

DEALING WITH DOPING

Cricket bodies must keep the game free of performance enhancing drugs

Sport is expected to operate at a higher moral plane where the effort is honest and transparency remains an abiding principle. It is a utopian ideal leaning on pure performance, copious sweat and relentless training. But in a practical world greased with greed, besides match-fixing, there is another terrible offence: ingestion of performance-enhancing drugs. Athletes like Canada's Ben Johnson were labelled as drug-cheats and rightly denied their Olympic medals. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), since its inception in 1999, has imposed stringent measures so that sport stays drug-free. In India, WADA's rules have been enforced by the Government-run National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) and almost all sports federations had fallen in line except one behemoth - the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). But that aberration was erased as the BCCI accepted NADA's supervision following a meeting between its CEO Rahul Johri, General Manager Saba Karim and Sports Ministry officials led by Sports Secretary Radhey Shyam Julaniya. Indian cricket's governing body finally agreed to subject its players to NADA's testing routines. Before its turn-around, the BCCI had resisted NADA's intervention. The main objection pertained to the 'whereabouts' clause, which made it mandatory for a player to reveal where he would be on a daily basis. The need for privacy was offered as an excuse.

Earlier, the BCCI had its in-house dope-tests but it only lent credence to the allegations about conflict of interest. The issue came to a boil when Prithvi Shaw was given a back-dated eight-month suspension after he tested positive for a banned drug, Terbutaline. The 19-year-old batsman, who was checked in February, claimed that the substance was present in an over-the-counter cough syrup. Shaw's excuse and the BCCI's quick acceptance of his self-medication, bred scepticism. It is either naivety or a classic cover-up from an Indian cricketer, who had been advised about the chemicals that have to be avoided even for therapeutic purposes. The silver-lining is that the episode hastened the BCCI's move into the NADA's ambit and also cleared the decks for the Indian women's cricket team to compete in the 2022 Commonwealth Games at Birmingham. With the BCCI belatedly allowing NADA to monitor its domestic cricketers, by extension the International Cricket Council too has finally come under the WADA's unerring gaze. In these hyper-kinetic times, it is a fallacy to stress that cricket is just a reflection of skill and that drug-enhanced muscular efficiency cannot influence match

results. Sport has to be a level playing-field and it is finally one with the willow-game subjecting itself to universal drug-testing rules.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Enhance		Boost, surge, increase, augment, snowball, proliferate
Transparency		Translucency, lucidity, pellucidity, limpidness
Abiding		Enduring, lasting, persisting, long lasting
Utopian		Unworldly, non-materialistic, immaterial
Lean		Slant, incline, bend, till, slope, cant, angle
Copious		Plenty, plethora, rife, myriad, umpteen
Relentless		Persistent, continuing, lasting, unabated
Grease		Lubricate, oil, smear with, make slippery
Greed		Avarice, greediness, acquisitiveness, covetousness
Inception		Establishment, foundation, inauguration, opening
Stringent		Strict, exacting, rigorous, draconian
Behemoth		Enormous, especially a large and powerful organization
Aberration		Anomaly, deviation, divergence, variation
Erase		Destroy, wipe out, obliterate, eradicate
Resist		Withstand, hold out against, combat, counter
Intervention		Involvement, intercession, interceding
Pertain		Concern, relate to, applicable to
Whereabouts		Location, position, site, place, situation
Mandatory		Compulsory, obligatory, binding
Reveal		Disclose, evince, divulge, let out, betray, unveil
Credence		Acceptance, belief, faith, confidence, traction, reliance
Allegations		Claim, assertion, declaration, contention, plea
Bail (n)		A state of excitement
Scepticism		Doubt, dubiousness, a pinch of salt
Naivety		Innocence, simplicity, naturalness, lack of guide
Silver lining		Hopeful side of a situation
Hasten		Hurry, hurtle, dash, dart, streak
Ambit		Scope, extent, bounds, confines, range, breadth
Hyper kinetic		Frenetic, energy, activity
Fallacy		Misconception, misbelief, delusion, misapprehension

HONG KONG ON THE BRINK**As protesters make new demands, the prospects of a quick settlement recede**

Protests broke out in Hong Kong two months ago when local authorities proposed a Bill that would have allowed them to extradite suspects to places with which the city doesn't have extradition treaties, including mainland China. The Bill was suspended amid public anger, but the protests, now entering the tenth week, continue to rock the city, affecting the economy and setting off an unprecedented political crisis. The police have tried several tactics to rein in the protesters and restore normalcy in the city, a major Asian financial hub and business centre. They have fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets. Dozens have been arrested, some on riot charges. Still, the city has been on a standstill. Public transportation is hit. People, from construction workers to teachers and lawyers, have joined the demonstrations. The protesters ransacked the local legislative council building and occupied parts of the airport, which led to the cancellation of several flights. Graffiti appeared across the city calling for "a revolution" and "liberation" of Hong Kong. Despite warnings from both the city government and Beijing, the protesters don't seem to be in a mood to leave the streets.

It is no longer about the extradition Bill as a leadership-less group keeps coming up with new and varied demands. Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, has said the Bill is dead. The protesters first wanted the city government to formally withdraw the Bill. Then they wanted Ms. Lam, the architect of the Bill, to go. Now, the protesters say they won't end the rallies even if Ms. Lam quits. They have made a host of demands - withdraw the Bill, order an independent probe into the clashes between protesters and police, drop all charges on the arrested protesters and start the process to reform the electoral system. Ms. Lam, perhaps wary of being seen to be weak in the face of mounting pressure, has ruled out any more concessions. For her, the top priority is to restore order, while Beijing, with its patience wearing thin, has hinted that it could interfere to end the crisis. Both the city government and the protesters share responsibility for the crisis Hong Kong is in today. Ms. Lam could have officially withdrawn the Bill instead of merely pronouncing it dead. Her reluctance to do so even after the Bill was suspended only fanned the flames. The protesters on the other side took an excessively provocative path when they ransacked the city Parliament and attacked the police. What could have been a peaceful protest against an extradition Bill led to the biggest political crisis Hong Kong has seen since it was handed over to China by the British colonialists. At least now, the focus of both the local leadership and protesters should shift to

finding common ground and a peaceful settlement. It's in everyone's interest to arrest the slide of Hong Kong.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
On the brink		Very near
Break out		Spread, go round
Extradite		Deport, hand over, send back, repatriate
Set off		Start, kick off
Unprecedented		Unparalleled, unequalled, unrivalled
Rein		Controlled, harness, curb, hinder, impede, restrain
Riot		Uproar, rampage, furore, tumult, commotion
Demonstration		Exhibition, presentation, display, illustration
Ransack		Plunder, pillage, steal from, raid, rob
Liberation		Freeing, release, discharge, deliverance, salvation
Come up with		Produce a new idea
Pronounce		Aver, avow, assert, declare, beral, proclaim
Provocative		Annoying, irritating, exasperating, infuriating, provoking