



Valencia players celebrate with the trophy after beating Getafe 3-1 in the final to win the Copa del Rey at the Vicente Calderon Stadium in Madrid on Wednesday. PHOTO: AP

Media boycott still on cards

CRICINFO, undated

The News Media Coalition (NMC), the body that has under its wings global news and photograph agencies Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France-Presse and Getty Images, has not ruled out a boycott of the Indian Premier League (IPL), which starts on April 18.

Although the IPL's relaxation of its terms and conditions has satisfied newspapers and broadcasters, it still bars agencies from supplying photographs to cricket websites. The NMC is unhappy over the discrimination, which prevents it from serving a section of its clientele.

"The News Media Coalition calls upon the Indian Premier League to remove remaining obstacles in the way of full editorial coverage of the tournament, starting tomorrow (on April 18)," it said in a release. "As terms of journalistic access to games still prevent photographs from games being used on cricket websites, the international news agencies are each reviewing their options for coverage including not seeking to attend at all."

The Press Trust of India, India's leading news agency, had said it would cover the event "under protest," but the NMC said the present accreditation terms are still not acceptable.

"The interests of the Indian Premier League are protected by the fact that its accreditation terms limit news content generated by the news agencies to be used for editorial purposes only. It is discriminatory for the accreditation terms to prohibit international news agencies from being able to serve a specific group of users, such as cricket websites. Major international news agencies and news picture agencies including Reuters, AP, AFP and Getty have stated that they object to such discrimination and would not be able to accept the accreditation terms as long as concerns with this prohibition remain unaddressed."

Vision Bangladesh

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"There was a lack of transparency and accountability on previous occasions that led to the discontinuation of the project. For long this post was run by amateurs but now we need someone who can take this project forward," said Sultan.

According to Imtiaz, the project this time will work with BFF holding events like the B.League as well as the districts to start organising tournaments, coaching and refereeing programmes.

"It is a new departure for the project here in Bangladesh. We will make sure that teams do not play only in knockout competitions but also play on a home and away basis in the district events," hoped Imtiaz.

The initial projects of the Vision Bangladesh will focus on Narayanjan and Chandpur, the latter district being Sultan's home.

Asked why Chandpur was picked, the BFF chief said that other District Sports Associations were not willing to take the responsibility.

Mention, the grey-haired AFC Vision Asia director, informed: "The first phase of the project in these two districts would take a year to set in and we are taking it as a proper model which will be suitable for other districts to follow."

But Mony warned that if the districts do not perform up to standard they will be dropped.

The delegation promised of sustained development of football and have also pledged to bring money from AFC and FIFA if the project goes in the right direction.

Valencia win Copa del Rey

Football

AFP, Madrid

Two goals inside the first 11 minutes helped give Valencia coach Ronald Koeman a night to savour, after a miserable season in La Liga, as his men beat Getafe 3-1 in the Spanish Cup final here Wednesday.

Failure to win the Cup would almost certainly have seen Koeman depart company from the Spanish side, who have only won one of their last nine league games, perhaps even being sacked before the end of the season.

However, now that Valencia have ensured a return to European competition next year after lifting their seventh Spanish Cup, the under-fire Dutchman may yet have a future at the club and be able to mould it in his image.

Valencia struck quickly to take control of the game being played in Atletico Madrid's Vicente Calderon stadium, just a few kilometres from Getafe's home in the Spanish capital's southern suburbs.

Juan Manuel Mata put Valencia into the lead with little more than three minutes having elapsed, scoring with a bullet-like header from exactly on the penalty spot after a cross from the edge of the area by David Silva.

Getafe had only themselves to blame having left Mata unmarked and they committed the same error seven minutes later when defender Alexis Ruano raced in to head Valencia further ahead from a Silva

corner.

To add insult to injury, Alexis had moved to Valencia from Getafe last summer.

After the two early body blows, Getafe gradually regained their composure and started to assert themselves.

Cosmin Contra headed just over the bar midway through the first half and the roving Romanian international defender earned Getafe a penalty in injury time at the end of the first half which brought them back into the game.

Valencia defender Emiliano Moretti scythed down Contra with a wild sliding tackle and on-loan Real Madrid midfielder Esteban Granero clinically put away the penalty to give Getafe a big boost at a crucial time.

However, Valencia demonstrated a side of their character which has not been seen too often since Koeman took over last November and refused to be too severely shaken by the Getafe goal.

Spanish international striker David Villa had two good opportunities within the first 10 minutes after the break, the latter requiring a good reflex save from Getafe keeper Oscar Ustari.

Granero then hit the cross bar from 20 yards out just after the hour to show that Getafe hadn't thrown in the towel.

Valencia keeper Timo Hildebrand then pulled off a magnificent save to keep out Braulio Nogueira's header 10 minutes from the whistle before second-half substitute Fernando Morientes

clinched the Cup for Valencia four minutes later.

Ustari could only parry away a rasping free kick by Ruben Baraja from 25 metres out and Morientes nipped forward to head home the bouncing ball.

It was a sweet moment for Morientes who finally filled the one missing space in his trophy cabinet.

The former Spanish international striker had won every other club honour during his eight seasons with Real Madrid but his only Cup winners' medal was in England with Liverpool two seasons ago.

Getafe's miserable night was completed when midfielder Fabio Celestini was sent off in the dying seconds of regulation time, adding to the nine bookings that referee Alberto Undiano had made earlier.

It has been a cruel six days for Getafe and their coach Michael Laudrup.

Getafe are still searching for their first piece of silverware in club history after also being the beaten Cup finalists last season, when they went down 1-0 to Sevilla.

They looked to be well on their way to the UEFA Cup semifinals last Thursday only for Bayern Munich to equalise with just a minute to go to make the score 1-1 and force the game into extra-time.

The Spaniards then scored twice, despite only having 10 men, only for Luca Toni to get two goals in the last five minutes to clinch the tie for the Germans on the away goals rule.

candidate for the player of the series.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
There maybe no Shoaib Akhtar but Kolkata have big names to draw in the crowds. Brendon McCullum, Chris Gayle and Ricky Ponting form a trio as dangerous as any. Add to that the brilliance of Sourav Ganguly and Ishant Sharma and you have a squad high on entertainment value. It's a side full of crowd pullers -- a fact that would pump up Shah Rukh Khan after all the bickering over ticket sales at Eden Gardens.

David Hussey started the 2007 county season hammering 275 from 227 balls in an early game against Essex and belting seven sixes from eight balls in a one-dayer. He has more than 1100 runs in Twenty20 games and scores at a strike rate of over 140. He maybe the least known of Kolkata's overseas stars but could well be the trump card.

KINGS XI PUNJAB
A well-balanced side bowling side with two genuine quicks (Brett Lee and Sreesanth), a swing bowler (Irfan Pathan) and two spinners (Ramesh Powar and Piyush Chawla), Yuvraj Singh and the two Sri Lankans -- Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara -- form a good trio but their fortunes could depend on how the local batsmen perform.

An economical medium-pacer and handy hitter, James Hopes could be the one to watch out for. His bowling has variety and tight final overs have regularly picked up wickets and saved runs. A Twenty20 strike-rate of 118.5 (in 15 games) gives you an idea of his big-hitting prowess.

MUMBAI INDIANS

The big question around the Mumbai side is who will captain in case Sachin Tendulkar misses out because of a groin strain. Shaun Pollock, Sanath Jayasuriya and Ashwini Prasad have captained their sides before but Pollock preferred if a local player led. Either way it could only be for one or two

games as Mumbai look ahead to a big season. Expect fireworks from the top order: Ajinkya Rahane and Robin Uthappa following the two masters, Tendulkar and Jayasuriya.

Luke Ronchi has quickly confirmed his place as Australia's future wicketkeeper. An accomplished gloveman, Ronchi has also demanded attention with the type of clean hitting that made Gilchrist such a fearsome force. In 2006 he hammered the fastest hundred in Australian domestic one-day history. Mumbai picked him late but, as the only foreign wicketkeeper in the side, he will be expected to play every game.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

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Batting first after winning the toss, Chandpur posted 239 for 9 in 50 overs with Elias contributing 60 runs and Rubel scoring 39.

Suman captured three wickets for 57 runs while Rubel took two for 31.

In reply, Wari Club were all out for 206 in 47.1 overs with Rajib top scoring 72 runs and Faisal making 31.

Fazul and Jahan took two wickets each.

In the day's other match, Prime Doleshwar (253-9) managed a hard-fought one-wicket win over Dhanmondi Pragati (251-10) at the City Club ground.

DIVIII CRICKET
Gulshan Youth Club and Bangladesh Police won their respective matches of the Third Division Cricket League yesterday.

At the Dhanmondi Club ground, Police (89.3 in 10.5 overs) rattled to a seven-wicket victory over Kamrangirchar Sporting Club (88 all out in 25.3 overs) with Chanchal hitting 45 for the Police.

In the other match, Gulshan Youth (165-4 in 29.5 overs) beat Lalbagh Anwar Sporting Club (161-8 in 50 overs) by six wickets at the Uttara Friends Club ground.

Ricky wary of Indian threat

REUTERS, Mumbai

India pose a serious threat to Australia's Test cricket supremacy, Australian captain Ricky Ponting said on Wednesday.

Australia have dominated the Test championship race, finishing top of the 12-month cycle ending on March 31 for the fourth year in succession, but Ponting said the way the new cycle pans out will depend on the younger members of his team.

"India certainly have a great team together at the moment and South Africa have played excellent cricket for a number of years in both forms of the game," he told a news conference.

"So we just have to wait and see," he said after collecting the ICC Mace, the Test championship trophy, at a function in Mumbai.

India, who lost an acrimonious recent Test series 2-1 in Australia, finished second in the Test rankings after squaring a home series with South Africa at the weekend.

"Hopefully over the next 12 months the younger guys that we bring into the (Australian) national team will stand up and perform," Ponting said.

"If they can do that and the older guys like me, Matty (Matthew) Hayden and the other guys keep pulling our weight we can hopefully remain number one."

Australia have lost top players Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and Justin Langer, who all retired early last year, and wicketkeeper-batsman Adam Gilchrist, who quit after the series against India.

"There were a lot of question marks around the team at the start of the last Australian summer, losing the...great players that we lost," Ponting said.

"But I thought some of the younger guys who came into the side like Phil Jacques and Mitchell Johnson handled themselves really well at the international level."

Mumbai sweat

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With Anil Kumble set to miss their opening match on April 18, Nathan Bracken, the Australian left-arm seamer, has already been ruled out for at least four weeks and it would make the selection of the final XI a tricky process.

Bangalore's opponents for the first match of the IPL -- Kolkata Knight Riders -- have announced a 14-member squad for the opening match. The side, led by Sourav Ganguly, includes five foreign players -- Ricky Ponting, David Hussey, Brendon McCullum, Chris Gayle and Mohammad Hafeez.

The second match of the tournament features Chennai taking on Kings XI Punjab in Mohali. Yuvraj Singh, the captain of the Punjab side, has already spoken of the mini-battle that the contest is likely to throw up between him and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the captain of the Chennai franchise.

"It's a good way to build the hype (around the competition) by pitching it as Yuvraj versus Dhoni contest," Yuvraj said. "Maybe, I will share a joke with him after the game." Dhoni, however, will play in the side as a specialist batsman with Parthiv Patel set to keep wicket. "Dhoni has bruised fingers. We'll see how things shape up in the next couple of days, but with Parthiv there, we don't want to put unnecessary pressure on the Indian captain," said Kepler Wessels, the coach of the Chennai franchise.

PCA book final

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From a score of 68 for two, they suddenly got into a quagmire to lose next four wickets for only 19 runs.

Nevertheless, only Reeza Hendricks stood tall against the searing Pakistani attack. Coming to bat as number four batsman, Hendricks remained unbeaten on 55 off 107 balls. Mr Sundries (19) was the next highest scorer.

The hosts now face the hapless South Africans on Saturday, followed by another encounter between the two teams who faced each other yesterday. On April 21, GP-BCB National Cricket Academy face Pakistan at the same venue.

The final will be held on April 23 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

BRIEF SCORES

PAKISTAN CRICKET ACADEMY: 240-6 in 50 overs (Manzoor 12, Shehzad 74, Khalid 51, Asad 18, Azhar 23, Asad 28*, Anwar 10, Imdad 14*, Das Neves 2-35, Shezi 1-21, de Villiers 1-38).

SOUTH AFRICA ACADEMY: 155 all out in 44.4 overs (Joe Avontuur 4, Jappie 14, de Villiers 18, Hendricks 55*, Vilas 4, Van Schalkwyk 1, Barnes 5, Das Neves 7, Mahlomme 7, Wagner 17, Shezi 4, Yasir 3-20, Anwar 2-23, Shehzad 1-7, Imdad 1-28, Azharullah 1-18).

Result: Pakistan Cricket Academy won by 85 runs

Man-of-the-match: Ahmad Shehzad.

Kapil's English desire

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Cricket legend Kapil Dev says he wants to add a London or Birmingham team to the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL).

Dev heads the ICL, the breakaway rival of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

"I would love to have a London team playing in the ICL or Birmingham or another city team," Dev, India's World Cup-winning captain, told BBC Sport.

"If I get a chance, if I have the money, I will definitely make one team from London or Birmingham. Give me the money and sponsor and I will do it."

He added: "I would also love to see a team from South Africa, West Indies and Australia."

Dev went on to reiterate his desire to sign England paceman Steve Harmison to the ICL.

The Durham bowler was dropped by England during the recent series against New Zealand and might not get a central contract when they are handed out by the England and Wales Cricket Board in September.

"Definitely, he would be most welcome," said Dev.

The ICL is in its second season after being set up by Indian broad-

caster Zee TV in 2007.

It is not recognised by the International Cricket Council, the Board of Control for Cricket in India, or any of the other Test-playing nations.

The BCCI has set up its own Twenty20 league, the Indian Premier League, which kicks off in Bangalore on Friday.

Dev, who was named India's cricketer of the century by Wisden in 2002, said he could not understand the hostility to the ICL.

The ECB had originally announced it would ban from county cricket for a season any players who competed in the ICL, but has since abandoned such a decision.

Dev stated: "We always say anybody picked for ICL must first represent their country and come to play for us when they are free."

"We don't want to spoil any country's cricket. The aim of ICL is to give exposure to the young boys and people who have played enough cricket, like Brian Lara or Inzamam-ul-Haq."

"If they share their time with the young upcoming guys, they can teach these young cricketers."

"That's what our aim is and if we give the spectators thrilling cricket, everyone benefits from that."

Dev says the aims of the ICL are analogous to those of county benefit matches.

Violent play, dissent to be punished

REUTERS, Regensburg



Thursday.

The 12 referees who will officiate at the June tournament in Austria and Switzerland were handed a six-point list of instructions at the end of a four-day workshop at their Euro 2008 base near Zurich.

The instructions, compiled by European soccer's governing body UEFA, order referees to "act firmly (red card) against challenges involving excessive force...including the illegal use of arms and elbows."

UEFA said that players would also be expected to respect officials' decisions.

"Referees can accept a spontaneous expression of frustration from players," the instructions state, "but will firmly sanction players who show dissent to the referees by word or action."

The referees have also been instructed to control holding or pushing in the penalty area prior to corners and free kicks and to punish

"simulation intended to deceive the referee" with yellow cards.

As is already the case in the Champions League, UEFA's disciplinary body will be able to use video evidence to punish players who fool the referee by diving or pretending to have been fouled.

The referees have also been told to deal firmly with mass confrontations with the instructions stating that "any players involved... have to realise that the main protester(s), including any who run over to join in, will get a yellow card."

At a news conference accompanying the workshop, UEFA referees' committee member Hugh Dallas warned that "we can guarantee a minimum of one player from each team will be cautioned following such an incident."

The list ends with a note to team coaches, advising them that they will be "left to do their jobs" in the technical area immediately in front of the team bench provided they act responsibly.

"If a coach openly criticises the referee, action will be taken to curb his behaviour," the instructions add.

The directives do not include any radical changes to existing practice in European competition but instead highlight the areas in which referees will be asked to place particular emphasis during Euro 2008.

Arrest mars torch relay

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Tibetan refugees also demonstrated in the Himalayan region of Ladakh.

Seventy Indian sports figures, entertainers and others took part in the official torch run, including Bollywood actors, tennis player Leander Paes and officials from China's embassy in New Delhi.

Several Indian personalities had pulled out of the run, including Kiran Bedi, India's first woman police officer, and India's football captain Bhaichung Bhutia, a Buddhist who said he wanted to show "solidarity" with Tibetans.

Some here have also been irked by the presence of Chinese security guards employed in India to guard the flame -- many here still hold bitter memories of a 1962 border war with its giant northern neighbour.

Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan defended his decision to take part.

"I am not a great supporter of

China's politics. I am sympathetic to what is happening in Tibet," the star told reporters. "But at the same time I am here as a supporter of the Olympics."

India has been home to the Dalai Lama since he fled Tibet after a failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule in his homeland.

Jiang Xiaoyu, the vice-president of the Beijing Olympic organising committee, thanked India for its organisational skills.

"We have been deeply impressed by the beauty of Delhi and the arrangements and the Indian people's passion for the Olympic flame," he said as the relay ended.

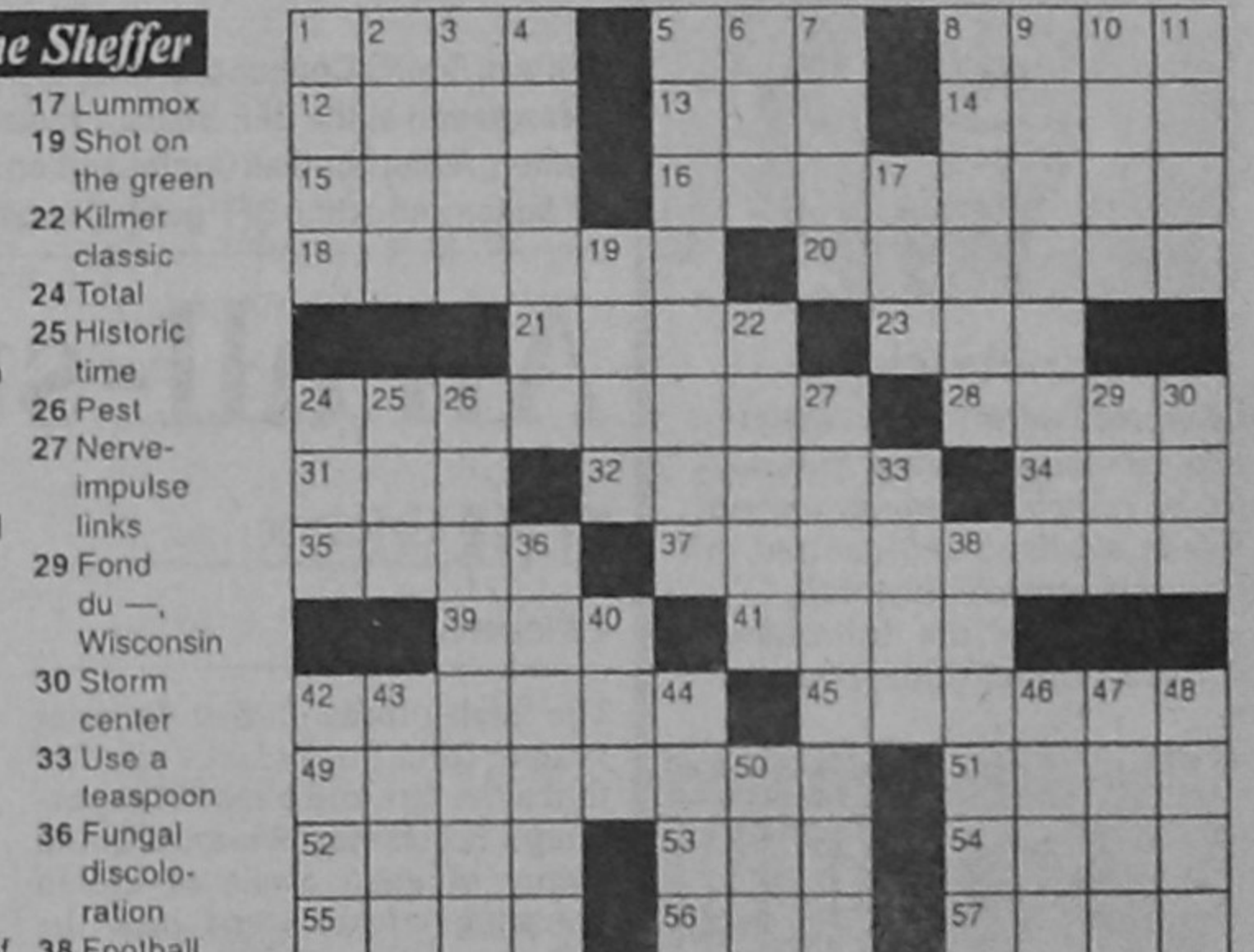
Suresh Kalmadi, head of the Indian Olympic Association, said the relay was a "great occasion."

"I thank all of you for keeping up the spirit of the Olympic torch," he said at the end of the relay in a speech.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Winged
5 Solemn
8 Black, in poetry
12 Laundry
13 Bach's last words
14 Top-notch
15 Stead
16 Mexican miss
18 Seafood entree
20 Run like a horse
21 Cigar remnant
23 Craze
24 Pair from each state
28 Staff
31 Neighbor of Arg.
32 Deuces' toppers
34 Melthod
35 Cripple
37 Court-room punishment
39 Sermon subject

DOWN
1 Puncturing tools
2 Secular
3 On the briny
4 Ballroom dance (Var.)
5 Guest's impulse links
6 Praiseful poem
7 To...
8 Winter center
9 Uplift mately reduce (to)
10 Aware of
11 Tide type
17 Lumox
19 Shot on the green
22 Kilmer classic
24 Total
25 Historic time
26 Pest
27 Nerve-impulse
29 Fond du...
30 Storm center
33 Use a teaspoon
36 Fungal discoloration
38 Football team
40 Ultra-modernist
42 Venomous vipers
43 Fervor
44 Frizzy hairstyle
46 Basketball team
47 Always
48 McNally partner
50 Dandy



CRYPTOQUIP

ADNQ LKBLTK MZM RZCIKF

YNVKR KVLTBW PBF QDK YBU

BP VKCMZCI DZR ANFMFBUK?

QNWTFBR QNZTBR

Saturday's Cryptquip: STRUGGLING TO EKE OUT A LIVING. POETS HAVE ADOPTED A NEW WORKING MOTTO: "RHYME DOESN'T PAY."

Today's Cryptquip Clue: L equals P