

Australian cricketer Khawaja vows to fight Gaza message ban

AFP | Sydney

Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja vowed Wednesday to fight a ban on him wearing shoes during a match highlighting the plight of people in Gaza, saying it was a “humanitarian appeal” and not a political message.

During training this week the 36-year-old opening batsman had hand-written slogans “Freedom is a human right” and “All lives are equal” on his footwear.

Khawaja, who is Muslim, wanted to wear the shoes for the opening Test starting on Thursday in Perth against Pakistan, his birth country.

But governing body the International Cricket Council bans any messages during matches that relate to politics, religion or race.

“Is freedom not for everyone? Are all lives not equal?” Khawaja subsequently said in an emotional video message on social media.

“To me personally it doesn't matter what race, religion or



Australia's Usman Khawaja plays a shot (file photo)

culture you are. I'm just speaking up for those who don't have a voice.

“The ICC have told me that I can't wear my shoes on field because they believe it's a political statement under their guidelines.

“I don't believe it is so -- it's a humanitarian appeal,” he added.

“I will respect their view and decision but I will fight it and seek to gain approval.”

Cricket Australia said that it

supported the players' right to express their opinions.

“But the ICC has rules in place which prohibit the display of personal messages, which we expect the players to uphold,” it said in a statement.

Four days ago, Khawaja shared a video on Instagram from the children's charity UNICEF from Gaza.

In the post he commented: “Do people not care about innocent humans being killed?”

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USMAN KHAWAJA

“Or is it the colour of their skin that makes them less important? Or the religion they practise?”

In his message on Wednesday Khawaja noted the fierce reaction his stance had caused in some quarters.

“But let's be honest about it, if me saying all lives are equal has resulted in people being offended to the point where they're calling me up and telling me off, well isn't that the bigger problem?” he said.

BIC Chief Executive congratulates 2 Seas Motorsport on Gulf 12 Hours success



HH Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa



HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa

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Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa congratulated His Highness Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Personal Representative and Supreme Council for Environment President, and His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, co-owner of 2 Seas Motorsport team, on the occasion of 2 Seas' winning the drivers' title in the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC), and contributing to the success of Mercedes-AMG in clinching the IGTC manufacturers' title.

These were secured following the final race of the 2023 IGTC season, held as the Gulf 12 Hours at Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, the UAE.

Shaikh Salman asserted that the unlimited support accorded by His Majesty King

BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa

Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to Bahraini sport has been the driving force towards Bahrain's achievements across various sports, including motor racing.

Shaikh Salman said: “Congratulations to HH Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa and 2 Seas Motorsport on their fantastic results in this year's Gulf 12 Hours and the IGTC.”

Cologne hit with highest ever German fine for fan misconduct

Reuters | Dortmund

Bundesliga club FC Cologne have on Wednesday been hit with a 595,000 euro (\$641,800) fine for igniting pyrotechnics and throwing objects on the

field which delayed a match.

The fine is the highest penalty ever levied for fan misconduct in German football.

The German FA (DFB) fined the club for the incident which delayed Cologne's home der-

by clash with Borussia Mönchengladbach by several minutes in October.

Around a third of the fine can be invested by the club in security or other protective measures.

Cologne have promised to fight for a “significant reduction” in the penalty, with managing director Christian Keller saying the fine inflicts “enormous financial damage” on the club.

Loeb sets sights on landmark Dakar victory for BRX

Bahrain Raid Xtreme star looks to build on record-breaking run in motorsport's biggest adventure

● Loeb emphasizes the importance of speed, navigation, and avoiding mechanical problems for Dakar success

TDT | Manama

Sebastien Loeb has set his sights on a landmark victory for Bahrain Raid Xtreme in next month's Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia as he looks to build on the team's record-breaking achievement in this year's edition back in January.

Partnered by Fabian Lurquin in the Prodrive Hunter, Loeb takes BRX into the team's fourth Dakar starting on 5th January, and is determined to better their second place finishes from the past two editions of motorsport's biggest adventure.

The BRX crew produced a stunning performance in the BRX Prodrive Hunter on the 2023 Dakar, taking 50% of the stage victories and a record breaking six stage wins in succession.

“We've had some good results together with Prodrive, but for me the Dakar is my target,” said Loeb. “To make the best over the big stages, Fabian and I will



Sebastien Loeb and Fabian Lurquin

work hand in hand to have the speed, the correct navigation and avoid mechanical problems.

“However, the Dakar always has some ‘hidden things’ at any time, so we'll piece these together over the huge adventure that this rally always is. I'm looking forward to it.”

With nine World Rally Championship crowns and an impressive set of accolades under his belt from Le Mans and X Games to Touring Cars, Loeb is as motivated as ever as he looks to steer BRX to a first Dakar triumph.

Opening the 2024 World Rally-Raid Championship, the fifth

Dakar Rally to be staged in Saudi Arabia will be another gruelling test of human endurance and technical engineering.

Over two weeks, a route of nearly 8,000 kilometres includes 12 stages as the rally traverses the Kingdom from north-west to south-east and back again for the finish at Yan-

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SEBASTIEN LOEB

bu on the coast of the Red Sea.

The organisers have laid out a taxing route over the

tracks in the north to the sheer enormity of the Empty Quarter in the south, where dunes cover an area the size of France.

This time the event includes an extra-long ‘48-hour Chrono’ stage at the mid-point, with 600kms to be covered over two days in pure dunes, with service allowed only by the drivers and crew from the BRX race trucks at the overnight bivouac.

Looking ahead to the start, David Richards, Founder and Chairman of Prodrive, said: “If I turn the clock back and think to when we started this programme with Bahrain, and remember how much work has gone into our Rally Raid Pro-



The BRX Prodrive Hunter will use sustainable fuel, emitting 80% less CO2 from the 3.5-liter V6 twin-turbo engine during the 2024 Dakar Rally

gramme, I have to say I'm very proud of what we have achieved.”

The BRX Prodrive Hunter will arrive at the start of its fourth Dakar with further developments and utilising sustainable fuel to power through the stages in Saudi.

With no major changes made to the set-up of the engine to accommodate the biofuel created from agricultural waste, the car will again emit 80% less CO2 emissions from the 3.5 litre V6 twin turbo engine during the rally.

