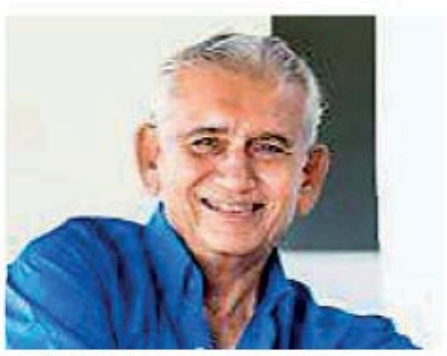
Past cricketers back new Sri Lanka Cricket Bill

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AI Summary


Michael Tissera


Mahela Jayawardena


Rangana Herath


Champika Ramanayake


Roshan Mahanama


Kumar Sangakkara


Sidath Wettimuny

Trace-it

- **File intervening petitions in support of Bill in Special Determination hearing**
- **Say Sri Lankan cricket should be freed from club administration, or from politicised culture of cricket clubs**

Several veteran cricketers, through their lawyers, yesterday stated before the Supreme Court that "Sri Lankan cricket" should be freed from club administration, or from the politicised culture of cricket clubs.

The players also pointed out that, in order to further consolidate the achievements of cricketers both locally and internationally, an independent administrative unit should be established as stated in the draft.

The cricketers made these submissions while appearing as intervening petitioners in the petitions filed before the Supreme Court challenging the new Bill promulgated by the Government to govern, control, regulate, promote, and develop cricket in Sri Lanka.

These matters were presented by filing intervening petitions against six petitions filed by a group, including former Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) Head of Legal Affairs Attorney-at-Law Dr. Chanaka Senanayake, seeking an order declaring certain clauses of the Cricket Bill unconstitutional.

The Bill seeks to establish SLC to govern, control, regulate, promote, develop, and administer cricket in Sri Lanka; to promote the growth of cricket through the principles of good governance, integrity, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and equal opportunities; to protect the welfare of all participants and to protect cricket from corruption and other improper activities; and to provide for the establishment, powers, and functions of SLC and for matters connected therewith. The Bill was published in the Government Gazette on 28 September, and these intervention petitions were filed against the petitions stating that the provisions of the Bill, as published in the said Gazette, were unconstitutional.



Test players, including Michael Tissera, Mahela Jayawardena, Rangana Herath, Champika Ramanayake, Roshan Mahanama, Kumar Sangakkara, and Sidath Wettimuny, and SLC Transformation Committee Chairman Eran Wickramaratne, on the advice of Sudath Perera Associates.

Presenting arguments in the petitions filed challenging the Bill, President's Counsel Navin Marapana and other lawyers stated that certain clauses in the Bill are detrimental to the game of cricket.

He also pointed out that Section 32 of the proposed Bill provides that only "A" and "B" category sports clubs and provincial cricket associations are entitled to vote in SLC General Assembly meetings.

The proposed Bill will see a majority concentration of voting rights in the Western Province, while sports associations in other districts outside the Western Province will lose that right.

In addition, it was stated that the President is appointed the "Patron" of SLC through Section 28 of the relevant Bill, and that under Section 22, the Sports Ministry Secretary and the National Sports Council Chairman will be ex officio members of the board that will select independent directors for the Cricket Board.

The petitioners argued that such provisions undermine the independence of the SLC administration and violate the fundamental right to equality before the law guaranteed by Article 12(1) of the Constitution.

Accordingly, the petitioners have also requested the Supreme Court to rule that the relevant sections violate fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution.

On behalf of the intervenient petitioner cricketers, on the advice of Sudath Perera Associates, President's Counsel Saliya Peiris, M.A. Sumanthiran, Ali Sabry, Uditha Egalahewa, Palitha Kumarasinghe, Faiszer Musthapha, Sanjeewa Jayawardena, Harsha Amarasekera, and Chandaka Jayasundara presented arguments in favour of the Bill, stating that the clauses of the Bill are constitutional.

They pointed out that this does not violate the Constitution and that Sri Lankan cricket should be taken out of the sports clubs. They pointed out that the administration of Sri Lankan cricket clubs is politicised and that sports club representatives are not acting for the betterment of cricket but as politicians with the aim of coming to power next.

Here, the Supreme Court judges asked the petitioners why such a law should be established by treating cricket as a separate sport. They also asked whether other sports in Sri Lanka are treated in this way.

The lawyers of the intervenient petitioners who responded stated that, considering the corruption and irregularities in cricket and the deteriorating state of the game in the country, it would be more appropriate to establish such an independent administrative unit. Since cricket has succeeded on the international stage compared to other sports, and attracts a large audience and circulates money, it is imperative to make it an independent unit, they said.

After hearing the arguments of both sides for three days, the Supreme Court decided to forward its opinion to the Speaker.

President's Counsel Navin Marapana, Kaushalya Navaratne, and Shiran Lakthilaka appeared on behalf of the petitioners.

Nine President's Counsel appeared for the intervenient petitioners, as advised by Sudath Perera Associates.

Deputy Solicitor General Nirmalan Wigneswaran appeared on behalf of the Attorney General.