

Sport

Sampras on top of the world again



NEW YORK, Sept 12: Second seed Pete Sampras served his way past Russian Alexander Volkov on Saturday to complete his return to the US Open final and the top of the tennis world, reports Reuters.

With his 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 semi-final victory over the 14th seed, Sampras regained the number one ranking and is poised to become the first man since Boris Becker in 1989 to win Wimbledon and the US Open in the same year.

"I served really well," said Sampras, who did not face a break point in the entire one hour 48 minute match.

"The last couple of matches... I hit the ball really well," added the second seed, who dropped just two sets on his way to the final.

To avenge last year's final round loss to Stefan Edberg, which he called the most devastating of his career, Sampras today will have to beat surprising 15th seed Cedric Pioline.

The dashing Frenchman opened the day with an impressive 6-1, 6-7, 7-6, 6-1 victory over unseeded Australian Wally Masur.

Pioline, who picked off top seed Jim Courier and eighth seed Andrei Medvedev on his way to the semis, became the first Frenchman to reach the US final since Henri Cochet in 1932.

The men's semifinals of the super Saturday programme on a windy autumn-like day sandwiched the women's singles final in which top seed Steffi Graf dismantled 12th seed Helena Sukova 6-3, 6-3 to claim her third Grand Slam title of the year and third career US Open crown.

"It is a great achievement to have been able to win three Grand Slams and be in the final

of the other one," said Graf, who earned \$35,000 for the win.

Sampras moved quietly through his match, keeping the points short and holding his serve with ease throughout.

The left-handed Russian gave a far better account of himself than in last year's quarter-final with Sampras when the American accused him of quitting after one set.

"He came out ready to play. He was serving very well," Sampras said.

But the second seed, who became the youngest ever US Open champion at 19, three



PETE SAMPRAS

years ago, made the most of his break opportunities.

Sampras converted the lone break point of the first set. Unfortunately for Volkov, it came at set point.

The Russian, playing his first career Grand Slam semi-final, saved two break points in the second set. But Volkov fell behind again in the eighth game and Sampras drilled a backhand crosscourt winner that caught the line for 5-3 and he served out the set.

"After I won the second set I could see him kind of lose interest," Sampras said.

"I could see it in the way he was carrying himself. I think he knew he was in trouble."

If Volkov didn't know he was in trouble after two sets, it became painfully obvious when Sampras opened the third set with another service break.

He broke Volkov once more for good measure at 5-2 and served out the match with a love game, ending it with his 16th ace, a 117-mile per hour (188 kph) sizzler.



CEDRIC PIOLINE

The most inspirational tennis of the day, however, was provided by Cedric Pioline, who came out playing perhaps the best tennis of anyone in the tournament over the past two weeks.

Like Sampras, Pioline did not lose his serve once. But the brilliance of his play, especially in the opening set, was breathtaking as he raced out to a 5-0 lead before Masur knew what hit him.

The depth and precision of

his groundstrokes and passing shots gave Masur no chance as Pioline smashed winner after winner — 17 in the first set to just two for Masur and 62 in the match.

"I couldn't believe the way he played in the first five games. He did absolutely nothing wrong," said the 24th-ranked Masur, who did not face a seeded player on his way to the semis.

"He had too much game for me. He is very dangerous on both sides."

Masur played better in the middle two sets and Pioline came down to earth a bit as the pair split tie-breaks.

But the Australian veteran's inability to capitalise on break points continued to hurt him and when Pioline broke Masur to open the final set, he was done for.

Pioline fashioned another overpowering 6-1 set and stood on the threshold of his first professional title — at the toughest tournament in the world.

"I said to myself go and hit every ball you can and try to make a winner," said Pioline. "I really played well at the end."

The 24-year-old Parisian is only the fourth Frenchman to reach the US final. The other three are the tennis legends of the 1920s and '30s: Cochet, Rene Lacoste and Jean Borotra.

"I hope they are happy in France," he said.

Sampras said he expects Pioline to come out swinging today.

"He really has nothing to lose. It's his first Grand Slam final and he's going to be swinging away."

And Pioline's impression of Sampras?

"He is playing very well. Good serve, good forehand, good volley, good smash, good legs, good mental."

"We will see tomorrow."



Garri Kasparov of Russia awaits challenger Nigel Short's next move during the third game of their rebel world championship at the Savoy Hotel in London on Saturday. Kasparov leads the 24-match series 2-1-2.

— AFP photo

Black seems Briton's bane

LONDON, Sept 12: Black threatens to spell death for British challenger Nigel Short's attempt to defeat world chess champion Garri Kasparov, reports Reuters.

After three rounds, Kasparov leads the 24-game series 2-1-2 on 1/2 on the strength of wins with the white pieces in Games One and Three — he needs only a 12-12 tie to retain the crown and is heavy favourite to dispose of Short in quick order.

Short will have white pieces in the pair's fourth game on Tuesday.

The Azeri-born Russian compares the advantage of the first move in chess with having the serve in tennis. Many consider this exaggerated, but for Short it now looks unusually apt.

Short's results when defending the black pieces against Kasparov are disastrous — he has now only managed a single draw playing that colour in nine career attempts against Kasparov, widely regarded as the strongest player in the history of the game.

The only encouraging sign for the challenger is that he has created winning chances in every game, a fact hidden by the lopsided scoreline.

"If I was unlucky the score could be the opposite. Today Nigel could draw and he could have won the first or second Games," Kasparov admitted on Saturday in a press conference immediately after the game.

Only the winner appears for the post-game interview for television and press. The loser retires to lick his wounds.

Short has a history of feeble starts in crucial matches, and has always fought back. What makes experts sceptical that Short's knack for renaissance is likely to surface here is the lifetime record between the players.

In serious tournament play before this match, Short had managed only one win to set against Kasparov's 10 victories, with just a handful of games ending in draws.

Experts now find it hard to visualise Short mounting a serious challenge, but are not quite convinced that Kasparov, despite his strong start, is in top form.

"I think the match will get worse for Short — but I'm not sure if the games can get any worse," disillusioned English Grandmaster Lony Miles told Reuters.

Short left short of space

LONDON, Sept 12: Garri Kasparov defeated his time-troubled challenger Nigel Short in Game 3

to take a substantial early lead Saturday in their breakaway world championship match, reports AP.

Kasparov, 30, the reigning Armenian-born world champion, won playing white on the 59th move when his 28-year-old British challenger had only an embattled king and two pawns remaining.

Short virtually threw the game away in a frantic time scramble as the match's two-hour, 40-move limit approached. With just 60 seconds to go the British champion had to make four moves. He made the deadline but suffered heavy losses in the process.

"His attack did not look healthy. He had to sacrifice too much, and I felt confident," Kasparov told the post-match press conference at London's Savoy Theatre.

In a surprisingly upbeat, in-

terview on British television after his loss, Short smiled and said: "This is what chess is all about. I had my chances, and I didn't take them."

The gaggle of onlookers huddled in the Grandmaster's "analysis room" were not sparing in their criticisms of Short's tactics Saturday — particularly his relinquishing a bishop for a Kasparov knight in move 15.

"Short got outmanoeuvred in the early stages," said Tony Miles, the first British-born Grandmaster, who called the knight-bishop swap "a serious mistake." Two bishops are considered a mightier pair than a knight and a bishop.

"After that his position went downhill naturally," Miles told The Associated Press. "In real time trouble, Short tried to lash out in desperation but Kasparov was always in complete control."

Other observers derisively described Short's aggressive attack as "the charge of the Short brigade."

Short's loss gave Kasparov a 2-point lead in the 24-game

match, which continues Tuesday. Kasparov won playing white in the first game — Short appeared to be winning but ran out of time on his 40th move — and drew with Short in the second.

Some Grandmasters already were predicting that the two-month series would prove a Kasparov rout. After Saturday, none felt confident of predicting a come-from-behind victory for Short.

"He's never been two points down in a match before," said British Grandmaster Cathy Forbes. "But he's very tough, he's very determined and he's got nothing to lose."

Kasparov, who talked at length with Short on stage after the match, said it was "exciting chess" that could have gone either way.

"It's what I promised — what we promised," Kasparov said, referring to his and Short's foundation in February of the Professional Chess Association in defiance of the international chess federation FIDE.

Karpov, Timman opt for draw

ARNHEM, Netherlands, Sept 12: Dutch Grandmaster Jan Timman secured an easy draw against former world champion Anatoly Karpov of Russia in the fourth game of the FIDE World Chess Championship on Saturday, reports Reuters.

After only three hours' play Timman offered his higher ranked opponent a draw and after five minutes' thought, Karpov decided he had no chance of winning and accepted the offer.

The match score now stands at two points each.

Timman, controlling the black pieces, abandoned the solid Queen's Indian Defence with which he scored a crushing victory in Game Two and tried the risky Vienna variation of the Queen's Gambit declined.

Karpov, world champion from 1975 to 1985, seemed unsettled. He proceeded cautiously, and soon fell well behind on the clock.

Pundits in Arnhem judged the position after the early moves to be completely equal. "After the exchange of queens the game will be an early draw," Norwegian expert Argold

Eikrem said. Sure enough, the shortest game of the match ended five moves later when the two players reached a completely equal endgame.

For the third consecutive game, Timman's opening ideas seemed superior to those of Karpov and the Russian looked nervous throughout.

In contrast Timman, aged 41 and 30 places below Karpov in the world rankings, appeared totally at ease, sometimes brushing his long hair away from his face, the better to concentrate on the position.

"Something is wrong with Karpov's opening preparation," said Israeli International Master Eli Svidler.

"Either that or his seconds (Grandmaster assistants Vladimir Epishin and Ron Henley) are not working properly. Karpov has got nothing from any of the openings in this match."

"Jan will be very happy," Timman's Grandmaster compatriot Genna Sosonko said.

Timman will have the advantage of the white pieces and the first move in the fifth game in Arnhem on Sunday and will be hoping to take the lead for the

first time in the match. Karpov won the first game but Timman replied immediately with a win in the second game. The third game was drawn. A draw means nothing.

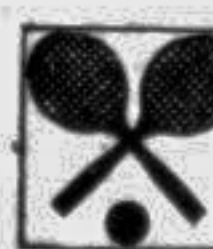
Karpov, 42, arrived 10 minutes late for the game after his seconds misjudged the time required to travel the 24 kms (15 miles) from their hotel in Apeldoorn.

Karpov and Timman are playing for the official FIDE World Championship because Garri Kasparov of Russia, the world number 1, and his British challenger Nigel Short would not accept the match conditions proposed by the World Chess Federation.

Kasparov and Short, who split from the World Chess Federation to form their own controlling body, are currently holding the breakaway Time World Championship in London.

The first 12 games in the best of 24 game match are to be played in the Netherlands — in Zwolle, Arnhem and Amsterdam — with the remaining games scheduled for Oman. The winner will be the first player to reach 12.5 points.

Doing something for native land



NEW YORK, Sept 12: Now that communism and the Berlin Wall have crumbled, tennis players from the former Soviet bloc are helping out the countries they used to fight with, reports AP.

Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere represented Bulgaria in the 1988 Seoul Olympics, although she also was a Swiss citizen, and until recently donated 10 per cent of her winnings to the Bulgarian Tennis Federation.

And Natalia Zvereva, who once complained that the Soviet Tennis Federation kept all of her prize money, has loaned money to her current federation so they could enter teams in federation and Davis Cup competition.

"Communism does not exist

Gigi Fernandez, Zvereva denied Grand Slam sweep

NEW YORK, Sept 12: The Grand Slam women's doubles bid by Natalia Zvereva of Belarus and American Gigi Fernandez ended on Saturday when they lost to their seeds Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and Helena Sukova 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the semifinals of the US Open, reports Reuters.

The top-seeded Zvereva and Fernandez, doubles winners at the Australian, French and Wimbledon Championships, were trying to match the Grand Slam sweep last achieved in 1984 by Martina Navratilova and Pam Shriver.

Sukova, who played the doubles semifinal after losing the singles championship match in straight sets to Steffi Graf earlier in the day, will be trying for her second title of the fortnight when she and her Spanish partner play South African Amanda Coetzer and Argentine Ines Gorrochategui in today's doubles final.

The Czech teamed up with Todd Woodbridge of Australia on Thursday to win the mixed doubles crown.

any more. It was a huge lie that was bound to collapse," said Yulia Berberian Maleeva, a nine-time Bulgarian tennis champion whose three daughters are currently ranked in the top 20 in the world. "Unfortunately for Bulgaria, it took about 50 years."

Both Zvereva and Maleeva say the biggest change in their lives since the demise of the Iron Curtain has been the ease with which they now obtain visas, necessary to travel the professional tennis circuit.

"I travel whenever I want to or whenever I feel like it," Zvereva said. "It's getting better with the visa situation because in my hometown [of Minsk] a lot of embassies are starting to open up."

A major reason for the change is that Zvereva doesn't live in the same country anymore, although she hasn't moved.

Before, she was a citizen of the Soviet Union. Now, she has a Belarus passport, and Minsk, not Moscow, is the capital. "Now that the embassies have opened up in my hometown, I go to one and get a visa in a couple of days," Zvereva said.

Mrs Maleeva and her two youngest daughters — Katerina and Magdalena — still call Sofia home. Manuela is married, lives in St. Legier, Switzerland, and now represents that country in Federation Cup play.

Manuela, seeded 11th, reached the semifinals of the US Open for the second consecutive year. Magdalena, the baby of the family, was seeded the highest No 10, and reached the fourth round, where she was ousted by sibling Katerina. She eventually fell to Helena Sukova.

"The change is so huge that it's like a different country now," Mrs. Maleeva said. "There is no more Iron Curtain. Everyone can travel. Everyone has their travel passport in their pocket."

Both Zvereva and Katerina Maleeva were in the news for stands they took against their

respective governments when the Iron Curtain was still impenetrable.

In 1989, when she was 18 years old and ranked fifth in the world, Zvereva said she was tired of giving most of her winnings to the Soviet Tennis Federation and wanted to keep more for herself. She became the first Soviet tennis player to sign a professional personal contract with an American agent, ProServ, in April 1989, and came under attack from members of the Soviet sports hierarchy.

Katerina Maleeva came under attack in her native land when she backed the democracy movement.

"Just before the first free elections in Bulgaria in 1990, there was a huge euphoria and everybody was trying to help the new democratic movement," Mrs Maleeva said. "Rock stars were giving concerts and Katerina was asked to play an exhibition match."

"To do something like this only a few months before that was unthinkable, to do something you want to do and you don't have the permission from the federation, from the Ministry of Sports or the KGB or people there. You know, the Ministry of Sports, every secretary of a federation is KGB."

So they come to Katerina and the secretary of the federation told her, "You're doing something you don't have permission to do. She said, 'I don't need your permission. I'm doing this.' And she did it."

Mrs. Maleeva said she was in Berlin, where Magdalena and Manuela were playing, when Katerina was called on the carpet by the officials.

"I sent him a fax," she said. "This was the first time I expressed what I felt. The first time. And I was already 45."

"I told him, 'don't you ever dare tell us what to do and what not to do. You have your job because they put you in it. I have my job because I earned it. I worked for it. So don't tell us what to do.'"

The Maleevas were able to

keep the money they won on the worldwide circuit, something others behind the Iron Curtain couldn't do.

Zvereva, the world junior champion in 1987 after winning the French Open, Wimbledon and US Open junior titles, and other players from the Soviet Union received only a stipend to cover expenses, while the money they won went to their federation.

Mrs. Maleeva said there was a reason her daughters were treated differently.

"The Soviet federation took complete care of their players," Mrs. Maleeva said, "airfare, hotel bill, clothes. For us, the minister of sports never paid one thing. Never, ever."

"So they did not have the face to come for our money."

The Maleevas didn't turn their backs on their country.

"Until Manuela got married, she was giving 10 per cent" to the Bulgarian federation, Mrs. Maleeva said. At that time, Manuela was paying for herself, for Katerina, for me — and we bargained for the 10 per cent tax.

"The minute she married, her husband said, 'No more money.'"

After she was married, she kept on competing for Bulgaria for two more years. She won that Olympic medal from Korea for Bulgaria although she was already a Swiss citizen. Her husband was very understanding.

'Friendship Run' gets underway

TAIPEI, Sept 12: Twenty-four athletes from China and Taiwan began a two-week "Friendship run" from Taipei to Beijing on Sunday, accompanied by the first five km (three miles) by thousands of Taiwanese amateur runners, reports Reuters.

The 12 athletes from China and 12 from Taiwan were to run through more than a dozen cities on both sides of the Taiwan straits before arriving in Beijing on September 26.

Organisers billed it as a 3,000-km (1,860-mile) marathon but the schedule reveals that the athletes will actually run for only a few hours every day, catching planes between cities including Kaohsiung in Taiwan and Shanghai and Harbin in China.

To get to China the runners will have to fly via the British colony of Hong Kong as Taipei and Beijing have had no direct links since the 1949 communist revolution that ousted the nationalists from the mainland.

Senior Taiwanese government officials joined several thousands Taipei residents in running the first stretch. "We hope to improve feelings between peoples on both sides through this sports activity," Cheyne Chiu, secretary-general of Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation, which handles the island's links with China, told reporters last week.

Sports exchanges between Taiwan and China have been growing since political tensions began easing in the late 1980s.



Chinese and Taiwanese marathon runners show V-signs during the 'Friendship Run' that began yesterday to promote cross-strait athletic exchange. About 1,000 runners attended the event.

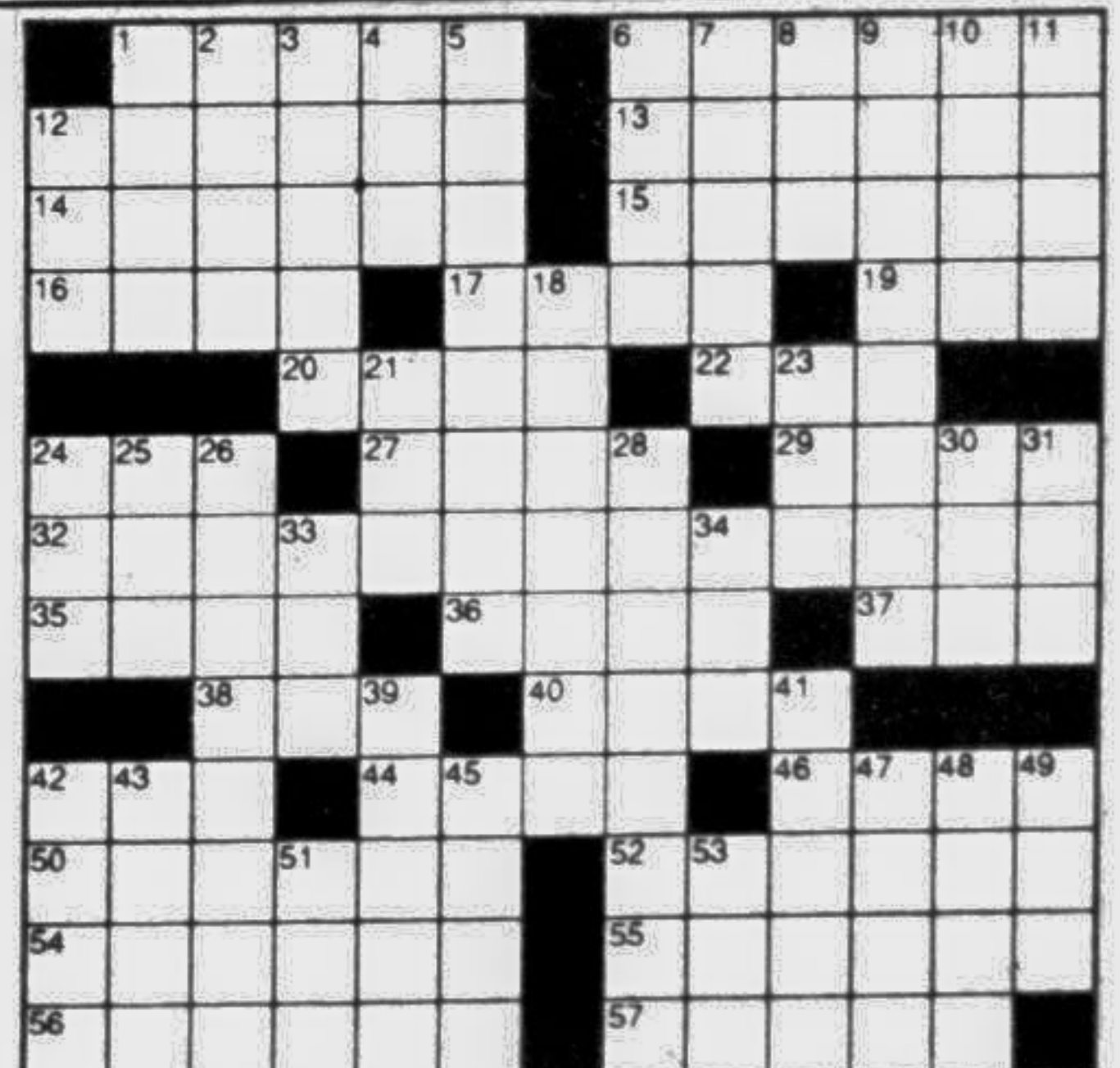
— AFP photo.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS
- 1 Combat unit
 - 6 Follows a trail
 - 12 Buff
 - 13 Carry away
 - 14 Ballerina Markova
 - 15 De Havilland or Newton-John
 - 16 Cranny
 - 17 Request in a kids' game
 - 19 Stately tree
 - 20 Court
 - 22 Train component
 - 24 Razor-billed bird
 - 27 Pop
 - 29 Emilia's husband
 - 32 "Murphy Brown" star
 - 35 Verifiable
 - 36 Recognize
 - 37 Scot's uncle
 - 38 Rotating part
 - 40 Battle it out
 - 42 Run up the
- DOWN
- 1 Western st.
 - 2 Medley
 - 3 Lucy's man
 - 4 Omega precoder
 - 5 Mar. 17 emblem
 - 6 Helen's home
 - 7 Souvenir of bygone times
 - 8 "What Kind of Fool —?"
 - 9 Journalist's insurance?
 - 10 Malefic
 - 11 Fashion line
 - 12 Zero-star review
 - 18 List of extras
 - 21 "— was saying..."
 - 23 Tune
 - 24 Revue segment
 - 25 Abbr. on old African maps
 - 26 — under (yielded)
 - 28 Teamed
 - 30 Prized possession
 - 31 Inseparable
 - 33 Goddess (Lat.)
 - 34 Lamb's dam
 - 39 "West Side Story" song
 - 41 Tag
 - 42 Calendar quota
 - 43 Nourishing, in one context
 - 45 Blue hue
 - 47 St. Helens spillage
 - 48 "— o'clock schola"
 - 49 Bear lair
 - 51 New Haven collegian
 - 53 Ron of TV's "Tarzan"

Solution time: 24 mins.

JOB ELAN SLAW
ALA NINE TAXI
CALENDAR OXEN
KNIFED VOW
RAY ONEILL
COWED DUE DOE
ADAM MTS ROOM
ROC WEB POLKA
PROVED TAB
OBI APIECE
VIEW COLANDER
ABEE ORLY ANN
TELL SOVA MTS



CRYPTOQUIP

P G V Q J X Z W S I F N G M
N J W N F V X N A C G S Q

Y P Q I N J Y P J M R S C N A W R ?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN MINIMUM SECURITY PRISON, INMATES HELD A HAPPY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: W equals G

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.