

Mbeki makes it clear

CAPE TOWN, Jan 9 (Reuters/Internet): South Africa's cricket and rugby authorities, under fire because of perceived racial selection policies, gained an unlikely ally when deputy President Thabo Mbeki called for national teams to be supported by all South Africans.

In a speech delivered on behalf of the African National Congress executive committee at a rally on Friday, Mbeki said that cricket and rugby teams deserved support "by the fact that we are all African".

His comments followed a statement by Sports Minister Steve Tshwete last week that he would be unable to support the South African cricket team if an all, or nearly all-white selection was sent to the World Cup in England this year.

Our teams, the (rugby union) Springboks and the (cricket) Proteas, will compete in their respective World Cup tournaments," said Mbeki who is expected to succeed Nelson Mandela as President later this year.

"All of us must give them necessary support as they compete in these tournaments so that they can become world champions."

Tshwete has threatened legislation compelling selectors to pick racially mixed teams regardless of form.

The United Cricket Board of South Africa responded by forming a committee which has the power to veto the selectors' choice. It also announced the creation of a "transformation charter" aimed at darkening the overtly white complexion of the game in South Africa.

Gooch in favour of domestic overhaul

LONDON, Jan 9 (AFP/Internet): Tour manager Graham Gooch returned to London without the Ashes trophy on Friday and said only a radical shake-up of domestic cricket could put England's Test team back on the Test map.

Gooch, a former England captain, said a memorable win in Melbourne and a fight to the finish in Sydney in the last two Tests had offered some hope for English cricket.

But he felt that big changes were needed in the domestic game before England could expect to welcome another triumphant touring party back from down under.

"We have got to radically look at the domestic structure. We are putting into place a national league this year and going to two divisions," said Gooch.

"We have got to produce tougher, leaner and more competitive domestic cricket. In the long run, our Test side will benefit from that."

You can't create strong character overnight," he added. But Gooch was happy to hear that the Ashes looked set to remain a five-Test series at least for the immediate future.

The International Cricket Council are reported to be keen to keep the longer Ashes showdowns despite rumours that England's poor recent run of form and the pressure for some sort of world championship could shorten the traditional series.

"England against Australia is the big one for England players. It's the one they all want to play in and I would hate to see that devalued by a shorter series," he added.

Meanwhile, England play Australia on January 10th in the first day of the triangular one-day series which world cup champions Sri Lanka also compete in.

France might escape WC tickets fine

PARIS, Jan 9 (Reuters/Internet): France might escape being fined over its controversial methods for selling match tickets for the 1998 World Cup finals.

Jacques Lambert, the chief executive of the organising committee (CFO) said on Friday.

He also said the figure of 350 million francs (\$60 million) goes off from the finals published in France on Thursday was wrong.

"It's not certain (France) will be inflicted with a fine," Lambert said.

He said the European Commission stated its case to the CFO at the end of August and the French organisers replied with their defence of their methods on November 30.

"They have yet to take a decision," Lambert said. The European Union threatened to fine the CFO over its sale of tickets when it appeared to favour French nationals and people resident in the country over citizens of the rest of the EU.

The commission at the time threatened to fine France up to 10 per cent of the CFO's profits for 1997.

Lambert said the CFO would announce its global profits at a news conference next Tuesday.

But it will not be the \$60 million figure publicised prematurely on Thursday.

"That does not correspond to reality," Lambert said. On Tuesday, exactly six months after France beat Brazil 3-0 in the World Cup final at Stade de France, the organising committee will be dissolved as a company.

From the 13th (Wednesday), we will proceed to the liquidation of the CFO," Lambert said.

"How the profits will be distributed depends on a convention between the state and the French Football Federation, but this has not yet been drawn up."

Dravid ton goes to waste



TAUPO, New Zealand, Jan 9 (AFP/Internet): New Zealand beat India in the first limited-over cricket match Saturday after a power failure at Owen Delany Park forced officials to recalculate the home side's scoring target.

In reply to India's 257, New Zealand were 168 for three off 30.4 overs when the floodlights malfunctioned, causing a 50-minute delay.

New Zealand's target was recalculated to 33 runs off 8.2 overs and those runs were knocked off for the loss of two further wickets and with one over to spare.

New Zealand was handicapped in the field by the loss of captain Stephen Fleming to a groin injury. Fleming hobbled off in the 35th over and is in doubt for the remaining four games in the series.

Rahul Dravid top-scored with 123 in India's total for 257 for five and Craig McMillan made 73 and Matthew Horne 57 in New Zealand's winning total of 200 for five.

Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin said it's frustrating to come out on the wrong side of a recalculation but players have to learn to cope with the disappointment.

"They are the conditions for the World Cup so we have to get used to them," Azharuddin said. "It is not ideal but I have no major complaints. It was just unfortunate that it happened at such a crucial time."

The match was evenly poised with India having just dismissed danger man Craig McMillan for 73 when the floodlights went out.

On the third ball after the restart, Chris Cairns was caught at long off for 23 but Adam Parore and Chris Harris steered New Zealand to within six runs of the target.

After Harris was run out for 13, Dion Nash joined Parore and they stroled to the target.

The feature of New Zealand's run chase was a 105-run partnership between McMillan and Matthew Horne. Horne made 57 off 62 balls and McMillan 73 off 115 balls.

Earlier, Dravid scored his third century in six days against New Zealand after scores of 190 and 103 not out in the third Test.

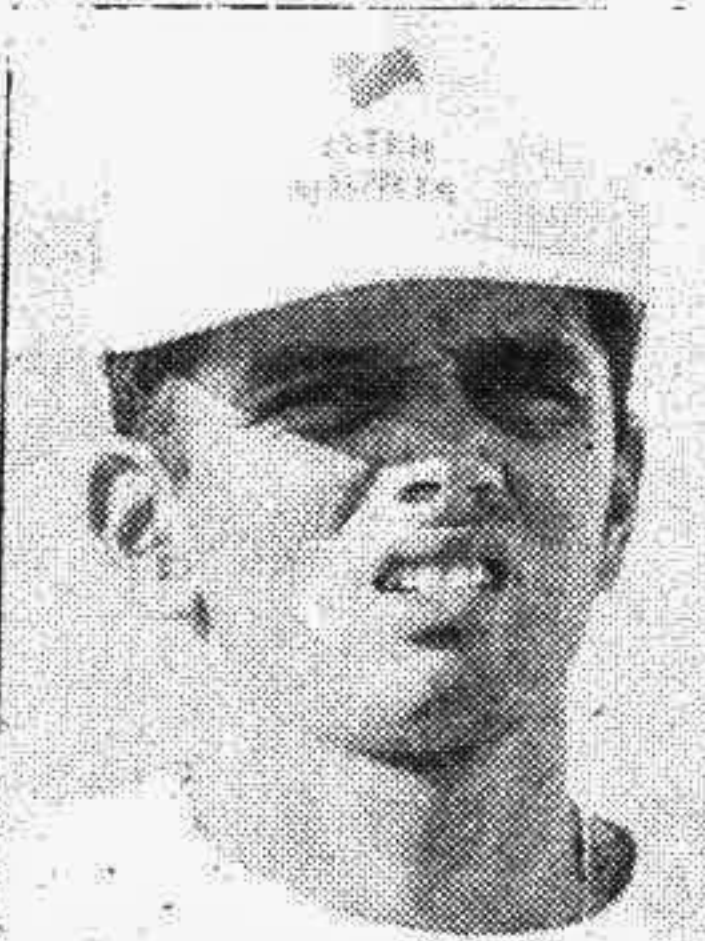
Dravid came to the crease in the third over after Sachin Tendulkar had been dismissed for a duck on the fifth ball.

Dravid started slowly but grew in confidence, receiving good support from Saurav Ganguly, who made 60.

Dravid's century took 112 balls and 181 minutes and he hit eight fours.

India scored 83 in the final 10 overs with Robin Singh, and

Hrishikesh Kanitkar striking boldly in the late overs.



DRAVID... 123 n.o SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the first one-day international between New Zealand and India at Owen Delany Park on Saturday:

INDIA
Ganguly c Larsen b Vettori 60
Tendulkar c Harris b Cairns 0
Dravid not out 123
Azharuddin b Larsen 9
Jadeja c and B Harris 10

R Singh run out 27
Kanitkar not out 17
Extras (lb-5, w-6) 11
Total: (for 5 wks in 50 overs) 257
Fall of wks: 1-3; 2-116; 3-144; 4-163; 5-223

NEW ZEALAND
Twose c Mongia b Srinath 10
Horne lbw b Tendulkar 57
McMillan c Ganguly b Srinath 73
Cairns c Srinath b R Singh 23
Parore not out 16
Harris run out 13
Nash not out 1
Extras (w-2, lb-5) 7
Total: (for 5 wks in 38 overs) 200
Fall of wickets: 1-21; 2-126; 3-166; 4-168; 5-194

Bowler O M R W
Srinath 8 0 35 2
Prasad 8 1 41 0
Chopra 8 0 37 0
R Singh 4 0 36 1
Tendulkar 8 0 34 1
Kanitkar 2 0 12 0
Result: New Zealand won on Duckworth-Lewis (by five wickets).



Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin square-cuts during the first one-day international against New Zealand yesterday. — AP/UNB photo

Prabhakar feels vindicated



NEW DELHI, Jan 9 (Reuters/Internet): Former Indian cricketer Manoj Prabhakar, whose allegations in 1997 of corruption in the game were later dismissed, believes recent developments have proved him right.

On Sunday the International Cricket Council (ICC) began a two-day meeting in Christchurch at which the main topic on the agenda will be allegations of bribery and corruption.

Prabhakar had written in a magazine column that he was offered 2.5 million rupees (\$70,000) by a teammate to sabotage a match against Pakistan in Sri Lanka in 1994.

It prompted India's cricket authorities to order an investigation but the ensuing inquiry said it did not find any truth in the allegations.

"What I said in the past has proved to be true. My stand has been vindicated," Prabhakar told the news agency.

"If a cricketer feels that in spite of his putting his best years into the game his future is not secure, then he may get lured by money. After all, everybody wants a security for the future," Prabhakar said.

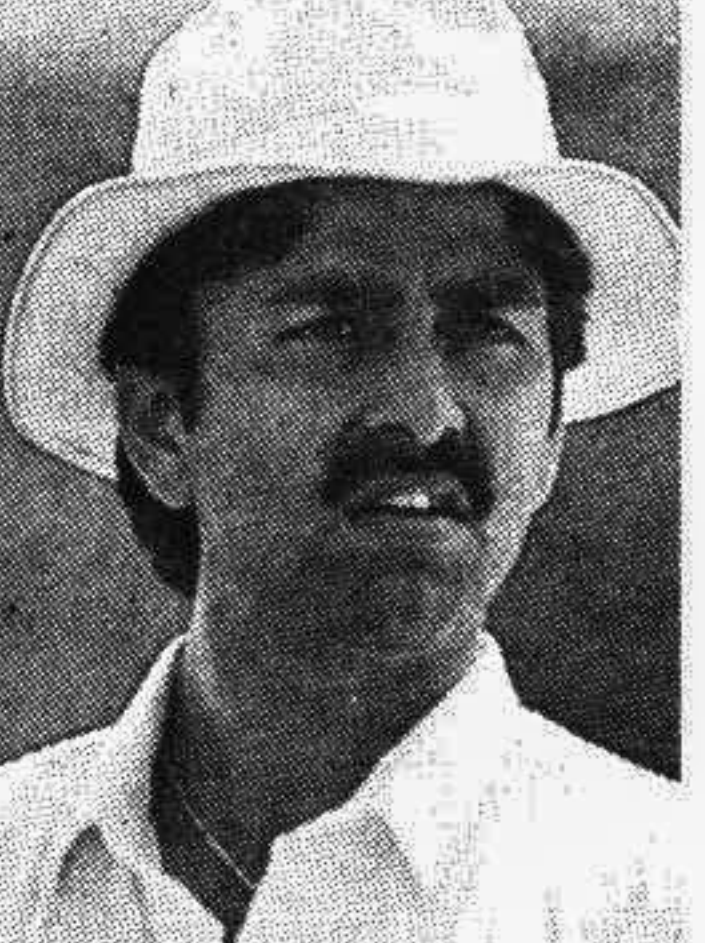
The ICC has finally been forced to take up the issue following a spate of allegations by other major Test players.

Kirti Azad, another former Indian Test player, commented: "If international cricketers are turning around and saying they have been offered money, then it shows that there is something more than meets the eye. There is no smoke without fire."

The Times of India newspaper quoted former Pakistani

captain Imran Khan as saying that match-fixing does take place.

"Match-fixing was done. How much, I've no idea. But there were some matches which were fixed," Imran told the daily.



MANOJ PRABHAKAR

Allegations of corruption have been around for some time. In 1994 Australian Test trio Shane Warne, Mark Waugh and Tim May accused Pakistan's Salim Malik of offering them bribes to play poorly.

Those charges were dismissed by an inquiry four years ago but surfaced again last year when the Pakistan Cricket Board recommended a fresh investigation into match-fixing and bribery and have been repeated again at a hearing this week.

The whole issue became further clouded last month when it was admitted publicly that four

years earlier Warne and Waugh were both fined by the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) for accepting money from an Indian bookmaker in exchange for pitch and weather information.

Since then a number of other players have said they were also approached by bookmakers.

The ICC is expected to appoint a commission to investigate the whole issue.

But the game's governing body, which normally keeps well clear of any contentious issues, will find it hard to confront the ugly face of match-fixing.

The ICC chief executive admitted Saturday they had first to establish the structure and processes for dealing with any cricketer found guilty of being involved in betting or bribery.

Richards said the international body must be empowered to make tough decisions but it raised queries about the jurisdiction of the ICC to act in other countries.

"We have a vital role to play in these bribery issues but what's up for debate is if the ICC has jurisdiction in sovereign countries if there is criminality involved," Richards said.

The ICC's biggest problem in attempting to root out corruption is that it possesses little genuine power - its constitution only allows recommendations not substantial action.

"That's an issue we have to address," Richards said. It was unlikely the Council would seek to impose penalties on past offenders.

This would leave Pakistan to sanction former captains Wasim Akram and Salim Malik if found guilty.

Hair in ICC's line of fire

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Jan 9 (AFP/Internet): Australia's top umpire, Darrell Hair, faces a call for a Test match ban when the International Cricket Council's executive board meets here Sunday and Monday.

World Cup champions Sri Lanka have asked for Hair to be disciplined for reopening the controversy surrounding their star spinner, Muttiah Muralitharan. ICC chief executive David Richards said Saturday Sri Lanka viewed Hair's autobiography, in which he described Muralitharan's action as "diabolical", was a breach of conduct.

"It hasn't happened with a current umpire before so if it's found there was a breach of the code of conduct we will have to work through the processes," Richards said.

Players face suspensions of three Tests or six one-day matches if they bring the game into disrepute.

Hair no-balled Muralitharan seven times on the Boxing Day Test at Melbourne in 1995 and said in his book he could have called him another 27 times.

The Sri Lankan was later found not to have violated the throwing law and Sri Lanka, who delighted in beating Australia in the World Cup final later in 1995, have demanded Hair be punished.

Hair stood down for a one-day series involving Australia, Sri Lanka and England in Australia, which starts Sunday.

Kishoreganj football

Itna emerge champions

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 9: Itna emerged champions in the Kishoreganj inter-thana football tournament beating Kishoreganj Sadar by 4-2 goals in tie-breaker at the local stadium on Saturday, reports UNB.

The match rolled into tie-breaker after the two teams were locked 1-1 goals during the stipulated time.

Mokhes put Itna ahead in the 8th minute while Kabir scored the equaliser for Sadar in the 17th minutes.

National striker Intiaz Ahmed Nakib and national stopper Jewel Rana played for the champions.

LCRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman witnessed the final as chief guest and distributed the prizes while Deputy Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Abdul Hamid was present as special guest.

12 thanas took part in the meet.

Gil supporters take to the streets

MARBELLA, Spain, Jan 9: Several thousand demonstrators marched through the Mediterranean resort of Marbella Friday night in support of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) after charges of embezzling taxpayer money to benefit a soccer team he owns, reports AP.

Police said up to 10,000 people snarled through the streets of Marbella, working their way from a park to the courthouse where an investigating magistrate announced Thursday he was sending Gil to jail to keep him from destroying evidence.

The demonstrators Chanted slogans in favour of Gil, one of the most controversial and outspoken figures in the Spanish sports world, and carried banners, some of them reading "We support our mayor to the death."

The protesters included local jet-setters and members of the city council, as well as supporters of Gil's political party, called GIL (the Spanish Acronym for Independent Liberal Group) who were brought in from other towns on chartered buses.

Gil, 65, is suspected of funneling some 450 million pesetas (3.2 million dollars/2.7 million euros) in city money to benefit Atletico de Madrid, a first-division soccer team of which he is president and owner.

Two of his closest business associates were also sent to jail, although one was later released on bail.

The cases centres on a deal under which the city sponsored the team. Atletico is the only Spanish club sponsored by a town hall rather than a private company. The name Marbella is displayed in large letters across the front of the team's jerseys.

Clemente's tips for Denilson

MADRID, Jan 9: Real Betis coach Javier Clemente has told the world's most expensive footballer, Brazilian World Cup star Denilson, that he will not succeed in Spain until he gives up dribbling, reports AFP.

Denilson moved to the Spanish First Division side during the summer for a reported world record fee of 34.8 million dollars but has not yet justified his enormous price tag.

The Brazilian said on Friday, "He (Clemente) told me I would have to stop dribbling in midfield if I wanted to be a success in Spain."

"He explained to me that dribbling in midfield made it easier for opposition players to get the ball back and that would oblige my teammates to work harder in defence."

Denilson was generally used as a substitute by Brazil during France '98 although when he did take the field he caught the eye with his dribbling skills.

Clemente presided over Spain's disastrous World Cup campaign when the seeds did not make it through to the second phase of the competition.



Germany's Steffi Graf executes one of her trademark forehand returns against Serena Williams at Challenge Cup in Hong Kong on January 8. — AP/UNB photo

Tri-series from today



BRISBANE, Jan 9: For a man claiming to be unaffected by cricket's match-fixing scandal, Shane Warne spent a lot of time talking about the issue on Saturday, reports AP.

As acting captain of the Australian limited-overs side to open the triangular series against England at the Gabba on Sunday, Warne's opening comments to the media were dominated by his recent involvement in the Pakistani judicial inquiry into the affair.

Warne claimed he had been victimized by the media and hinted that he may take legal action against sections of it for what he believed was unfair treatment.

He said some of the media had drawn unfair parallels between his involvement with an Indian bookmaker and an attempted bribe offer from Salim Malik of Pakistan.

"One of the most disappointing things, I think, is parts of the media (and) the constant innuendo to match-fixing and bribery," Warne said.

"As an Australian living in Australia you would expect a little better but at the same time we made a mistake and deserved to be punished."

"Certain parts of the media have tried to link both ... and there's a few papers that are definitely in the hands of my lawyers, over the past couple of days definitely."

Warne was also critical of those who questioned his appointment as acting one-day captain following skipper Steve Waugh's withdrawal with an injury.

"Some people have never

Dighton shines for W Australia

ADELAIDE, Jan 9 (Reuters/Internet): Western Australian opener Michael Dighton made 95 as the visitors took first innings points on the second day of the Sheffield Shield match against South Australia on Saturday.

Dighton, playing only his second Shield match, led the way as Western Australia reached 330 for nine in reply to South Australia's 284 for nine declared.

The 22-year-old Dighton, who was dropped late in the day at slip, faced 216 balls, hitting 10 fours and three sixes. He was well supported by Simon Katich (60) and Mike Hussey, who scored 59.

liked me in the past for whatever reason, whether they are jealous of me, don't like the way I play or don't like the way I conduct myself," he said.

"There will always be those detractors and if you go out and be yourself and give your best every time you play the majority of the public have been fantastic. If they actually read the facts then they will know what happened."

England captain Alec Stewart said Saturday he does not believe the inquiry will affect Australia's performance in the series opener.

"What has happened has happened," Stewart said. "It didn't affect them in the Test series and there's no reason it should affect them here in the one-dayers."

The likely teams for Sunday's match:

AUSTRALIA: Mark Waugh, Adam Gilchrist, Ricky Ponting, Darren Lehmann, Michael Bevan, Greg Blewett, Shane Warne (captain), Brendon Julian, Brad Young, Damien Fleming, Glenn McGrath.

ENGLAND: Nick Knight, Alec Stewart (captain), Graeme Hick, Mark Alleyne, Neil Fairbrother, Adam Holoake, Mark Ealham, Robert Croft, Darren Gough, Dean Headley, Allan Mallyall.

Lara calls for compassion



LONDON, Jan 9: West Indies captain Brian Lara appealed on Friday for Caribbean cricket fans to get behind his struggling players, saying that sometime you need a friend when you are down, reports Reuters.

"It may not seem so, but we too are hurting," Lara said in his column in the Barbados Nation newspaper after West Indies were left trailing 4-0 by South Africa in their Test series.

"In the circumstances, it would be nice to hear some word of comfort from our own people back home."

"We are in the middle of a world of negatives here in South Africa, how nice it would be for the President of my own country to say something to us — to offer a word of reassurance or consolation," he said in his column. "It's not too late."

After a 149-run defeat in the fourth Test on Wednesday, West Indies face the possibility of losing a series 5-0 for the first time. Their previous worst was a 5-1 defeat in Australia in 1975-76.

The fifth Test starts at Centurion Park, Pretoria, on January 15.

Lara himself has failed to hit a Test century since his appointment as captain a year ago and he did not spare himself any criticism.

"Nobody likes a loser. You'd probably be surprised to know that I'm included among that group. It's difficult to motivate and get players to perform their best given the current situation," he wrote.

"The reality is that we have found ourselves in a hole from which it is difficult to climb out."

The tour of South Africa, the first by West Indies since the dismantling of apartheid, has been a disaster for the visitors. Before it started, Lara was stripped of the captaincy after a player boycott over match payments. He was later reinstated.

"It seems unfortunate that the only time we hear from our people back home is when we are on top. No one ever bothers to call or even send messages to us when we are doing badly," he wrote in his column.

"There are individuals here who are doing well. I would welcome some kind of encouragement for them."

"There was a time when I received so many messages that I had to stay up very late in the night just to read them, these days the fax machine is idle."

Lara said West Indies were

determined not to lose the series 5-0 because South Africa were second to the Australia in the world rankings and West Indies were playing Australia soon.

He said injuries to Courtney Walsh, fellow fast bowler Curtly Ambrose and Frankly Rose had not helped. But he was still hopeful that the situation could be saved.

"It is a major challenge to, not only me, but the entire team management. If we can somehow lift ourselves, I still believe the talent is there. All we need is the belief in ourselves."

V-Day juvenile chess ends

Yanur Rahman emerged unbeaten champion in the under-16 age group of the Victory-Day Shisu Kishore chess competition securing full five points, reports UNB.

Zainul Abedin finished runner-up in the group collecting four points.

In the 13-14 age group, Jyoti Pal Mitra became champion with four points while Ashraf Alami finished second having three points.

Minhazuddin clinched the title in the 11-12 age group while Ishtiaquddin placed second.

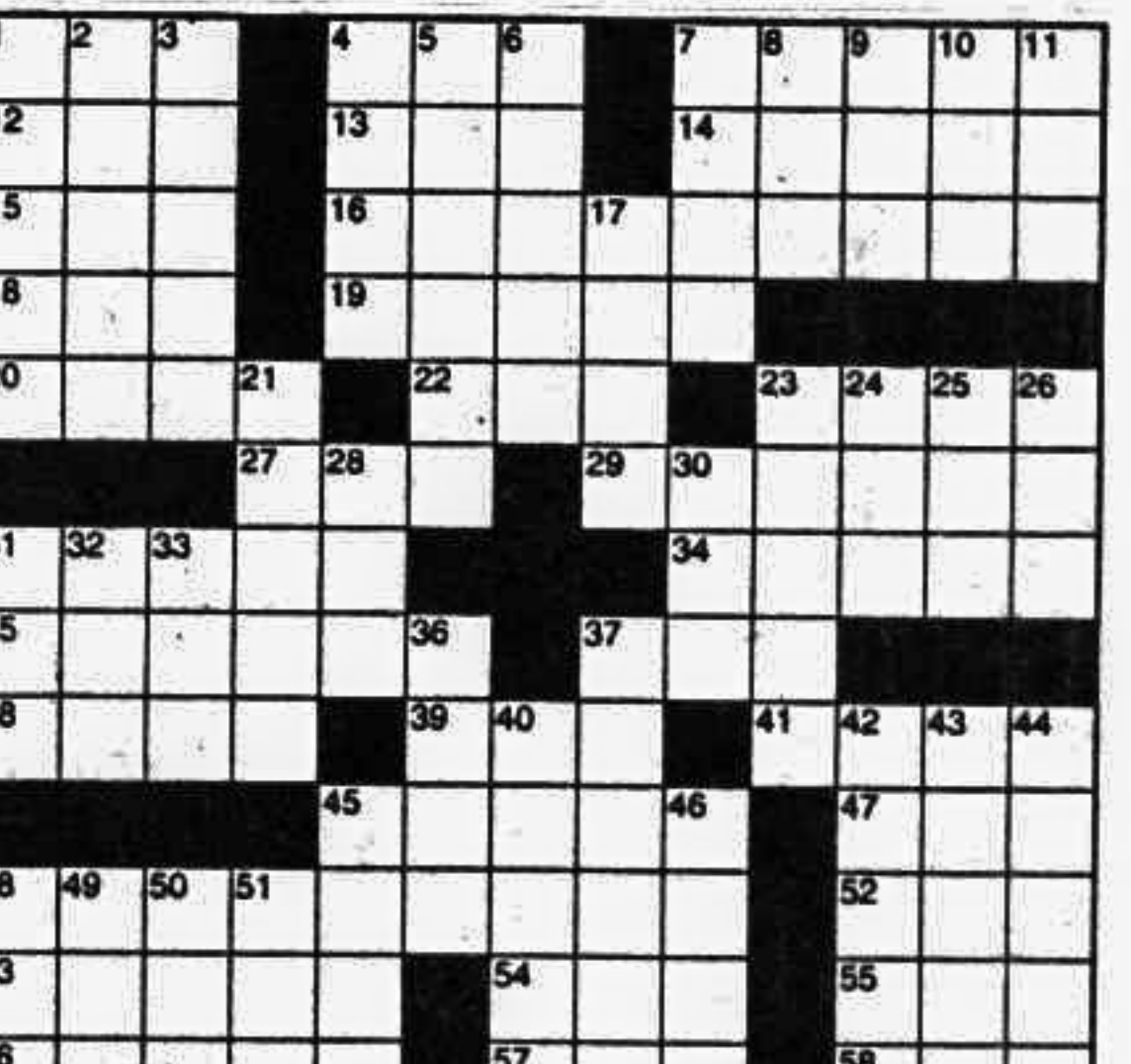
In the under-10 age group, Nazir Arefin became champion securing three points while Tanveer Hossain finished runner-up with same points.

A total of 42 players took part in four age groups of the two-day Swiss League basis competition, organised by Kendrio Khelaghar Asar in co-operation with Bangladesh Chess Federation.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
45 Still life subject, often
46 Cagers' org.
7 Rivera of Broadway
12 Kid's card game
13 Moray
14 Horse
15 Blunder
16 Sounded a false alarm
18 Writer
19 Jack
20 Lascivious
22 This recording
23 Hotel staffer
29 Census statistic
29 Bean
31 Taming of the Shrew setting
34 Whimsical
35 One of the Bowls
37 B followers
38 Departed
39 Every last crumb
41 Valentine acronym
2 Gay city
3 Pointer
4 Bottle part
5 Elton's frequent collaborator
6 Wanted poster
7 Cross-index
8 Hem's mate
9 Recent news-making judge
10 Corn device
11 Bowwow
17 Author
1 Expand
Solution time: 25 mins.

JUG WAGS MAID
IMA OMIT ARIA
GARGOYLE NAIL
FAD LARAMIE
MAILER MAG
ABE NUT DEGAIS
MOLLIE GEM SAGE
AUDITION RUIE
OWL WALDEIN
SPANNED BEE
LOSE GARBANIZO
ARTS ALAI EON
YEAS LINTY ROE
Yesterday's answer
6-26



CRYPTOQUIP
EUM EWTAZ LUR FYAAM
XTM BTL UYF URIZ
WD I XNYDZFLWR?
LW FUINBRD UYF EYLF
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: YOU COULD SIMPLY CALL A POOCH AT THE UNITED NATIONS A DIPLOMUTT.
Today's Cryptoquip clue: U equals H
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.



Former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson gives a tiny tot a kiss at the Madison Square Garden gymnasium in downtown Phoenix on January 8. — AFP photo