



### Pakistan not to host World Cup cricket in 2011

Pakistan has been stripped of hosting rights for the 2011 World Cup because of the 'uncertain security situation' in the country, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said last week. "It is a regrettable decision but our number one priority is to create certainty and deliver a safe, secure and successful event," David Morgan, ICC president, said in Dubai. "The uncertainty created by events in Pakistan created a huge question mark over our ability to do just that." The ICC will look into possible compensation for Pakistan Cricket Board as a result of being stripped off the mega event.

### Yankees notch first win in new stadium

Derek Jeter snapped a 5-5 tie with a homer in the eighth innings to lift the New York Yankees to a 6-5 victory over the Cleveland Indians last week, the team's first win at their new US\$1.5bn stadium. Cleveland had won Thursday's opener 10-2 at the new park. "Sometimes the first one is the hardest one to get," Jeter told reporters.

### Cyclist Hamilton tests positive, retires

Olympic gold medal winner Tyler Hamilton has tested positive for a banned substance and retired from cycling, the American said last week. Hamilton said he is battling depression and admitted taking an over-the-counter homeopathic anti-depressant containing the steroid DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone), which is a banned substance.



Photo: Rodolfo Altoroso

# SAIL TIME

Competitors tame tough winds at the recent Oman national laser event

M Najmuz Zafar  
mohammad.zafar@apexstuff.com

For two entertaining days of the weekend, the sea was abuzz with activities as 22 participants from the sultanate chased tough winds at the Ras al Hamra Boat Club (RAHBC) in Muscat for the Volvo 2009 Oman National Laser Championship.

Thursday saw winds of 17-18 knots, which became difficult to manoeuvre for many sailors during the scheduled five races. In the end only eight participants were left in the fray.

The remaining three races on Friday were more competitive with the conditions being perfect for sailing. "It's shame when winners are decided in non-existent winds but

this year the weather was ideal to have a good competition," said Fred Rourke, the racing officer. Douwe Sickler, who bagged first places in five of the eight races, was the undisputed winner with Tony Van Thiel breathing down his neck in the second position. The third place went to Stephen Rice. Of the five Omani participants, four of them were from Royal Navy of Oman. Rashid Khalfan al Yahji took the first position while second and third places went to Abdulhakeem al Kiyumi and Mafoud al Zarafi respectively.

The championship had a distinct flavour due to its varied participation as sailors (mostly in their 40s)

had a chance to fight it out with a couple of teenagers in the fray. In fact, four youngsters aged (14-16) did pose a serious challenge to veterans, some with over 40 years of sailing experience. Alexander Rice, 14, was placed seventh on the overall list, while Paul-Henry Van Thiel, 15, stood ninth. The prize distribution ceremony was like a family gathering as sailors knew each other and have been maintaining close ties.

The winners got trophies from Oman's sailing hero, Mohsin al Busaidi, amidst cheers and encouraging words of 'bravo' and 'way to go' from their fellow sailors.

Organised by the RAHBC Sailing



Section and Oman Laser Sailing Committee since 1983, the championship, with the backing of its main sponsor Volvo, has plans to involve sailors from the neighbouring regions. "For two years, we have

been associated with this championship and we want to extend the reach of this event to sailors from the UAE and other Arab countries," said David Aziz, director, Mohsin Haider Darwish, distributor of Volvo.