



## India slammed for one-venue 'farce' in Champions Trophy



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India refused to travel to hosts Pakistan for the 50-over tournament, because of security concerns and political tensions, and are playing all their matches at Dubai International Cricket Stadium. A stand-off between the rivals lasted for more than a month, leaving plans for the tournament in jeopardy until the Pakistan board finally agreed a compromise with the International Cricket Council.

The deal means Pakistan will play at a neutral venue in any ICC tournament hosted by India until 2027. The decision was reached after Jay Shah - secretary of the powerful Board of Control for Cricket in India - took over as ICC chairman in December at the headquarters of the sports' governing body in Dubai. "I feel very uncomfortable about the way that India is being treated at the moment," former England cricketer and popular broadcaster Jonathan Agnew told ABC Sport. This is wrong. If you're going to play an international tournament you can't pick and choose where you play and where you're not going to play.

"I don't see how long this can carry on for? It makes a farce of these tournaments." The playing and pitch conditions in Dubai and the venues in Pakistan - Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi - are drastically different. There has been no dew in Dubai in India's first two wins with the highest total being 244 when Rohit Sharma's team chased down 242 against Pakistan on a sluggish pitch.

Totals in Pakistan have been much higher with dew also playing a part, notably when Australia's Josh Inglis hit an unbeaten 120 to chase down a tournament-record 352 against England at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium. What about the advantage India have in playing only in Dubai - which seems to me to be a hard-to-quantify advantage, but an undeniable advantage?" former England captain Michael Atherton asked Nasser Hussain on the Sky Sports Podcast. "They're playing at just one venue. Therefore, the selection, you know, can focus in on the conditions in Dubai."