

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 Reuter.

"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 Reuter.

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.

Others held signs saying

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 Ditya," 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.

It took three hours for the



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.

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

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 carden lamps.

LIMIT ON TICKETS

An earlier Reuter report from Calcutta said: Authorities set a limit on ticket sales for South Africa's first cricket match 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.

Grooming for the future

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 8: Four youth South African provincial players, two of them black, have been selected to travel with the squad to India for the country's first official cricket fixture in two decades, reports Reuter.

The United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) said on Wednesday the four players were being taken to India to expose them to the atmosphere of international cricket.

"Although they will not play in any of the three one-day matches, they will be part of the whole preparation for the three internationals — including team talks, nets and foreign conditions," USBSA managing director Ali Bacher said.

"One condition for South Africa's re-admission last July was the establishment of a development programme to take the sport to the country's black townships."

"We felt the inclusion of four young players in this way would be a vital part of our development programme and would be an ideal opportunity to prepare them for future international participation," Bacher said.

Kiwis beat Fiji

SUVA, Nov 8: New Zealand beat Fiji 4-0 (halftime 0-0) in an Olympic Soccer Oceania group qualifying match on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Scorers: Julian Fallon (67th and 76th minutes), Thomas Edge (69th), Shane Gillics (87th).

SA to compete in Barcelona

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 negotiations.

"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's has competed in the Olympic Games. Before only a section of South Africa did," Ramsamy told a new conference.

NEW COLOURS, TUNE

He unveiled a flag of red, green and blue stripes on a green diamond background and Olympic rings, which adroitly skirt around the colours of any major political movement in South Africa, black or white.

In a further bid to defuse heated debate over national symbols, Ramsamy said Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," and internationally accepted hymn of peace, would be used, with the IOC's permission as South Africa's anthem at the Games.

"We had to go for something that would represent national unity, something that would represent something that we are all going to be proud of."

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 this decision," said IOC director-general Francois Carrard.

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