



## **US firm breaks new ground with simulators**

MILFORD, March 9: An American firm that supplied computer-video cricket bowling simulators to England and Australia last year has hit new boundaries with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

ProBatter Sports, which began 12 years ago as a supplier for Major League Baseball teams such as the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees, installed a simulator system last week at the ICC Global Cricket Academy in Dubai.

The recreations of facing live bowlers in a closed environment were adapted from the technology used for baseball clubs and first sold to cricketers last year when the English Cricket Board and Cricket Australia purchased systems.

With the ICC hopeful of boosting performance levels of rising cricket nations, the system in Dubai is aimed at aiding batsmen from such nations as Ireland, Kenya, Canada and Netherlands.

Similar to an aircraft flight simulator, the PX2 Cricket system uses cutting-edge cyber technology to deliver a DVD-level image of a bowler on a large screen with a ball fired through a hole in the screen at an endless variety of angles with speeds up to 100mph with pinpoint accuracy.

Video of different bowlers can be integrated into the system, which already features a data base of known bowlers, with a coach or batsman able to select what ball is bowled when.

“Individuals can hone in on aspects of their hitting technique that need the most attention,” ProBatter president Adam Battersby said.

“Timing is critical to hitting success and the simulator allows batsmen the opportunity to face the equivalent of a live bowler. It also has a tremendous advantage over a human being - it never gets tired and is far more accurate.”

Cricket Australia struggled to find an indoor facility to house the system before a government grant for a weather-proof tunnel allowed the system to be installed at the team's training facility in Brisbane last November. The English had been training on the system since March of last year when they inaugurated the firm's first cricket simulation system in Loughborough and enjoyed months of work on it ahead of the Ashes, which England won in Australia for the first time since 1986-87.

ProBatter has also sold a simulator to China's women's softball team ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics as well as to groups in Japan, Canada, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. AFP