

Akhtar sent to hospital

CRICINFO, undated

Shoaib Akhtar, the Pakistan fast bowler, was taken to hospital for an MRI scan after suffering back pain during the first day of the final Test against India in Bangalore. The scan revealed no injury but he has been experiencing muscle spasms and will not take further part in play on the first day. He will be assessed on Sunday morning.

Shoaib bowled four overs in his first spell before going off the field at the end of the seventh over, during which he showed discomfort while bowling. He came back on after Gautam Gambhir was dismissed in the eighth over but once again left the field after bowling the ninth. He bowled eight overs in the first session and managed two more after the break before once again leaving the field at the end of the 32nd over.

Akhtar, 32, took six wickets in Delhi and two in Kolkata, where he played with a chest infection.

BFF president

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"It's not right the way they are communication with FIFA, which is very much one-way, about formation of the DFAs (district and divisional football associations). They must have misled FIFA to have things their way," Tapan had added.

The BFF has ignored all popular demands to discuss with its councillors about formation of the DFAs and remained autocratic about all election decisions.

Sultan told a number of TV channels that the sports adviser had no jurisdiction to talk about the BFF as it was under the wings of FIFA and AFC.

"I do not want to go against him (Tapan) but he does not have a clear idea about these things. It is out of his area. We (BFF) have called an emergency meeting on Monday to decide how to protest this," Sultan added.

He knows

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a mark in Tests.

"I always knew I could do well in Test cricket because you always have time to settle down. If you take out that time you can still bat well. For me Test cricket is always the main thing. So I'm very happy with my effort today," he told reporters.

Yuvraj, who has been in awe-some form this season, blamed himself for being unable to gain a foothold in Test cricket and said he has not capitalised on the opportunities that came his way.

BVF honours

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Championships in Kolkata earlier this year.

Special guest Latifur Rahman, chairman and managing director of Transcom, said that his organisation, like elsewhere in the world, has been sponsoring sport in Bangladesh and will continue this process.

He also promised to sponsor Bangladesh's Everest Expedition team that have targeted scaling the world's highest peak in 2009.

AKM Zakaria, ex-BVF president Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, Bangladesh Olympic Association's acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed and BVF president Golam Quddus Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Frings pencils

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Germany have been drawn in the same group as hosts Austria, Croatia and Poland for next summer's European Championships.

But Loew will need to have the currently injured midfield trio of Frings, captain Michael Ballack and Bernd Schneider back for next June's tournament if Germany are to progress to the final.

"If we want to win, we need our most experienced players. Against many of Europe's strongest teams there is only a small margin for error without our best players," warned Frings.

"But we'd have no chance against the likes of France or Italy without our best team."

Boca ready

FROM PAGE 20

Brazilian teams have dominated the Club World Cup -- Sao Paulo smashed Liverpool 1-0 in 2005 and Internacional whipped Barcelona by the same score last year.

Palermo, who scored twice in Boca's 2-1 victory over Real Madrid in the 2000 Intercontinental Cup, said he was getting ready to ruffle the net.

"At this stage, I'd only said it would be great if I can score again," he said. "The goals I scored against Real Madrid were something special and I never forget the moment I scored them. It will indeed bring me happiness if I can score such special goals this time."

Boca will Wednesday play the winners of Sunday's quarter-final between Mexico's Pachuca and Etoile Sahel of Tunisia.

"I have studied various reference materials on both teams and they have many important players," Russo said. "We have to be careful about their front line. We must think about how we defend in that part and stop the ball. We also want to go on attacking ourselves."

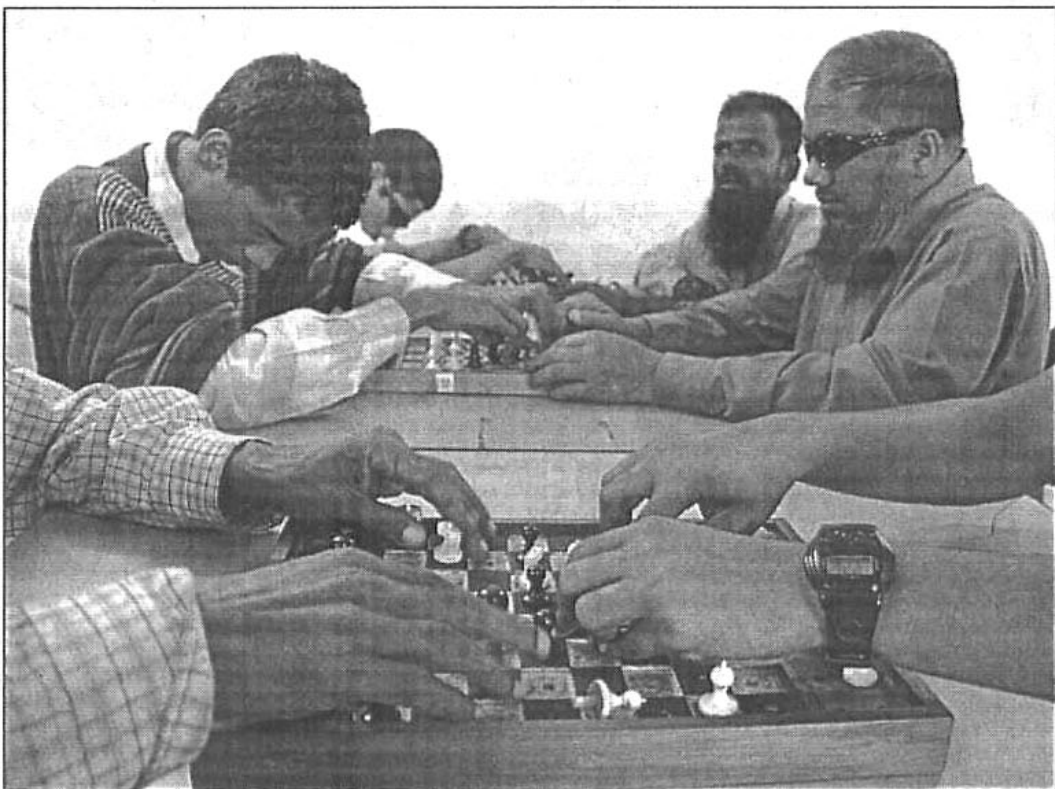


PHOTO: STAR

The picture shows visibly impaired players deeply engrossed in the war of wits during the third round of the Grameenphone 8th National Special Chess tournament at the chess room of the National Sports Council yesterday.

Dyson to find what's wrong

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australian coach John Dyson says he needs to sit down with the West Indian players and quickly discover why they are underachieving in world cricket, reports said Saturday.

The former Test opening batsman coach leaves here for the Caribbean on Monday to take up his appointment as the successor to compatriot Bennett King for one of the most challenging jobs in international cricket.

The West Indies have won just three of their past 40 Tests with their victories coming against Zimbabwe, Bangladesh and a Pakistan side missing five leading players.

Dyson, the former Sri Lanka coach, says he is not sugar-coating the task of coaching a team currently ranked eighth in both Test and one-

daycricket.

"Over the last 10 years, by anyone's standards, the West Indies have been playing some pretty average cricket," Dyson told Saturday's Sydney Morning Herald newspaper.

"When I was coach of Sri Lanka I followed their performances closely, and I felt it was a squad underachieving."

"Certainly they should be higher up the ICC (rankings) table than they are now. At the moment, you would have to say that there is only one player in that squad who is playing up to their potential, and that is Shivnarine Chanderparat."

"With the other guys, you look at them and think, 'He's a better player than what he's showing on the park.'"

"I need to get there, sit down with the players and find out what is wrong."

Dyson says he doesn't expect a return to the glory days of the 1970s and '80s, but will insist on personal

accountability among the players.

"I'm not a big believer in putting the broom through a place upon arrival," he said. "And I don't expect people to compare this West Indies squad with those of the '70s and '80s."

"What they did for international cricket was to introduce a form of professionalism and dedication never seen before."

"These guys have to develop their own personality and see what brand of cricket they can play."

"I haven't spoken to Bennett King, but I have spoken to (stand-in coach) David Moore, and he felt the squad had more potential than what it has shown."

"I agree, and now it's about finding a way of bringing that potential out."

"I don't see it as the toughest challenge I've had, just a different one," he said. "Every coaching job in world cricket is difficult, with the exception of Australia."

Nazim ton thwarts Khulna

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11 boundaries in his 193-ball knock that took him to 121. Chittagong captain Ehsanul Haque threw Khulna a challenge to score 307 runs in 60 overs.

Khulna played it safe, reaching 188-5 with Habibul Bashar scoring a half-century off 114 balls. Off-spinner Arafat took three wickets while Sajit and skipper Ehsanul took a wicket each.

Chittagong had a better match of the two sides with their 12 points to Khulna's eight. The hosts also moved up to third in the points table.

BARISAL-RAJSHAHI

Rajshahi lost four wickets on way to completing the formalities of scoring 49 runs.

Barisal's impressive left-arm fast bowler Sajidul Islam grabbed three wickets, that of Jahurul Islam, Rafiqul Islam and Anisur Rahman. But Rajshahi had too few to get on the day.

In form Farhad Hossain, having hit five fours in his solid 37, and Nayeem Islam took Rajshahi to

victory.

Rajshahi's Alamgir Kabir was declared man-of-the-match.

DHAKA-SYLHET

Imtiaz Hossain struck his first century this season that also made sure of Sylhet's third draw in the first-class competition.

He struck 148 with the help of 13 boundaries and three sixes as the visitors piled 306-8 declared, giving Dhaka 346 to win in the last two hours.

Both sides then went about turning the second innings chase into a bit of fun, something common in longer version cricket in Bangladesh. Sylhet let the likes of Ejaz Ahmed, Golam Rahman and man-of-the-match Golam Mabud to some bowling, while Dhaka turned their batting line-up upside down.

BRIEF SCORES

CHITTAGONG: First Innings 359 all out and second Innings 229-9 dec in 73.3 overs (Salahuddin 12, Nafis 9, Mahbubul 26, Nazimuddin 121*, Dhiman 5, Ehsanul 15, Faisal

0, Kamrul 11, Sajit 4, Yasin 4, Younus 14*, Ziaur 3-74, Robiul 2-63, Murad 2-46, Farid 1-35, Nahidul 1-5).

Khulna: First Innings 282 all out and second Innings 188-5 in 59 overs (Sadat 36, Imrul 10, Mostafiz 13, Bashar 50, Nahidul 37, Sanjay 30*, Ehsanul 1-31, Yasin 3-54, Sajit 1-39).

BARISAL: First Innings 182 all out and second Innings 169 all out.

RAJSHAHI: First Innings 204 and second Innings 148-4 in 54.4 overs (Jahurul 74, Rafiqul 6, Farhad 37*, Mahbub 1, Anisur 3, Nayeem 9*, Talha 1-21, Sajid 3-28).

SYLHET: First Innings 312 and second Innings 306-8 dec in 91.3 overs (Rahman 23, Imtiaz 148, Sadiqur 1, Rajin 71, Kapali 8, Mabud 31, Ejaz 3, Enamul 7, Rezaul 7*, Mahbubul 1-51, Rafique 3-97, Riyad 3-42, Mosharraf 1-66).

Dhaka: First Innings 273 all out and second Innings 188-7 in 33 overs (Shahriar 12, Rafique 37, Sharif 5, Nadif 7, Riyad 60*, Uttam 23, Shamsur 18, Anwar 0, Mehrab 13*, Rashid 2-37, Golam 2-41, Kapali 1-26, Mabud 1-21).

England to show intent

FROM PAGE 17

against Bangladesh in July, hit 112 and 86 in two practice matches against the tourists ahead of the first Test.

Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene said the rest of the team will be unchanged, meaning the hosts will play three seamers to support record-breaking spinner Muttiah Muralidaran.

"The bowling combination will depend on the pitch but knowing the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) it will probably be three seamers and Murali," said Jayawardene.

Sri Lanka have won 10 of their last 12 Tests at the SSC since losing to Hussain's Englishmen in 2001.

The last time England played here in 2003 under current captain Michael Vaughan, Sri Lanka coasted to victory by an innings and 215 runs with Muralidaran grabbing seven wickets in the match.

England have much to fear from Jayawardene and the prolific Kumar Sangakkara, whose match-winning 152 in Sri Lanka's second innings in Kandy took the match away from the tourists.

It was at the SSC in July last year that the Sri Lankan captain and his deputy compiled Test cricket's highest partnership of 624 runs against hapless South Africa with Jayawardene making 374 and

Sangakkara 287.

SQUAD

England (from): Michael Vaughan (capt), Alastair Cook, Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood, Ravi Bopara, Matthew Prior (wicket-keeper), James Anderson, Ryan Sidebottom, Monty Panesar, Steve Harmison, Stuart Broad.

Sri Lanka (likely): Mahela Jayawardene (capt), Kumar Sangakkara, Upul Tharanga, Michael Vandort, Chamara Silva, Jehan Mubarak, Prasanna Jayawardene (wicket-keeper), Chaminda Vaas, Lasith Malinga, Dilhara Fernando, Muttiah Muralidaran.

Yuvraj, Sourav sparkle

FROM PAGE 17

(19) and Venkatsai Laxman (five).

The hosts' batting problems began in the eighth over when Gautam Gambhir was caught behind off Sami after making five in his first Test in two years.

Arafat bagged his first big wicket when he dismissed David, caught at first slip by Misbahul Haq while attempting to cut an away-going delivery.

Jaffer, who scored a double-century in the previous match, was trapped leg-before while Laxman played a slow delivery on to his stumps.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the open-

ing day of the third and final Test between India and Pakistan on Saturday:

INDIA: First Innings 17 Jaffer lbw b Arafat 5 Gambhir c Akmal b Sami 5 Dravid c Misbah b Arafat 125 Ganguly not out 5 Laxman b Arafat 169 Yuvraj c Iqbal b Sami 3 Karthik not out 22 Extras: (b-9, lb-7, nb-6) 22 Total: (For five wks in 90 overs) 365 To bat: Kumble, Harbhajan, Sharma, Pathan.

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-44, 3-51, 4-61, 5-361.

Bowler O M R W Akhtar 10 3 23 0

Sami 23 4 103 2 Arafat 22 2 98 3 Kaneria 23 5 75 0 Younis 2 0 14 0 Butt 5 1 10 0 Hameed 5 0 26 0

PAKISTAN: Salman Butt, Yasir Hameed, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Faisal Iqbal, Misbahul Haq, Kamran Akmal, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Yasir Arafat, Danish Kaneria.

Toss: India

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (RSA) and Simon Taufel (AUS)

TV umpire: GA Pratapkumar (IND)

Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)

Malaysia U-19s in city

SPORTS REPORTER

Malaysia Under-19s cricket team arrived in Dhaka yesterday to play a few practice matches as part of their preparation for the upcoming World Cup which they will hosts next February.

The Southeast Asian visitors, under the guidance of former BCB high performance coach Shahidul Alam Ratan, will play two two-day games and a limited-over match against BKSP Under-19 team.

During their month long trip they will also play four one-day matches against the selection of BCB's Under-19 development squad.

7 share lead in Special Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Seven players were sharing lead in the 8th Special National Chess Tournament after the third rounds on Saturday.

Kamal Hossain, Ajgor Ali, Tofazzal Hossain, Mir Hossain, Ferdous Hasan, Nazmul and Monir Rana all had three points after the second day's competition where 62 players from several districts and Dhaka city are participating.

The event, organised by Bangladesh Braille Chess Society, is sponsored by Grameenphone.

Aminul Islam Khan, Secretary of National Sports Council, officially inaugurated the meet yesterday at the NSC conference room.

India's great gift

PTI, Melbourne

India can hope for a bright start to their tough tour of Australia with the Melbourne Cricket Ground expected to offer a surprise slow track for their first Test, which would be a worrying factor for the hosts.

"Lucky India is poised to unwrap the ultimate Christmas gift surprise - a Boxing Day Test pitch with all the trappings of a super-flat, subcontinent track," the Australian media reported.

Batsmen were seen struggling on the pitch during Australia's domestic competition -- Pura Cup clash between Victoria and New South Wales this week.

While Brad Hodge claimed that the sluggish pitch would "promote boring cricket", former Test stars Allan Border and Darren Lehmann said it would be a worrying factor for the hosts.

"What we need is to prepare wickets that suit our cricket rather than the Indians," said Border.

"If it is slow and low the Indians really come into the contest. They like that sort of surface. That is the worrying thing for me. You should try to get a bit more bounce - it doesn't have to be sideways movement - then it will suit our cricket," the former captain added.

Lehmann said it was justified to provide bounce tracks to India on their tour Down Under.

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Chelsea striker Pizarro last year quit the team, saying he would not play while Franco Navarro was coach. He was then banned by the federation but returned this year after Navarro's contract was not renewed.

Peru have taken two points from their first four World Cup qualifiers, have scored only two goals and the bans will leave them even shorter of firepower.

Peruvian football has been plagued by in-fighting among the directors for years and the country has not qualified for a World Cup since 1982.

The players are often accused of indiscipline but in turn complain of harassment by the country's tabloid newspapers and television stations.

Peru suspend

FROM PAGE 20

Glen Johnson rolled the ball to Muntari, who unleashed a fierce long-range strike that flashed past Carson into the roof of the net.

Once again James kept out Agbonlahor before the break. This time beating off his snapshot and Villa trudged off feeling it wouldn't be their day.

Muntari had already proved his ability to score from distance, so Villa had only themselves to blame when he repeated the trick after they squandered possession in the 61st minute.

Nigel Reo-Coker was tackled by the Ghanaian, who nutmegged Zat Knight and used the outside of his foot to bend a 25-yard strike past Carson.

Villa were given a glimmer of hope when Sylvain Distin gave away a 72nd minute penalty for a foul on Youn.

Barry smashed the spot-kick past James. But Villa's bid for a dramatic comeback faded when Olof Mellberg shot wide and Agbonlahor powered a header against the bar.

It's the Muntari

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Australia to meet Germany in final today

Hockey

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

World number one Australia Saturday stormed into the Champions Trophy hockey final with a 5-0 win over Germany.

Australia will now play Germany again in Sunday's final, making it a repeat of the 2002 World Cup final, which Germany won 2-1.

South Korea had been the favourites to make Sunday's final but ended their winning streak on a 2-2 draw with Britain.

After missing several early chances, Australia finally broke through with Russell Ford in the 23rd minute and never looked back.

Travis Brooks scored a solo effort in the 25th, before Edward Ockenden made sure of victory in the 40th with his fifth goal of the

tournament and added another through Liam de Young (51st) and Luke Doerner (63rd).

Australian coach Barry Dancer said it was great to be in the final but he expected a different German side on Sunday.

In other matches, Spain recorded the biggest win of the tournament here Saturday by downing hosts Malaysia 7-2 in their last group match of the Champions Trophy.

All eyes were on Spain and the world number fours did not disappoint, leading 4-0 at half time thanks to some amazing attacking and midfield play.

David Alegre started the rout with a thunderous shot inside the circle in the 20th minute. Victor Sojo followed suit three minutes later while a double strike from veteran Eduard Tubau (25th and 26th) quickly put the score at 4-0.

Malaysia came out firing in the second half when Chua Boon

Huat slammed in from close range in the 39th and Selvaraju Sandrakasi in the 42nd.

But that was all the home side could muster as Spain regained control, adding three more when Alegre bagged his brace in the 45th before Xavier Ribas (47) and Eduard Arbos (62) also scored to complete one of the most one-sided matches seen at this tournament.

Britain stunned the South Korean defence when Matt Daly scored a thunderous first timer in the opening six minutes.

The Koreans found the British defence tough to crack and had to wait until the 45th minute before Seo Jong-ho connected from close range.

Richard Mantell scored in the 60th through a penalty corner to go one ahead but Korea immediately answered with a goal in the 62nd through Lee Nam-yong.

Prior's faith in bowlers

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Matt Prior insists England have what it takes to level the series against Sri Lanka in Colombo despite the absence of fast bowler Matthew Hoggard.

Hoggard misses the second Test, which starts on Sunday, with a back injury, and Prior told BBC Sport: "Losing him would be a massive blow for any side."

"But Steve Harmison, Stuart Broad and Graeme Swann are all firing in the nets so whoever comes in can do the job."

"We know what we must do and we're sure we can turn this series on its head."

Hoggard, who has 246 wickets from 65 Tests, impressed with figures

of 4-29 in the first innings in Kandy.

But he broke down with the injury whilst bowling in the second innings of the 88-run defeat to the hosts in the first Test.

The Yorkshireman was able to bat on the last day - with a runner - but he missed Friday practice, and skipper Michael Vaughan later confirmed his absence.

And with the likes of Kevin Pietersen, James Anderson and Ryan Sidebottom also having to cope with niggles, England's preparations for the second Test could have been smoother.

However, Prior insisted: "Obviously we'd like everyone to be fully fit, but on tours like this you do get the odd niggle and injury and you can't allow it to be a distraction."

"This is the ultimate squad effort out here and everyone is backing each other up and supporting each

other.

"And the whole squad - especially those who weren't fortunate enough to play in the first Test - have certainly been putting the work in off the pitch to ensure we're ready for Colombo."

Traditionally a turning pitch, Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene sprung a surprise before the match by hinting the hosts will still play only onespinners.

And England must decide whether to imitate that move and replace Hoggard with another seamer - Harmison or Broad - or play a second spinner in Swann.

But Prior has no worries about any of them being less than match ready, saying: "They all look in exceptional rhythm in the nets."

"We know exactly what we have to do and we're all determined to ensure the fightback starts in earnest on Sunday."

Eriksson dreams big

FROM PAGE 20

Yet Tottenham have been far from invincible at White Hart Lane and lie perilously close to the relegation zone.

Juande Ramos has made a good start to his reign as Spurs boss but the feeling remains that his side are brittle at the back and often lack a real creative spark in midfield.

Ramos could take heart from the way they emerged unscathed from a hostile atmosphere against Anderlecht to book a place in the next round of the UEFA Cup.

But the Spanish coach admitted

he is more concerned with avoiding a survival scrap than competing for silverware.

"At the moment we are closer to relegation than we are to the European places. It's the reality," he said.

"So we're left with no alternative but to fight against this and get as many points as possible."

"And if we're capable of coming out of this situation we will think about something better. But at this moment this is the reality."

"It's of massive importance that my players don't think they're too

good to go down but concentrate on winning some games and then looking up the table," he said.

"Good results help players restore their confidence and from then on we will see if we're capable of doing something better."

"Let's get to mid-table first and then we will have to think about going a bit higher."

Spurs captain Robbie Keane starts a three-match ban, while Eriksson is without suspended midfielder Didi Hamann and will give late fitness tests to Elano and Emile Mpenza.

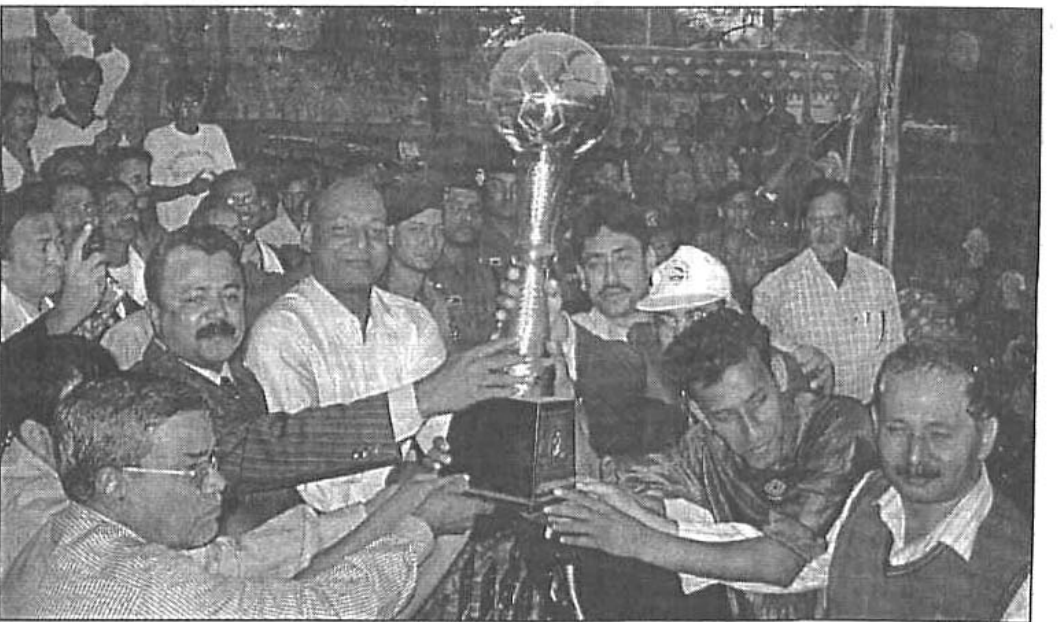


PHOTO: STAR

Players of officials of Parbotipur Young Star Club receive the Manik Sarker Gold Cup Trophy from SP of Dinajpur Mostafa Kamal at the Fhulbari College ground yesterday. Young Star won the final against Gobindapur in the tiebreaker.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Sauté
4 Starch, for short
8 Greek cheese
12 Old card game
13 Culture medium
14 Terrible guy?
15 Wapiti
16 Venitas
17 source
18 Tree with thin, hanging branches
21 Scott Joplin's style
22 Turf
23 Flight component
26 Chaps
27 Resort
30 Salon request
31 Corn spike
32 Blue hue
33 Nevertheless
34 Pink-slip

DOWN

1 Took off
2 Characterization
3 Symbol of servitude
4 Ritzy spread
5 Senescent
6 Pealed
7 Web Info program
8 Occupation
9 Satan's specialty
10 Poi base
11 From square one
12 Differently
13 West-heimer
14 auto model
15 India
16 Caspian leader
17 Year-end refrain
18 Long narrative poem
19 Exposed
20 Pinnacle

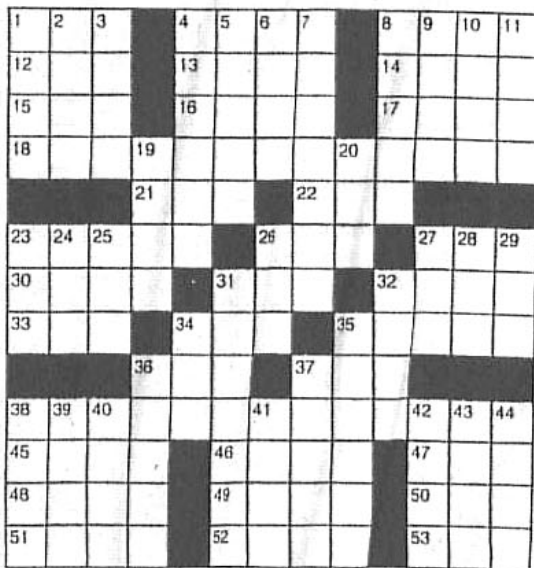
Solution time: 27 mins.

ACROSS

1 SAUTÉ 4 STARCH 8 GREEK 12 OLD CARD 13 CULTURE 14 TERRIBLE 15 WAPITI 16 VENITAS 17 SOURCE 18 TREE 21 SCOTT 22 TURF 23 FLIGHT 26 CHAPS 27 RESORT 30 SALON 31 CORN 32 BLUE 33 NEVERTHELESS 34 PINK-SLIP

DOWN

1 TOOK OFF 2 CHARACTERIZATION 3 SYMBOL OF SERVITUDE 4 RITZY 5 SENESCENT 6 PEOLED 7 WEB INFO 8 OCCUPATION 9 SATAN'S SPECIALTY 10 POI BASE 11 FROM SQUARE ONE 12 DIFFERENTLY 13 WEST-HEIMER 14 AUTO MODEL 15 INDIA 16 CASPIAN LEADER 17 YEAR-END REFRAIN 18 LONG NARRATIVE POEM 19 EXPOSED 20 PINNACLE



CRYPTOQUIP

XWP OUEXW ISEUVZOS DPX-
XUD PXPWE ZG XAE OZOD
HZGUEHPEVF. ZX'G S EPSVVF
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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE ECCENTRIC
ARTIST DOESN'T PAINT CIRCLES AND ELLIPSES.
HE CLAIMS THERE'S NO POINT TO THEM.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals T