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**Did U Know?**

American Miss E M Ryan is the most, twelve in 1914, 1919-1923, 1925-1927, 1930, 1933, 1934, women's doubles title winner at the Wimbledon Championships.



**Talk Turkey**



**Deco**

(Portugal midfielder)  
"I am sure I have come at the right time to do great things and be able to help Chelsea go back to the way it was and come back to being the first one, not only in England but also to win the Champions League that has been their dream for so long." After signing for Chelsea.



**What to Watch**

**STAR Sports**  
Wimbledon Championships  
Women's Singles Final  
Live from 6:30pm

**Nothing is concrete yet**

SPORTS REPORTER

The committee to probe the national football team's failure in the recently concluded fifth SAFF Football Championship began interviewing the team management and players on Thursday and it was evident that lack of coordination was behind the poor performance.

Bangladesh for the second time failed to reach the semifinals of the regional football extravaganza following draws against unfancied Bhutan and Afghanistan and a loss to co-hosts Sri Lanka in the in the group stage last month.

Team manager Sheikh Mohammed Aslam, physician Mahfuzullah Chishti and captain Aminul Haque and his deputy Biplab Bhattacharya appeared before the committee headed by Harunur Rashid on the first day of interview.

Anwarul Hoque Helal and Sirajul Islam Bachchu are the other two members of the committee, which expected to submit their report to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) by mid-July.

Previously, it was learned that players were divided into groups and coach Abu Yusuf maintained a distance with the players that increased as the tournament went on.

**BSJA to honour hockey league winners**

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) will accord a reception to the Premier Hockey League champions Usha Krita Chakra and top performers of the meet at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room tomorrow.

Usha midfielder Zahidul Islam Rajan has been selected best player while runners-up Abahani's Mamunur Rahman Chayan will receive the award for the highest scorer. Mohammedan's Mehrab Hossain Kiran and Syed Al Masum and Krishna Kumar of Sonali Bank were adjudged best promising players.

Secretary general of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) Kutubuddin Ahmed will be present as chief guest in the function.

**Zimbabwe skip T20 WC**

**Retained as full ICC member**



AGENCIES, Dubai

Zimbabwe have agreed to skip next year's World Twenty20 in England to end a deadlock over demands that the African nation be suspended, the International Cricket Council said on Friday.

The ICC Executive Board, which sat for an unscheduled third day, agreed to keep Zimbabwe in its fold after the African nation acceded to India's request to pull out of next year's World Twenty20 championships in England.

"We have decided to pull out in the larger interests of the game," Peter Chingoka, the chairman of Zimbabwe Cricket, told Cricinfo. "We have been informed that the British government may not grant visas to our players, and that situation may prevail during the Twenty20 World Cup. We don't want to be gatecrashers; we will attend only those weddings to which we are invited."

While England and South Africa reportedly wanted Zimbabwe suspended from the ICC, the Asian bloc -- led by the game's commercial powerhouse India -- opposed the move.

With India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh supporting Zimbabwe, the rival group led by England was unable to garner the 7-3 majority among the 10 full members required to suspend the African nation.

"We have consulted and exchanged notes with everybody, including our Indian friends, last night," Chingoka said. "We are now looking forward to more tours and international cricket with our Asian friends, especially India."

The ICC said in a statement that Zimbabwe's decision to withdraw from the Twenty20 Worlds in June next year was a "one-off and will not be taken as a precedent."

"The Zimbabwe delegation has agreed to take this decision in the greater interest of world cricket and the ICC," the statement said.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe will remain a full member of the ICC, officials said on Friday, after the deeply-divided world body worked out a last-minute compromise.

"The full membership of Zimbabwe is currently not in doubt," incoming ICC president David Morgan of England told reporters at the conclusion of the council's executive board meeting.

"There was not even a discussion on the issue of Zimbabwe's membership," he said.

"Everybody stands to benefit from the decision," said Morgan.

"Zimbabwe will be entitled to participation fees in the tournament like any other member. The ICC could not jeopardise the tournament."

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown welcomed the decision.

"I welcome the suspension of Zimbabwe from ICC tournaments for a year. This will allow the Twenty20 tournament in England to go ahead."

"It also sends a powerful message to Zimbabwe that the Government must change or face further isolation."

The cricket boards of South Africa and England last week suspended bilateral ties with Zimbabwe in protest at the deteriorating political situation in Harare, where President Robert Mugabe was controversially re-elected.

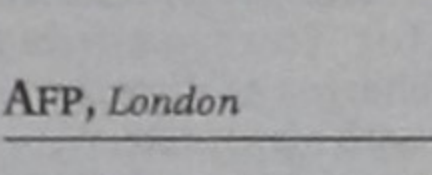
Incoming ICC Chief Executive Officer Haroon Lorgat meanwhile said that the ICC should not get involved in politics.

"We cannot as a sports body be mixing sports with politics... They should be kept separate," Lorgat told reporters following the meeting in Dubai.



Pakistan's medium-fast bowler Abdur Rauf is ecstatic after seeing the back of Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful during the Asia Cup Super League match at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday.

**Another final of the Rs**



AFP, London

Rafael Nadal set up a third successive Wimbledon final with five-time champion Roger Federer on Friday when he defeated Germany's Rainer Schuettler 6-1, 7-6, 6-4 in the semifinals.

Federer had earlier defeated Russia's Marat Safin 6-3, 7-6, 6-4 to move to within one win of a record sixth consecutive Wimbledon title.

Nadal, who came close to taking the world number one's All England Club crown in 2007 and destroyed the top seed at Roland Garros just four weeks ago, will be bidding to become only the third man to win the French Open and Wimbledon in the same season.

Victory would also make the second seed the first Spanish winner of the Wimbledon men's singles title since Manuel Santana in 1966.

Schuettler had spent three more hours than Nadal getting to the semifinal, including tying the record for the second longest men's match in Wimbledon history in getting past Arnaud Clement in the last eight.

That was five sets taking five hours and 12 minutes spread over two days.

On Friday, he was a set down in only 23 minutes with Nadal breaking in the first, third and seventh games to threaten a Centre Court rout.

But the 32-year-old German, giving away 10 years to the Spaniard, rallied and broke Nadal to take a 2-1 lead in the second set with a wrong-footing, cross-court forehand on his way to taking a 5-4 lead.

Nadal, however, broke in the 10th game as Schuettler served for the set and then dominated the tiebreak, taking the second set when the German watched a loose forehand drift wide.

The four-time French Open champion then illustrated his intimidating, all-court power by unleashing a 100mph forehand in the second game of the third set before breaking the dispirited German to lead 2-1.

Even a bloodied left knee, which he needed to gingerly ice, failed to disrupt the 22-year-old Mallorcan who comfortably stretched his lead to 5-3.

Schuettler saved three match points in the next game but Nadal carved out three more on his next service game which he converted

to victory after two hours on court when the German went wide with a weak return.

In the first semifinal, a near flawless display ensured Federer was detained on Centre Court for just one hour and 41 minutes as he compiled the win over the Russian to set up what is expected to be another showdown with Nadal in the final.

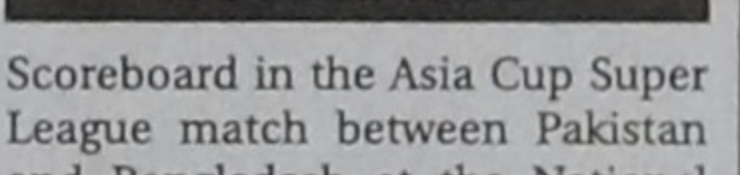
"It is great," Federer said after wrapping up what was his 65th straight win on grass. "It is a beautiful feeling to have the opportunity to win the title again here."

Federer, who is bidding to become the first player to win six consecutive titles at the All England since the 19th Century, admitted he had been surprised by the ubiquity of predictions that Nadal would deny him the place in history he craves.

"I guess you can say what ever you like but I was surprised by how intense it was," he said. "But the fact was that Rafa beat me so easily in Paris and went on to win at Queens."

"He has been playing fantastically but don't write me off too quickly because this is my part of the season, Wimbledon and the US Open."

**BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD**



AGENCIES, Dubai

The ICC's annual conference week, which began on Sunday, has included two-day meetings involving the ICC Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) and the ICC Board. Among the different issues discussed and decided upon were the following:

**FREE HITS PREVAIL**

The current playing condition relating to free hits following a foot fault no-ball in One-Day Internationals and Twenty20 Internationals is retained.

**BATSMEN TO PICK POWERPLAY OVERS**

The batting team will be permitted to choose when one of either the second or third PowerPlays takes place in ODIs.

**NO COMFORT BREAKS**

Substitute fielders shall only be permitted in cases of injury, illness or other wholly acceptable reasons. 'Wholly acceptable reasons' should be limited to extreme circumstances and should not include what is commonly referred

**Decisions, decisions**



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It was also agreed that three fielders be permitted outside the field restriction areas during both the second and third PowerPlays. Previously the third fielder was allowed outside the circle during either the second or third PowerPlay. The idea behind the amendment is to offer greater opportunity for spinners to bowl

with the safety net of more protection for spinners.

**ELIMINATOR REPLACES BOWL-OUT**

Both the ICC Champions Trophy 2008 and the ICC World Twenty20 2009 include a provision for a one-over eliminator to replace a bowl-out in the event of a tie.

The eliminator will be applicable in the semifinals and the final in the Champions Trophy and all matches in the ICC World Twenty20.

The loss of two wickets by the batting side ends its innings. If the scores are equal then the team that has hit the most sixes combined from its two innings in the main match and the one-over eliminator is declared the winner. If the scores are still equal at that point then they will be separated by determining which of them scored the most boundaries -- fours and sixes -- in both innings.

**NO COMFORT BREAKS**

Substitute fielders shall only be permitted in cases of injury, illness or other wholly acceptable reasons. 'Wholly acceptable reasons' should be limited to extreme circumstances and should not include what is commonly referred

to as a 'comfort break'.

**CLEAN CATCHES**

Should both umpires be unable to make a decision, they may consult by two-way radio with the third umpire as to whether there is any definitive evidence as to whether the catch was taken cleanly or not.

Following such consultation, the final decision will be made and given by the bowler's end umpire. Should the bowler's end umpire still not be able to decide, a not-out decision shall be given.

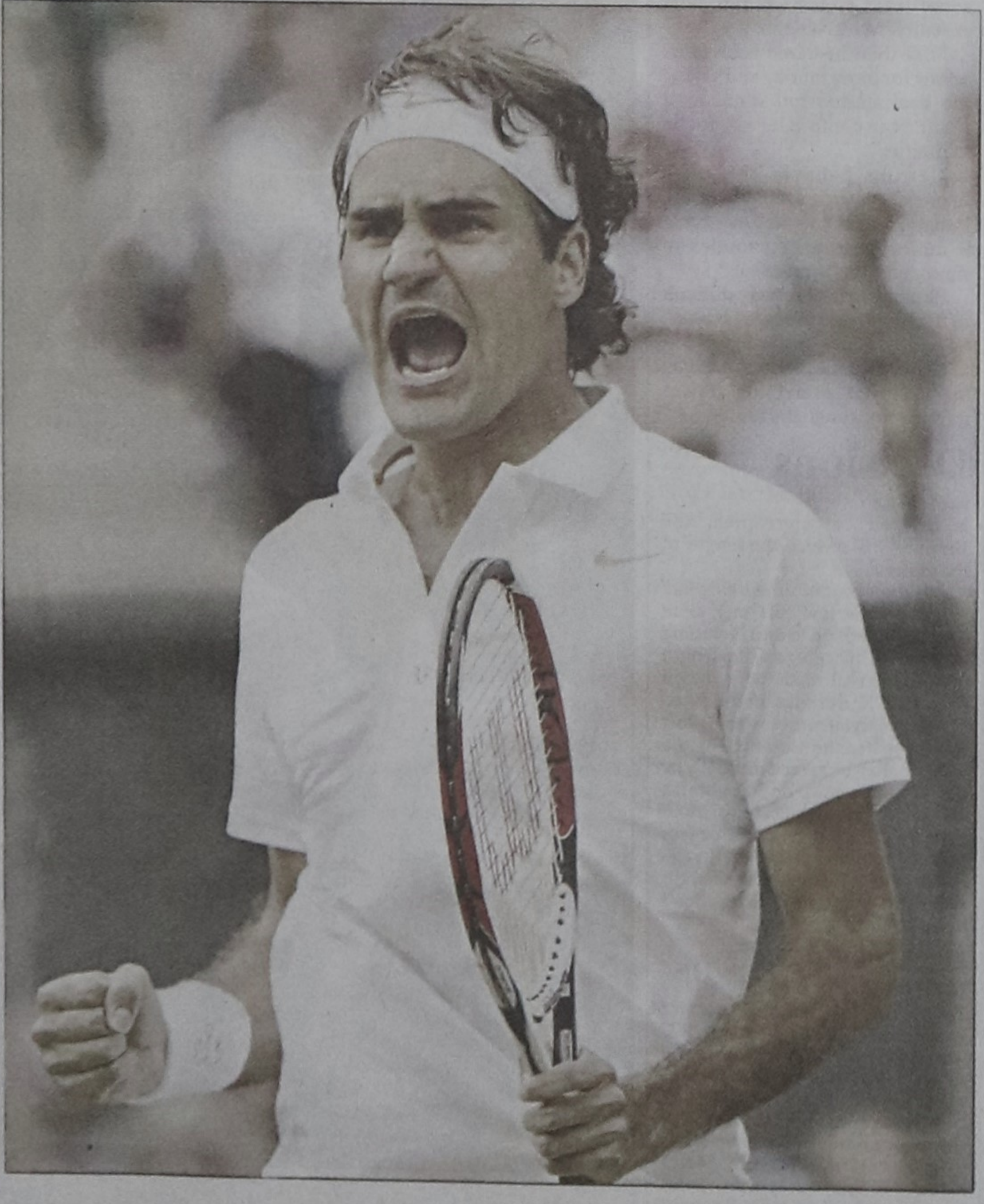
**CHANGING OF BALLS IN ODIs**

It was agreed to continue with the playing condition that requires a mandatory change of ball at the commencement of the 35th over in ODIs.

**INTERVALS IN ODIs**

It was agreed the playing conditions be amended so that the interval is reduced by the amount of actual playing time lost, up to a maximum of 15 minutes, rather than the current requirement of reducing the interval to 30 minutes only after more than 60 minutes have been lost.

It was also agreed that "Where the innings of the side batting first



Swiss world number one Roger Federer exults after beating Russia's Marat Safin in the semifinals of the Wimbledon Championships at the All England Tennis Club in London yesterday.

**Serena, Venus in doubles final**

AFP, London

Serena and Venus Williams warmed up for their Wimbledon singles final by teaming up to reach the doubles title match as well on Friday.

The Americans, seeded 11, saw off France's Nathalie Dechy and Casey Dellacqua of Australia 6-3, 6-3 and will be chasing their third Wimbledon doubles title to add to their 2002 and 2003 wins.

In Sunday's final they will face America's Lisa Raymond and Samantha Stosur of Australia, the 16th seeds, who shocked top seeds Cara Black and Liezel Huber 6-3, 6-3.

The Williams sisters have also won the Australian Open doubles title twice as well as one French Open.

**Inamdar head of associates**

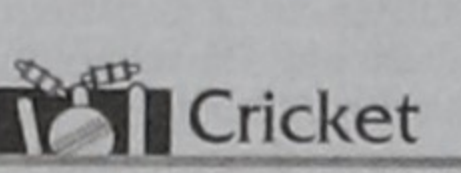
CRICINFO, undated

Chairman of Cricket Kenya (CK) Samir Inamdar was elected as the chairman of the Associate and Affiliate members of the ICC at the annual conference in Dubai.

Inamdar, who was already one of the three representatives of the non Test-playing countries on the ICC executive board, replaces HH Tunku Imran who stood down because of his commitments with the IOC.

Inamdar, who polled 26 votes, is joined on the ICC executive board, by Imran Khwaja (Singapore, 22 votes) and Neil Speight (Bermuda, 21). Rene van Iershort from the Netherlands received 18 votes while Israel's Stanley Pearman, who was a sitting representative, finished bottom of the pile with 16 votes.

**Shoaib ban suspended**



AFP, Lahore

A Pakistani court on Friday said Shoaib Akhtar was free to play cricket again after suspending an 18-month ban imposed on the paceman by the country's cricket authorities for indiscipline.

A judge at Lahore High Court ruled that the 32-year-old Akhtar should be allowed to play until his appeal against the ban is heard, most likely in September.

Akhtar lodged an appeal with the court on Tuesday against an 18-month ban for indiscipline, the latest in a string of controversies involving the bowler. The ban was originally for five years but was reduced last month.

"While accepting his application for interim relief (until the appeal is heard), the court has allowed Shoaib Akhtar to play cricket," Judge Zahid Hussain told the court in the eastern city.

"The petition will be heard after the summer vacation," which ends in September, he said.

Akhtar welcomed the decision and said he wanted to play in the Champions Trophy, which Pakistan hosts in September this year.

"I am relieved," Akhtar told AFP after the hearing.

"I am keeping fit and I'm going to England and try to play some county or league matches there and get in shape for the Champions Trophy."

Akhtar added that he wanted to clear his name. "I owe my name and fame to Pakistan, so I will never defame my country. I want to win the Champions Trophy for my country and for that I need everyone's support."

"I am thankful to PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf for his support in the last two months," he added.

Akhtar and Ashraf were caught up in a legal battle earlier this year over comments made by the bowler against the initial ban, but PCB sources said a senior cabinet minister had succeeded in engineering a rapprochement between them ahead of the court decision.

A Pakistan Cricket Board disciplinary committee banned Akhtar for five years in April for several incidents of indiscipline and for violating the conditions of a two-year probation period imposed for hitting a teammate with a bat.

seven million rupees (115,000 dollars) in June.

In October last year, Akhtar was banned for 13 matches and fined 3.4 million rupees for hitting partner Mohammad Asif with a bat just days before the Twenty20 World Cup in September in South Africa.

The Pakistan Cricket Board

PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar comes out of a court building after filing an appeal against his ban in Lahore yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP