First Division cricket

Prantik sail on Aslam

SPORTS REPORTER

An unbeaten century by Aslam powered Prantik Krira Chakra to a 60-run victory over Partex Sporting Club in the First Division Cricket League at the BKSP cricket ground yesterday.

Put into bat, Prantik scored 223 for 6 in the stipulated 50 overs. Opener Aslam hammered 115 off 135 balls featuring six fours and three sixes while Shaon added 43 off 63 deliveries with five boundaries.

In reply, Partex were bundled out for 163 in 46.2 overs with Tareq Ahmed making the highest 43 off 74 balls.

Mintoo claimed four wickets conceding 37 in 8.2 overs.

Pepsi handball

Jessore zonal champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Jessore became zonal champions in the Pepsi 17th National (Men's) Handball Championship when they inflicted a 29-15 defeat on hosts Bagerhat in the final match at the Bagerhat Stadium yesterday.

Both teams have qualified for final-round to be held in Dhaka.

Jessore handed a 30-21 defeat on Kushtia in the first semifinal while Bagerhat defeated Faridpur 26-22 in the second semi.

Kushitia finished third beating Faridpur 16-6 in the place deciding match.

Rating chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Arman Monir and Sohel Chowdhury are jointly leading the points table with maximum four points each after the fourth round games of the Prime Bank 7th International Rating Chess Tournament at the federation hall room yesterday.

Arman beat Khurshed and Sohel defeated Afzal. FIDE Master Aminul Islam, Palash, Mahtabuddin Ahmed, Moniruzzaman Khan, Arman Siddiqi and Moniruzzaman Moni followed the leaders with 3.5 points each.

Tanveer U-14 cricket from Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

The Metro Cricket Academy and former students of cricket at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) have jointly organised a under-14 cricket tournament in memory of Abu Tanveer Razeul Karim, a first batch cricket student of BKSP who passed away in 2001.

The tournament named "Tanveer Under-14 Cricket Tournament" will begin on Friday at the Lalmatia Housing Society School and College ground.

Eight teams split into two groups will take part in the league basis competition.

Eng impress Aussies but

Stewart believes they can win back Ashes

Cricket

AFP/BBC, *undated*

Australia's cricketers have praised England's eighth consecutive Test victory, but say talk of breaking the Aussies' Ashes supremacy is premature.

England mastered South Africa by seven wickets in Port Elizabeth on Tuesday to eclipse the previous record for English consecutive Test wins which had stood for 75 years.

Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist and champion leg-spinner Shane Warne acclaimed England's success, but suggested it was too early to say whether England was capable of supplanting Australia as the world's No.1 Test cricket nation when they meet in next year's Ashes series in England.

"It's a fantastic win for them. They've played great cricket, they've won eight Test matches in a row now and it's a good team that does that against any opposition," Gilchrist said Wednesday.

"I think they're shaping up as a very formidable opponent for anyone.

"But there's a lot of time between now and the Ashes -- there's a lot of cricket to be played between now and then."

Australia regained the Ashes from England in 1989 under Allan Border and haven't lost in seven subsequent series.

"Excellent victory for England. With guys like (Steve) Harmison and (Andrew) Flintoff they're obviously a very good cricket side," Warne said.

"But we'll have to wait and see. I think everyone in England's been saying 'bring on the Ashes' for 12 months, but they've been saying for the last 15 years.

"We'll wait until it gets a little closer."

England, who whitewashed New Zealand 3-0 and West Indies 4-0 at home before going to South Africa, strung together seven consecutive Test victories between 1928 and 1929 under Percy Chapman.

Only four sides have won more Tests in a row, with Australia holding the world record with 16 under Steve Waugh.

Former England stalwart Alec Stewart, however, believes Michael Vaughan's team is capable of beating Australia next year.

Stewart said: "They're going from strength to strength.

"We've got to remember that Australia are the best side, there is still a gap between us but we've certainly closed that gap from when we last played them.

"If we can maintain form and fitness and in home conditions you never know."

Having opened the innings many times at Test level for England, Stewart is hugely impressed by the impact made by Andrew Strauss.

"It's been incredible," he enthused.

"When you start in international cricket there's always that slight question mark in the back of your mind but he hasn't looked out of his depth at any stage.

"Now when he comes to the wicket he's full of confidence."

Stewart also feels that South Africa have problems, both on and off the field, as they bid to come from 1-0 down in the five-match series.

"I played over there twice and they were always tough to play against, but they didn't look like the South Africa of old," he said.

"They are not picking their best side, without a doubt I'd make sure Mark Boucher comes back in, he's a world class cricketer."

England move to Durban on Wednesday to prepare for the second Test, which begins on Boxing Day.

"England didn't allow them to play at their best," Stewart said of the first Test, which the tourists won by seven wickets.

"England have to play as they have and keep improving, Michael Vaughan will be driving that home to the players.

"At the start of the series I thought there would only be one Test in it but now I think we can win by more than that."

San Miguel tournament

Farashganj going to Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj Sporting Club will leave for Nepal on December 26 to play in the San Miguel invitational football tournament.

The old Dhaka club, which was promoted to the Premier League this year, have named a 16-member team with five players hired from Abahani for the competition.

The guest players are Arif Khan Joy, Mehedi Hasan Ujjal, Shawkat Khan, Wali Faisal and Zahid Parvez Chowdhury

The team will be accompanied by nine officials.

SQUAD

Arif Khan Joy, Mehedi Hasan Ujjal, Shawkat Khan, Wali Faisal and Zahid Parvez Chowdhury, Pearuzzaman Piru, Ziaur Rahman, Faisal Ahmed, Apu, Ashraful Karim, Khaled Hossain, Masud Khan Jhony, Kabir Hossain, Amirul Islam, Walid Khan and Shawkat Ali.

Time for

FROM PAGE 13

one-day debut.

Dhoni is one of six cricketers to join the Indian squad for the one-day series. The others are: Yuvraj Singh, Sridharan Sriram, Dinesh Mongia, Ajit Agarkar and Joginder Sharma.

The Indian captain said his team was keen to end the year on a high note after inconsistent performances in recent one-day tournaments.

"We haven't done well in recent one-dayers. Our performance needs to get better and we want to win this series in a nice manner," said Ganguly.

Mohammedan

FROM PAGE 13

penalty corner just before the break but seeing his path blocked by Ajax defenders, he pushed the ball to the right to defender Gurinder who fired an angular hit into the net.

Mohammedan relaxed after the break on their three-goal cushion. They could have made it 4-0 but Shishu rattled the sidebar from close.

Premier cricket

FROM PAGE 13

Victoria, Abahani, newcomers Old DOHS and Agrani Bank are jointly leading the table after the five rounds with eight points each while City Club, Mohammedan and Bangladesh Biman are tied in second with six points e.

POINTS TABLE

(Club,	Matches,	Won,	Lost,	Points)
Victoria	5	4	1	8
Abahani	5	4	1	8
DOHS	5	4	1	8
Agrani	5	4	1	8
City	5	3	2	6
MSC	5	3	2	6
Biman	5	3	2	6
Brothers	5	2	3	4
Pegasus	5	1	4	2
Indira	5	1	4	2
Orient	5	1	4	2
Uttara	5	0	0	0

Aussie authority

FROM PAGE 13

gap and wants Australia to actively help the rest of the world catch up.

"The game is in serious trouble," Chappell warned. "I know some administrators are very concerned about it and some are sitting back rather complacent about it.

"Australia has a good track record in developing the game, but we can't assume that we can just look after our house and not look after everyone else."

The biggest threat to Australia's domination is likely to come in the next few years when players such as Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath retire.

The transition was seamless after the departures of Steve and Mark Waugh and Mark Taylor but Warne and McGrath, in contrast, are all-time great bowlers.

The rest of the world will have to hope that they prove less easy to replace.

Australia's current domination of world cricket can be traced back to the 1980s when West Indies were the driving force.

But unlike their rivals, the Australians learnt their lessons from defeat and had the resources to do something about it, developing academies of excellence and specialist coaches to ensure they have a steady stream of talent ready to take over.

Latif hopes to make int'l return

AFP, *Karachi*

Former Pakistan captain and wicketkeeper Rashid Latif said Wednesday he hoped to revive his international career after the Pakistan Cricket Board reduced a six-month ban and cleared him for selection.

The PCB in a statement on Wednesday said that after Latif appealed the ban and after considering the facts, it had reduced the ban to a month.

Latif, 36, was banned from all cricket for six months after he led the Karachi team on a walkout to protest a dangerous pitch in a first-class match at Faisalabad last month.

He was also fined 251 dollars.

"Latif had appealed against the ban and the penalty imposed on him, stating that proper procedures had not been followed in the subsequent inquiry and that he had publicly regretted the incident of the match and explained his reasons for abandoning the match," the PCB said.

"After reviewing all related issues and considering Latif's standing as a former captain, the PCB has decided to reduce the penalty to one months suspension from first-class cricket from the date of the incident," the PCB said.

"Latif would be eligible for selection at all levels after the expiry of one months suspension."

The ban expires on January 1, which leaves Latif eligible for selection for Pakistan's one-day squad due to be announced next week.

Inzi, Akhtar fit to play

AFP/REUTERS, *Melbourne*

Pakistan received some much-needed good news Wednesday with key players Inzamamul Haq and Shoaib Akhtar cleared to play against Australia in the second Test in Melbourne.

Coach Bob Woolmer said skipper Inzamam had received a diagnosis on his long-term back injury, while paceman Shoaib had been cleared of any significant shoulder damage.

Inzamam has a problem with the sacroiliac joint in his lower back, but Woolmer said the team's most experienced batsman would play against Australia in the Test starting at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Boxing Day.

Gibbs, Boje return for SA

REUTERS, *Johannesburg*

South Africa called up opening batsman Herschelle Gibbs on Wednesday for the second and third Tests against England after losing the opening match of the series.

Gibbs is almost certain to return to the starting line-up alongside captain Graeme Smith following a hand injury.

Experienced left-arm spinner Nicky Boje is also back in the squad after thyroid surgery while uncapped fast bowler Charl Langeveldt, who had match figures of seven for 73 in South Africa A's victory over England, is included in a 14-man squad.

Convenor of selectors Haroon Lorgat said: "Herschelle Gibbs' return brings experience to the top-order, he is a world-class player and he and Graeme Smith have proved themselves to be one of the best opening pairs in the game."

SQUAD

Graeme Smith (captain), Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Rudolph, Jacques Kallis, Boeta Dippenaar, Hashim Amla, Shaun Pollock, Thami Tsolekile, Charl Langeveldt, Dale Steyn, Makhaya Ntini, Nicky Boje, AB de Villiers, Andrew Hall.

Real get Sacchi on board

AFP, *Madrid*

Real Madrid have signed former AC Milan and Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi as the club's new sports director, Real club president Florentino Perez announced at a press conference Tuesday.

Sacchi, who has until recently been working in the same capacity with Serie A side Parma, will replace Argentine Jorge Valdano who resigned from the post in June.

Perez said: "He (Sacchi) is someone we know well and who will bring all of his valuable experience to the club.

"We didn't need a coach for the team. We needed someone who can organise and plan everything to do with football and Arrigo Sacchi was the ideal candidate."

Sacchi is set to work under former Spanish international Emilio Butragueno, who was named the club's general sports director and a vice-president of the board.

Sacchi, who is credited with AC Milan's European Cup triumphs in 1989 and 1990 - a team in which Rijkaard and Dutch compatriots Ruud Gullit and Marco Van Basten played - should fit in well in the Spanish capital although his spell in charge of Real's city rivals Atletico in the 1998-99 season was brief and unsuccessful.

Primera Liga

Eto'o pulls Barca through

Football

AFP, *Madrid*

Cameroonian international Samuel Eto'o made sure league leaders Barcelona maintained the pressure on their title rivals by scoring a late winner in a 2-1 defeat of Levante on Tuesday.

The African Player of the Year's 13th goal of the season ensured the Catalans will pick up the unofficial prize of being Spain's 'winter champions' when the championship race reaches its halfway point in mid-January.

Ahead of Wednesday's main round of league matches, Barcelona lead city neighbours Espanyol by 12 points, with third-placed Real Madrid and Valencia a point further back on 29.

Barcelona always looked like the winners but their inability to get the ball in the net didn't help their cause to finish 2004 on a high note.

Eto'o, the Spanish first division's leading scorer, sent two shots skimming off the crossbar twice in the first nine minutes.

The hosts finally broke the deadlock when Alexis Suarez put the ball in his own net after 28 minutes, a free kick from Barca's Portuguese international Deco glancing off the head of the luckless Levante defender.

The Valencia-based visitors then drew level on the hour from Jofre Mateu, the former Barcelona midfielder flying down the left wing to connect with an inch-perfect pass from Felix Ettien, and slide the ball in from just outside the area.

Remembering that he had started his professional career at the Nou Camp, Jofre respectfully kept to a minimum the celebrations of his first goal in the top flight of Spanish football for six years.

Levante almost went ahead 15 minutes from the end when Alberto Rivera found the net but the goal was ruled offside.

Eto'o then made sure of the points with a left foot shot from the edge of the box three minutes from the whistle, although Levante were given their chance to find a last-gasp equaliser after six minutes of injury time were added.

On Wednesday Espanyol travel to nearby Valencia while Real Madrid, who lead Valencia on goal difference, play host to fifth-placed Sevilla.

Real Betis moved up to sixth after their 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid later on Tuesday.

A goal after seven minutes from Spanish international Joaquin Sanchez was enough for victory.

PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona striker Samuel Eto'o (C) gets on top of celebrating teammates after scoring against Levante in Barcelona on December 21.

TOP SIX

Spanish football league standings after Tuesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	17	13	3	1	35	11	42
Espanyol	16	9	3	4	18	9	30
Real	15	9	2	4	24	11	29
Valencia	16	8	5	3	24	12	29
Sevilla	16	8	4	4	20	18	28
Betis	17	7	6	4	22	20	27

He makes it beautiful

Football

FOX SPORTS

If there is one player who can help us to forget the unromantic realities of modern soccer forget that what we are watching is now little more than business, forget that players have no passion for the game, just inflated egos and salaries, forget the lurid scandals of player gang bangs, doping, racism then it is Ronaldinho, of FC Barcelona…

He reminds us that once upon a time the game was played for the sheer joy of it…

Ronaldinho's odyssey began, like many South American fairytales, in the slums. In this case, Porto Allegre Brazil's equivalent of the Wild West, hence his nickname Gaucho (cowboy).

This week, his journey from favela to footballing legend was completed. The Barcelona star won the FIFA World Player Of The Year award.

157 international coaches and 145 national team captains voted that Ronaldinho, in first place with 620 points, Thierry Henry, in second with 552, and Andriy Shevchenko, third with 253, be recognized as the three greatest footballers in the world this year.

Amazingly the Brazilian received the award despite having won nothing with Barcelona during the year in question and having missed Brazil's Copa America triumph last summer.

He becomes the fourth Brazilian to have won the award since it's inception in 1991. Romario (1994) was the first recipient. Ronaldo came next, filling his mantelpiece with the 1996, 1997 and 2002 editions. Rivaldo felt left out so they gave him one too, in 1999.

Ronaldinho started his career at unfashionable Gremio, Porto Allegre's club, in 1998, following a spectacular contribution to the Brazil under-17 side's participation in the World Championships in Egypt, where he was top goal poacher.

Soon enough he got into the national side and at the 1999 Copa America he even managed to score six goals as Brazil went on to win the damn thing! A star was born, the goofy grin was everywhere and Europe's top clubs waved their cash at him from across the Atlantic.

Suitably for such a jolly young man, 'gay' Paris was to be the next destination, in the summer of 2001. The club Paris St Germain. A legal wrangle over his contract prevented him playing for his first five months in the French capital.

Paris St Germains' initial loss was Brazil's eventual great fortune. In the summer a well-rested Ronaldinho took the 2002 World Cup by storm. By now he was a key piece in the Brazil jigsaw, alongside Ronaldo and Rivaldo.

In the quarter-finals, Brazil met a miserly England defense, bolstered by the veteran goalkeeper David Seaman, one of the hottest shot-stoppers in the world and with a lovely pony-tail to boot.

Michael Owen scored a surprise breakaway goal for the English, having pounced on a Lucio mistake, then Rivaldo pulled one back with a neat finish and just after half-time Brazil were awarded a free kick a long distance out, wide right of the England goalmouth.

Q: What do an Elephant and Ronaldinho have in common?

A: They can both lob Seaman from 40 yards.

Ronaldinho swept the ball high into the humid Sapporo air, it swirled, it curled and in came back down to earth, beyond Seaman's outstretched hand and into the net.

The impossible goal took Brazil to the semi-finals and Ronaldinho to world superstardom. Fluke or not, the goal was of paramount importance. Brazil went on to claim their fifth crown against a wretched Germany in the final and Ronaldinho was named one of the players of the tournament.

In 2003 Barcelona's president-elect Joan Laporta was basing his prospective candidature on the signing of a superstar, but was rebuffed by first-choice David Beckham. Laporta turned his attentions to Ronaldinho, object of Man United's affections.

RONALDINHO

After four years in the wilderness, surely Barca couldn't compete with the likes of Man United? But Laporta, to the amazement of the soccer world, got his man. Ronaldinho's choice of Barcelona ahead of United was a moral victory for the club and paved the way for a turn-around in its affairs.

On his home debut in the 2003-2004 campaign in front of a wildly expectant Nou Camp, Gaucho announced himself in samba style. He won the ball on the half-way line, danced past defenders and spanked a thirty-yarder in the top corner. Catalunya fell for him on the spot.

His first campaign as a blaugrana restored the club to the top two and helped attract players of the pedigree of Deco, Eto'o, Larsson and Giuly to join. The delirious Catalan press referred to him as 'The Savior'.

This season, with Ronaldinho's help, Barca have returned to their best form, have been hailed as the greatest attacking team in Europe, are top of their league, and have already whipped arch-rivals Real Madrid 3-0.

There have already been memorable goals particularly the winner against AC Milan, where he turned Alessandro Nesta on the edge of the box and let fly into the roof of the net and with the increased quality of the team, he has been able to do what he, and we, love

The flicks, the shimmies, the feints, the slaloming runs, the lobs, the backheels, the party tricks. At times he just stands in the semi-circle on the edge of the penalty area, spraying flick after flick and chip after chip into the box for the on-rushing Eto'o and Giuly. At other times he finds space deep in his own half and gallops forward, his nostrils flaring, the ball at his command, the opposition at his mercy. On occasion he pulls the enemy out wide to create openings through the middle for Deco.

He's a marked man, but when he's fouled, there are no dives or demands for divine intervention. He's straight onto his feet the best way, the only way to hurt them back. Win or lose, the smile is always there, the refreshing face of a tarnished game. I leave it to Tostao, a member of the legendary Brazil team of the 1970 World Cup, who wrote:

'Ronaldinho has the touch of Rivelino, the vision of Gerson, the joy and irreverence of Garrincha, the speed and strength of Jairzinho and Ronaldo, the technique of Zico and the creativity of Zidane and Romario. By uniting fantasy with efficiency, Ronaldinho is reinventing football itself.'

A near miss for HP

FROM PAGE 13

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the limited-overs match between BCB HP Squad and Sri Lanka Cricket Academy at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

SL ACADEMY

Muttaliph c Rakibul b Shabbir	50
Vithana b Wasel	22
M Perera c Rakibul b Wasel	7
I Perera run out	2
Wijaysingha run out	38
Walegedara c Rakibul b Shabbir	0
Indika not out	62
Gihan not out	35
Extras: (lb-4, nb-10, w-16)	30
Total: (For six wkts in 50 overs)	246

Fall of wkts: 1-49, 2-77, 3-87, 4-107, 5-114, 6-167.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Munir	8	1	49	0
Rajib	2	0	15	0
Wasel	10	1	21	2
Shamsur	7	0	50	0
Enamul Jr	10	1	41	0
Shabbir	10	0	46	2
Nadif	3	0	20	0

HP SQUAD

Sadat b Walegedara	0
Rakibul b Walegedara	1
Naeem not out	35
Wasel c M Perera b V'Pathirana	3
Al Shahriar c Walegedara b Wijaysingha	72
Shamsur c & b V'Pathirana	84
Mushfiq c M Perera b C Perera	12
Nadif run out	0
Shabbir run out	5
Enamul Jr not out	0
Extras: (b-2, lb-4, nb-10, w-15)	31
Total: (For eight wkts in 50 overs)	243

Fall of wkts: 1-0, 2-5, 3-11, 4-138, 5-216, 6-231, 7-235, 8-243.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Walegedara	10	2	39	2
V'Pathirana	10	2	38	2
C Perera	7	0	39	1
Abeydeera	10	0	48	0
Wijaysingha	5	0	27	1
Gihan	1	0	13	0
Vithana	7	0	33	0

Mongia's bye

FROM PAGE 13

prompted me to take the step. I was playing well and there was no reason to exclude me from the team. I was dropped from the team even though I had a fitness certificate."

In five innings this season, Mongia has failed to reach fifty once.

Mongia, who turned 35 on Sunday, played in 44 Tests with a highest score of 152 against Australia in the one-off Test at Bangalore in 1996-97 when he opened the batting. His last Test was the epic victory at Kolkata also against Australia in March 2001, when India won after following on.

Mongia's lowest point came when India's Central Bureau of Investigation questioned him over his alleged involvement with bookmakers, although he was later cleared of all involvement.

Mongia mostly played for Baroda and West Zone, on the Indian domestic circuit. In 183 first-class matches, starting in November 1989, he took 353 catches and made 43 stumpings, and scored over 7000 runs.

Don't criticise

FROM PAGE 13

they were very disappointed about what happened and they would like to handle it themselves.

"It doesn't mean I can't talk to these people and see if there's anything new on the market that might help the team.

"Inzamam (captain Inzamamul Haq) specifically was adamant that it's not outside help we need, we need to help ourselves and that was the most important thing I think that came out of the meeting."

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

ACROSS
1 Billboards
4 Hasn't settled yet
8 Teensy bit, to a chef
12 Shuffleboard stick
13 Gratis
14 Neighborhood
15 Remain unresolved
17 Vegan's no-no
18 Firstborn
19 Snake eyes
21 Witness
22 Problem
26 Footballer Favre
29 "The Amazing Race" episode
30 Gorilla
31 Cleanse
32 Launch site
33 Like a snail
34 Improve, to a vintner
35 Chatter away
36 Brick-makers' needs
37 Persist
39 Cambridge sch.
40 Mel of Coopers-town
41 Parka
45 Soared
48 Cuticle woe
50 "Hee Haw"-like humor
51 Differently
52 Indignation
53 Gear features
54 Clarinetist's need
55 Beautician's bottle

DOWN
1 Rue the run
2 Two-way
3 Transmit
4 Displaced
5 Emulate Shakespeare
6 Alway
7 Boiled
8 Pythias' pal
9 "You — There"
10 Vast expanse
11 Bella Abzug trademark
16 "Beau —"
20 Punster
23 Impudence
24 Immediately after
25 Church array
26 Uninteresting
27 Indian style of music
28 Fair and balanced
29 Matlock's field
32 Cougar's kin
33 Squelch
35 Make marginalia
36 Promoted a checker
38 Prom purchases
39 Imposing home
42 Incursion
43 Ethereal
44 "Fish Magic" painter
45 TV watchdog org.
46 Privy
47 Work unit
49 Milwaukee product

Solution time: 25 mins.

M	O	L	D		E	M	I	T		H	O	G		
E	P	E	E		G	O	R	E		A	L	E		
S	U	N	F	L	O	W	E	R		I	A	N		
A	S	S	A	Y	S			S	O	L	V	E		
			M	E		S	T	E	A	M				
E	L	S	E		B	A	H		T	A	C	O		
F	E	N			A	T	E			R	U	N		
T	O	O	L		B	Y	E		B	Y	T	E		
		W	A	F	E	R		O	R					
T	A	B	O	O			U	R	A	N	U	S		
E	R	A		R	A	I	N	C	H	E	C	K		
N	I	L		U	G	L	I		M	A	L	I		
S	A	L		M	E	L	T		S	T	A	T		

CRYPTOQUIP

V C A U C Q Z B W T B Q A O C Z B B Z X W S U Z C O B R Z S N R C T U, D A Z B A T D A U N R C U U V C R Z Q B V R Z X C Z A D C U.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: STUCK AMONGST A SUFFOCATING MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE, THE SKETCH ARTIST DREW A CROWD.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals O

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.

Tevez picks Diego over Pele

REUTERS, *Rio de Janeiro*

Argentina striker Carlos Tevez has immediately walked into a potential storm after arriving in Brazil to join Corinthians by telling his hosts that he considers Diego Maradona to be better than Pele.

"I know that Brazilians think Pele is the best but I'm Argentine and I think it's Diego Maradona," the 20-year-old forward, regarded as one of his country's top players, told Globo television.

Tevez's $18 million move from Boca Juniors to Corinthians is a record transfer between two South American clubs.

The transfer was made possible after Corinthians signed a controversial $35 million partnership deal with London-based group of investors MSI.

Tevez arrived in Brazil on Sunday night, two days after scoring in his last game for Boca Juniors as they beat Bolivar 2-0 to win the Copa Sudamericana.

He underwent a medical on Monday and was officially presented to the club at a dinner on Monday night.

He is due to fly back to Buenos Aires for Christmas and will joining the team for pre-season training in January.