

Indo-Pak duel in the desert today

SHARJAH, Oct 24: India are riding a wave, but arch-rivals Pakistan have history on their side for the Willis Trophy cricket final on Friday, reports AFP.

The Pakistanis, backed by the frenzied support of expatriate fans, have won nine of their last ten encounters against India at this desert venue.

Imran Khan's men are determined to win their fifth title in a row at the Sharjah cricket stadium after producing a great escape act to stay in the three-nation tournament which also featured the West Indies.

Having lost both matches in the first part of the double-leg round robin league, Pakistan came within two runs of being knocked out of the competition.

But a sensational last-ball victory over the West Indies followed by Wednesday's narrow win against India have put the rejuvenated Pakistanis in the right frame for the final.

"We have finally got our act Bombay match cancelled

together. Everything has suddenly begun to click", Imran said.

Pakistan's brittle batting was boosted by the immediate success of two of the three players flown in before Wednesday's match to replace the injured opener Rameez Raja and veteran Javed Miandad.

Left-handed opener Aamer Sohail slammed a brilliant 91 against India during a 86-run second wicket stand with another replacement Zahid Fazal who made 39.

"Both these lads are here to stay. I was very impressed with their performance", said the 39-year-old Imran of the two youngsters.

With Salim Malik and the captain himself also among the runs, Pakistan has the batting power to complement the fearsome pace attack of Waqar Younis, Wasim Akram and Aqib Javed.

The Indians, however, are neither impressed nor overawed by the sudden turn in Pakistan's fortunes.

Skipper Mohammad Azharuddin felt his team, the

only one to win three league matches, was capable of turning the tide against the Pakistanis.

"We have looked the best side in the tournament and are determined to win the big one", Azharuddin said.

The Indians were particularly heartened by the return to form of vice captain Ravi Shastri who made 77 in the return match against Pakistan.

With newcomer Vinod Kambli, Navjot Siddhu, Sachin Tendulkar and Sanjay Manjrekar also striking the ball well, India's only worry is the poor run of Skipper Azharuddin.

The dashing stroke player has contributed just 63 runs in the previous four matches and the Indians are hoping he will come good on Friday.

Kapil Dev, one-day cricket's most successful bowler, who claimed his 200th wicket on Tuesday against the West Indies, and fellow-seamer Manoj Prabhakar make up a competent new ball attack.

Left-armers Shastri and Venkatapathy Raju and leg spinner Anil Kumble have used the slow wicket to their advan-

tage, making strokeplay difficult with their good line.

Neither captain, however, was willing to predict the outcome of the match which was sold out soon after Pakistan ensured its place in the final on Wednesday.

"It's a 50-50 situation", Imran said. "All depends on how well one plays when the going gets tough".

"It will be an evenly-matched contest. One can't predict the matches" said Azharuddin.

TEAMS

India: (from) Mohammad Azharuddin (captain), Ravi Shastri, Navjot Siddhu, Sanjay Manjrekar, Sachin Tendulkar, Vinod Kambli, Kapil Dev, Manoj Prabhakar, Kiran More (wicket-keeper), Venkatapathy Raju, Anil Kumble, Javagal Srinath.

Pakistan: (from) Imran Khan (captain), Aamer Sohail, Saeed Anwar, Zahid Fazal, Salim Malik, Ijaz Ahmed, Wasim Akram, Aqib Javed, Waqar Younis, Moin Khan (wicket-keeper), Akram Raza, Mustaq Ahmed.



India's women's 4x400m runners (L-R) Ashwini Nachappa, Danalakshmi, Shimi Wilson and Kuttan Saramma upset the form book by pushing the fancied Chinese to second place in the final in Asian Track and Field championships in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday. — AFP photo

Shiv Sena gets its way

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: India today called off the opening match of a Pakistan cricket tour after militant Hindus dug up the pitch, reports Reuter.

Bal Mahadalkar, Secretary of the Bombay Cricket Association, said the Board of Control for Cricket in India had cancelled the match scheduled for October 28 in Bombay.

But he said the sport's governing body had decided to go ahead with the other four one-day matches in the series.

Militants of the Hindu Shiv Sena party dug up the pitch at Bombay's Wankhede Stadium on Tuesday. They regard Muslim Pakistan as an enemy state.

Shiv Sena has a strong presence in western India's Maharashtra state of which Bombay is the capital.

In Islamabad, Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto called for Pakistan's tour to be postponed because of India's human rights record in the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

Her Pakistan People's Party said in a statement that Bhutto had asked Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to halt the tour following appeals by a Kashmiri group accusing India of atrocities in trying to put down a Muslim uprising in Kashmir.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since their independence from Britain in 1947.

India accuses Pakistan of arming separatist militants in Kashmir and in the northern state of Punjab. Pakistan denies the charges.

Lloyd, Sobers hail SA's return

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Oct 24: Former West Indies Test captain Clive Lloyd welcomed Wednesday's decision by the International Cricket Council to allow South Africa to participate in the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand early next year, reports Reuter.

The retired Guyanese left-handed batsman widely regarded as the West Indies' most successful captain, told a news conference that he was elated over the decision to allow South Africa to participate in an international cricket tournament for the first time in 21 years.

Lloyd, who now lives in Manchester, England, had campaigned to end the South African ban and said he recently spent three weeks in the republic coaching youngsters.

"Apartheid in sports was being dismantled there," he said. "I saw white and Black youths playing cricket. It's a sign that things are changing."

Sir Garfield Sobers, another former West Indies captain, had also called for South Africa to take part in the premier limited overs competition.

Following its annual general meeting last month in Barbados, the West Indies Cricket Board of Control announced it was still opposed to South Africa's inclusion.

Anand beats Korchnoi

TILBURG, Netherlands, Oct 24: Indian grandmaster Viswanathan Anand moved into joint second place in the Interpolis Tilburg tournament on Wednesday when he won a marathon adjourned game against Viktor Korchnoi, reports Reuter.

The win left Anand, 21, equal with Britain's Nigel Short with three points out of five but well behind Soviet world champion Garry Kasparov who has dropped only a half point.

League Committee fails to announce fresh date

Sports Reporter

The Senior Division Football League Committee (SDLC) failed to take any decision in its meeting yesterday evening regarding the date of the Senior Division football league.

This year's league was scheduled to begin from October 28.

SDLC gave two reasons for not being able to decide the date of the beginning of the league — the first, according to them, is a letter to the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association from the Bangladesh Football Federation stating that the players who had been called for SAF Games camp beginning from the first week of November will not be able to play in the league.

The second reason cited by the SDLC is that two of the country's top team — Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Krira Chakra — will be involved in the Asian Club Cup Championship's Asian Cup Winners' Cup

Pak booters arrive

Sports Reporter

A 16-member Pakistan Wapda football team arrived in the city yesterday afternoon to play in the first-leg match of the 11th Asian Club Cup championship against Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club. The match is scheduled for a 5:00 pm start tomorrow, Oct 26 at the Dhaka stadium.

The return leg of the home-and-away fixture will be held in Lahore on Nov 1.

The winners will meet the winners of the clash between Indian Federation Cup champions Kerala Police and the champion Maldives team in the next round.

Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting earned the right to represent Bangladesh in the Club Cup by virtue of their triumph last year in the Federation Cup. This year's Fed Cup winners Brothers Union, who took the trophy from Mohammedans only last week, will represent Bangladesh in the meet next year.

Reigning Dhaka Senior Division football league champions Abahani Krira Chakra will represent the country in the Asian Cup Winners' Cup, which has been introduced by the Asian Football

E Bengal, BSF in semis

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: Defending champions East Bengal and Border Security Force (BSF) snatched semifinal berths from Group 'A' on the penultimate day of the quarterfinal league in the Durand football tournament, reports PTI.

BSF today scored a solitary goal victory over JCT, Phagwara, thanks to a 54th minute strike by Avtar Singh.

With this win, BSF topped the group with five points from a 2-0 triumph over Bangladesh Army and a 1-1 draw against East Bengal.

In the other match, East Bengal were held to a goalless

Botham pulls out to protest dropping of S Africans

TORONTO, Oct 24: England Test star Ian Botham has withdrawn as captain of a Rest of the World XI to play West Indies in a charity cricket game here because invitations to three South Africans were cancelled, reports AFP.

Botham told organisers that the decision not to have the South Africans at the match to benefit the United Way charity at Toronto's Skydome on November 2 was unacceptable.

The Englishman felt the invitations should stand after the readmittance of South Africa to the International Cricket Conference (ICC).

Ron Aldridge, chairman of the Toronto match organizing committee, said Wednesday, "Botham was asked how he could lend support to this match now that South Africa had been returned to the ICC fold.

Botham pulls out to protest dropping of S Africans

draw by a spirited Bangladesh Army East Bengal finished second in the group with four points. Their only victory was over JCT (2-0).

Bangladesh Army collected two points to move ahead of JCT who could muster only one point.

From Group 'B' last year's runners-up Mahindra and Mahindra, Bombay, and Army XI have already booked the last-four places. However, the group position will be clear only after tomorrow's match between Mohun Bagan and Army XI.

Mahindras have five points from three outings while Army team have garnered three from two matches.



Action from yesterday's Bata handball semifinal match between Shaheed Nabi and KL Jubilee high schools at Outer Stadium handball court. Shaheed Nabi won 30-12. — Star photo

Narinda govt, Shaheed Nabi schools in final

Sports Reporter

Narinda Government High School and Shaheed Nabi High School reached the final of the fourth Bata schools handball tournament, yesterday at Outer Stadium handball court.

Narinda boys assured their final berth eliminating Ansar VDP High School by 19-13 goals in the semifinal.

They dominated the match with a convincing score of 9-4 goals during the breaker.

Saiful with 14, Vishnu 2 and Asif 2 were the main contributors for the winners while Abu Zafar with 7, Dehwar 3 and Zakir 2 were the notable scorers for the losers.

In the second semi, Shaheed Nabi outplayed KL Jubilee High School by 30-12 after leading her first half 13-6.

Yousuf scored 10, Ariful 8, Dastgir 5, Nayan 5 were leading scorers for the winners while Lutfur 3, Sharif 3, Zafar 2 and Sanjit 2 were main contributors for the losers.

Eton, Harrow may have to move from Lord's

LONDON, Oct 24: The annual cricket match between Britain's top two schools, Eton and Harrow, may have to move from Lord's cricket ground where it has been played since 1805, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The match, once a high point of the British social season, is the oldest fixture at Lord's. Until recently, top hats and tail coats were preferred attire for most male spectators.

But difficulties with examination timetables and pressure from other fixtures mean the MCC, which runs Lord's, and the two schools are still trying to set a date for next season's game.

The MCC said that if a date cannot be agreed, the match will have to be played elsewhere.



Md Omar Faruque of Comilla, who won two gold medals without creating a new mark on the opening day Tuesday, finally wrote his name in the record books by shattering the 15,000m mark for 15-17 years-olds yesterday — the concluding day of the national age-group swimming championships. — Star photo

S Africans delighted at ICC vote

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates, Oct 24: South Africa can play in next year's cricket World Cup — a decision greeted by their officials on Wednesday as "the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow", reports Reuter.

The International Cricket Council (ICC), the sport's world ruling body, gave the go-ahead for South Africa to take part in the limited overs tournament in Australia and New Zealand next February and March at a special meeting.

Geoff Dakin, president of the United Cricket Board, of South Africa (UCBSA) said: "It's not easy to find worlds. When you work as hard as we work and at the end of the rainbow we got the pot of gold."

"It's been 21 years since we last played official cricket. It is a very emotional for us to be back."

Asked if South African cricketers were ready for an international tournament after 21 years, Dakin said: "You are asking us whether we will go into a tournament and do well? We believe we will."

Dakin said Wednesday's meeting was very cordial and was held in a "superb spirit."

"Certain countries had some questions to ask, reservations that they want us to clear up. Those were cleared up, everybody appears to be totally happy about the decision."

ICC chairman Colin Cowdrey of England, who announced the decision after two hours of talks, said: "Every aspect of the case was put on the table and such was the decision that it was passed unopposed."

The eight full ICC members — England, Australia, New Zealand, West Indies, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Africa — were present at the meeting.

Those teams and Zimbabwe, who qualified in a tournament for minor cricket countries, will comprise the nine sides to contest the World Cup.

The need for a special meeting — arranged here because India, Pakistan and West Indies were already present for one-day competition — became unavoidable after the Asian countries and West Indies made it clear they would not accept a unilateral decision by Cowdrey.

West Indies' delegate Deryck Murray said: "We did not oppose the inclusion of South Africa in the World Cup."

In South Africa, 1984-87 Springbok captain Clive Rice said: "This is great news for South Africa. Finally (president) FW De Klerk's reforms are starting to bear fruit."

SACO's president Joe Ebrahim, who wants sports curbs lifted only when Blacks

Rajshahi reign supreme

Sport Reporter

The 11th national age-group swimming competition for boys ended at the Dhaka Stadium pool yesterday with 10 new records being set, five of them on the concluding day.

Rajshahi Education Board clinched the championship with 17 gold, nine silver and 14 bronze medals. Pabna DSA finished second with seven golds, nine silvers and three bronzes, followed by Comilla DSA with five golds and one silver.

Abdul Hamid of Pabna performed splendidly in the meet bagging six golds and a silver in the 13-14 years age group. His golds came in the 50m, 100m, and 200m freestyles, the 100m and 200m butterfly and the 200m individual medley. In the 100m backstroke he had to settle for the silver.

Omar Faruq UE of Comilla, a 16-year-old from Daudkandi, won all the five golds and a silver for his district in the 15-17 years age-group. He triumphed in the 100m and 200m backstroke the 200m and 400m individual medley and the 1500m freestyle and finished second in the 400m freestyle.

Abdullah Al-Muktadir of Rajshahi Education Board won four golds in the 11-12 years age-group the 50m and 100m freestyles, 100m butterfly and the 200m individual medley.

Rajshahi Education Board set three and the Comilla boys two of the five new records that were created yesterday.

Nur Alam Khan of Rajshahi Board set the new 200m breaststroke mark in the 15-17 years age-group clocking 2 mins 58.37 secs against the previous timing of 2 min 59.70 secs.

Masud Rana, also of Rajshahi Board, set a new record in the 100m backstroke in the 13-14 years age-group, taking 1 min 17.06 secs. The old timing was 1 min 18.50 secs. This was Masud's second record after the 200m mark he set Wednesday.

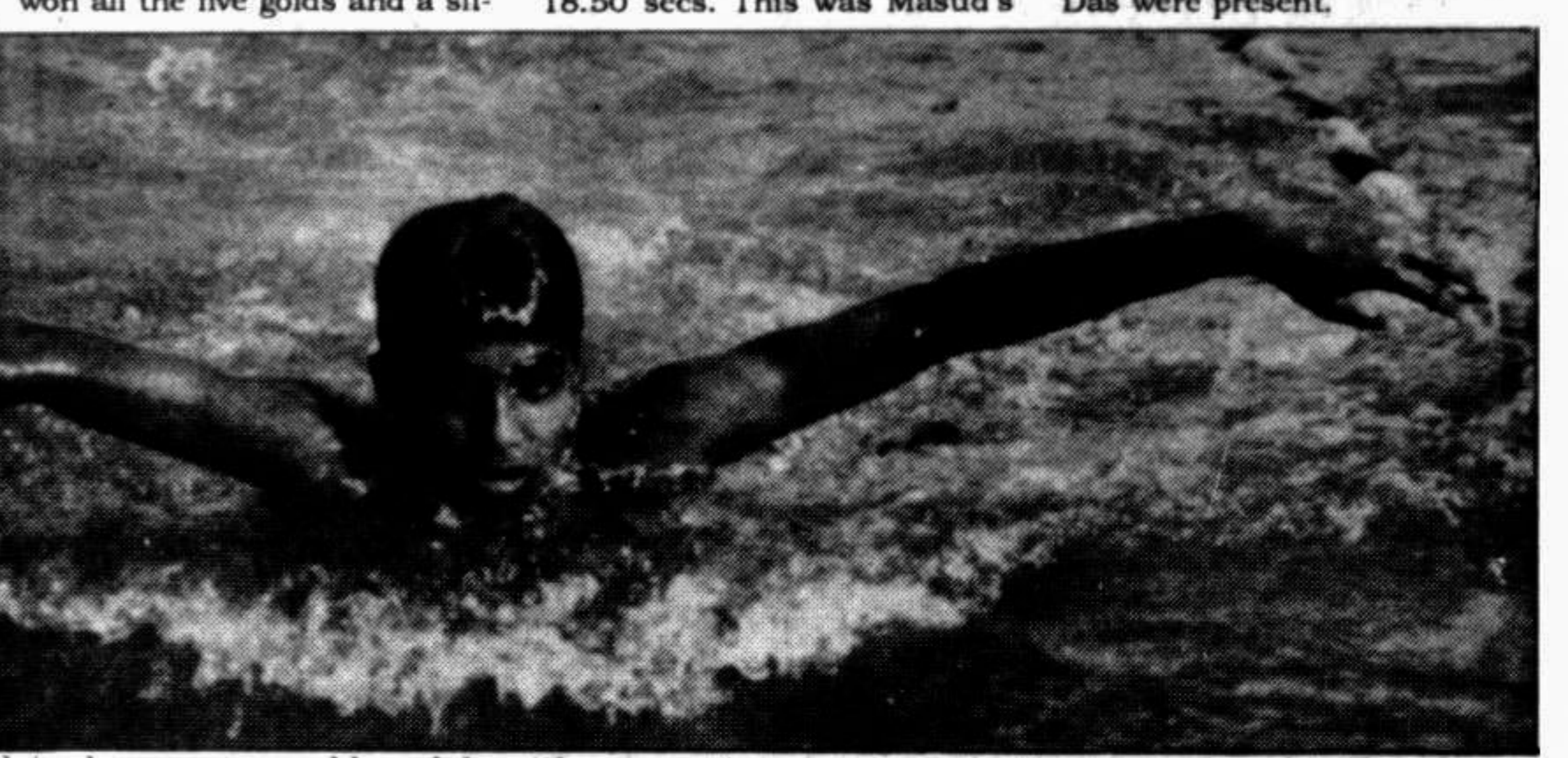
Abu Syed Haider of the Rajshahi Education Board established a new mark in the 50m backstroke for boys under 10 years. He clocked 40.61 secs against the previous record of 41.20 secs.

Comilla's Omar Faruque established two, other new marks on the day in the 1500m freestyle and the 100m backstroke for boys in the 15-17 years age-group.

As many as 218 boys from 22 teams took part in 32 different events in four age groups of the three-day meet.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeque Hossain witnessed the concluding day's events and distributed the medals as chief guest.

Chairman of the National Sports Council Major General Mahbubur Rahman and vice president of Bangladesh Swimming Federation Brojen Das were present.



The Pakistan WAPDA football team arrived yesterday to play their qualifying first-leg match against Dhaka Mohammedans on Saturday. — Star photo

Blacks being implemented by the non-racial UCBSA

Rice said it would take two or three years before a Springbok team included non-white players "But they will come through, no doubt".

Nelson Mandela's ANC, the main Black nationalist movement, last week gave its blessing to South Africa's return to world cricket, explaining that the sport's administrators had implemented a model of non-racial reform.

It says curbs on other sports should be lifted in line with moves to implement racial integration on the playing field. The anti-apartheid South African Council on sport, an umbrella sports body mainly influential among coloured (mixed race) people in Cape Province, condemned the ICC's decision and said it had been ill-informed.

SACO's president Joe Ebrahim, who wants sports curbs lifted only when Blacks have the vote, said, "We are disappointed and condemn the decision in the strongest terms."

"Sport in South Africa reflects society, and our society is not yet normal, but the ICC has taken the narrow view."

In Melbourne, Australian Cricket Board (ACB) chief executive David Richards said in an interview from Sharjah the decision was "Marvellous for cricket" and would hopefully lead the way for other sports.

"It's a great moment for all the people in South Africa who have worked so hard to unite cricket in that country," Richards said.

Richards said a revised draw for the World Cup would be issued next Monday, once the last details had been finalised.

Under the original schedule, all the teams played each other and the top four in the standings qualified for the semifinals.



The Pakistan WAPDA football team arrived yesterday to play their qualifying first-leg match against Dhaka Mohammedans on Saturday. — Star photo