

Mandela invited

NEW DELHI, Nov 8: India has invited African National Congress (ANC) chief Nelson Mandela to watch South Africa return to international cricket from 21 years of Banishment, officials said Thursday, reports Reuters.

"We have sent an invitation to Nelson Mandela to attend the historic, first-ever cricket match between the two countries on Sunday," Jagmohan Dalmiya, head of the Cricket Association of Bengal, said.

Dalmiya, speaking by phone from Calcutta where South Africa will play their first official international match for two decades on Sunday, said Mandela was "seriously considering" the invitation.

"If Mandela cannot make it the ANC will nominate (ANC Executive member) Steve Tshwete to grace the occasion," he added.

England find new sponsor

LONDON, Nov 8: England's cricketers are to be sponsored by a brewing company for more than three million Pounds sterling (\$5.3 million dollars) starting with the New Zealand Test tour in January, reports Reuters.

The three-year package includes "Discreet" shirt advertising for both Graham Gooch's senior squad and the team which tours Bermuda and the West Indies early next year.

The deal does not cover the World Cup where teams must wear the logo of the sponsoring tobacco firm.

Grand welcome for Rice's men in Calcutta



CALCUTTA, Nov 8: Cheering crowds greeted South African cricket players as brothers Friday as they arrived for a competition that will end 21 years of international isolation in the sport, reports AP.

School girls in white-and-maroon uniforms daubed sandalwood paste on the foreheads of the cricketers as they stepped off their chartered Boeing 707 at Dum Dum Airport.

The South Africans' arrival coincided with the Bengali festival "Bhai Ditiya," or "Day of the Brother," when women and girls in this part of India visit their brothers to wish them longevity and happiness with sandalwood.

"It is great that the Indians invited us and we came," said South African team captain Clive Rice, 42. "This trip will begin a new era for our cricket."

South Africa plays the Indian team on Sunday in Calcutta, the first of three one-day matches. The two sides meet in the central Indian city of Gwalior on Tuesday and wind up in New Delhi on Thursday.

At least 10,000 spectators waited along the motorcade route into Calcutta, a city of 10 million. Many held posters of Nelson Mandela, the president of South Africa's black nationalist African National Congress.

Others held signs saying



CLIVE RICE

"Cricket for brotherhood" and "South Africa — your comeback is a great victory for cricket."

The cricket players, riding in a bus, waved back. Their motorcade was escorted by about 100 motorcyclists. At one point, 100 pigeons, symbols of peace and happiness, were released as the cricketers passed. Reception tents had been organised in four places along the route. Girls blew on conch shells, announcing their arrival.

It took three hours for the

motorcade to wind the 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Dum Dum Airport to the 150-year-old Grand Hotel where the team will stay.

Traffic came to a standstill in this city where British colo-

nial rulers introduced cricket to India two centuries ago and left a lasting legacy of passion for the sport.

Mothers came out of shantytowns along the route, holding up naked children to see

the procession. At the Grand Hotel, whose sheltered courtyard is an oasis of quiet dignity amid the bustle of downtown Calcutta, the South Africans were greeted by more symbols of hospitality and goodwill — rose petals, green coconut water and earthen lamps.

LIMIT ON TICKETS

An earlier Reuter report from Calcutta said: Authorities set a limit on ticket sales for South Africa's first cricket international after 21 years in exile and prepared to greet the touring team with a triumphant procession through the city.

Cricket chiefs in sport-crazy Calcutta on Thursday imposed a maximum sale of two tickets per person queuing outside the Eden Gardens stadium, which has an official capacity of 90,000.

"There is a very, very big queue for tickets," said Jagmohan Dalmiya, executive president of the Cricket Association of Bengal. "We hope to give everyone a chance."

The tickets will be sold out by Friday, Dalmiya said. More than 120,000 people have been known to cram into the stadium in the past.

South Africa, whose last official appearance in world cricket was in early 1970, are making a short tour to play three one-day games against India — in Calcutta on Sunday, Gwalior on November 12 and New Delhi on November 14.

Crammed homework



JOHANNESBURG, Nov 8: South Africa's international cricket squad held their first and only net practice together in Johannesburg on Thursday a few hours before flying to India for their historic post-sanctions sporting debut, reports Reuter.

The 14-man team selected to break South Africa's 21-year isolation assembled on the Wanderers pitch for a two-hour net watched by former West Indian opening batsman Conrad Hunte.

"You have got some real quick fast bowlers. I would gamble on them picking up some early wickets," he told reporters at a news conference.

"The cricketing world could be in for a big surprise," said Hunte, who is helping the non-racial United Cricket Board of South Africa to develop the game after 40 years of segregation.

Captain Clive Rice said he had gathered advice from as many people as possible to help South Africa in their three-match return to world

White sports administrators and Education Minister Louis Pienaar, whose portfolio includes sport, slammed the decision.

SA to compete in Barcelona

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 8: South Africa's Springboks leaped back into the Olympic arena on Wednesday with the announcement that they would compete in next year's Summer Games, reports Reuter.

Sam Ramsamy, Chairman of the National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA) said his committee had decided to accept an invitation to go to Barcelona, signalling the end of 32 years of isolation enforced by the republic's apartheid policies.

"I am happy to say that the executive committee of NOCSA has decided unanimously to send a team to the Barcelona Olympics," Ramsamy said to cheers from the audience.

South African last took part in an Olympics in Rome in 1960 with an all-white team and was expelled from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) 10 years later because of its race segregation policies.

It was re-admitted to the IOC in July as a reward for President FW de Klerk's decision to scrap apartheid and the Olympic guardians then invited South Africa to send a team to Barcelona — an invitation which was accepted on Wednesday.

"This is the first time that South Africa has competed in the Olympic Games. Before... only a section of South Africa did," Ramsamy told a new conference.

he said. The flag and anthem would remain the symbols of Olympic unity until a future, non-racial democracy picked its own national symbols, Ramsamy said.

The decision to send a team to Barcelona marks a crowning achievement for Ramsamy, who for decades spearheaded South Africa's sporting isolation from London at the offices of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC).

Since his return from exile, however, he has shepherded squabbling unions to non-racial unity, the basic requirement for being accepted back into the international fold.

One notable exception is athletics, where officials are still fighting over the negotiat-

ing table, but the passport to Barcelona is likely to speed their moves to forge unity.

Ramsamy's deputy Muleki George said he expected to hear good news from the athletics bodies very soon.

South Africa is too late to qualify for the team events in Barcelona and will depend upon its individual stars to make their mark in the Games.

One of the country's hottest medal prospect, marathon runner Frith Van Der Merwe, said Barcelona would be a great incentive for her.

"I am tired of running the same race against the same runners and I have been a little demotivated. This will motivate me to train harder towards a goal," she said.

IOC hails decision

GENEVA, Nov 8: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Thursday welcomed South Africa's decision to accept its invitation to the 1992 Summer Olympics, saying it would help break down the country's racial divisions, reports Reuter.

"We are very happy with this decision," said IOC director-general Francois Carrard. "For us it is an extremely important step which will allow NOCSA to prepare its athletes for Barcelona even better."

"The work continues in every sport (in South Africa). But when we look at the situation today, we have every hope that their best athletes will come to Barcelona," he said in a telephone interview.

"And that is our aim — to have the best athletes in the world, including from South Africa."

NOCSA, the non-racial National Olympic Committee of South Africa, announced its decision to accept the invitation to Barcelona on Wednesday, ending over 30 years of apartheid isolation.

Although the IOC granted outright recognition to NOCSA in July — it could be withdrawn now only if Pretoria went back on its reforms — not all South African sports officials were agreed on sending a team to

Barcelona. He did not expect political opposition to South Africa's participation in Barcelona to pose a threat to the Games since the IOC had involved African countries at every stage of its rehabilitation.

"We've always taken great care to involve African leaders in our work at the every stage," he said.

Last-minute goal saves Barcelona

PARIS, Nov 8: A last-minute goal saved mighty Barcelona but Olympique Marseille, Arsenal and PSV Eindhoven were unceremoniously ditched out of the European Champions Cup on Wednesday, reports AP.

Marseille were knocked out by Sparta Prague while Arsenal lost 3-1 to Benfica after extra-time. Soviet international Vasily Kulikov and Brazilian striker Isaacs, with two, put paid to the English champions.

Marc Degryse and Danny Boffin scored for Anderlecht as the Belgian side knocked out Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven. It could have been a heavier defeat. Degryse missed a penalty.

Barcelona scraped through to the lucrative mini-league phase of the competition on the strength of Jose Maria Bakero's last minute goal against Kaiserslautern.

The German champions beaten 2-0 in Spain, won 3-1 but went out on the away goals rule.

Yugoslav striker Demir Hotic scored twice before Danish international Jarne Glodbaek scored what appeared to be the winner in the 76th minute.

Bakero's last minute strike saved Dutch coach Johan Cruyff's expensive side.

Marseille club president Bernard Tapie admitted defeat in Czechoslovakia would cost him 30 million francs (five million dollars).

Last season's finalists lost 2-1 to Sparta Prague and paid dearly for the lapse of concentration in the home match when they conceded two penalties after going 3-0 up.

Martin Frydek and Horst Siegl scored in each half for Sparta and Ghanaian forward Abedi Pele's 6th minute goal came too late to save Marseille.

Roman Kukleta and Petr Vrabec had scored the decisive away goals in the first leg. Gianluca Vialli scored twice after Attilio Lombardo had opened the score on nine minutes to put Italian champions Sampdoria through against Hungarian side Hoved.



Molly (R) and Farzana of Swamibagh TTS in action against Lalmatia Club during yesterday's AB Bank women's table tennis league match at the National Coaching Centre.

Atlanta officials deny charges

ATLANTA, Nov 8: Atlanta Olympic organising officials on Wednesday vehemently denied allegations that bribes were paid to win the right to host the 1996 Games and said they were considering legal action, reports Reuter.

Atlanta Organising Committee chief Billy Payne said the bribery allegations, first reported in the German magazine Der Spiegel, were false and apparently originated from cities which lost the bid to the southern US city.

"Absolutely, unequivocally no. There is no truth in them. It's just a case of the people who lost just trying to explain what happened," Payne told the Atlanta Journal newspaper.

Bob Brennan, a spokesman for the Atlanta organisers, told Reuter that "the charges are

absurd and absolutely baseless."

He added that it was "even more disturbing that neither Der Spiegel nor the London Times bothered to call us before printing the allegations."

"Some of them were totally bizarre, such as suggesting we'd offered to pay for heart surgery at a Houston hospital." (In exchange for votes from international Olympic Committee (IOC) members.)

Der Spiegel said Australia's two IOC members had sought to ensure support for Sydney's bid for the 2000 Games by threatening to release evidence that Atlanta bribed IOC members to get the 1996 Games.

But Sydney Olympic officials said they were unaware of any evidence that bribery was in-

involved in Atlanta's getting the Games and Australian Olympic chief Kevin Gosper said he would sue Der Spiegel if he did not receive an apology.

Brennan also said legal action was being considered in connection with the published allegations. But he added that their dissemination by respected news media would cause some people to believe the charges regardless of the facts.

"We have our attorneys looking at the articles. But one of the problems is that this is out there now and some people will believe it in any case. How do we take it back?" he said.

"Der Spiegel is a widely respected publication — though certainly not in our circles anymore," Brennan added.

UEFA blacklists Belgium

GENEVA, Nov 8: Belgium will not be allowed to host either of Europe's two prestigious Cup finals following a court decision to hold a UEFA official responsible for the Heysel disaster, a UEFA spokesman said on Thursday, reports

Reuter. UEFA, the European Football Union, are changing their criteria for selecting venues for the European Cup and Cup Winners' Cup finals, but will not consider Belgium as a site.

"There can be no further finals in Belgium in the present circumstances," the UEFA spokesman said.

UEFA are angry that Belgium's highest court of appeal upheld the verdict against their former General-Secretary Hans Bangerter last month for "gross negligence" leading to the deaths of 39 soccer fans at the 1985 European Cup final.

UEFA argue they should not be held responsible for an incident in another country and are considering whether they might challenge the verdict of Belgium's highest court.

Treasurer Jo Van Marle said last week there would be discussions about the exclusion of Belgium from all UEFA games in the upcoming weeks.

The spokesman said on Thursday UEFA were drawing up a list of stadia submitted by national associations from which they could choose a sta-

dium more suitable for the finalists.

UEFA hope to avoid the problems thrown up by last season's Cup Winners' Cup final between Manchester United and Barcelona when ticket demand from the two heavily-supported teams far exceeded the 42,000-capacity of Rotterdam's stadium.

"The advantages of this catalogue of stadia... will allow greater flexibility, since it will enable UEFA to designate venues for the finals before the semifinal stage of the competitions rather than at the end of the previous year," UEFA said in its latest newsletter.

"It will be possible to take into account which teams are liable to reach the finals and thereby avoid situations where the stadium chosen is too large for teams which are not supported by vast armies of fans, or where a stadium cannot accommodate enough fans for a final between two very popular teams."

They also hope to avoid forcing two teams from one side of Europe to travel across the continent for the final.

Jansher Khan irked

LONDON, Nov 8: World number one Jansher Khan said on Thursday he would not play for Pakistan in the World team squash championship starting in Helsinki on November 13, reports Reuter.

Jansher said he felt slighted by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) in refusing him a complimentary seat on a flight from London for Karachi.

Although I have played for Pakistan for seven years I am treated like a very low person which is why I do not feel like playing for the country," said the former world champion.

But before Jansher left London on Thursday paying his own fare on another airline he was told by his London-based manager Satinder Bajwa to give the matter further thought.

Jansher, in England to play league squash, said he had come with only two rackets and wanted to go home to pick up a fuller kit for Helsinki.

As an employee of the national airline Jansher was entitled to free transportation. However, a PIA official in London said such privileged travel was subject to load and Jansher could not be given preference over fare-paying passengers.

The airline spokesman added that on the day in ques-

tion the flight was full. Jansher was offered a seat on the next available flight on Friday.

World squash now next Feb

DUBAI, Nov 8: The World Cup Squash championships, scheduled for Dubai in December, have been postponed for a second time Thursday.

A press release issued by the International Squash Players' Association, in consultation with the United Arab Emirates Squash Rackets Association, said the Dec 4-9 tournament was rescheduled for Feb 11 to 16.

The \$125,000 tournament is the richest on the world squash circuit, but will the statement that announced the event's purse would be increased by \$15,000.

The entry list for the new February date will remain the same with seedings based on Nov rankings.

The World Cup was first scheduled for a year ago. It was called off because of the Iraqi Aug 2 invasion and occupation of Kuwait for seven months.

The second postponement is due to a clash of dates with the Arab World Championships for soccer, Dec 3-25 in Dubai.

Kohl to back Berlin's bid

BONN, Nov 8: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl will back Berlin's bid to stage the 2000 Olympics despite reports he had suggested the German capital should shelve its candidature until 2004, the government said on Wednesday.

"The position of the government has not changed on this," government spokeswoman Kirsten Veuser said. "The Chancellor will back the 2000 bid with goodwill and his full support."

German Olympic chief Willi Daume said on Tuesday that Kohl had suggested at a meeting with Berlin officials that the city should put back its Olympic plans by four years.

The reports said Kohl felt Berlin had enough problems

adapting to its new role as capital and future seat of Parliament and government following last year's unification.

"You can understand the suggestion. But the Chancellor was finally persuaded not to give up the bidding plans for the turn of the century," Daume said.

Berlin's Olympic bid has been through difficult times in the last few months. Opponents believe the city should be concentrating on solving the economic problems of the former communist East after unification instead of building sports facilities.

Lutz Gruetike, the head of the company organising the bid, resigned in September after criticism from German politicians and press of his management of the whole campaign.

City Council spokesman Eduard Heussen confirmed that Berlin would be going ahead with its plans for the Games.

"Daume's comments have led to a few misunderstandings," Heussen said. "Berlin is bidding for the 2000 Olympics with the backing of Bonn and the NOC."

Lesson learnt

LONDON, Nov 8: British athletes are insuring themselves in case of injury ahead of the Olympic Games in Barcelona, reports Reuter.

"Around 20 per cent of our team in Seoul in 1988 was not fully fit," said a spokeswoman for the British Olympic Association on Thursday. "We vowed then never to let this happen again."



State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain Khoka being introduced to the players before the start of the 13th Damal Summer Cricket tournament at the Dhaka Stadium on Thursday.