

## Sport

## Aussies can't believe it



ISLAMABAD, July 28: Suspended Pakistan cricket captain Wasim Akram is found guilty of match-fixing, reports AFP.

Akram and star batsmen Ijaz Ahmed and Salim Malik have been suspended from the national team by Pakistan's anti-corruption bureau over match-fixing charges.

The Australians, according to Marsh, respect and admire Akram enormously because of his full-throttle approach to cricket and an eagerness to share a drink and a chat after a day's play.

Akram, Malak and Ijaz are ineligible for Pakistan's selection until results of an investigation into matches in 1994 against India, New Zealand and South Africa, plus this year's World Cup final, are tabled.

Marsh and former Pakistan captain Imran Khan are stunned.

"Our gut reaction is that we're disappointed. Wasim's name has been mentioned because we've got so much respect for him," Marsh said Wednesday.

"Respect for the way he plays and respect for the type of guy he is."

"He's a fierce competitor on the field but afterward, he's usually one of the first to come into our room, shake hands and have a talk."

"We've always regarded him as a really nice bloke and good company... and it's difficult for us to believe he's guilty of anything."

If found guilty of match-fixing Akram will miss Pakistan's tour of Australia this summer and probably never play international cricket again.

"It would be a very sad thing if that was the case," Marsh said. "We want him here over the summer -- we enjoy playing against him and crowds enjoy watching him."

### Murali extends Lancashire deal

MANCHESTER, England, July 28: Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan today agreed a new two-year contract to stay on as Lancashire's overseas player, reports AFP.

Muralitharan, who only began this season's deal following Sri Lanka's early exit from the World Cup, has claimed 55 wickets in just six English county championship matches.

His superb displays have enabled Lancashire to claim three successive championship victories over Essex, Glamorgan and Hampshire. His miserly bowling at one-day level has also helped his county to the NatWest Trophy quarter-finals and within touching distance of the one-day National League summit.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed my short spell here since the World Cup and I'm delighted to be coming back next year," said Muralitharan.

The lads have been great and I'm really hoping to be available for much longer and help win something for Lancashire."

Lancashire chairman Jack Simmons claimed: "This is a tremendous signing for the club. Murali is a world class bowler and I hope he will become as much a Lancastrian as Farokh Engineer, Clive Lloyd and Wasim Akram -- I know we've got the best overseas player for the next two seasons."

Murali's return to Old Trafford next season could be interrupted by a projected series between Sri Lanka and South Africa in the middle of next summer, which is yet to be finalised.

### Elenilson grabs 10000m gold

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, July 28: Brazilian Elenilson Silva broke away from a pack in the final 100 metres to win the men's 10,000 metres and veteran US performers dominated the field events at the Pan American Games Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The 22-year-old Silva had been disqualified in the men's 5,000 metres Saturday, then reinstated as the silver medalist, but there was no doubt about the colour of his medal this time.

He grabbed the 10,000-metre gold in a lifetime best of 28 minutes, 43.50 seconds to beat the man who was declared the winner of the protest-filled 5,000 metres, Jose Galvan of Mexico.

Galvan took silver this time in 28:44.03 with Peter Julian of the United States claiming the bronze in 28:44.55.

Silva fell to his knees, kissed the track and prayed after his triumph.

"This is the most important victory of my life," said the happy Brazilian.

The United States, meanwhile, picked up three gold medals in the field events.

Three-time Olympian Lance Deal opened the US show by claiming his second consecutive Pan American hammer gold with a throw of 79.61 metres (261 feet, 2 inches). Teammate Kevin McMahon took the bronze at 73.41 metres (240 feet, 10 inches).

Connie Price-Smith, another three-time US Olympian added to the total with a best of 19.06 metres (62 feet, 6 1/2 inches) in the women's shot.

The third US gold came in the men's pole vault with another 1-0-2 showing.

Pat Manson claimed the victory with a vault of 5.60 meters (18 feet, 4 1/2 inches). Countryman Scott Henning was 5 centimetres (2 inches) behind for the silver.

## Akram talks to PCB chief

ready to prove the allegations wrong," Rehman added.

He refused to reveal details or the outcome of the talks, saying the matter was now between Akram and the Accountability Bureau.

Rehman's newly-appointed committee last weekend suspended Akram and two other players, Ijaz Ahmed and Salim Malik, from the national team over match-fixing charges, which were stepped up after Pakistan lost to Australia the World Cup final in England on June 20.

The suspension followed charges framed by the Accountability Bureau against Akram and his two colleagues on the basis of an interim report of a PCB inquiry committee which in September last year had implicated the trio in match-fixing.

Akram put his point of view and "I listened to him patiently," Rehman told AFP, indicating the brief session remained inconclusive.

The chairman said he had asked Akram to contact the government's Accountability Bureau and clarify the charges.

"Akram assured me of full cooperation and said he was

during the tournament."

The bureau would finalise its report soon, he added.

Akram had stayed back in England after his team's dismal performance against Australia, which triggered protests with angry fans burning effigies of national players calling them "traitors and gamblers".

He said his engagements with a cricket league and commitment as television commentator during the England versus New Zealand Test series delayed his return last month.

Akram told AFP from England on Monday that he was "disappointed" over the charge but he was confident of fighting it. He ruled out any plans to retire.

Sources said Malik and several other players on Monday met with Rehman, who told them that he would not tolerate any indiscretions.

The players are also facing a judicial inquiry headed by Lahore High Court judge, Malik Mohammad Quayum, who is expected to finalise his findings in August.

Pakistani cricket stars have repeatedly denied the charges.

### Karim calls it a day

NAIROBI, July 28 (Reuters/ AFP): Asif Karim, Kenya's captain at this year's World Cup, announced his retirement from international cricket.

All-rounder Karim told a news conference he had considered retirement before the World Cup but had been asked to stay on by the Kenya Cricket Association (KCA).

"After captaining Kenya at the World Cup, I have reviewed the issue of retirement with my parents, family and well-wishers and I have decided to retire from international cricket," he said.

A veteran of 30 one-day internationals and captain since Kenya attained one-day status in 1997, the 36-year-old Karim said he had decided to make way for younger players.

"I feel the time has now come for the younger and fringe players to have a shot at international cricket and steer Kenya to greater cricketing heights in the new millennium," he said.

After sensational beating the West Indies at the 1996 World Cup in India, Kenya lost all five of their games at this year's World Cup in England.

His retirement comes at a time of transition in Kenya's cricket management. KCA officials also announced the replacement of coach and former



Samir Ibrahim (R) of Egypt making a sliding tackle on Mexico's Francisco Palencia during their Confederations' Cup clash at Mexico City on July 27. — AFP photo



Brazil's Elenilson Silva doesn't hide his feelings after winning the men's 10,000 metres gold at the PanAm Games on July 27.

— AFP photo

### Cricket at MCG for another decade?

MELBOURNE, July 28: International cricket appears certain to continue at the Melbourne Cricket Ground next summer with the Victorian Cricket Association and the Melbourne Cricket Club on the verge of reaching a new agreement, reports AFP.

The two bodies have been in dispute for three years over the signing of a new agreement covering the terms and conditions in which cricket can be played at the famous arena.

The Australian Cricket Board had threatened to move all international matches, including the traditional Boxing Day Test, interstate if the dispute was not solved by Monday.

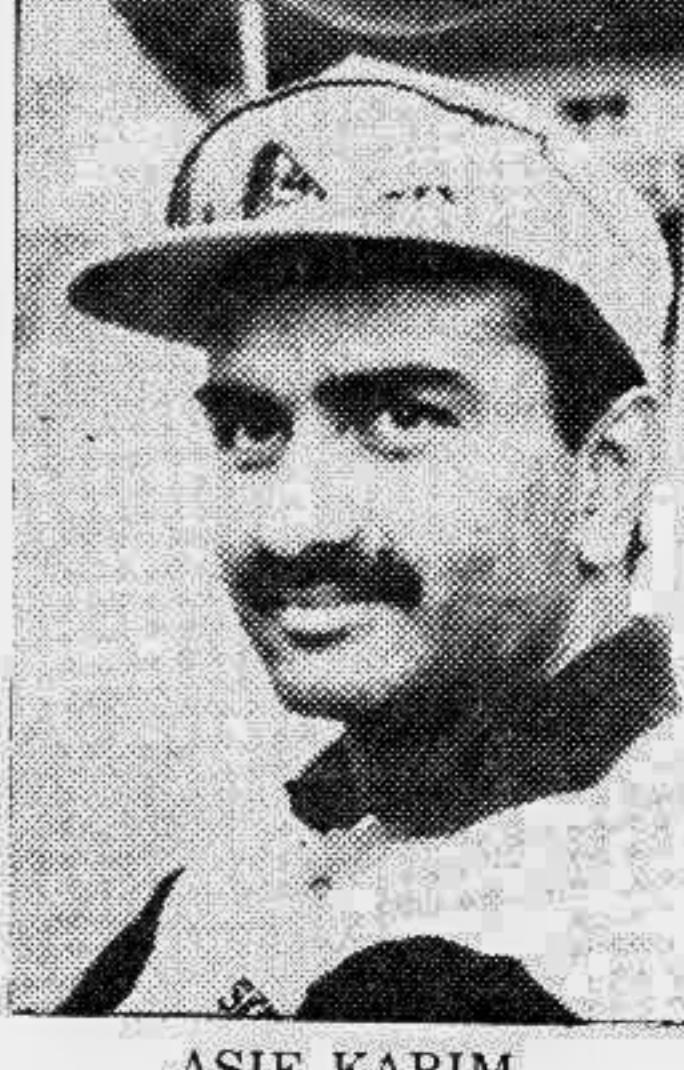
That is the date tickets for next summer's Test and one-day international matches against India and Pakistan go on sale to the public.

There was speculation the Boxing Day Test was to be moved to the Sydney Cricket Ground.

However, VCA cricket operations manager Shaun Graj said Wednesday an agreement with the MCC was close to being signed.

"We're fairly confident a decision will be made soon," he said.

"We should have an agreement soon. We're just fine-tuning everything."



ASIF KARIM

West Indian batsman Alvin Kallicharan with Indian Sandip Patil.

It is the second spell as coach for Patil, a former Indian Test player. He will take charge on August 1, with his first challenge the four nation tournament against South Africa, India and Zimbabwe in Nairobi from September 25 to October 4.

Kallicharan will help to oversee Kenya's under-19 team in next year's World Youth Cup in Sri Lanka.

Patil had led Kenya to the last ICC Trophy tournament in Malaysia in 1997 but quit halfway through his term. He was believed to have differed with Karim over team selection.

In an earlier Group A match on Tuesday, Bolivia and Saudi Arabia played to a lackluster 0-0 draw. Mexico leads the group with four points after two games but all four sides have a shot at the semifinal with one match each remaining.

The Group B teams, which

resume play today in Guadalajara, are Brazil, Germany, the United States and New Zealand.

footed shot that glanced off the crossbar and into the back of the net defended by Essam El Hadary.

In the 26th minute Jose Manuel Abundis scored his second goal of the tournament with a glancing header off a corner kick from German Villa.

Mexico appeared coasting to semifinal berth in the FIFA tournament when Egypt's Yasser Radwan was sent off at the 64th minute after receiving his second yellow card from South Korean referee Yung Joo Kim.

But the Egyptians refused to fold. Hassan Ahmed slotted home a close-range shot after Mexican keeper Jorge Campos failed to clear a free kick that rebounded off the crossbar.

With the impatient Mexican crowd boozing the home team, Egypt got the equaliser at the 85th minute when Samir Ibrahim rifled in a free kick inside the near post from 30 meters past a poorly positioned three-man wall.

In the second half there were some changes in tactics. Egyptian coach Mahmoud Al-Gohary told reporters. "The team's spirits were greatly lifted."

**MEXICO-EGYPT**

The Egyptians gained the respect of the 65,000 crowd in Mexico City's Azteca Stadium and were cheered as they walked off the pitch at the end of the scrappy match.

Long before the final whistle blew, the Mexican fans began boozing the local side. impatient with their team's complacency after taking a 2-0 halftime lead.

"It's logical for them to react that way," Mexican coach Manuel Lapuente said of the crowd's reaction. "It's up to us to try harder and do something to please them."

Mexico opened the scoring in the 15th minute when Pavel Pardo, fed into the box by a flicked on ball from Cuauhtemoc Blanco, slammed a right-

Gough, who is currently sidelined with a shin-calf injury, called on them to be selected for next week's third Test with New Zealand following another woeful batting display in the second Test that saw the tourists level the four match series at 1-1.

"If you look around the country, there's probably only two batsmen who could be in contention for a place in the line-up for the Old Trafford Test and that's Atherton and Chris Adams," said Gough.

"Atherton put the steel back into our batting and Chris in the middle order."

"I've bowled against him (Adams) this year and he's a great player. He loves to attack bowlers."

"With Nasser Hussain probably out for Old Trafford, there's definitely one place open which should go to Mike Atherton."

"And then we need someone in the middle order who's going to score runs - and that has to be Chris Adams."

The return of Atherton, who has scored a double century in a county match and 95 in a one day game since undergoing more treatment on his recurring back injury, could push either Mark Butcher or his brother-in-law Alec Stewart down the order as both have failed to convince in the series so far as an opening partner.

"If Maurice joins the exodus Marseilles may move for Boca Juniors star Claudio Caniggia.

"It's all on hold. We met at Monaco but just for a friendly chat - not a professional rendez-vous," said coach Rolland Courbis of a move for the Argentine.

Courbis, who has replaced Blanc with Argentinian central defender, Eduardo Berizzo, dismissed talk that he chopped and changed his squads too often.

Third last time out and in the Champions League preliminaries, have turned into big spenders after splashing

Marseille appear to be on the most even of keels as they approach the season, with striker Florian Maurice still pondering a mooted move to Real Madrid while fellow French international Christophe Dugarry faces a six-month ban after testing positive for banned anabolic steroid Nandrolone.

Monaco, whom coach Claude Puel led to fourth last season after replacing Jean Tigana, have lost Nigerian striker Viktor Ikpeba to Germany's Dortmund but Maurice can fill that void.

Lens, the 1998 champions, have been wheeling and dealing throughout the summer, buying midfielder Olivier Dacont from Everton and Cameroonian international striker Joseph-Desire Job from Lyon and offloading Vairelles, Stephane Dalmat and Fred Dehu - as well as Czech star Vladimir Smicer, who has joined Liverpool.

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