India in a wave of invasions that started in the Middle Ages. The Muslim conquest of India was a long, gradual process which started in Sind in the eighth century, and ended with the Mughal rule in Delhi between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries. The Muslims never conquered the whole of India, or even ruled over all of it, not even at the height of the Mughal Empire. As D. P. Singhal says in *A*

History of the Indian People, while the Turki Afghan invaders were mainly interested in loot and plunder – destroying innumerable Hindu temples and icons, carrying off immense wealth and appropriating businesses – the later Muslim rulers were woven into the India pattern ‘drawn by the tolerance and responsiveness of the Indian mind and their own capacity for absorption and imitation. Throughout India, an initial clash was followed by fusion and synthesis.’⁴

While many of India’s Muslims are poor and live in ghettos, there are many who have prospered in independent India. India advertises itself as a secular state and Muslims have occupied high positions within politics and civil society. In the years since Indian independence, India has had three Muslim presidents, a Muslim chief of defence staff, several Muslim judges, two Chief Justices of the Indian Supreme Court, a great number of Muslim politicians and ministers in central and state politics, and several senior Muslim civil servants. In addition, two of India’s cricket captains have been Muslims and several prominent Muslims have played for India, including two of its most loved cricketers, the Nawab of Pataudi junior and Salim Durrani.

Their heyday came during that seventeen-year period between 1961 and 1978 when India and Pakistan did not play each other. Such breaks in cricket are not entirely unknown. Australia played its first ever Test with New Zealand in 1946, then did not play their neighbours again until 1973. But in this case of India and Pakistan wider political issues were involved. In 1965 the two nations went to war over Kashmir, and in 1971 Pakistan and India were again at war, a conflict that eventually led to the division of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh.

It is interesting to speculate how the popularity and evident appeal of either Pataudi or Durrani would have fared had they failed against Pakistan. Pataudi, or ‘Tiger’ as he is more popularly known in India, arrived on the Indian cricket scene in 1961 after exploits at Winchester School, Oxford University and Sussex and seemed to recall Indian cricket’s first great superstar, K. S. Ranjitsinhji. His father had played for both England and India and had captained India. Pataudi junior did much to rescue Indian cricket from the ‘dull dogs’ tag it had earned in the 1950s. He led India for much of the 1960s and there was always something challenging and romantic about his cricket, as there was with Salim Durrani. Salim is a magical name in India, the name that the Mughal Emperor Akbar gave his son from his Hindu wife. Though Salim took the name Jahangir when he became Emperor, it was as Prince Salim that he created some of the most enduring Mughal legends; legends strong enough to become translated into films like *Anarkali* and the epic *Mughal-E-Azam*. The name Salim evoked romance, valour and recklessness and Durrani’s cricket symbolised all that. As N. S. Ramswami was

to write in *Indian Cricket*, 'Durrani broke hearts not records'.⁵ Handsome enough to be lured by films (in which he was not very successful), there was always something glamorous about his cricket. As an orthodox left-arm spinner he was not in the class of the great Bishan Bedi, but he bonded with the crowd, particularly when batting. 'We want six, we want six, Salim', the Indian crowd would shout, and sure enough Salim Durrani tried to oblige.

By the time India resumed cricketing relations with Pakistan in the form of a tour of the country in the winter of 1978–79, Pataudi and Durrani had long retired. The only Muslim in the side was Syed Kirmani, and he was so established as a wicketkeeper that few would dare to ascribe his failures to religious feelings. This phase of India–Pakistan cricket was to see the rise of great fast bowlers in Pakistan who destroyed India's batting. The Indian visit to Pakistan also marked the end of the four great spinners who had dominated Indian cricket for much of the late 1960s and 1970s: B. S. Bedi, E. A. S. Prasanna, S. Venkataraghavan and B. S. Chandrasekhar. The Pakistani batsmen treated them so roughly they were never a force again. In 1978–79 India lost a three Test series 2–0. The only consolation was that the series saw the emergence of Kapil Dev, an all-rounder who could also bowl fast and who was to play a dominant part in Indian cricket over the next decade. But although he was a vital part of the Indian team that went to Pakistan in 1982–83, the Indians lost three of the five Tests, two by an innings, one by ten wickets. Their batsmen were put to the sword by Pakistan's Imran Khan who, on supposedly lifeless subcontinental wickets, took forty wickets at a staggeringly low cost of 13.95 runs each. While the Indians did not know how to cope with Imran, the Pakistani batsmen could not stop making runs. They rarely had to bat more than once in a match and their scores in the first four Tests were 485, 452, 652 and 581 for 3 declared.

Both defeats led to changes in the Indian captaincy. Bedi lost the job after 1979, and Sunil Gavaskar, who had taken over from Bedi, lost his after the 1983 series. But in between these defeats Gavaskar did lead the Indians to their first series victory at home since Amarnath's inaugural series in 1952. This victory in the winter of 1979–80 by 2–0 was convincing enough, though the tour was marked by allegations that Pakistani cricketers had taken their eye off the ball by partying with Bollywood starlets. During the controversial third Test in Mumbai, which was the first of the two Indian victories, there were Pakistani allegations of Indian skulduggery with the pitch. This Test had seen the lone Muslim in the side, Kirmani, put on ninety-five for the seventh wicket with Kapil Dev, helping India reach 334 in the first innings and playing a crucial part in its victory.

The controversy arose from the nature of the pitch. The scrupulously objective reports in *Wisden* admitted the pitch presented problems from the

first day, so much so that Gavaskar, who had decided to bat on winning the toss, was out for four by a ball that ‘stopped’ (did not bounce as he expected due to the poor quality of the pitch). The Indians secured their initial advantage because they won the toss, but the Pakistani failure was caused by the number of dubious lbw decisions given by the umpires against their batsmen. Four of them were out lbw in the second innings, as against only one, Viswanath, in the Indian second innings. *Wisden*, describing Miandad’s lbw, said: ‘considering that the ball was turning so readily, he might have been unfortunate to be given out.’⁶

The Pakistani cricketers also claimed that the ground authorities in Mumbai had doctored the pitch after the match had started. Not long after the match finished the following graffiti appeared on the walls of certain parts of Mumbai. It read: ‘INDIA PLAYS WITH THIRTEEN PEOPLE – ELEVEN PLAYERS AND TWO UMPIRES.’ The graffiti had appeared mostly in the Muslim areas of Mumbai. For some Indians, the fact that the views of some Indian Muslims appeared to agree with those of the Pakistani cricket team raised all the old doubts. By the time I visited Mumbai almost a year later I not only saw the graffiti but became aware that the entire series had reopened many of the arguments I had personally experienced back in 1960–61. Then the debate had taken place behind closed doors. Now it was the subject of cover stories. Very simply it was: When India played Pakistan, what was the position of the large Indian Muslim minority? Did they support India, Pakistan or remain neutral? Yet despite this backdrop, cricket between the two nations continued. Pakistan’s visit to India in 1983–84 saw all three Tests drawn and India’s return visit in the winter of 1984 was cut short after two drawn Tests, by the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi.

The impact of one-day cricket and the 1996 World Cup

In the meantime, a different dimension was coming into play, created by the rise of one-day cricket. It was India’s unexpected victory in the 1983 World Cup which triggered this. The victory owed much to India’s captain Kapil Dev and the team he had forged and the result was that India, supposedly devoted to Test cricket, suddenly placed enormous emphasis on the one-day format. Furthermore, India leveraged their victory to stage the World Cup outside England for the first time.

In 1987, India and Pakistan jointly hosted the World Cup, and while neither country reached the final it showed how the cricket administrators of the two nations could work together. By then, for various reasons, there had been a growth of one-day matches, an expansion that was to increase during the 1990s. This saw one-day series between India and Pakistan in

such unlikely cricket places as Sharjah, Singapore and Toronto. The Indians call these ‘masala’ matches, ‘spice’ matches – something made-up and not quite real. Sharjah had started as a venue for benefit matches for Indian and Pakistani cricketers who have no English-style benefit system. Toronto provided a North American haven for India versus Pakistan matches, often not possible for political reasons in the subcontinent. Singapore and other tournaments represented the commercial opportunities that one-day cricket provided to those seeking to reach the new emerging Indian middle classes.

Many of these mini-series were sponsored by firms such as Singer and Pepsi, with extensive interests in South Asia, who saw the marketing advantages of being associated with Indian cricket. Rupert Murdoch’s Star television and Disney’s ESPN were also keen to reach this important economic group. With estimates that every second person watching cricket in the world is an Indian, this was a market worth cultivating. All this stimulated the ambitions of the region’s cricket administrators, illustrated in the decision to stage the 1996 World Cup in the Indian subcontinent. While the decision was controversial, the event proved a marketing bonanza for the game there.

Just as India’s victory in 1983 had brought the World Cup to the subcontinent, so the springboard for its return in 1996 was Pakistan winning the 1992 World Cup held in Australia. However, the way the 1996 tournament was secured for South Asia and then run was a vivid illustration of the partnership forged by its various cricket administrators. The crucial meeting was at Lord’s in 1993, in what is seen as the most unpleasant meeting ever of the ICC. England came to the meeting confident it had a gentleman’s agreement to host the 1996 tournament. Throughout the meeting they behaved as if this was an old boys’ gathering. In contrast India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, bidding jointly for the competition, had looked up the rules, wheeled in politicians and lawyers and treated the event like a political election contest. They targeted the ICC’s Associate Members. In the past they had been shunned by cricket’s big nations. Each of the associates was promised £100,000, £40,000 more than England offered. And after their victory, led by the Indians, the subcontinent made the most of the prize they had won.

At that stage, unlike the Olympic Games, football’s World Cup and European Football Championships, the cricket World Cup was not owned by the international authority that runs the game. The country staging it owned the competition. In five previous World Cups the host country had made little money. The 1996 World Cup changed everything.

The subcontinental alliance began exploiting the competition as never before. They auctioned the television rights for a then staggering US\$14 million, using an unknown agent, Mark Mascarenhas, an Indian born in

Bangalore who was based in the USA. The UK rights fetched \$7.5 million, compared to \$1 million in 1992. In addition, the tournament had official sponsors for almost every conceivable product, including the official World Cup chewing gum. Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola both wanted to be the official drink supplier. Coke won by paying \$3.8 million, more than Benson and Hedges had paid the Australians to be the main sponsor for the 1992 World Cup. The main sponsors Wills, the Indian tobacco offshoot of BAT, paid four times as much: \$12 million. The organisers knew the competition meant money. They could keep all the profits, once they had met expenses. This meant paying £250,000 to each of the competing Test countries, though the amount did not even cover the expenses of some of the teams. But India and Pakistan made a profit of almost \$50 million. During the same year, the 1996 European Soccer Championship in England saw UEFA, owners of the competition, make a profit of £69 million, while England, the hosts, lost £1.7 million.

Not all subcontinental countries financially benefited from the 1996 World Cup. The Sri Lankans were co-hosts with India and Pakistan but, worried that the competition might make a financial loss, did not agree to underwrite the costs and did not therefore participate in any of the profits. The Sri Lankan consolation was that their team won the competition. India, drawn in a tough group featuring Australia, appeared to have done all the hard work when they won their quarter-final in Bangalore against Pakistan. But they came badly unstuck in their semi-final against Sri Lanka. Not only did they lose but, with defeat imminent, the Kolkata crowd became so incensed they threw bottles and set seats on fire, and Clive Lloyd, the match referee, abandoned the match, giving Sri Lanka the game by default. However, all this did nothing to derail the bond the cricket administrators of India and Pakistan had formed. The countries could go to war and their people found it difficult to visit each other, but in cricket they could come together and make money.

Dalmiya and power struggles

The Pakistani administrators readily acknowledged that the money machine was driven by Jagmohan Dalmiya. Known to all as Jugu, his official title was Convener of the Pakistan–India–Sri Lanka Organising Committee (PILCOM). Dalmiya hails from the Marwari community of India, whose business skills are both feared and respected. By making a financial success of the World Cup Dalmiya furthered his international ambitions and ensured the India–Pakistan coalition was intact as he sought world power. The suggestion that he should go for the top job in cricket had come just

before the World Cup and was made by Anna Puchi Hewa, President of Sri Lankan cricket. As they stood in Kolkata's Taj Bengal hotel, the sumptuous Kolkata hotel just opposite the city's zoo, he said to Dalmiya: 'We should have an Asian as the next President of the International Cricket Council.'⁷ The idea had been triggered by Australia's refusal on security grounds to go to Colombo to play their World Cup group matches. The ICC could not force Australia to go and the Asian organisers were furious yet could do nothing. The opening ceremony in Kolkata was only days away and the Asians felt it was time they took over from the old powers, England and Australia.

The idea was immediately supported by Joe Bazalio, representative of Gibraltar, and Dalmiya ran his election as if it was an American presidential race, energetically wooing the associates. But despite Dalmiya twice winning the vote of the ICC members, the old powers were reluctant to accept him. The result was a brown versus white (and black) battle with England, Australia, New Zealand and West Indies against the subcontinent. It was so bitter it created scars that have never healed. The old powers felt that the new kids on the block were not following gentlemanly ways or doing anything about cricketing corruption, which had begun to rear its head. The Asians resented the fact that England and Australia would not accept them as equals. As one Asian official put it to me: 'We do not want to come to Lord's for the ICC meetings and just nod our heads like little schoolboys as we used to. Now we come with fully prepared plans and want to be heard as equals.'⁸ This war was to see many battles. The first took place at the annual ICC meeting at Lord's in July 1996. The former West Indies batsman Sir Clyde Walcott was coming to the end of his term of office as chairman. Dalmiya stood for the chairmanship, as did Malcolm Gray from Australia and Krish Mackerdhuj of South Africa. The first round saw Dalmiya ahead of Gray and Mackerdhuj, with thirteen associates and three Test countries, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, voting for him. Mackerdhuj dropped out and in the second round Dalmiya got the vote of a fourth Test playing country, Zimbabwe, although South Africa abstained. Dalmiya also received more associate votes, eighteen in all, and was ahead of Gray. But the ICC rules required a majority of Test playing countries and he did not have the support of England and Australia, who had the veto. The rules were not very clear. The Indians, having taken legal advice, argued that the election should be decided by a simple majority. Walcott countered by saying a chairman required the backing of a two-thirds majority of the Test playing countries: six out of nine. It was clear the old powers feared what a Dalmiya chairmanship might do to the game, whilst the Asians saw racism at play.

Not long after this inconclusive battle, Eshan Mani, the Pakistani representative, David Richards, chief executive, Dalmiya himself and Sir John Anderson, representing New Zealand, flew to Singapore. It was agreed Dalmiya would be chairman but of a restructured ICC. It would now be an incorporated body, with an executive board and other committees, and Dalmiya's title would be President not Chairman. The old colonial powers felt they were fencing in the new boy. Mani's suggestion of rotating the presidency was accepted. So Dalmiya would be succeeded by Gray. But the big question was: How long would Dalmiya serve? Walcott had had three years, Dalmiya wanted three. Anderson and Richards said no: only two. The matter was only resolved a few months later in Kuala Lumpur when Mani successfully proposed that both Dalmiya and Gray should serve three years and that thereafter the term of presidency should be two.

While all this negotiation was taking place off the field of play, on the field India–Pakistan cricket relations in the late 1980s and early 1990s were often rocky. The one-day matches in Sharjah ran into trouble, with the Indians having the worst of the largely expatriate Pakistani crowd and the results on the field. The most searing defeat for them came in 1986. A brilliant innings by Javed Miandad meant that Pakistan, requiring four to win, won with Miandad hitting the last ball of the match, bowled by the hapless Chetan Sharma, for six. Two years later, in the winter of 1986–87, Imran Khan led Pakistan to their first series win in India, winning the last and most gripping Test of an otherwise dull series. The Indians did manage to avoid defeat when they went to Pakistan two years later and drew all four Tests. The series was more memorable for the use of neutral umpires for the first time in Tests, and the debut of sixteen-year-old Sachin Tendulkar. Until then Pakistan had rarely been a stage for great Indian cricket but the tour marked the start of the career of India's, and one of the world's, greatest cricketers.

Resumption of Test matches

That series also marked another interruption to the two neighbours playing each other at home. They met in World Cups and one-day matches in far-distant lands but they did not meet in a Test series for a decade, until the winter of 1998. By this time Sachin Tendulkar had come and gone as captain and Mohammad Azharuddin had once again taken over. Azharuddin, a Muslim, had led India against Pakistan before, but this was the first time in a Test series. For a time it seemed the series might not take place. The threat of violence from Hindu extremists had cancelled tours in 1991, 1993 and 1994. As in 1991, when the pitch at Wankhede was dug up, this time it was

the one at Kotla but, with the government determined to resist fanatics, the tour went ahead amidst unprecedented security.

The first Test at Chennai saw Pakistan set India a target of 273. The match looked all over at 82 for 5 but among the unbeaten five was Tendulkar. His 136 nearly brought victory, India failing by 12 runs. The second Test at Kotla not only brought India victory but made history. Pakistan, set 419, had made a good start, getting to 101 for no loss at lunch on the fourth day. But after lunch the Indian spin bowler Anil Kumble changed ends, from the Football Stand End to the Pavilion End. In nineteen overs and three balls he took all ten wickets, only the second time since Jim Laker (against Australia in 1956) that a Test bowler had done so.

Although this marked the end of the two-Test series, India and Pakistan played a third match in what was billed as the Asian Test championship. This match showed the destructive passions India–Pakistan cricket can generate. India, after making a great start by reducing Pakistan to 26 for 6 on the first day, had a fight on its hands, being set 278 to win in their fourth innings. How explosive this fight could be was soon demonstrated. There occurred two incidents which ignited the Kolkata crowd and shamed Indian cricket. Tendulkar, on 9, hit a ball to the boundary and in going for a third – his second had taken him past 5,000 Test runs – he collided with Pakistan's Shoaib Akhtar at the bowler's end and was run out. The crowd felt Akhtar had deliberately blocked him and forced the game to come to a stop. Tendulkar and Dalmiya, the ICC President, had to appeal to them before play could resume. But the crowd was on edge and on the final morning, when their hero Sourav Ganguly failed and with India facing certain defeat on 251 for 9, they rioted. The police evicted all the spectators and, with only about 200 VIPs, officials and journalists present, Pakistan won by 26 runs. After Kumble's deeds at Delhi, the behaviour of the fans and the incompetence of the authorities represented a sad and dishonourable episode for Indian cricket. The defeat also meant that in effect two successive Pakistani visits to India had resulted in their going home victors. But the tide was about to turn for India and it was Ganguly, the man at the centre of the drama in Kolkata, who engineered it.

It was another three years before India and Pakistan resumed Test cricket relations. Ganguly led the side to Pakistan and did what no other Indian captain had previously done there, namely win both a Test *and a Test series*. Injury meant Ganguly could not captain the side during the first Test at Multan and Rahul Dravid led the team, but for the Indians the match set all sorts of records. For the first time in twenty attempts India won a Test in Pakistan and Virendra Sehwag became the first Indian to score 300 runs in

a Test innings. India lost the second Test but Ganguly returned to lead India to victory in the third.

There have been three further series since then, with India winning one at home, drawing the other and Pakistan winning one at home. But unlike previous encounters where draws have predominated – 64 per cent of all Tests between the two sides have been drawn – more recent series have been more result-oriented, with both sides willing to go for victory rather than settle for draws. However, there has been no series since the last one in India in 2007–08, with terrorism casting a vast shadow. The terror attack on the visiting Sri Lankan team in early 2009 has put Pakistan out of bounds for international cricket. That attack came in the wake of the terror strike on Mumbai in the winter of 2008, organised by groups from Pakistan. All this has so soured relations between the two countries that it makes any cricket contact impossible. So much so that the 2010 IPL cricket season saw no Pakistani players take part.

Relations between the Boards of Control

The exclusion of the players created much controversy in India, leading to televised debates on the subject, with some IPL franchise-holders expressing unhappiness about the decision. They included the Bollywood superstar Shahrukh Khan, who owns an IPL franchise. However, with Khan being a Muslim, his comments in favour of Pakistani players so incensed Hindu fanatics that they attempted a boycott of his film *My Name is Khan* in Mumbai, the centre of the Bollywood film industry.

One reason for the IPL exclusion of Pakistani players was the breakdown in relations between the two Boards. Indeed, matters had reached such a pitch that Indian Board officials privately told the President of Pakistan, Asif Zardari, who is also the Patron of the country's cricket, that the situation could only improve if he sacked Ijaz Butt, the head of Pakistan cricket. One very high-placed Indian Board official told me: 'We have approached the Pakistani President and told him that, for the sake of sub-continental cricket, he should exercise his power as patron and sack Butt. Without Butt's removal our two boards cannot work together. In the past, despite political problems between our two countries, and even with the armies squaring up to each other, the two cricket boards worked together. But now we cannot because of Butt.'⁹

Butt and the Indians had never had good relations. They had differences dating back to 1987, but the present crisis originated in early 2009 when, following the terrorist strike against the Sri Lankan cricketers in Lahore,

the ICC decided that Pakistan would not stage 2011 World Cup matches. They were meant to host the tournament along with India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The fourteen matches due to be played in Pakistan were thus reallocated, with India taking the lion's share.

The Indians have argued that, had they not done so, the World Cup would have been moved from the subcontinent to Australia and New Zealand, the reserve venues for the 2011 competition. But Butt has never forgiven the Indians for what he feels was an act of betrayal and an instance of India taking advantage of the terrorist strike in Lahore. He made public and private comments blaming the Indians for isolating Pakistan's cricket and forcing it to play all its home matches overseas.

The breakdown in relationship between the two Boards is said to be so complete that I am told the Indian cricket officials are not on speaking terms with Butt. It also led to Lalit Modi, the Indian Board official who organises the IPL, writing to David Morgan, the chairman of the ICC, registering a complaint against Butt and demanding that he be brought before the ethics commission of cricket's governing body for damaging his reputation and that of the Indian Board.

This followed public exchanges between Butt and Modi. In December 2009 Modi declared no Pakistani player would play in the IPL on the grounds that they had failed to obtain their visas before the deadline for confirmation of participation. Butt immediately contested Modi's version saying, 'The players have applied for visas but the clearance hasn't come from the Indian side. The ball is not in our court.'¹⁰ The issues concerned were not insoluble and from talking to Indian officials it is clear that their antagonism for Butt played no small part in keeping the Pakistani players out.

As this is being written, with the IPL under intense scrutiny by both the Indian Board and the Indian authorities, and Modi, the creator of the IPL, forced out of the organisation and asked to explain himself for alleged financial irregularities, it is hard to see how the issues can be resolved. But given the way these two countries have kept their cricket relations going when so much between them does not work, the hope must be that before too long the cricket will resume.

NOTES

- 1 Rajender Amarnath, *The Making of a Legend* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2004), p. 192.
- 2 Mihir Bose, *The Magic of Indian Cricket: Cricket and Society in India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 227.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- 4 D. P. Singhal, *A History of the Indian People* (London: Methuen, 1983), p. 157.

- 5 Bose, *The Magic of Indian Cricket*, p. 213.
- 6 Ibid., p. 202.
- 7 Mihir Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2002), p. 441.
- 8 Ibid., p. 443.
- 9 Mihir Bose, 'Pakistan Snub Raises Fears of IPL Terrorism', *Independent*, 26 February 2010.
- 10 Ibid.