

RAW tried to sabotage Zimbabwe cricket team's Pak tour: Minister

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Karachi: The Home Minister of Punjab province in Pakistan, Col. (R) Shuja Khanzada on Wednesday alleged that Indian spy and intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), tried to sabotage Zimbabwe cricket team's Pakistan tour in May and sent threatening message to its team manager.

He also claimed that Indian intelligence agency is involved in 90 percent of terrorism incidents in Pakistan.

Khanzada stated in the Punjab assembly in Lahore RAW officials had sent a text to the Zimbabwe team manager when the squad landed in Dubai with threats that if their players went to Lahore, none of them would go back alive.

"We came to know about this when the team manager forwarded that message to us and we sent it to our security agencies. When they investigated the origin of the message it belonged to a RAW official," the home minister claimed.

Zimbabwe played two T20 matches and three one-day internationals at the Gaddafi stadium in Lahore with all the games drawing capacity crowd. The visiting team was given unprecedented security throughout the tour. The tour concluded successfully in late May, marking the first visit by a Test team to Pakistan in six years' time.

Even an incident during the second One-day International, when a suicide bomber allegedly blew himself up after he failed to penetrate the security ring around the Gaddafi stadium, didn't derail the tour.

Khanzada also alleged that the suicide blast was an attempt by RAW to sabotage the event.

"We foiled RAW's attempt to abandon Pakistan, Zimbabwe cricket series," he claimed.

No Test team had toured Pakistan since March, 2009 when militants attacked the Sri Lankan team in Lahore, killing six Pakistani policemen and a van driver and injuring some of the visiting players.

Zimbabwe agreed to undertake the tour in May after the PCB gave them financial incentives, including USD 12,000 to each player, although the chairman of the board Shahayrar Khan rubbished media reports that it was a bribe to the Zimbabwe cricket board to undertake the tour.

- INDIA TV (With inputs from PTI)