## Abahani booters given reception

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani Samarthok Goshthi accorded a reception to Abahani football team last Tuesday for winning the Independence Day Cup tournament in Rajshahi last month.

The players and officials were presented with bouquets and gifts at the programme, which was presided over by the fan club's president Sheikh Jahangir Alam, at a local community centre.

Former Abahani and national footballers Dewan Shafiul Arefin Tutul, Kazi Anwar and Abahani's cricket manager Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby were present.

## Youth v'ball finals begin

SPORTS REPORTER

Four teams got off to identical starts, winning their respective matches 3-1, on the opening day of the City Bank National Youth Volleyball Championship yesterday.

Tangail defeated Khulna, Comilla beat Narail, Rajshahi outplayed Chuadanga and Jessore defeated Dinajpur at the Shaheed Suhrwardy National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

Earlier, Minister for Agriculture MK Anwar declared the ten-team finals open.

## BCCI to endorse Greg as coach

PTI, *Thiruvananthapuram*

The working committee of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) began a two-day session here Thursday afternoon to consider various issues including ratification of the appointment of Australian Greg Chappell as Indian team coach.

The meet is also expected to discuss the proposed merger of Women's Cricket Association of India (WCAI) with BCCI, TV rights issue, conduct of next year's ICC Champions Trophy and issues relating to state cricket associations, BCCI sources said.

The meet, being attended by 23 members from across the country including nine BCCI officials and 14 representatives of state associations, would also discuss Indian team's tour programmes to Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe later this year.

## Red-hot

FROM PAGE 16

saw one goal ruled out for offside and wasted a sitter, finally completed the first hattrick of the Premier League in the 76th minute from close range with a pass from Egir before scoring his fourth with a glancing header on a centre by Tanvir, who switched to the right flank.

The Youngmen's humiliation was completed on the stroke of the final whistle when Bulbul's drive from 20 yards got through the keeper's grip.

Yellow cards: Aminul (Russel)

**TEAMS**

**RUSSEL KC:** Biplab, Aminul, Deen Mohammed, Pradeep, Mishu, Hanif (Nayan), Sharif (Maruf), Egir, Tanvir, Yusuf and Rachid (Bulbul).

**YOUNGMEN'S:** Nayan, Ariful, Mamun (Shipon), Monaem, Ismail, Ripon (Zahed), Chanchal (Saikat), Baten, Tabith and Robin.

***Referee:*** Ramkrishna Ghosh.

**Did U Know?**

An artificial pitch is watered just before a hockey match and during half-time to avoid friction, which may cause injury to players.

**Khaled Mahmud**

(Former Bangladesh cricket captain)

*"It is very painful as a cricketer to read all those negative reports. So nothing will be better than getting the news of the team playing good cricket in the second Test."*

PHOTO: AFP

**Juventus star Alessandro Del Piero poses by his prize, a luxurious Nissan Skyline Coupe car, after being awarded the MVP (Most Valuable Player) trophy after an international friendly against Japan's Yokohama F Marinos on June 1.**

# Hands-off our Test status

FROM PAGE 16

cricketer ever but … Caught smoking cannabis on one of his tours to the Caribbean and bowled over by a beauty queen Botham was banned briefly in 1986. A tabloid newspaper's favourite, he said England wouldn't have their best side on the field because "… teams like Bangladesh and Zimbabwe just haven't come up to standard" and "They would struggle, in all fairness, to beat a county side or even a minor counties side". England did field a full side in the Lord's Test and that respect we have earned.

One would have given these critics some credibility had every other Test team with decades of experience scored all their runs against us. Or had all their bowlers got ten wickets each in every match. Or had we featured as the opposition in every Test record created, or even in most of them. The records speak for themselves.

Of the three fastest 'fifty' in Tests two are against India, one as recent as in 2005, and the other against Zimbabwe.

Fastest century? Okay! The fastest in 56 balls (I don't believe it) is against Botham's England (1985-86), the second fastest against South Africa and the third in 71 balls against Benaud and Warne's Australia.

Let's consider fastest Test double centuries. Oh my God! This one too is against Botham's England (2001-02). Tch! Tch! The second and third fastest 200 are against Pakistan and South Africa.

And do you know against which Test nation is the highest individual score by a Test captain? You guessed it right. It's Botham's England. Only in 2004 Brian Lara scored an unbeaten 400. Twentieth in that list is Australian Simpson's 225 in 1965-66 and that too would you believe against England. Bangladesh does not feature anywhere in between.

There have been 79 centuries on Test debut. Only the one by South Africa's Jacques Rudolph is against Bangladesh (Chittagong 2003). To counter that we have two in Aminul Islam's 145 against India in our Inaugural Test at Dhaka 2000-01 and later in Ashraful's 114 against Sri Lanka in their backyard.

Now let's come to most 'ducks' in a Test career. Ahem! Topping the list is Courtney Walsh with 43, followed by two Australians, McGrath (31) and Warne just one less. Is anybody taking note of these facts?

The most runs in a Test series is 974 by Donald Bradman against (no prizes for guessing) England. The opposition in the next two were New Zealand and England as recent as in 1989. Checking up to 700 runs nowhere you shall find Bangladesh as the team taking the battering.

What about most runs in a Test match? The three bottom oppositions are India, Pakistan and England (2004) in that order. Bangladesh does not feature even at 23rd, booked by Englishman Peter May against the West Indies.

In the wicket by wicket partnership records, England and Pakistan feature twice on the receiving end, while New Zealand, India, Sri Lanka, West Indies, Australia, Zimbabwe and South Africa share the ignominy once apiece. That makes it eleven wickets but that is because two 151 partnerships tied for the 10th wicket.

Enough seen in batting and let the focus turn to best Test bowling in an innings. Jim Laker's 10/53 was against Warne's Australia, Anil Kumble's 10/74 was against Pakistan, and George Lohmann's 9/28 was against South Africa. Bangladesh is not an opposition even once in the all-time top 20 figures.

The best bowling in a Test match is also by Laker 19/90 against Australia. Barnes' 17/159 was against South Africa and Narendra Hirwani's 16/136 was against the West Indies. No one could take as yet even 14/199 against Bangladesh, a record Australian Clarrie Grimmett accomplished against South Africa (1931-32).

Since the first hat trick in 1878-79 by Australian Fred Spofforth against England, there have been 35. Bangladesh has two against it but not before Bangladeshi Alok Kapali rocked Pakistan thrice in 2003.

Now they would have made you believe that thousands of runs were being scored against us. There is nothing far from the truth. The highest total in a Test innings is 952/6 declared by Sri Lanka against India in as recent as 1997-98. England once scored 903/7 declared against Australia. And Australia scored 701 against England. Bangladesh is nowhere near. In fact India knocked 705 declared against Australia in Sydney only a season ago in 2003-04. Actually if you can speak in English and have a microphone you can try to convince half the world your way.

Teams must have scored heavily against us in the vital fourth innings. Not really. The highest (418/7 by West Indies) is against Australia as recent as in 2002-03. Their commentators talk big. West Indies were the opposition when India scored 406/4 and England took the hiding when Australia put up 404/3.

With such a 'poor' team with no future (reference Warne) Bangladesh must have the lowest completed Test innings. Wrong! New Zealand with 26 tops the list. In 1924 South Africa were bowled out for 30 twice. South Africa also has a 35 and a 36, and Australia also have a 36. Did anyone call then for their status to be purged?

In spite of our defeat at Lord's last week by an innings and 261 runs, do we stand at the bottom of the pit? The greatest innings win margin is an innings and 579 runs in 1938. Scores: England (903/7 declared); Australia (201 & 123). Has Bangladesh ever been subjected to that level of humiliation? That and the margins of an innings and 360 runs, innings and 336 runs, innings and 332 runs, and innings and 324 runs (top five) were not against Bangladesh.

In terms of runs the heaviest defeat ever inflicted in a Test match is again against Australia. They lost in 1928 by 675 runs. Scores: England (521 & 342/8 declared); Australia (122 & 66). 66 after 122? And they still had their Test status?

Why then all the fuss now? Any psychologist worth his sodium chloride will tell you that the underlying reason of such orchestrated outburst against our Test status by several of the world's top players is because they are scared of losing. Yes! They know only too well that one of these days the wounded tiger shall lick his blood and humble them, in cricket. They just cannot face that prospect. Sportsmanship, hmph!

Speaking for these critics in the spirit of competitiveness, should you not advocate that Bangladesh continues playing Tests for your sake? If true to your belief they are dreadful should you not try to erase your names from some of the inauspicious records?

Unless and until Bangladesh features among the top three, or even five, in all the above lists my prescription for all the status-snatchers is to hold your trap and nurture the culture of the game thrice daily. We may be the babes, but our cradle is not for the snatching.

Every Test team has its share of nightmares. When you are rotting no one calls for you to be stripped of your Test status. Ours' is simply not for the taking. We earned it and it's ours by right. Talk to the ICC and they shall respond likewise. Last March the ICC rejected bizarre proposals to strip Bangladesh (and Zimbabwe) of Test status.

In the sub-continent when a suitor is rejected once he does not propose again. So join me cricket fans all around the world and roar, "Hands-off our Test status".

*(The author is former Advisory Sports Editor, The Daily Star)*

# WI-Pak 2nd Test

FROM PAGE 16

Ominously for Pakistan, West Indies romped to victory with only Lara and Chanderpaul -- utterly assured, and as ugly as ever during his second-innings 153 -- making sizeable contributions. The likes of Chris Gayle, Ramnaresh Sarwan and Wavell Hinds will be anxious not to miss out if Sabina Park offers similar batting delights.

There has been Jamaican delight in plentiful measure for West Indies down the years. Since the genesis of the pace quartet in the mid-'70s, they have lost only thrice here -- twice to England (1989-90 and last year) and once to Australia (1994-95). That last defeat, masterminded by the gutsy batting of the Waugh twins was possibly the most epochal result of the modern era, heralding the definitive shift in cricket's balance of power.

Pakistan themselves would do well to be blissfully ignorant of history. In their first outing here, in 1957-58, a young Garfield Sobers reel off an undefeated 365 as the hosts strolled to victory by an innings and 174 runs. Almost 20 years later, a brave second-innings hundred from Asif Iqbal and eight wickets from the peerless Imran Khan weren't enough to prevent a 140-run hammering. After the fiasco of Barbados, perhaps they can look to Jamaica's most famous son for succour. After all, Robert Nesta Marley did inspire a whole generation with Get up, Stand up.

**TEAMS**

**PAKISTAN** (from): Inzamamul Haq (captain), Younis Khan, Abdul Razzaq, Arshad Khan, Asim Kamal, Bazid Khan, Danish Kaneria, Rao Iftikhar, Kamran Akmal, Navedul Hasan, Salman Butt, Shabbir Ahmed, Shahid Afridi, Shahid Nazir, Yasir Hameed.

**WEST INDIES** (from): Shivnarine Chanderpaul (captain), Courtney Browne, Ian Bradshaw, Dwayne Bravo, Corey Collymore, Fidel Edwards, Chris Gayle, Wavell Hinds, Reon King, Brian Lara, Daren Powell, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Devon Smith.

## Rangamati soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

The Bilaichhari upazila team received a walkover as Naniarchar failed to show for yesterday's scheduled match of the Zila Parishad Junior (Under-14) Gold Cup Football tournament at the local stadium.

Brothers Union will take on Baghaichhari team today.

## Trying to put

FROM PAGE 16

if we are put in first and if we are bowling we need to contain the runs if not getting wickets," said Bashar.

Bangladesh's first innings at Lord's lasted only 38 odd overs and their second essay also lived less than two sessions.

Bashar said that it would be nice if he won the toss this time.

"It's difficult to say at the moment what to do if I win the toss because I'm yet to see the wicket. It has been under cover and under such situation it is ideal to bowl first."

## Del Piero saves Juventus

AFP, *Yokohama,*

Striker Alessandro Del Piero's sole goal enabled Italian Serie A champions Juventus FC to beat J-League champions Yokohama Marinos 1-0 in a football friendly match on Wednesday.

The sole goal came in the 42nd minute when Del Piero quickly collected a rebound off a left cross by Vanni Pessotto on a Pavel Nedved pass for the decider at the Yokohama stadium.

"I didn't want to lose. I'm glad to show a nice game to so many fans here," said Del Piero.

It was the opener of the visitors' three-game Asian tour.

The Italians, who will receive one million euros (1,230,800 dollars) for each game, will fly to Hong Kong to play against Kitchee Football Team on Saturday before returning to Japan for a game against FC Tokyo on Tuesday.

## Henry not for sale

AFP, *London*

Thierry Henry will be staying at Highbury despite a stated interest from Spanish giants Barcelona, according to Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein.

The French striker, who won a second European Golden Boot this season, is reportedly a transfer target for some of Europe's top clubs.

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard is known to be an admirer of the former Monaco and Juventus forward, and recently told Spanish daily that Henry was his next transfer target.

However Highbury chief Dein insists the 27-year-old France international will still be plying his trade in North London next season.

"Thierry Henry is our player and will remain so," Dein told the Today programme on BBC Radio Four.

Arsenal will want to keep Henry even more so given Arsene Wenger's plans not to invest too heavily in the market.

Wenger has already told the club's website: "I have not planned to buy too many (players) and to be busy (in the transfer market) would mean we were under tremendous stress to sell players, which we don't want to do."

Arsenal signed Henry for 10.5 million pounds (19 million dollars) in 1999 after an unsuccessful stint at Juventus in Italy's Serie A.

## Atapattu's cause for concern

AFP, *Colombo*

Sri Lankan cricket captain Marvan Atapattu said Thursday his team's hectic schedule in the next 12 months could severely affect the players' form and fitness.

Sri Lanka are scheduled to play 15 Tests and 42 one-dayers during this period. The number could increase if a postponed series of five one-day internationals against India goes ahead.

"It's going to be hard on players," Atapattu told AFP. "It's not going to do any good to their fitness.

"Generally, we play 25 one-dayers and 10 Tests a year and get a break of about three months. But this is something very unusual."

Sri Lanka begin the new season in July with a two-Test home series against the West Indies. The two teams will be joined by India the following month for a triangular one-day tournament.

They are then scheduled to tour India, Pakistan, Australia, England and Bangladesh for either Tests or one-dayers in the next 12 months.

"We were out of the country for more than nine months in 2002. This season is also going to be the same. I hope it does not happen every season," said Atapattu.

Some of the Sri Lankan players are also expected to represent a World XI in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Super Series in Australia in October.

"But there is nothing we can do about it," said the Sri Lankan skipper.

"We need to follow the ICC fixtures as it is our profession.

"There were a couple of series that got cancelled last year, like the one in New Zealand, and I suppose all those add up to this season."

## Latif begs

FROM PAGE 16

captain to sit and have a talk. But unfortunately the coach was busy giving interviews to the BBC at that time," said Latif.

Latif, who has been managing Bangladesh for two years, said that he also did not like the idea of a two-and-a-half-hour training session when English summer permits an extended time.

But Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar did not agree with the sentiment of his manager.

"I won't say that our training was hampered because Whatmore was linked with the Indian job. The training went nicely. Maybe we had expected a better performance after a good home series and that did not happen at Lord's," said Bashar.

He also said that Whatmore was a renowned coach and could easily get a job anywhere else.

# Federer faces Nadal in dream clash today

French Open

AFP, *Paris*

Spanish star Rafael Nadal aims to celebrate his 19th birthday in stunning style on Friday by crushing Roger Federer's dreams of securing a career Grand Slam when the two clash in the French Open semifinals.

The most eagerly-awaited clash of the tournament pitches Nadal, on a 22-match winning streak, against the world number one who is bidding to become just the sixth man in history to win all four Grand Slam tournaments.

The muscular Nadal has his sights set on being the first man since Mats Wilander in 1982 to win the French Open on his debut.

Such has been the anticipation that the second semifinal between Russian 12th seed Nikolay Davydenko and unseeded Argentinian Mariano Puerta has been completely overshadowed.

Puerta feels he has a point to prove having served a nine-month drug suspension while Davydenko, 24 on Thursday, aims to show there's more to Russian tennis than a handful of glamorous blondes on the women's circuit, and the mercurial Marat Safin on the men's.

"Federer has all the pressure," insists Nadal.

"He is the number one. I will try and play my best tennis to win and I think I can win if I play my best. He is playing really well and I know it's going to be a complicated match."

Nadal has been the sensation of 2005 winning five clay-court titles including back-to-back Masters in Monte Carlo and Rome.

That figure could have been three.

At the Miami Masters in March, Nadal was within two points of beating Federer in the final before the Swiss top seed mounted a stunning fightback to win a five-set thriller.

In 2004, Nadal had beaten his rival at the same event.

"That was on hard courts, this is clay. It's going to be different. I have been playing well so far," said Nadal who has been trying to play down the significance of the semi-final duel.

"I don't want to think about this as being the biggest match of my life because I don't want to put pressure on myself. But it is a wonderful match and an important match.

"This is very good for my career. A final at 19 would be unbelievable as my objective was to make the semi-finals here."

Of the two, Nadal has had the more testing path to the last four having to beat French teenager Richard Gasquet, one of just two men to have defeated Federer in 2005, in the third round.

He then put out another home favourite Sebastien Grosjean dropping a set for the first and only time before easing past compatriot David Ferrer in the quarterfinals.

Federer has yet to drop a set so far and comfortably overcame his sternest test against 1998 champion Carlos Moya in the fourth round, though the Spanish former world number one was suffering from a sore shoulder.

He has reached the semi-finals here for the first time after enduring three miserable years where he failed to get beyond the third round.

"It's purely the experience, the big matches, the occasions I have faced. Overall I believe in my game more, not just my clay court game but my all of my game," said 23-year-old Federer who has already collected six titles in 2005 and has been beaten just twice.

"We're not quite there yet. But to win the French Open would be a dream come true. It would mean I have won all the Grand Slams. At 23, that would be quite something.

"For me it's a big moment. There are still two matches to go but it's one of those chances to maybe walk away with the title."

The winner of the tie will face either Davydenko or Puerta, both of whom battled through marathon quarterfinal five-setters, for a place in Sunday's final.

The 26-year-old Puerta was sanctioned in October 2003 for testing positive for clenbutherol in Vina del Mar, Chile.

# Chelsea, Cole & Mourinho heavily fined

Football

AFP, *London*

English Premiership champions Chelsea were fined 300,000 pounds and handed a suspended three points deduction for tapping up Arsenal left-back Ashley Cole, the Premier League announced on Wednesday.

Cole himself was fined 100,000 pounds while Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho received a fine of 200,000 pounds after all three parties had been found guilty of breaching Premier League rules following allegations of the London club 'tapping up' the England defender.

All three guilty parties later announced they would appeal with Chelsea especially angered at the sanctions imposed and pointing the finger of blame more at Arsenal for making such a issue out of it.

"We are very disappointed, even shocked at the sanctions," said Chelsea's American chairman Bruce Buck.

"The tribunal in its findings clearly said that Chelsea had been approached by agents on behalf of Ashley Cole and then came to the conclusion that the fact we went to the meeting with Ashley Cole made us a guilty party.

"We disagree. We believe that attending the meeting does not go over the line.

"Having said that the sanctions are totally disproportionate. We are certainly going to appeal and look forward to making this right at a future time."

Buck said that he felt sorry for Cole.

"I think it is an unfortunate situation. He is a fine young man, who was caught up in this situation.

"At the hearing two weeks ago Jose Mourinho was asked how would he react if John Terry had been discovered talking to Arsenal in the bar after a match and Mourinho handled it beautifully.

"He said he would call the player in and ask him what was the problem and if it was a football issue he would have gone out of his way to resolve it. If it was a financial one he would have gone to Peter Kenyon and the board and told them to resolve it.

"In this case the players' current club (Arsenal) didn't try and resolve anything but made it into a spectacle which I think inappropriate and not in the best interests of the player or football."

Cole announced through his solicitor Graham Shear that he would be appealing.

"This sends entirely the wrong message. English football have lost the message that a footballer is an employee, it is more like the master and servant of centuries ago.

# Pele to play in tsunami charity match

Football

AFP, *Bangkok*

Three-time Brazilian World Cup champion Pele will bring a squad of football all-stars to Thailand next month for a charity match to raise funds for tsunami victims, a Thai official said Thursday.

The likes of France's Eric Cantona, Argentinian great Claudio Caniggia and Rudi Voller of Germany will team up against former Thai internationals led by local hero Kiatisak "Zico" Senamuang on July 30 in Bangkok.

"The charity match will be held to help tsunami victims and promote our tourism industry," Thepitak Chansuthep, chairman of the Senior Football Association of Thailand, told AFP.

The all-stars, some of the best in the game at the peaks of their careers, will tour tsunami disaster zones along Thailand's southwest coast, where nearly 5,400 people died and 2,822 remain missing from the December disaster that ravaged coastlines ringing the Indian Ocean.

They are likely to engage in a bit of beach football on the resort island of Phuket and will participate in charity auctions with players selling off their football-related personal effects, Thepitak said.

Pele, 64, considered by many to be the greatest player of the game, is not expected to strap on his boots but will be on the touchline for the match.

## CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**

1 Listening device
4 Atomizer output
8 Hulot portrayer
12 Pair with an air
13 Radio response
14 Not up
15 Bachelor's last utterance
16 Contemptible
17 Broker's advice
18 Jim Croce classic
21 "Undeniably"
22 Work with bricks
23 "The Turn of the Screw" author
26 Gridiron arbiter
27 Remnant
30 Line of symmetry
31 Pantheon member
32 Othello, for one
33 Become one
34 Hardly any
35 First name of 25-Across
36 ATM access
37 Took top honors
38 Spalding Gray movie
45 Neighborhood
46 Terrific review
47 Stick figure?
48 Sincere
49 Shakespearean septet
50 Cretan mountain
51 Crocus bulb
52 Strong craving
53 Powell co-star

**DOWN**

1 Tend texts
2 German car
3 Leeway
4 Roeper's subjects
5 Political columnist Molly
6 Ward of "Once and Again"
7 Multiplied by three
8 Delicious
9 Lend a hand
10 Snitch
11 Comic Eric
19 Argus's 100
20 Lummox
23 Mandible
24 Give the pink slip
25 Central
26 Squabble
27 A billion years
28 Neither mate
29 Desiccate
31 Pentagon VIP
32 Actress Suvari
34 In condition
35 Square
36 Sacred song
37 Henry VIII's six
38 Painter Chagall
39 Black-and-white treat
40 Approach
41 Prego rival
42 Seethe
43 "Novus — Seclorum"
44 Picture of health?

**Solution time: 27 mins.**

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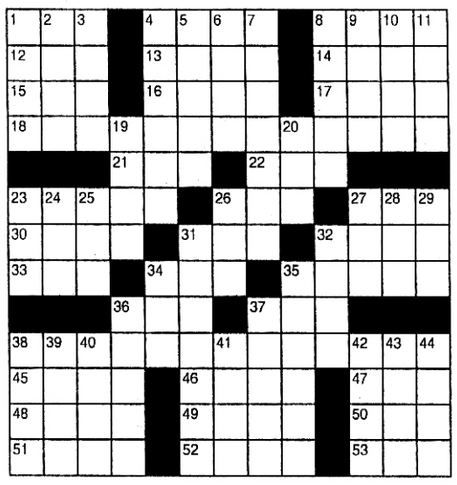

**CRYPTOQUIP**

T H S T X S I R F B X M R C W T T Q , V T H A K J I S T C S R X I R B Q S I R T W F E H Q J R T X E B V " A B V K M H S K X ? "

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** WHEN A HURRICANE'S WINDS BECOME LESS FORCEFUL, YOU MAY SAY IT HAS SOFTENED THE BLOW.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T

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.