

Islamabad, Sept 9 (AP) - The International Cricket Council suspended Pakistan off-spinner Saeed Ajmal on Tuesday from bowling in international matches after his bowling action was found to be illegal.

The ICC said analysis of the bend and straightening of Ajmal's bowling arm revealed "all his deliveries exceeded the 15 degrees level of tolerance permitted under the regulations."

The action was analyzed by an ICC-accredited team of Human Movement Specialists using the National Cricket Centre in Brisbane on Aug. 25.

Ajmal's suspension is a big blow to Pakistan's plans for next year's World Cup as the 36-year-old has taken 183 wickets in 111 ODIs and 178 wickets in 35 tests.

Ajmal was reported after the first test against Sri Lanka last month. He played in the second test but missed the first two ODIs to carry out the tests in Australia.

According to ICC regulations, the suspended bowler can continue to play in domestic cricket under the supervision and consent of the home board and can apply for a re-assessment any time after he modifies his bowling action.

It was not for the first time that Ajmal had been reported in international matches. He was previously reported in 2009 during a one-day series against Australia in Dubai but cleared all the tests.

Ajmal has often troubled batsman with his "doosra" - a delivery that spins away from right-handed batsmen. But it was the same delivery that ran him into trouble in 2009 before he was cleared by University of Western Australia.

In May England's fast bowler Stuart Broad had also questioned Ajmal's bowling action and said that the off-spinner used different bowling actions on the field and during testing.

Former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif said Ajmal's suspension was a major setback for Pakistan as there's a lack of quality spin options in reserve.

"The sad part is that we haven't tried any other specialist off-spinner in international matches and now our World Cup plans are severely dented," Latif told The Associated Press.

"(Pakistan) bowling is finished without Ajmal. I had doubts for the last few months ...because the way he bowls it's hard to get away with at in test matches."

Latif doubts there will be enough time for Ajmal to moderate his actions, have new tests, and be cleared by the ICC before the start of the World Cup.

Pakistan is scheduled to play against Australia and New Zealand in the United Arab Emirates over the next four months. Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah in the UAE have been rewarding venues for the off-spinner, claiming 67 wickets in 12 test matches.