

BEFORE THE ECB ANTI-CORRUPTION TRIBUNAL

**IN THE MATTER OF THE CHARGES BROUGHT BY THE CRICKET
REGULATOR AGAINST MOGHEES AHMED**

B E T W E E N :

**THE CRICKET REGULATOR OF THE ENGLAND
AND WALES CRICKET BOARD LIMITED**

Regulator

- and -

MOGHEES AHMED

Participant

DECISION ON SANCTION

Tribunal: Tim O’Gorman (Chair)
Chris Tickle
Maurice Holmes

Representation: *For the Cricket Regulator*
Chris Walsh – Partner, Onside Law, solicitors for the Cricket Regulator
George Cottle – Associate, Onside Law

For Moghees Ahmed
Ashley Cukier – Counsel for Mr Ahmed
Peter Nunn – Partner, Mishcon de Reya, solicitors for Mr Ahmed

Administrator: Anna Thomas – Senior Case Manager, Sport Resolutions

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. In this Tribunal's decision of 14 March 2025 (the "**Liability Decision**"), we found that all four charges (the "**Charges**") brought by the Cricket Regulator ("**CR**") under the ECB Anti-Corruption Code (the "**ECB Code**") against Mr Moghees Ahmed, an ECB-registered cricket agent, were proved to our comfortable satisfaction. In consequence of the Liability Decision, the ECB suspended Mr Ahmed's ECB Agent registration, preventing him from participating in any cricket-related activity falling within the ECB Code's definition of "Ineligibility", effective from 26 March 2025.
2. Further to the Liability Decision, we are required to determine the appropriate sanction to impose upon Mr Ahmed.
3. We are grateful to both parties for their comprehensive written submissions on sanction. The CR filed its submissions on 1 April 2025, and Mr Ahmed filed his submissions on 7 April 2025. Both parties indicated that they were content for the issue of sanction to be determined without a further oral hearing, and instead to determine the issue on the basis of written submissions alone.
4. This decision is intended to be read alongside, and in conjunction with, the Liability Decision. The factual findings contained in the Liability Decision are adopted for present purposes, and nothing in this decision is intended to augment or vary the reasoning of the Liability Decision. Capitalised terms used in this decision shall bear the same meanings as provided within the Liability Decision, unless indicated otherwise.

B. SUMMARY OF THE DECISION ON SANCTION

5. For the reasons set out below, the Tribunal is comfortably satisfied that the sanction set out below is fair, proportionate and consistent with previous decisions under the ECB/ICC Codes:
 - (1) Mr Ahmed is declared ineligible for a total of five years from 26 March 2025.
 - (2) The first 30 months must be served in full.

- (3) The remaining 30 months are suspended on the conditions set out in paragraph 51 below. Any breach of those conditions will render the suspended portion immediately operative in addition to any sanction for the new offence.

C. APPLICABLE FRAMEWORK

6. The Charges arise from conduct on 5 September 2023. At that time, the relevant governing instrument was the 2023 edition of the ECB Code, which came into force and effect on 1 March 2021.
7. On 1 June 2024, a revised version of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code (the “**ICC Code**”) came into force. Article 11.3 of the ICC Code provides materially:

“The Anti-Corruption Code shall come into full force and effect on 1st June 2024 (the “Effective Date”). It shall not operate to disturb any decisions and/or sanctions previously made under predecessor versions [...] Nor shall its substantive provisions apply retrospectively to matters pending before the Effective Date. Instead, any case pending prior to the Effective Date, or brought after the Effective Date but based on acts or omissions that occurred before the Effective Date, shall be governed (a) as to substance, by the predecessor [...] in force at the time of the alleged offence, subject to any application of the principle of lex mitior by the hearing panel determining the case; and (b) as to procedure, by this Anti-Corruption Code.”

8. The Notice of Charge against Mr Ahmed was served on 10 May 2024, i.e. before the effective date of the ICC Code. Accordingly, the applicable substantive provisions as to sanction are provided by the ECB Code, in particular by Article 6. The parties have confirmed, and the Tribunal agrees, that no material difference exists between the ECB Code and the ICC Code that would engage lex mitior.
9. Article 6.2 of the ECB Code prescribes minimum and maximum periods of ineligibility, together with unlimited fines, for each proved offence:
 - (1) For Charge 1 (breach of Article 2.1.1 – fixing or improper influence) the Tribunal may impose an unlimited fine and must order not less than five years’ ineligibility, up to a maximum of lifetime ineligibility.

- (2) For Charge 2 (breach of Article 2.1.3 – offering a bribe or reward) the same range applies: an unlimited fine and a minimum of five years’ ineligibility and a maximum of lifetime.
 - (3) For Charge 3 (breach of Article 2.1.4 – inducement of another Participant) the range is, again, identical: an unlimited fine and a minimum of five years’ ineligibility and a maximum of lifetime.
 - (4) For Charge 4 (breach of Article 2.5.1(b) – conduct prejudicial or disreputable) the Tribunal may impose an unlimited fine and may, but need not, impose a period of ineligibility of up to five years.
10. Where, as here, multiple offences arise out of the same incident or factual matrix, any periods of ineligibility will ordinarily run concurrently and not cumulatively: see Article 6.3.2.
 11. In assessing the appropriate sanction, the Tribunal is required first to evaluate the relative seriousness of the offending, and then to identify and weigh all aggravating and mitigating factors. A non-exhaustive list of aggravating factors appears in Article 6.1.1; a corresponding non-exhaustive list of mitigating factors is set out in Article 6.1.2. The Tribunal must give each factor such weight as it considers just.
 12. Having undertaken that assessment, the Tribunal must impose a sanction that falls within the mandatory ranges unless “*exceptional circumstances*” justify a sanction below the mandatory minimum: see Article 6.2.
 13. Even when the minimum term is applied, the Tribunal retains a discretion under Article 6.2 to suspend a portion of the ineligibility on such conditions and for such period as it deems appropriate, provided the balance remains effective to protect the integrity of the game.
 14. Finally, the Tribunal must ensure that the sanction imposed is proportionate to the offending, fair to the Participant and consistent with sanctions imposed in comparable cases.

D. STANDARD OF PROOF

15. As set out in paragraphs 20 to 27 of the Liability Decision, the burden of proof lies on the CR and the requisite standard of proof is that the Tribunal must be “*comfortably satisfied*” that an alleged fact or contention is established.
16. At both the liability and sanction stages the Tribunal has therefore asked itself, in respect of every material contention advanced by the CR, whether the evidence as a whole is sufficiently clear, convincing and reliable to leave the Tribunal comfortably satisfied. Only where that threshold is crossed has an allegation been treated as proved.

E. PARTIES’ SUBMISSIONS

(I) The CR’s submissions

17. By its written submissions dated 1 April 2025, the CR invited the Tribunal to impose a period of ineligibility totalling between seven and ten years, and to order that the whole of that period be served, with no element suspended.
18. The CR emphasised that corruption offences of the kind proved against Mr Ahmed “*strike at the very heart of the sport*” because they attack the integrity of selection and, in consequence, the uncertainty of outcome that underpins public confidence in cricket. Deterrence, alongside maintaining public confidence in the sport, was said to be the principal purpose, consistent with the approach taken in recent ICC anti-corruption decisions.
19. The CR submitted that many of the aggravating factors identified in Article 6.1.1 are either plainly engaged or closely analogous on the facts of this case. Amongst these: Mr Ahmed was an experienced and ECB-registered agent whose knowledge of the Code was beyond doubt; his approach to [Witness A] was pre-meditated, motivated solely by personal financial gain, and capable of undermining multiple franchise competition; the proposal placed [Witness A] in an “extremely unsettling” position and, had it borne fruit, would have involved several further Participants and generated substantial illicit reward. The CR further pointed to the adverse credibility findings in the Liability Decision as evidence of a complete absence of remorse.

20. Acknowledging that Mr Ahmed has a good previous disciplinary record and that he co-operated procedurally with disclosure requests, the CR nonetheless submitted that those matters carry little mitigating weight when set against the gravity of the misconduct. The CR submitted that there are no “*exceptional circumstances*” such as to permit a period of ineligibility less than the mandatory minimum, and submitted that the seriousness of Mr Ahmed’s conduct does not justify any suspended element of sanction.
21. The CR submitted that the corrupt approach made by Mr Ahmed is “*in relevant aspects, akin*” to those made in *ICC v Jayasundara* (2021), *ICC v Zoysa* (2021) and *ICC v Lokubettige* (2021), which resulted in periods of ineligibility of seven years, six years and eight years, respectively.

(II) Mr Ahmed’s submissions

22. By his written submissions dated 7 April 2025, Mr Ahmed invited the Tribunal to find that there were exceptional circumstances justifying a sanction at a level substantially lower than the minimum provided for under the ECB Code, alternatively a sanction no more than the minimum, taking into account any period of ineligibility since the suspension of Mr Ahmed’s ECB Agent registration.
23. Mr Ahmed accepted that the Tribunal had found the Charges proved, yet emphasised that the misconduct lay, on any objective view, at “*the lower end (if not the bottom) of the sliding scale of ‘seriousness’ as it pertains to offences under Articles 2.1.1, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4*”. This position was put expressly “*without in any way diminishing, or seeking to diminish, the seriousness and solemnity of the charges brought, or of the proceedings generally.*”
24. Mr Ahmed submitted that the alleged approach to [Witness A] did not involve any fixing of a named Match, did not attract or dispense any money, and never progressed beyond a single conversation. In his submission, this distinguishes his case qualitatively from the match-fixing or spot-fixing authorities on which the CR relies.
25. Mr Ahmed’s position was that few, if any, of the aggravating factors at Article 6.1.1 of the ECB Code can sensibly be said to apply.
26. Relying on Article 6.1.2, Mr Ahmed identified a number of factors said to mitigate both the nature of the offence and culpability, including the following (some of which appeared to overlap or constitute repetitions of the same point).

27. As to culpability: (i) he has an unblemished previous disciplinary record over more than a decade as a registered agent; (ii) he cooperated fully with the investigation: he attended two voluntary interviews, surrendered his mobile telephone for forensic imaging on each occasion, and produced bank statements and other documents without demur; (iii) the offence did not substantially damage the commercial value, integrity of results and/or public interest in any Match, not least since the alleged approach did not identify or contemplate any specific Match at the stage in which it was made.
28. As to the nature of the offence: (i) the approach was an isolated incident with no wider scheme; (ii) no money ever changed hands and nothing was likely to come of the proposal; (iii) no other Participants were involved; (iv) he cooperated fully throughout the investigation and the proceedings; (v) even the minimum five-year ban would have severe effects on his livelihood and on his continued participation in his primary profession; (vi) he is the main provider for his wife and two young children, so a lengthy ban would harm innocent dependants; (vii) the CR's decision to publish a summary of the Liability Decision before the proceedings have been concluded has already caused serious reputational damage; (viii) his other business interests are modest and the case has left him in a precarious financial position, so any fine in addition to a period of ineligibility would be oppressive; and (ix) liability ultimately rested on one man's word against another, suggesting an uncertainty that should temper sanction severity.
29. Mr Ahmed submitted that the case presents "*exceptional circumstances*" warranting a sanction below the ECB Code's mandatory five-year minimum. In summary, his submissions were as follows. First, liability was found exclusively on [Witness A's] uncorroborated evidence; the complete absence of supporting documents, messages or financial records creates an inherent and unusual uncertainty about what really happened that renders these proceedings exceptional. Secondly, any period of ineligibility will deprive Mr Ahmed of his profession and principal income, leaving his young family without their main source of financial support. Thirdly, Mr Ahmed has an unblemished previous disciplinary record. Taken together, these factors constitute exceptional circumstances and, Mr Ahmed submits, justify imposing a substantially shorter period of ineligibility than the mandatory minimum.

30. Mr Ahmed submitted that a three-year period of ineligibility – of which a substantial portion should be suspended subject to compliance and education requirements – would fully serve the policy objectives of deterrence, denunciation and protection of the sport. In the alternative, Mr Ahmed submitted that the Tribunal should impose the minimum – but nonetheless substantial – sanction of 5 years’ ineligibility, to run concurrently with no further sanction imposed.

F. DECISION ON SANCTION

31. We have approached sanction in the structured manner mandated by Article 6 of the ECB Code and as elaborated by both parties:
- (1) Step 1 – seriousness of the misconduct;
 - (2) Step 2 – aggravating factors (Article 6.1.1);
 - (3) Step 3 – mitigating factors (Article 6.1.2);
 - (4) Step 4 – the question of “*exceptional circumstances*”;
 - (5) Step 5 – proportionality, fairness and consistency of approach.

(I) Step 1 – Relative seriousness of the misconduct (Article 6.1)

32. The starting point is the nature of the misconduct that the Tribunal has already found proved. As set out more fully in the Liability Decision, Mr Ahmed’s approach to [Witness A] was “*a deliberate effort to subvert the integrity of the player-selection process in franchise cricket for financial gain.*” The offences proved are three separate breaches under Article 2.1 (Charges 1-3) and one breach under Article 2.5 (Charge 4). Each Article 2.1 offence carries a stipulated tariff of at least five years’ ineligibility, reflecting the seriousness with which the Code treats any corrupt agreement or attempted agreement, whether or not an actual Match is manipulated.
33. Corrupt interference with selection integrity strikes at the first link in the competitive chain. The choice of who takes the field, or who is selected for inclusion within a squad of players, is plainly capable of affecting the progress and result of every Match in which improperly selected players appear (and by extension from which improperly

disregarded players are omitted). The offence therefore jeopardises the very uncertainty of outcome that underpins public confidence, commercial value and spectator interest in cricket. Attempts, even if aborted, to influence improperly player selection strike at the heart of sport's integrity and must be met with severe sanction. The ECB Code reflects that policy consideration by prescribing a minimum five-year period of ineligibility for all Article 2.1 offences, whether consummated or not. The tariff itself is thus a declaration as to the gravity of these offences.

34. We acknowledge, as Mr Ahmed emphasises, that the corrupt approach failed at an early stage in conception: no money changed hands; no player was actually selected pursuant to the attempted scheme; and no Match result or betting market was affected. Those facts reduce the consequential harm but they do not diminish the inherent seriousness of the underlying misconduct. The ECB Code is purposely preventative: its aim is to eradicate corrupt overtures before they mature into manipulation. If the sanction for a thwarted attempt were nominal, the disincentive to making such overtures would disappear.
35. We also recognise that the misconduct comprised a single approach on a single day, rather than a sustained campaign. That factor influences where, within the statutory range, the appropriate sanction lies; but it does not re-characterise the conduct as minor. Even one corrupt solicitation by a registered agent represents a serious breach of the trust reposed in those who mediate opportunities for players and coaches.
36. Accordingly, the Tribunal finds that the offences occupy a position of material gravity – less than a completed fixing conspiracy but still firmly within the category of serious corruption for which the ECB Code intends to mandate a multi-year suspension. That assessment forms the baseline against which aggravation, mitigation and proportionality are subsequently evaluated.

(II) Step 2 – Aggravating factors (Article 6.1.1)

37. Having fixed the baseline level of seriousness, the Tribunal next considers whether – and to what extent – any of the non-exhaustive aggravating factors in Article 6.1.1 of the ECB Code are engaged.
38. There are some, but relatively few, aggravating factors operating with any material weight. In our view, these are:

- (1) Attempted corruption of another – had the corrupt approach succeeded, this would have involved Mr Ahmed corrupting another Participant. In other cases this has been identified as a particularly serious aggravating factor: e.g., *Zoyisa* at paragraphs 11.4 to 11.5.
 - (2) Experience – Mr Ahmed is an ECB-registered agent of some ten years’ standing who, by his own evidence, negotiates player and coaching contracts worldwide. His seniority means that he was or ought to have been well familiarised with the ECB Code and of the damage that corrupt incentives can inflict on selection integrity. A deliberate breach by an experienced intermediary constitutes a particularly serious betrayal of the professional standards expected of agents.
 - (3) Premeditation – the approach was not impulsive but a proposal brought to a pre-arranged meeting.
 - (4) Potential breadth of harm – had the proposal been accepted, it could have affected the composition of team selection across at least one franchise tournament and thereby the integrity of numerous Matches. The scale of the risk to the integrity of the sport therefore sits at the higher end of the spectrum for Article 2.1 offences (as compared with, for example, an attempt to manipulate the outcome of one delivery or other event within one Match).
 - (5) Conduct during the proceedings – whilst a Participant is entitled to maintain a denial without attracting a punitive premium, the Tribunal is entitled to take account of conduct that actively obstructs the truth-seeking function of the hearing. Giving untruthful or misleading evidence aggravates the original offence because it wastes resources and prolongs proceedings. We treat Mr Ahmed’s approach to his evidence as a modest aggravating factor.
 - (6) Lack of remorse – as a necessary corollary to Mr Ahmed’s denial of the Charges, there has been an absence of remorse.
39. We do not place material weight on any other aggravating factors that have been identified.

(III) Step 3 – Mitigating factors (Article 6.1.2)

40. We turn to the non-exhaustive list of mitigating considerations in Article 6.1.2 and to the additional matters relied on by Mr Ahmed.
41. The following factors, in our view, attract material weight:
- (1) Unblemished previous disciplinary record – Mr Ahmed has never previously been the subject of anti-corruption or other disciplinary proceedings in more than a decade as an ECB-registered agent. A clean record over so extended a period of professional activity merits recognition. At the same time, the weight that can be accorded is necessarily limited: a Participant is expected to comply with the Code, and the absence of prior misconduct is the norm rather than the exception.
 - (2) Co-operation with the investigation – Mr Ahmed attended two voluntary interviews, surrendered his mobile telephone for forensic imaging on each occasion, and produced bank and other commercial records when requested. This level of procedural cooperation assisted the CR in completing its investigation and is therefore a genuine mitigating factor. Its value is, however, moderated by the Tribunal’s finding in the Liability Decision that aspects of Mr Ahmed’s oral testimony were disingenuous and misleading. Full credit cannot be given where cooperation in providing documents is accompanied by dishonesty in evidence.
 - (3) Absence of actual sporting or financial harm – the corrupt approach was rejected immediately; no player selection was in fact distorted, no Match result was affected, and no illegitimate payment was made or received. Those objective facts serve as mitigation in assessing the gravity of the breach in terms of its ultimate consequences (as distinct from the seriousness of the underlying misconduct). We acknowledge, however, that Article 2 offences are framed so as to capture attempted or solicited corruption precisely because preventative intervention is essential; the absence of realised harm therefore cannot carry very significant weight.
 - (4) Isolated incident – the approach to [Witness A] was a single episode; there is no evidence of a wider corrupt scheme or of repeated attempts to recruit other

Participants. The Tribunal gives modest weight to this factor because repeat offending would plainly have aggravated culpability.

- (5) Personal and family hardship – Mr Ahmed is the primary earner for his wife and two children and submits that any lengthy ban will cause acute financial distress. We have sympathy for innocent dependants, but personal hardship is not a recognised mitigator under Article 6.1.2 and carries limited weight in corruption cases, where deterrence and protection of the sport are paramount. We acknowledge the hardship to Mr Ahmed and his family in considering the extent to which it is appropriate for part of the sanction to be suspended, but in itself this does not justify reducing the overall term.

42. All the other matters advanced by Mr Ahmed, in our view, carry little or no mitigating force. Amongst these, we observe in particular the following:

- (1) The submission that liability rested on a single witness and/or was in any way prone to inherent “*uncertainty*” – this seeks, in effect, to re-litigate issues of fact and credibility already resolved in the Liability Decision. It cannot, and does not, operate to reduce sanction.
- (2) The professional and reputational impact of the Liability Decision – this flows inexorably from the Tribunal’s findings and does not justify material mitigation.
- (3) Lack of involvement of other Participants – the approach was confined to [Witness A] and did not involve enlisting, or attempt to enlist, any other coach or player. That observation overlaps with the ‘isolated incident’ factor already taken into account in mitigation and does not warrant additional credit.

(IV) Step 4 – Appropriate sanction (Article 6.2)

43. Article 6.2 sets a five-year floor for each of Charges 1–3 unless either (a) the Tribunal is satisfied that “*exceptional circumstances*” justify imposing a shorter period of ineligibility; and/or (b) the Tribunal, while respecting the minimum, suspends a portion of the sanction on terms it considers appropriate. The analysis therefore proceeds in three stages:

- (1) Are there “*exceptional circumstances*” permitting a sanction below five years?

(2) Should any part of the sanction be suspended?

(3) Appropriate Sanction.

(a) Are there “exceptional circumstances” permitting a sanction below five years?

44. The “*exceptional circumstances*” threshold is deliberately stringent. Mere mitigation, even conceivably of substantial weight, does not of itself amount to an “*exceptional circumstance*”. Something exceptional – whether in the nature of the offence or the personal circumstances of the offender – must be shown to justify a sanction below the mandatory floor compatible with the purposes of the ECB Code.

45. Mr Ahmed advances three principal grounds: (i) the case was proved on the uncorroborated evidence of a single witness and therefore carries “*inherent uncertainty*”; (ii) any lengthy ban will deprive Mr Ahmed of his ability to carry on business in his profession, and of his primary source of income with which he supports his young family; and (iii) his previously unblemished disciplinary record.

46. In our view, none of these, singly or in combination, is exceptional in the sense contemplated by Article 6.2:

(1) As to (i), the Tribunal’s Liability Decision resolved the evidential dispute to the requisite standard of comfortable satisfaction; there is no residual “*uncertainty*” that could justify leniency, whether exceptionally or otherwise. The fact that the Charges were established primarily on oral evidence is neither unusual in corruption cases nor capable of diminishing the seriousness of the proven misconduct. This submission on Mr Ahmed’s behalf is misconceived.

(2) As to (ii), professional and/or financial hardship, whilst sympathetically acknowledged, is the foreseeable consequence of any meaningful period of ineligibility and is far from exceptional. Were it otherwise, the mandatory minima would be deprioritised whenever the Participant happens to be financially vulnerable and/or the main bread-winner within a family – a result plainly incompatible with the policy principles underpinning Article 6.2 of the ECB Code.

- (3) A clean disciplinary record is already recognised under Article 6.1.2(b). Lengthy prior compliance is commendable, but the Code cannot plausibly treat it as “*exceptional*”: many Participants before the Tribunal are first-time offenders.

47. Accordingly, the Tribunal finds that no exceptional circumstances exist that would entitle it to depart below the five-year minimum fixed by the ECB Code.

(b) Should any part of the sanction be suspended?

48. The discretion to suspend under Article 6.2 serves a different function. Its purpose is to enable the Tribunal, where appropriate, to temper the immediate impact of the sanction while preserving both deterrent effect and the ability to enforce future compliance. In exercising that discretion, the Tribunal must bear in mind factors such as:

- (1) The objectives of deterrence and public confidence emphasised by the CR;
- (2) The mitigating factors outlined in Step 3, including Mr Ahmed’s cooperation, unblemished prior record, and the absence of realised harm;
- (3) The practical impact on an intermediary whose profession depends on lawful engagement with clubs, players and coaches.

49. Balancing those considerations, we conclude that it is consistent with the purposes of the Code to suspend part of the sanction to be imposed, and we address this further in the following sub-section, setting out the Tribunal’s determination on sanction.

(c) Determination

50. Having balanced the aggravating and mitigating factors, the appropriate sanction is a single sanction of five years’ ineligibility, half of which is suspended on stringent conditions.

51. The suspended period is subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Mr Ahmed must not commit any further offence under either the ECB Code or the ICC Code or under any other National Cricket Federation’s anti-corruption regulations;

- (2) Within 12 months of the date of this decision Mr Ahmed must complete, to the satisfaction of the CR, an approved anti-corruption education programme designed for agents and intermediaries.
52. If any condition is breached, the suspended 30 months shall become immediately operative in addition to any sanction imposed for the new breach.
53. Mr Ahmed's ECB Agent registration has been suspended since 26 March 2025. Pursuant to Article 6.4, that period – now totalling 133 days – will be credited against the unsuspended portion of the sanction. The effective end-date of the unsuspended 30-month term is therefore 26 September 2027. The suspended 30 months will remain in force until 26 March 2030, subject to the conditions specified above.
54. All four offences arose from a single incident. Consistent with Article 6.3.2, the periods of ineligibility therefore run concurrently.

(V) Step 5 – Proportionality, fairness and consistency of approach

55. As to proportionality and fairness, the Tribunal is satisfied that a five-year period of ineligibility is sufficient to mark the relative seriousness of the misconduct and to deter other Participants, whilst affording due weight to the active mitigating factors. The suspended component is a meaningful deterrent, incentivising future compliance and supporting rehabilitation.
56. As to consistency of approach with comparable cases, the CR invited the Tribunal to take guidance from *Jayasundara* (7-year ineligibility), *Zoysa* (6-year ineligibility) and *Lokubettige* (8-year ineligibility). The CR submitted that those cases demonstrate that a total period of between 7 to 10 years of ineligibility would be appropriate; Mr Ahmed, for his part, submitted that each of these cases involved relatively graver wrongdoing, and that his circumstances do not justify a term above (or even equal to) the ECB Code minimum.
57. Each of the three cases involved corruption offences falling within Article 2.1 of the ICC Code and therefore carried the same mandatory five-year minimum as applies here. However, we agree with Mr Ahmed's submission that all three contained objectively graver features that justified longer unsuspended terms, including the following:

- (1) Multiplicity and breadth of wrongdoing – Zoysa and Lokubettige each concerned two separate corrupt approaches as part of an established wider scheme of corruption, combined with a failure-to-report charge under Article 2.4.4; Jayasundara combined an Article 2.1.3 bribery offence with an Article 2.4.7 obstruction offence. By contrast, Mr Ahmed’s misconduct comprised one approach on one day, with no established wider scheme, and involved no additional failure-to-report or obstruction charge.
- (2) Target and potential impact – Jayasundara involved an attempted bribe to the Sports Minister of Sri Lanka to manipulate selection for a national A-team ODI; Zoysa involved an attempted approach to two international players to orchestrate spot-fixing in one or more upcoming international series and an upcoming franchise league; Lokubettige involved an attempt to orchestrate spot-fixing in an upcoming T20I. All three scenarios carried a direct risk to competitive integrity in international matches. Mr Ahmed’s approach, while serious, was confined to the preliminary stage of franchise squad selection.
- (3) Additional aggravating conduct after charge – in Jayasundara, the tribunal expressly treated conduct relating to the Article 2.4.7 obstruction offence as an aggravating factor. In Lokubettige and Zoysa, the player’s lack of remorse was compounded by conduct taken in the proceedings including, for example, making (or permitting his counsel to make) “*very serious, highly improper and totally unsubstantiated*” allegations about the conduct of the ICC/ACU, and public comments outside of the proceedings, in breach of the ICC Code’s provisions relating to confidentiality. The same cannot be said to apply to Mr Ahmed.

58. Those material distinctions explain the respective sanctions in those cases. In summary:

- (1) Compared with Jayasundara – Mr Ahmed’s case lacks the additional obstruction offence, the attempted payment of a substantial cash bribe and the involvement of a government minister.
- (2) Compared with Lokubettige – Mr Ahmed made only a single approach, with no established wider scheme, no failure-to-report, and he showed procedural co-operation.

(3) Compared with *Zojysa* – the factual matrix is closest, but even in this case the tribunal were considering two separate approaches, an established wider scheme and a failure-to-report charge. The case of Mr Ahmed sits below that level, reflecting the narrower scope of offending and the differing balance of aggravating and mitigating factors.

59. In our view, when measured against the outcomes in those three authorities, the sanction we impose – five years’ ineligibility with 30 months suspended – fits coherently within the established spectrum. It is lower because the offending was materially less grave, yet still substantial enough to uphold the integrity-protective purposes of the ECB Code.

60. The Tribunal is therefore satisfied that its decision is consistent with precedent, proportionate to the particular facts, and fair to the Participant.

G. CONCLUSION

61. For the reasons set out above, the Tribunal is comfortably satisfied that the sanction set out below is fair, proportionate and consistent with previous decisions under the ECB/ICC Codes:

(1) Mr Ahmed is declared ineligible for a total of five years from 26 March 2025.

(2) The first 30 months must be served in full.

(3) The remaining 30 months are suspended on the conditions set out in paragraph 51 above. Any breach of those conditions will render the suspended portion immediately operative in addition to any sanction for the new offence.

62. Mr Ahmed’s ECB Agent registration has been suspended since 26 March 2025; that period is credited against the unsuspended element pursuant to Article 6.4 of the ECB Code.

63. In light of the evidence of Mr Ahmed’s limited means and the primary need for deterrence being satisfied by the period of ineligibility, no fine is imposed.

64. The administrative costs of these proceedings shall be borne by the CR in accordance with Article 5.2.4 the ECB Code. Save as aforesaid, each party shall bear its own legal and other costs.
65. Pursuant to Article 8 of the ECB Code, this decision may be published and notified to the ICC and other National Cricket Federations.
66. The parties' rights of appeal are as set out in Article 7 of the ECB Code.
67. The Tribunal wishes to reiterate its gratitude to both parties and their respective legal representatives for the manner in which this case has been conducted.

**TIM O'GORMAN
CHRIS TICKLE
MAURICE HOLMES**

5 August 2025