

Sport

Dream debut for South Africa



SYDNEY, Feb 26: South Africa stormed back to the centre of the international cricket stage with a stunning nine-wicket win over World Cup holders Australia in a day-night match today, reports Reuter.

It was an amazing debut for the largely inexperienced team as they held Australia to a meagre 170 for nine and then passed the total with 13 balls to spare.

Rubbing salt into the wound, Kepler Wessels, who played 24 Test matches for Australia, led his native South Africa to victory with an unbeaten 81.

Wessels, who returned to South Africa six years ago, was also named man-of-the-match. After nearly 22 years as international cricket outcasts because of apartheid, it was a dream start in the World Cup for South Africa.

But for Australia it was a continuing nightmare following their opening defeat by New Zealand in the first match of the tournament.

The co-hosts and favourites now face a tremendous task just to win through to the semifinal stage.

fast outside off stump. Geoff Marsh parried, and the whole South African team leaped in the air with a concerted appeal as wicketkeeper Dave Richardson took the ball. Umpire Brian Aldridge of New Zealand turned them down, although television replays showed a distinct deviation as the ball passed the bat.

For the first 30 minutes Australia were in command, with an aggressive David Boon taking advantage of any loose deliveries and they raced to 35 by the end of the seventh over. That supremacy ended soon afterwards, never to be regained.

Boon committed batting suicide, racing down the pitch for a run after Marsh had played a dead bat defensive shot, and was unable to beat the ball back to the bowler's end.

His 27 was to be the joint top score of the innings.

Marsh and Dean Jones struggled through a second-wicket partnership of 34 in 71 balls, mainly because of the introduction of Richard Snell into the attack.

The paceman did not take a wicket but returned the most miserly figures of the tournament so far, a mere 15 runs from nine overs.

But it was the introduction of seamer Adrian Kuiper into the attack which turned the match heavily in South Africa's favour.

He moved one away from just short of a length to have Marsh caught by Richardson, and the next he swung in to the left-handed Allan Border to bowl the Australian captain off his pads.

That left Australia on 76 for three in the 21st over and 21 runs later they were plunged even deeper in trouble when Jones was caught behind for 24 off seamer Brian McMillan.

A part from a short flurry by Steve Waugh, who made the other 27, and Ian Healy (16), none of the batsmen were able to help Australia's cause.

To compound Australia's problems, Healy injured his right hamstring while he was batting and was unable to keep wicket later.

Donald, who bowled with considerable fire, ended with

three for 34 while Kuiper and seamer Brian McMillan took two wickets apiece.

Faced with only a small total, Wessels and Andrew Hudson opened cautiously against Craig McDermott and Bruce Reid.

Both were beaten in the early overs, but they gradually increased the tempo and although Border rang the bowling changes it made on real impression.

Sloppy fielding only served to emphasize how good the South Africans had been in that department.

Hudson, a 25-year-old right-hander who was out for a duck in his only previous international, against India last November, blossomed in a 74-run opening partnership.

As his confidence improved, so did his strokes and in one over from Reid he garnered eight runs from two glorious extra cover drives.

The injury to Healy proved especially unfortunate for Australia when stand-in Boon spilled a difficult chance diving to his left for an edge by Wessels when the left-hander had scored 23. That was the last chance Australia had of turning the match.

After Hudson departed, bowled when going down the wicket in the first over from off-spinner Peter Taylor for 28, the experienced Peter Kirsten gave Australia no respite.

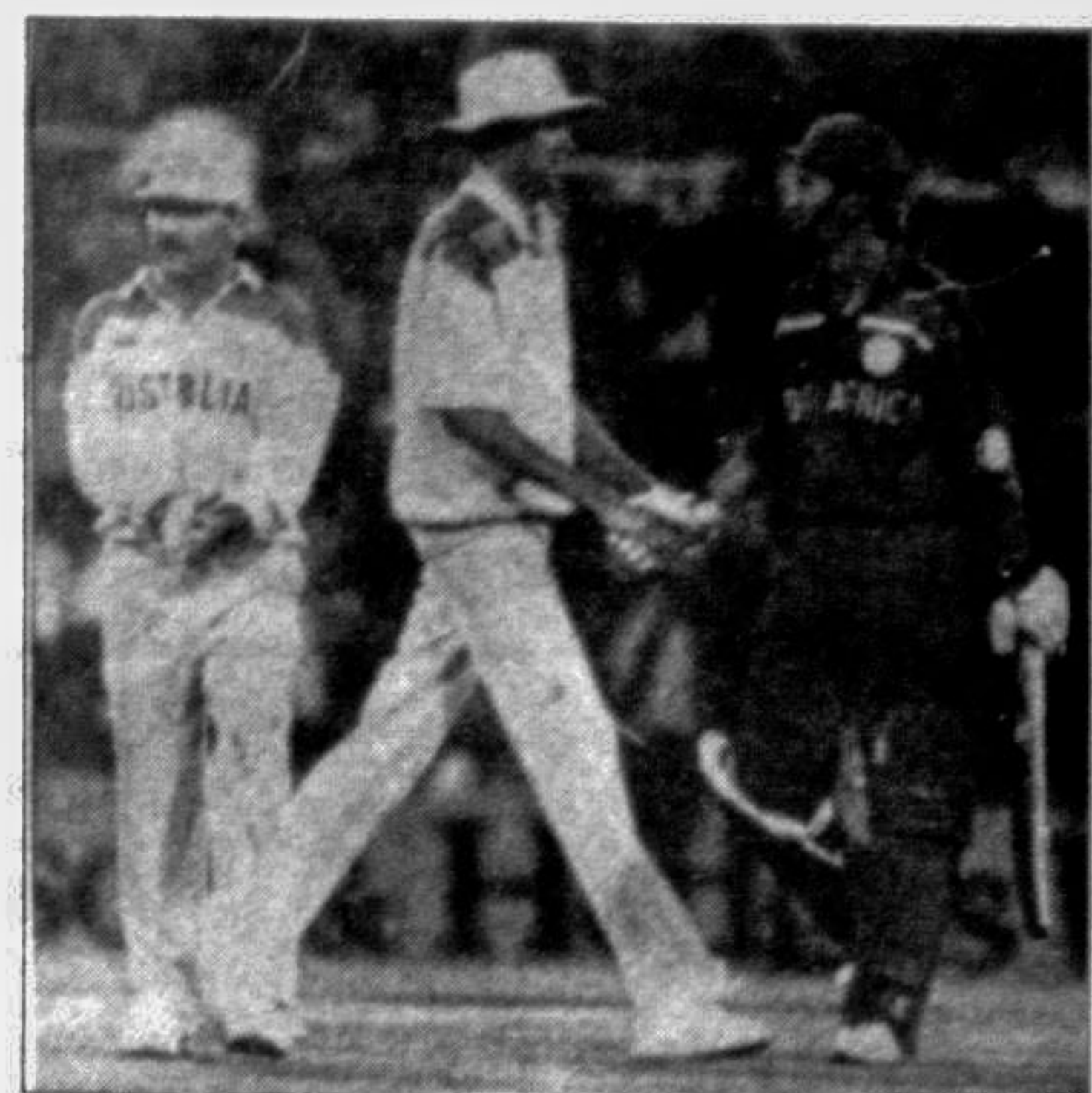
Kirsten finished with a sometimes cheeky, unbeaten 49, frequently lofting the ball into open space between fielders.

He was denied his half-century when Wessels hit Reid to the boundary and then tucked the ball down to third man for the winning single.

It was an epic win for South Africa, and a defeat which will have added considerably to the worries of Australia, who face several tough matches ahead of them in the nine-team tournament.

Scoreboard in the World Cup day-night cricket match between Australia and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground here Wednesday:

Table with columns: AUSTRALIA, BOWLING, SOUTH AFRICA, and columns for O, M, R, W.



South African captain Kepler Wessels (R) is congratulated by Australia's Bruce Reid (C) after making 81 not out during the World Cup match yesterday in Sydney. At left is Australian captain Allan Border.

Imran likely to play today



HOBART, Feb 26: Imran Khan is to lead Pakistan in their World Cup cricket match against Zimbabwe on Thursday despite having a shoulder injury, reports Reuter.

But the inspirational captain and all-rounder, who has been receiving daily physiotherapy to his injured right shoulder, may not be able to bowl.

Imran, whose role as a bowler has assumed more significant proportions in the absence of the injured Waqar Younis, was badly missed at the weekend when Pakistan suffered a 10-wicket drubbing by a rejuvenated West Indies in Melbourne.

When Pakistan held a light training session at Bellerive Oval on Wednesday Imran did not bowl.

But manager Intikhab Alam said: "We are very hungry to win and Imran will be playing." Javed Miandad, who led the

side when Imran was ruled out of the match against West Indies, said they were not taking Zimbabwe lightly.

"They are in the World Cup and we can't take them, or anyone else, too easily," Javed said.

"I think our bowlers learnt a lot at the weekend and I'm sure they will bowl tighter and with more fire tomorrow."

Zimbabwe captain David Houghton said his team's biggest worry was being over-awed by the calibre of players they would be facing.

"Everyone is supposed to be better than us and man for man they (Pakistan) are a much better side than us, so we have just got to go out there and prove we can play with the top players," Houghton said.

But he said he was certain Zimbabwe could compete with other tournament teams and might cause a few upsets.

"All we have to do is get it right on one day and I'm sure we can beat one or two sides."

Nirman cricket

Sports Reporter BDR High School and Arab Mission recorded victories in their respective matches yesterday in the Nirman Schools cricket.

At the Dhanmondi Club ground Arab Mission High School defeated Pallabi Model High School by 29 runs. The winners batted first and were all out in 31 overs for 174 runs with Kaiser topscoring with 35.

Babu of Pallabi captured three for 25. In their turn, Pallabi were booked for 146 in 23 overs. Zafar made 30 and Sajid remained unbeaten on 29.

Tapan was the wrecker-in-chief for Arab Mission with figures of four for 31. In the other match, BDR High School edged past Gano Bhaban School by two wickets at the same venue.

Put into bat, Gano Bhaban managed 114 in 24 overs with Jhinuk and Henry scoring 28 each. Selim of BDR High destroyed the Gano Bhaban batting with figures of four for 18.

BDR High crossed the target in 22.4 overs for the loss of eight wickets with Sattar and Babu making 30 and 22 respectively.

Henry and Atiq took three wicket each for the losers.

Majumder snooker

Sports Reporter Sixteen players have moved into the pre-quarterfinals of the first P H Majumder memorial snooker championship now being held at the Narayanjan Club.

With the conclusion of the preliminary robin league matches yesterday, the top two players from each of the eight groups have moved into the round of 16. They are: N A T Rouf, J F D Costa, national champion Reshadul Amin Bappa and Syed Mahboob of Dhaka Club, Syed Masood and M A Awar of Gulshan Club, A B Chowdhury and Sarder Iftekar of Engineers' Club and R K Manju, N C Ghosh, Muniruzzaman Bachchu, G C Saha, Rafiqul Islam, Munir Hossain, Yeakub Sattar and Anwar Hossain of hosts Narayanjan Club.

The pre-quarters of the tournament start today.

Army b' ball BOGRA, Feb 26: Rangpur Area team outplayed Log Area team 130-60 while Comilla Area team defeated Chittagong Area team 90-68 in the two matches of the Army Basketball championship at the Bogra Cantonment here today.

Lanka allowed to replace Ratnayake

HAMILTON, New Zealand, Feb 26: Sri Lanka were given permission to replace injured pace bowler Ramesh Ratnayake by the World Cup Cricket Committee on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The committee—comprising officials from co-hosts Australia and New Zealand—said in a statement that Sri Lanka would call for an immediate replacement.

Nishantha Ranatunga appeared the most likely replacement.

Ratnayake dislocated his right shoulder in a warm-up match against Pakistan before the tournament began last weekend and has not been able to bowl since.

The committee said the request had been approved because Ratnayake's injury was sustained early in the competition, and they were satisfied he could not have played any further part in the tournament.

Captain Aravinda De Silva said Ratnayake might need surgery.

Sri Lanka were effectively down to 12 fit men on Tuesday when opening batsman Athula Samarasekera injured a hamstring.

"It seems he'll be out for a couple of weeks," he said.

Nat'l shooting from today

Sports Reporter The 13th national shooting championships organised by the National Shooting Federation begin at the National Shooting Complex at Gulshan today, says a press release.

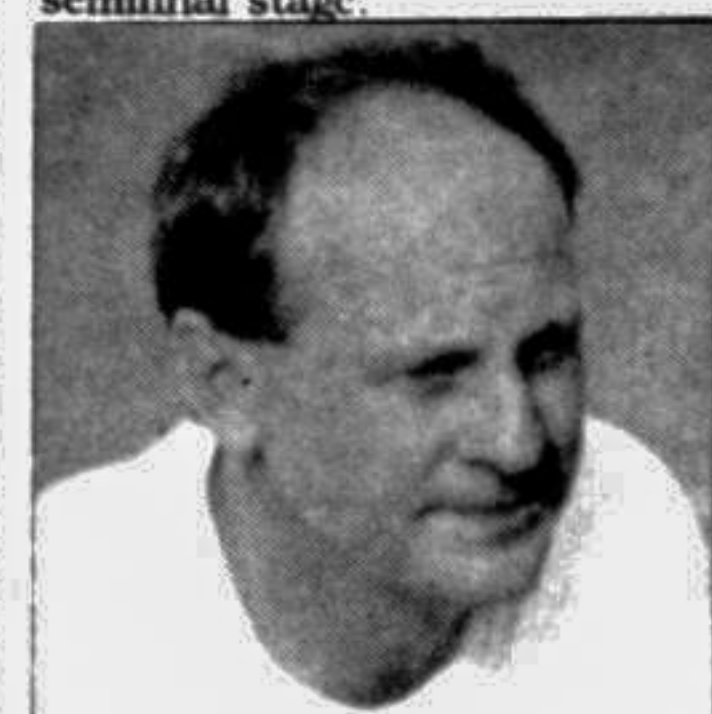
Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury will attend the opening ceremony of the five-day meet at 2-30 pm while Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Abdus Salam Talukder and State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka will witness the closing functions on March 2.

Some 500 shooters and officials from different rifle and shooting clubs will take part in the meet.

Fed Cup TT

Sports Reporter The finals and prize-giving ceremony of the invitational Federation Cup table tennis tournament will be held at 5-30 pm this afternoon at the National Coaching Centre, says a press release.

Secretary of the Sports and Youth Ministry Nurul Momen Khan will give away prizes among the winners.



PETER KIRSTEN 49 n.o

The South Africans, given a standing ovation as they walked on to the field after losing the toss, outplayed Australia in every department of the game.

They could, and probably should, have had a wicket with the very first ball of the innings.

Allan Donald bowled it very

Gooch warns against complacency

MELBOURNE, Feb 26: England captain Graham Gooch warned his team on Wednesday that their impressive recent record against West Indies did not mean they could write off the former cricket World Cup winners, reports Reuter.

West Indies have lost seven out of their last 10 meetings, including a 3-0 defeat in England last year, and were also knocked out of the World Series in Australia this season by the hosts and India.

Gooch's team meet West



BRIAN LARA

Indies here on Thursday and he said: "They are still a good side. You don't become a bad side overnight. We haven't written them off."

"They are less experienced but have plenty of talent." Gooch said he was surprised West Indies had played two spinners - Roger Harper and Carl Hooper - in their 10-wicket win over Pakistan and, although England are unlikely to follow suit by adding

Richard Illingworth's left-arm spin to that of Phil Tufnell, Graeme Hick is expected to bowl his off-spin.

Allan Lamb has been ruled out and the only likely England change from the team that defeated India in their opening Cup game is the inclusion of Gladstone Small to rest one of their seamers.

LARA MAY PLAY

For West Indies, Brian Lara is expected to play, despite injuring his toe against Pakistan. Captain Richie Richardson said: "Brian is a little uncomfortable but I am sure he will be ready."

Lara, opening for the first time for West Indies, made a sparkling 88 against Pakistan before retiring hurt and Richardson added: "He is a very talented player and very difficult to keep quiet."

West Indies are a noticeably more upbeat group from the team that lost in the World series recently and Richardson said: "Things are going well; we are happy and working hard."

"A few of the guys were on trial before. Now it is the World Cup to do or die, and we are going to do it."

"If we beat England it would demoralise them a bit."

Richardson said they did not see Tufnell as a big problem and suggested their previous poor record against him came from an attitude where his batsmen "like to play shots and get on top of the bowler; sometimes that can go against you."

LAMB SIDELINED

An AP message adds: England has decided against

risking key batsman Allan Lamb in Thursday's World Cup cricket match against the West Indies.

Lamb has been sidelined for a fortnight with a hamstring injury and England coach Mickey Stewart said Wednesday that was pointless gambling on the South African-born run-maker's fitness.

Stewart said England was hopeful Lamb could return to action for Sunday's game against Pakistan in Adelaide.

"The earliest reasonable target for Allan would be Sunday," Stewart said. "He's coming on OK and as long as he's fit for the game against Australia on Thursday week (March 5), that was the deadline we set him."

"What would be disastrous would be if he played and broke down. Then it would be doubtful if he could complete the tournament."

Stewart said he expected Zimbabwe-born Graeme Hick to rediscover his form against the resurgent West Indies.

Zimbabwe-born Hick boasts a first-class career average of more than 50, but has been in disappointing form this season.

He did not play well on England's tour of New Zealand and scored only five runs in England's opening match of the tournament last Saturday.

Stewart said Hick was not under any pressure from team management.

"He has not put together an international score and that's what's disappointing for him," Stewart said.

"In the other first-class matches, he played excellently." It's a question of time, because his general play has been



ALLAN DONALD 3 for 34

Table with columns: BOWLING, O, M, R, W and rows for McDermott, Reid, Whitney, Waugh, Taylor, Border, Moody.

Result: South Africa won by nine wickets. Man-of-the-match: Kepler Wessels.

Kiwis earn a day off

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Feb 26: The New Zealand cricket team celebrated its unexpected rise to the top of the World Cup standings by taking the day off, reports AP.

The New Zealanders defeated Sri Lanka by six wickets in Hamilton on Tuesday to improve their record to 2-0 in the nine-nation tournament.

They are now inactive until Saturday when they play South Africa in Auckland, and planned to make the most of Wednesday's break.

The only official duty for the New Zealand players was to watch a telecast of the Australia-South Africa match being played in Sydney.

"We'll have the day off and just concentrate on watching that match, and then have two good sessions on Thursday and Friday," said New Zealand captain Martin Crowe.

"That's an important team-building exercise." Crowe said it was important for the New Zealanders to take a close look at the South Africans, who are an unknown quantity after 22 years out of international cricket.

"We'll have to sit down and have a good look at the South Africans, the way they bowl and bat," Crowe said.

"We've seen hardly any of them before, so we'll be getting in front of the television in one room and having a good look."

The New Zealanders re-

turned to their Auckland base on Wednesday following the win over Sri Lanka.

Crowe said he was not completely satisfied with the team's performance and was particularly critical of his own cautious contribution.

"I was a little disappointed with myself. I played it too carefully and I put a little bit of pressure on in that three-quarter stage," Crowe admitted. He scored only five as New Zealand chased a moderate victory target of 207 runs.

"I was just conscious of batting out and being responsible, instead of throwing wickets away," Crowe said.

"You've just got to get four and five runs an over on a pitch which was a bit slow and I didn't want to put anyone else under pressure."

"It served as a good reminder for me, anyway."

Sri Lanka next travels to NacKay to play India on Friday. The islanders will Wednesday call up a replacement for injured pace bowler Ramesh Ratnayake, who has a shoulder injury and will not recover in time to participate in the tournament.

The World Cup committee agreed to Sri Lanka replacing Ratnayake in its squad of 14 and the Sri Lankans are likely to call up Nisantha Ranunga.

Sri Lanka's injury problems were further compounded by a hamstring injury to opening batsman Athula Samarasekera in Tuesday's match.

He is not expected to be able to play for at least a week.

Jahangir returns

MADRID, Feb 26: Jahangir Khan, the Pakistani world number one, returns to the fray after a

three-month break from competitive squash when the Spanish Open gets underway at the luxurious Castellana Club here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Jahangir missed last week's Welsh Classic in Cardiff because of a back injury and the Spanish Open marks the beginning of his preparation for the defence of the British Open championship, the world's premier title, which he has held for 10 years.

Although looking a little overweight, Jahangir, 28, said, "I have been training quite hard in Karachi and I feel I am pretty fit. My back feels okay at the moment and I am hoping it will stand up to the hard matches I will have to play over the next few days."

After Madrid, there is only one tournament, the German Open in Cologne, before the elite of international squash do battle for the British Open title in London, in April.

Jahangir's hold on the world number one spot depends heavily on his performance here as it is the last tournament before the issue of the new list.

Tyson sentencing now Mar 26 INDIANAPOLIS, Feb 26: Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson will be sentenced for rape a day earlier than the March 27 date originally set, the Marion County prosecutor's office said Tuesday, reports AP.

Superior Court Judge Patricia Gifford moved the sentencing to March 26 because of the prosecution's scheduling problems, spokesman Rob Smith said.

Tyson was convicted Feb. 10 of raping Desiree Washington, 19, in his Indianapolis hotel room last summer. Washington of Coventry, R.I. was a contestant in the Miss Black America pageant.

Tyson could face up to 60 years in prison, but will likely receive 12 years or less based on past sentencing patterns.

Real in semis VALENCIA, Spain, Feb 26: Real Madrid, playing primarily a defensive game, advanced to the semifinal round of Spain's King's Cup with a scoreless draw Tuesday against Valencia, reports AP.

Real Madrid defeated Valencia 2-1 in the first leg of the quarterfinals three weeks ago.

Bacher appeals for development funds

CANBERRA, Feb 26: South African cricket chief Ali Bacher urged the International Cricket Community on Tuesday to provide financial support to safeguard the sport's trailblazing role in advancing non-racial sport, reports Reuter.

The former South African skipper, who helped to return cricket to the world arena after more than 20 years in the wilderness, said huge differences in living standards and sporting facilities between blacks and whites could jeopardise bids to integrate the sport.

"I believe that unless a black person sees things are changing, something visible... notwithstanding that the African National Congress could be in power some day, I would anticipate there will be a huge problem," Bacher told

the National Press Club. "In many areas, in many Townships, you have difficulty finding a blade of grass."

Bacher, managing director of the new non-racial United Cricket Board of South Africa, said his board's biggest challenge was to redress the balance between the cricketing haves and have-nots.

"The need (for funds) is so great we cannot, simply cannot do it on our own that is our message to the international cricket community," Bacher said.

He suggested that the International Cricket Council (ICC), which last years readmitted South Africa, could divert funds from sources such as lucrative international tours.

"These funds would be earmarked for the uplift and promotion of cricket among disadvantaged communities in member countries," Bacher said.

Bacher, captain of the last South African team to play official Test cricket, against Australia in 1970, is touring the country with Steve Tshwete, an executive member of the ANC.

He and Tshwete will be at South Africa's opening match in the World Cup in Sydney on Wednesday against Australia.

The South Africans have only one non-white in their 14-man squad, coloured (mixed race) spinner Omar Henry, but Bacher expected to see more blacks make it to the top level under the current development programme.

"I believe the ultimate would be at the (Johannesburg) Wanderers Stadium when we play your Australian team in the second half of this decade and our team on merit constitutes all the different population groups of this country," Bacher said.

Tshwete, who is the ANC's

sports representative spear-headed cricket's return to the international scene, was presented with a gold medalion by Bacher to mark his efforts in establishing the non-racial board.

"This is not from me put from South African cricket, from the president and vice-president and from their representatives here," Bacher said.

Customs sports

Sports Reporter The seventh inter-club sports meet of the Bangladesh Customs, Excise and VAT begins at the Rajarbagh Police Lines ground today.

Finance Minister M Saffur Rahman will inaugurate the two-day competition while State Minister for Finance Majibur Rahman and State Minister for Establishment Md Nurul Huda will attend as special guests.