

## Cyber betting's on the rise

*With the on-going Indo-Pak series, betting is in full swing... especially on the net!*

**PRIYANKA DELADIA** Times News Network

The Indo-Pak cricket series is in full swing and so is betting... on the internet as well! "During the India-Pakistan matches, the traffic on cricket related websites goes up nearly 10 times," says Bhavin Turakhia, CEO of a webhosting company. This trend has boomed over the last one-and-a half years as the net savvy have taken well to it, informs Bhavin. The procedure to place a bet on the internet involves registration with the website after which transactions take place using a credit card.

"The internet is the most preferred choice for gambling, primarily because of the anonymity factor. There are chances of being caught when transacting via telephone and one often hears of betting rackets being busted every second day," says internet expert Vijay Mukhi.

Says Vivek Kathpalia, cyber-crime lawyer, "The law in India prohibits gambling of any form. However, in case of the net, the server might be located outside the jurisdiction of the country or in countries where there is little or no prohibition on gambling. This exercises limitations on the law-enforcing agencies in the country." Another law which is flouted when the user makes transactions using his credit card is the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), "Since, most of these websites have an international base, you transact in foreign exchange, using your international credit card. In which case, you are flouting the Foreign Exchange laws under FEMA, which prohibits usage of the credit card for gambling transactions," says Mukhi.

Is there a solution to this? "In such a case the internet service provider can act as a monitoring body and filter websites but one must take into consideration that there are a million such websites on the world wide web, which makes it impossible to keep a check on them," says Kathpalia.

