

# Mystery voice called Zidane back

## Football

AFP, Paris

Real Madrid star Zinedine Zidane has admitted a mysterious apparition advised him to end his self-imposed international retirement to return and help France qualify for the 2006 World Cup.

Zidane returned to the France fray recently and was immediately named captain for the remaining qualifiers which the former world champions must win if they want to have any chance of going to Germany next year.

The French icon, who has had a huge influence in France's success over the years, said the "overpowering presence" left him with only one decision to make.

"I didn't want to make a big thing out of this, and for people to interpret what I say badly but what happened to me is really quite mysterious and unexplainable," Zidane said in Tuesday's edition of France

Football magazine.

"You could even say it's irrational.

"One night about three o'clock in the morning I woke up suddenly and began speaking with someone. Afterwards I didn't tell anyone about it, not even my wife.

"It's a total enigma, but don't try to explain it - you can't. It's someone that you are likely to never meet. I can't even begin to explain. This person exists, but it's a total mystery."

He added: "A few hours later I was with my wife at home and that's when I decided.

"I've never had an experience like it. It was like I was powerless against this presence that was forcing me.

"It was like a revelation, and suddenly I realised I had to go back on my decision to retire."

Zidane said he wants to speak of his strange experience to put an end to speculation which suggest his return has been orchestrated purely for commercial or financial reasons.

It has been suggested that several sponsors as well as state television channel TF1 - who are transmitting the World Cup in France next year - have banded together to force Zidane's hand.

Zidane is sponsored by both the private television channel Canal Plus and telecommunications network Orange - and announced his decision to return on their websites following an initial announcement on his personal site.

He added: "Why am I telling you this? It's because I want to put an end to the unfounded rumours that are flying about.

"Do you really think that people who have an interest in my return could really make me - such as Adidas, Orange, Canal Plus, TF1 or even the president of France - come back?"

"When I read that I couldn't believe it. It's only logical I announce it through Canal Plus and Orange because they spend a lot of money for my image so I don't see me announcing it anywhere else.

"If I'm coming back it's because I want to, and that's the only reason," said the 33-year-old who admits that he will now stay with Les Bleus until he decides to hang up his boots for good.

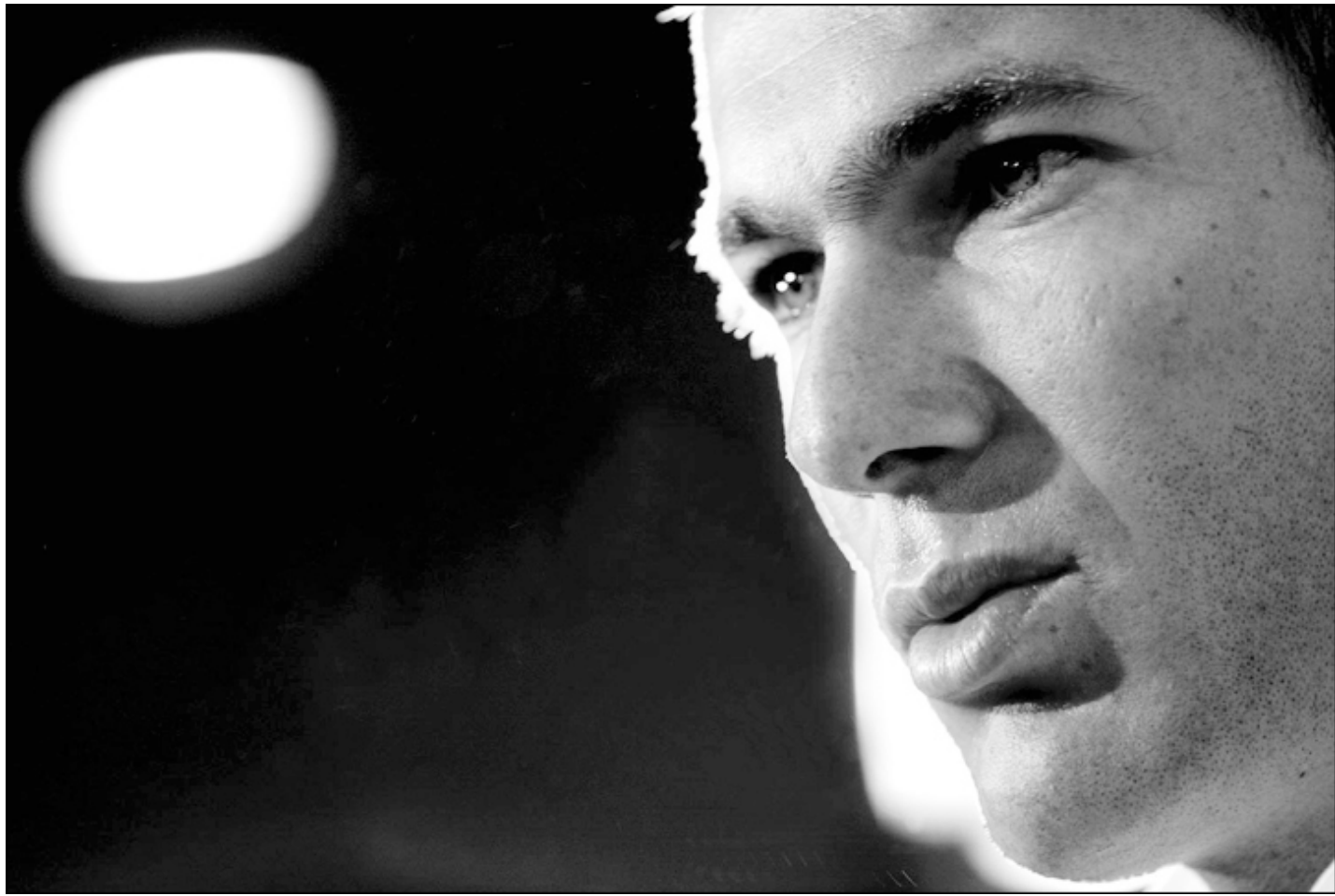
"The day I retire from the France squad is the day that I will retire from football for good."

Zidane however will have pressure to produce some of the midfield magic which has been his career trademark.

France have had a poor qualifying campaign so far and sit fourth on ten points in the Europe zone group four behind leaders the Republic of Ireland (13), Switzerland (12) and third-placed Israel who have 11 points.

Raymond Domenech's Bleus have four matches to redress their poor start, beginning with the visit of the Faroe Islands on September 3.

Four days later they travel to face Ireland, and a month later travel to Switzerland before winding their qualifying campaign up at home against Cyprus.



ZINEDINE ZIDANE

## BD gymnastics in Rajvi Gandhi meet

UNB, Dhaka

A 13-member Bangladesh gymnastics team will participate in the Rajiv Gandhi International Artistic Gymnastics Tournament. The meet will be held in the Indian city of Hyderabad from August 18-21.

The Bangladesh team comprising five officials and four men's and four women's gymnasts will leave on August 16.

The team received the Government Order (GO) yesterday to compete in the competition named after the slain Indian Prime Minister.

**TEAM Officials:** Anisur Rahman (team leader), Kazi Akram Ali (men's coach), Dewan M Nazrul Hossain (women's coach), Laila Parveen (judge-women), and Iqbal Islam (judge-men).

**Gymnasts:** Mushfiqur Rahman, Mahmudul Hasan Milan, KM Barkatullah, Abdullah Al Mamun, Nishat Ara Nadia, Ratna Banik, Umme Kulsum Polly and Sharmeen Sultana.

## BKSP Red, Punjab reach final

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP Red and Punjab National Bank Hockey Academy team were set to clash in Thursday's final of the North Bengal-CA 3rd BKSP Cup U-18 Hockey Tournament.

BKSP Red managed a solitary goal victory over BHF (Bangladesh Hockey Federation) Green to move into the final. Mamunur Rahman scored the match decider.

Punjab National Bank Hockey Academy defeated BHF Red 3-1. Laprit Singh struck twice and Yuthbir Singh scored one for the visitors while Jimmy netted for the home team.

The third place-deciding match between two BHF selections will be also held tomorrow.

## Strauss ready

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or six overs, I might be thrown the ball earlier than usual.

"I thought in a county game this season, when he tried to reverse sweep, Strauss didn't have much of a plan.

"Nothing in this series has since made me change my mind."

## Sri Lanka score

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**SRI LANKA**

	O	M	R	W
Atapattu b Nehra	11			
Jayasuriya run out	67			
Lokuhettigelle lbw b Nehra	9			
Sangakkara c Sehwaag b Nehra	8			
Jayawardene c Kaif b Nehra	83			
Arnold run out	6			
Dilshan b Nehra	7			
Vaas not out	18			
Chandana c Harbhajan b Nehra	2			
Muralitharan run out	0			
Extras: (lb-2, nb-2, w-8)	12			
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	281			
Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-46, 3-67, 4-122, 5-247, 6-257, 7-262, 8-268, 9-281				
Did not bat: Maharoof				
<b>Bowler</b>				
Pathan	9	0	59	0
Zaheer	9	1	43	0
Nehra	10	1	59	6
Harbhajan	10	0	40	0
Kumble	10	0	64	0
Sehwaag	2	0	14	0
<b>INDIA:</b> Dravid, Sehwaag, Ganguly, Yuvraj, Kaif, Dhoni, Pathan, Kumble, Harbhajan, Zaheer, Nehra.				
<b>Toss:</b> Sri Lanka.				
<b>Umpires:</b> Simon Taufel (Australia) and Asoka de Silva (Sri Lanka).				

# Bekele keeps 10,000 crown

## Athletics

AFP, Helsinki

Long distance running great Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia retained his men's 10,000 metres title at the World Athletics Championships on Monday.

The 23-year-old Olympic champion timed 27minutes 08.33 seconds ahead of compatriot and Olympic silver medallist Sileshi Sihine (27:08.87) while Kenya's Moses Mosop took bronze in a personal best time of 27:08.96.

For Bekele it rounded off a traumatic year in which he has experienced the tragedy of his fiancée and training partner Alem Techale dying of a suspected heart attack.

"It was a fantastic race. It's a great feeling to have won. The race was very important for me, being the World Championships," said Bekele, who threatens to even exceed the achievements of his legendary compatriot Haile

Gebrselassie.

However, he confirmed that he won't be chasing a world title double here opting not to take part in the 5,000 metres.

"I'm definitely not running the 5000m. I'm tired and this year has been very tough for me, especially after losing my fiancée."

His win on Monday, which followed his fourth consecutive cross country double earlier in the season, came after a fascinating race which was first set alight by Japan's Terukazu Omori.

He had decided that the first lap pace was less than satisfactory and decided to blaze a lone trail taking a 40 metres lead but the rest sat back content to let him burn himself out.

Tanzania's Commonwealth bronze medallist John Yuda led the pack and with 21 laps to go they were up on Omori's shoulder with Sihine.

With just over 19 laps to go Yuda decided enough was enough and eased past Omori and by the lap marker the 25-year-old Japanese

runner was all but lost.

The third of the Ethiopians Abebe Dinkessa took the lead with 14 laps remaining with Bekele in mid-division while Sihine came up on the pace setter.

At the halfway mark Bekele was eighth but another of Qatar's seemingly endless supply of former Kenyans, Nicholas Kemboi, surged into the lead to try and split the group but was soon overhauled by the Ethiopians.

Bekele took the lead with just over eight laps to go and was accompanied by his two compatriots Dinkessa and Sihine who were now leading a group of nine including Kemboi and Eritrea's Olympic bronze medallist Zedersenay Tadesse.

However another burst from the Ethiopian trio saw them fail to split the group as Tadesse fought his way back while two Kenyans also stayed in the chase, and left his compatriot to fend off Mosop while Dinkessa paid for his efforts by finishing seventh.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Scene from Tuesday's third BKSP Cup invitational international under-18 hockey tournament match between Punjab National Bank Academy and Bangladesh Hockey Federation Red at BKSP.

# Sharapova aims to be a longtime No 1

## Tennis

REUTERS, California

Three victories away from becoming the first Russian woman to attain the number one ranking, Maria Sharapova insists she is more interested in staying at the top than reaching the pinnacle in the first place.

"I know I say this all the time, but I am 18 and it's more important that

The 27-year-old tested positive for the prohibited diuretic hydrochlorothiazide at Acapulco, Mexico in February, where the Argentinian was beaten by Spain's Rafael Nadal in the quarterfinals.

He must repay 276,070 dollars in prize money and forfeit 525 singles and 95 doubles ranking points as part of the sanction.

I'm fully ready to remain number one as long as I can," Sharapova said on Monday.

"Being there for a week would give me pride, but not as much as staying there for the long term."

Top seeded at this week's JP Morgan Chase Open, Sharapova needs to reach the semifinals to overhaul American Lindsay Davenport and become the first player from her country to climb to the top of women's tennis.

Last year's Wimbledon champion has a first round bye before a tricky path to the top ranking begins in the second round with a match against her best friend on tour, Maria Kirilenko.

Sharapova could then face 16th seeded compatriot Anna Chakvetadze or possibly the in-form Sania Mirza of India.

Should she advance to the quarterfinals, the ninth seeded Daniela Hantuchova appears likely to be the woman standing between the Russian and the top ranking.

Sharapova realises that the closer she gets to achieving the feat the more questions she will be have to answer about it.

"It's just something else I have to hear," she said.

"It's all about locking it out. I've been close before and I'm close now, but I'm not looking at it as a one-week thing."

Whether or not she achieves it

this week, the fact a Russian is so close to the milestone is something Sharapova's compatriot Elena Dementieva is all too aware of.

"It's such a big goal for every player that sometimes when you get so close, you can't reach it," the sixth-ranked Dementieva said.

**Ponting's side**

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he said. "They are a very good team with two great bowlers. You will always be in with a chance of winning games in such a situation."

In the opening two Tests Hayden struggled to curb his aggression and Chappell said he paid the penalty.

"We have seen a side that is very good against some average attacks, but this is the first time for a while they have come up against a really good attack," he said.

"They have usually had their own way and got over-confident. Hayden has got into that way of thinking. He is so used to smashing the ball around that he hasn't made the adjustment."

Chappell said Hayden needed to say: "This is not the kind of attack I have been facing, this one I should respect more." In the first innings Hayden suffered his first golden duck in Tests and after making 31 in the second extended his streak without a century to 14 matches.

## Ferdinand end gossips

AFP, Manchester

England defender Rio Ferdinand has agreed a new four-year deal with Manchester United, the Premiership club confirmed on Monday.

The defender, who has two years left on his current contract, is yet to sign the new deal, but when he does it will keep him at the club until 2009.

The agreement is a timely one for boss Sir Alex Ferguson, who has said he wants everyone at the club to have "a show of unity" before the season starts.

The announcement comes on the eve of United's first competitive game of the campaign - a Champions League qualifier against Debrecen of Hungary.

It ends months of speculation about his future which had led to Red Devils fans booing the 27-year-old central defender during pre-season matches.

According to reports Ferdinand has been offered around 100,000 pounds (178,000 dollars) a week to stay with the club.

## Dudek blow for Liverpool

REUTERS, London

Liverpool's Polish international goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek has been ruled out of action for up to three months after suffering a fracture-dislocation of his elbow during training on Monday.

"Jerzy saw a specialist on Monday afternoon and will see another specialist on Tuesday for further investigation," spokesman for the European champions Ian Cotton told the club's website.

"He will be out of action for three months."

That would rule Dudek out of Poland's remaining World Cup qualifying games against Austria and Wales in September and their final game against England on October 12.

Dudek was the hero of Liverpool's Champions League final penalty shootout victory over AC Milan in May, saving two Milan spotkicks and probably contributing to another wayward effort by his "spaghetti legs" antics on the line.

However, he was going to have to fight for his place in the Liverpool side this season following the signing of Spanish keeper Jose Reina from Villarreal.

## Jayasuriya across

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Inzamamul Haq (10,933/344) in the 10,000-club.

Jayasuriya, playing his 337th one-dayer, needed just 10 runs before the match to reach the milestone. He did it in style, pulling Indian fast bowler Irfan Pathan for a four in the fifth over.

The Sri Lankan, known for his explosive batting, has already scored 18 hundreds and 57 half-centuries since making his one-day debut against Australia at Melbourne in 1989.

Tendulkar holds the world record with 38 centuries.

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selected him to provide some cover for the current injuries," said chairman of selectors, Trevor Hohns.

Clark, 29, is a right-handed pace bowler who took 40 wickets at 25.98 in the 2004-2005 Australian domestic season. Playing for New South Wales state, he took five wickets for 10 runs during a match against Victoria.

In his most recent match for Middlesex, he took five for 61 against Warwickshire.

Cricknet Australia said the condition of McGrath, who tore a ligament in his right ankle before play on the first day at Edgbaston, was being monitored.

## FIFPRO WORLD XI PLAYER AWARDS

# Premiership booters dominate

## Football

BBC ONLINE

The 55-man shortlist for the inaugural FIFPro World XI Player Awards at Wembley on 19 September is headed by 19 Premiership players.

Ballot forms were sent to 38,000 players asking them to pick a world XI for the event, which has been organised by the international players' union.

Eight Chelsea players, including Frank Lampard, John Terry and Joe Cole, are among those stars nominated.

Manchester United have six players listed, Arsenal four and Liverpool one.

The defensive shortlist also includes England and Arsenal pair Sol Campbell and Ashley Cole, plus Manchester United's Rio Ferdinand.

English midfielders nominated are Paul Scholes, Steven Gerrard and Real Madrid's David Beckham, although there is no place for his club colleague Michael Owen on the strikers' list.

The only English player shortlisted in that category is Wayne Rooney.

**SHORTLIST FOR THE FIFPRO**

## WORLD XI PLAYER AWARDS.

**Goalkeepers:** Gianluigi Buffon (Italy/ Juventus), Iker Casillas (Spain/ Real Madrid), Petr Cech (Czech Republic/ Chelsea), Nelson Dida (Brazil/ AC Milan), Oliver Kahn (Germany/ Bayern Munich).

**Defenders:** Alex (Brazil/ PSV), Roberto Ayala (Argentina/ Valencia), Cafu (Brazil/ AC Milan), Sol Campbell (England/ Arsenal), Fabio Cannavaro (Italy/ Juventus), Roberto Carlos (Brazil/ Real Madrid), Ricardo Carvalho (Portugal/ Chelsea), Ashley Cole (England/ Arsenal), Rio Ferdinand (England/ Man Utd), Gabriel Heinze (Argentina/ Man Utd), Lucio (Brazil/ Bayern Munich), Paolo Maldini (Italy/ AC Milan), Alessandro Nesta (Italy/ AC Milan), Carlos Puyol (Spain/ Barcelona), Walter Samuel (Argentina/ Inter Milan), Jaap Stam (Holland/ AC Milan), John Terry (England/ Chelsea), Lilian Thuram (France/ Juventus), Gianluca Zambrotta (Italy/ Juventus), Javier Zanetti (Argentina/ Inter Milan).

**Midfielders:** Michael Ballack (Germany/ Bayern Munich), David Beckham (England/ Real Madrid), Joe Cole (England/ Chelsea), Deco (Portugal/ Barcelona), Luis Figo (Portugal/ Inter Milan), Gennaro Gattuso (Italy/ AC Milan), Steven

Gerrard (England/ Liverpool), Kaka (Brazil/ AC Milan), Frank Lampard (England/ Chelsea), Claude Makelele (France/ Chelsea), Pavel Nedved (Czech Republic/ Juventus), Andrea Pirlo (Italy/ AC Milan), Arjen Robben (Holland/ Chelsea), Ronaldinho (Brazil/ Barcelona), Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal/ Man Utd), Paul Scholes (England/ Man Utd), Mark van Bommel (Holland/ Barcelona), Patrick Vieira (France/ Juventus), Xavi (Spain/ Barcelona), Zinedine Zidane (France/ Real Madrid).

**Forwards:** Adriano (Brazil/ Inter Milan), Hernan Crespo (Argentina/ Chelsea), Didier Drogba (Ivory Coast/ Chelsea), Samuel Eto'o (Cameroon/ Barcelona), Thierry Henry (France/ Arsenal), Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Sweden/ Juventus), Ronaldo (Brazil/ Real Madrid), Wayne Rooney (England/ Man Utd), Andriy Shevchenko (Ukraine/ AC Milan), Ruud van Nistelrooy (Holland/ Man Utd).

The World Player and Young player of the year and World XI to be announced at Wembley Conference Centre on 19 September.

# Warne awaits the 600th

FROM PAGE 12

"Hollywood" to his teammates, put it down to vanity and a slimming pill.

He was written off but Warne, his powers supposedly waning, has returned with 108 wickets in 18 Tests since, at an average of 23.13., most of those wickets taken on good batting tracks.

As Warne explains: "Over the last few years there hasn't been much five-day cricket so I'm not exploiting the conditions late on the fourth day and on the fifth.

"I'm bowling a lot more on day one, two and three at the moment. It means I must be doing something pretty right."

Warne's popularity is probably based on the perception that, at heart, he is a rather ordinary individual, with everyday weaknesses.

He seems to have struggled to

mature. He was laughed at when, nervous of experimentation, he had a cargo of baked beans sent out while on tour in India.

But there was warmth to the laughter, just as in the 1999 World Cup when English crowds goaded the ample Warne with chants of "save the whale!"

This season at Hampshire he has made friends with men far younger than himself, including England's Kevin Pietersen. He has had treatment to prevent a bald patch emerging in his peroxide locks.

Some Australians, though, have tired of their man-child and his off-the-field antics, so much so that Warne has talked of moving permanently to England.

Getting to 600 first will mean a great deal.

He says he is not a "stats man" but would have winced when Sri Lankan

spinner Muttiah Muralitharan overhauled Courtney Walsh's previous world record of 519 wickets first.

Warne has forged clear since. Few doubt that Muralitharan, with 549 wickets, will ultimately overhaul him but for this week Warne will have the stage to himself.

It is a stage he loves. Thorpe hated publicity. Warne throws himself at it. He also seems to want to be loved in return, making him prone to flattery (which may explain his involvement in match-fixing allegations during the early part of his career).

At Old Trafford this week, Warne will delight in public adulation. He will take that wicket and the world will rise.

His cricketing life, like many of his leg breaks threaten to do, will have come full circle.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Barber-shop item

5 Balthe

9 Comic DeLuise

12 "Every — winner!"

13 Duel tool

14 Flamenco cry

15 "Love Story" star

17 Trawler need

18 Still here

19 Belgian city

21 "Fuhgeddaboutit!"

22 Fair

24 Succotash bean

27 West of Hollywood

28 Salaman-der

31 Commo- tion

32 Dus

33 "Eureka!"

34 Skin opening

36 Caesar or Vicious

37 Amor-phous sci-fi villain

**DOWN**

1 Heart of the matter

2 Intaglio stone

3 Heart of the matter

4 Bicycle-seat style

5 Took off head?

6 Gorilla

7 Vast expanse

8 Conversa- tion starter

9 Fall

10 Couturier

11 Apportion

16 Lennon's lady

20 Hostel

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13			14		
15			16					17		
18							19	20		
		21		22	23					
24	25	26		27			28	29	30	
31				32			33			
34			35		36			37		
		38		39			40			
41	42					43			44	45
47				48	49	50				
51				52			53			
54				55			56			

## CRYPTOQUIP

Q X D B Z F B I D P K R M E O

I U Q E E S U B M Q U F R K , D F B

K S S Z X B E E S U Z B Q E E O

A S D Q D S J A P B - E Q I F R J A .  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A FEW MEN WERE DISCUSSING HOW BEST TO DIG A WELL, BUT THE TOPIC WAS TOO DEEP FOR ME.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals W

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.