

DSC to be
Pak home

CRICINFO, undated

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has signed a three-year contract worth 9 million dollars with Dubai Sports City (DSC), which will serve as the home venue for Pakistan's future cricketing commitments after touring teams raised security concerns over travelling to Pakistan.

"Under the recently-signed contract, the Pakistan team will play different events at the offshore venue for three years after the completion of Dubai Cricket Stadium next year," said Shafiqat Nagmi, the PCB's chief operating officer, while announcing the deal at a news conference.

Nagmi said the stadium is likely to be completed in February 2009 and will host a tri-series involving Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in April. For the next two years, the team will be participating in Twenty20 events. According to a senior PCB official, Pakistan will play four Twenty20 matches in that period with the board expected to rake in 3 million dollars per match for the three-year assignment.

The PCB has already suffered heavy financial losses this year with the postponement of the Champions Trophy and Australia's refusal to tour Pakistan for a Test series earlier in March-April this year.

Concerns also loomed over the lack of international cricket being played, with only a quadrangular tournament in Toronto involving hosts Canada, Bangladesh and the West Indies scheduled for October, ahead of the home series against India in January 2009.

"It is a lucrative contract which will help in overcoming the loss after postponement of Champions Trophy," said Nagmi. "Through this deal we will be generating enough funds besides having a definite programme of our team's participation in international cricket."

He signed the contract subject to the approval of the incoming chairman of the PCB, the position which remains vacant following the resignation of Nasim Ashraf.

Gomez back
in form

AFP, Berlin

After the nightmare of his Euro 2008 flop, Germany striker Mario Gomez is enjoying his return to form with seven goals in seven games for VfB Stuttgart ahead of next month's World Cup qualifiers.

The 23-year-old scored 28 goals in 32 games for his club last season only to end up being dropped from the Germany team during the Mannschaft's journey to the Euro 2008 final, but has rediscovered his form this season.

Having created a goal and scored one himself in last Sunday's 3-1 Bundesliga win over Karlsruhe, Gomez is hoping to force his way back into the Germany team for October's World Cup qualifiers against Russia and Wales.

"That goal (against Karlsruhe) was for everyone who has tried to talk me into believing I was suffering a crisis," said Gomez, who has also scored six goals for Germany in 17 appearances.

With Germany playing Russia in Dortmund on October 11 and Wales four days later in Muenchengladbach, Gomez is hoping to feature in coach Joachim Loew's plans ahead of Bayern Munich strikers Miroslav Klose and Lukas Podolski.

Having started all three group games for Germany at Euro 2008, Gomez was dropped for the quarter and semifinals, before coming off the bench with 11 minutes left of the final in Vienna as Spain went on to claim a 1-0 win.

Gomez admits he started to doubt himself as the tournament progressed, but says it was all "good life experience".

"What happened to me actually did me some good, since then things have picked up and it helps to have something negative to compare it to."

Bradman bat

FROM PAGE 17
Auctions told national news agency AAP

Bradman, who died in 2001 aged 92, is Australia's greatest sporting legend and maintains an unbeaten Test batting average of 99.94 some 60 years after his last match.

The bat sold at auction was used on Bradman's Test debut, during which he scored just 18 and 1 as Australia were thrashed by England. The English won the series 4-1.

Bradman, who was dropped after the match, donated the bat to a competition run by a Sydney newspaper to help raise funds for a children's hospital.

'It's upto

FROM PAGE 17
India captaincy. Like Anil (Kumble) did when retiring from ODIs," Shah told PTL.

There's been a big debate among cricket fans about the future of the fab-four batsmen (Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman) as well as Test captain Anil Kumble following the poor display by them in the last Test series in Sri Lanka, which India lost to the hosts.

ICC to regulate
T20: Lorgat

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Haroon Lorgat, the International Cricket Council's (ICC) chief executive, says that cricket's governing body will not sacrifice bilateral cricket for Twenty20 leagues and try to regulate the latest format to ensure that.

"All these tournaments are springing up and what we are trying to do is regulate them in a more effective way," Lorgat told the Guardian. "A private businessman might have different ambitions but we have to protect the game of cricket."

"Twenty20 is an opportunity that people have spotted they can take advantage of, but that doesn't detract from what has been agreed by all members that we will not sacrifice nation-v-nation cricket. Everyone recognises its importance. People are not disregarding it."

There has been plenty of criticism of the growing importance put on Twenty20 cricket, a lucrative proposition across the globe. Most of it has centred around the Indian Premier League's (IPL) second edition, provisionally scheduled for April-May 2009, which clashes with Sri Lanka's tour of England and its third season, which will clash with Bangladesh's tour of England.

"Out of a difficult situation can come a lot of good," Lorgat said. "If there wasn't an interest in the sport there wouldn't be so many challenges. I would rather come into a scenario where things are moving at great speed, with new forms of cricket and a new audience."

The first edition of the IPL, devised by Board of Control for Cricket in India vice-president Lalit Modi, was a huge success and the inaugural Champions League -- backed by the Indian board -- will be held in India from December 3-10, where two teams each from India, Australia and South Africa, and Middlesex and Pakistan's Twenty20 champion will compete.



Australia fast bowler Brett Lee (2nd R) jogs along with Shane Watson (L), skipper Ricky Ponting and Michael Hussey (R) ahead of a training session in Jaipur on Wednesday.

Tahir renews Hants deal

Cricket

AFP, London

Pakistani leg-spinner Imran Tahir has signed a new contract with Hampshire which will keep him with the southern English county for another two years, it was announced Wednesday.

Tahir has had a dramatic effect on Hampshire's fortunes this season since making his club debut in July, helping transform the Rose Bowl-based side from seeming certainties for relegation to having an outside shot at becoming county champions for the first time in 35 years.

Before the final round of matches, which started on Wednesday, Tahir had taken 36 wickets in six Championship fixtures at a meagre average of just over 17 apiece.

It looked as if he would miss the last match of the season, away to Nottinghamshire, the First Division leaders, when he was recalled for pre-season training by the Titans before the South African

franchise relented and allowed him to play at Trent Bridge.

"This is fantastic news for Hampshire cricket and all our members and supporters," Hampshire chairman Rod Bransgrove said.

"Immy" has made a massive contribution to Hampshire cricket since his arrival in July and he has become a real favourite both in the dressing room and with our members and spectators.

"I am extremely pleased that he has chosen to commit himself to Hampshire for the next two seasons - and I am sure that he will continue to be one of the most potent and successful spinners on the county circuit."

Tahir, 29, added: "I am very grateful to Hampshire for giving me the opportunity to continue to play for this amazing club."

News that Tahir would be staying with Hampshire came on the same day the county revealed that England Under-19 all-rounder Liam Dawson would be staying at the Rose Bowl for a further three years.

Dawson has enjoyed a fine first full county season, with the 18-year-

old left-arm spinner and middle-order batsman nominated for the Cricket Writers' Young Cricketer of the Year award, won this month by England's Ravi Bopara.

"I'm delighted to have signed a new three-year contract with Hampshire," said Dawson, who effectively counts as a homegrown product after being born and brought-up in the neighbouring county of Wiltshire, which does not have a first-class cricket team.

"The club have shown a lot of faith in me and I hope to repay with good performances."

Acting team manager Giles White added: "The long-term deal Liam has been offered reflects how highly he is regarded."

"We see him playing a big part in Hampshire cricket's future. I can't think of a more exciting young prospect in the country."

Hampshire's Tahir-inspired push for the title has come in their first season since former captain and Australia leg-spin great Shane Warne left the county after retiring from first-class cricket.

SLC clears
the ICL air

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has on Wednesday revised its stance on Indian Cricket League (ICL) cricketers playing domestic cricket after a meeting with Sports Minister Gamini Lokuge.

The board clarified that the approval, given by the interim committee, to ICL players last week to play domestic matches was limited to the "upcoming Premier League Cricket Tournament 2008 only".

"All ICL contracted cricketers will not be permitted to represent teams at district, provincial and international level," SLC said in a statement.

On September 19, in an unexpected move, the SLC allowed five cricketers and an umpire, who had signed up for the unauthorised ICL in 2007, to take part in domestic cricket. Marvan Atapattu, the former Sri Lanka captain, Russel Arnold, Upul Chandana, Avishka Gunawardene, Saman Jayantha and umpire Ramnare Martinez were the players who benefited from the decision.

However, at the meeting, Lokuge stressed the importance of working together with the Indian board, which has had a close relationship with the SLC for a long time. The BCCI had expressed its disappointment at the news of lifting of the ban on the ICL players.

Lokuge also requested SLC's interim committee to negotiate with the England board so that Sri Lanka's IPL players can take part in the Twenty20 league next year. The tour, as of now, clashes with the IPL and Lokuge asked the committee to work out alternative dates and proceed with the tour. He is also yet to ratify Sri Lanka's Twenty20 squad for the Canada Cup Four Nations 20/20 in Ontario from October 10 to 13.

Ash gives

FROM PAGE 17
left out of the national team.

"Even if I lose the captaincy or get dropped, I would not consider ICL because I want to play Tests and ODIs. Nothing is more important to me than representing the country."

"If I'm dropped for bad form, I know that I can bounce back even if it takes two years because I have age on my side," opined Ashraf.

He added that he only heard of the whole ICL fiasco when he was in England, where he went on a vacation (after returning from Australia) and did a couple of charity fund-raisers for Sidr victims.

He viewed that it is the ICL-bound players who were the bigger losers, as they had to give up their chance to play for Bangladesh.

"The players joining the ICL have lost more because they can't play international or first-class cricket and there will be others to fill in the gap."

"We lost fourteen out of roughly 160 first-class players. It is true that we will miss their experience to a certain extent because they had played top level cricket for a number of years but the newer guys will gain experience the same way," added Ashraf.

Asif awaits

FROM PAGE 17
badly in the last few months and once I return I will make sure that no untoward incident happens again," he said.

The IPL tribunal will study the issue and take a decision in accordance with the International Cricket Council's anti-doping code.

Asif has played 11 Tests and 31 one-day matches for Pakistan since making his debut in Australia in early 2005.

Armstrong set for Astana

Cycling

INTERNET, undated

Armstrong will announce his plans to sign with Johan Bruyneel's team later on Wednesday, Kazakh officials confirmed.

"Armstrong will announce his decision to join our team at a news conference," federation deputy president Nikolai Proskurin told AFP. "This case is a sealed one."

"I believe Armstrong will become a new sporting brand for Kazakhstan. He's a great sportsman and courageous man and he will exemplify Kazakhstan's rising talents in the best possible way."

The 37-year-old Armstrong quit professional racing after winning his record seventh successive Tour in 2005, but announced his comeback earlier this month.

Astana were banned from this year's Tour de France, along with 2007 Tour champion Alberto Contador, because of doping controversies stemming from last year's race.

Contador, who won the Tour with Armstrong's former Discovery Channel team before signing with Astana, has said that he could quit over Armstrong's inclusion in the team.

But Proskurin suggested that Armstrong would share leadership in the team with the Spaniard.

"Currently there's certain tension in the team but I hope we are capable of keeping the situation under control," Proskurin said. "Armstrong will not be the only star, he will be one of the team's leaders."

Contador, the reigning Giro D'Italia champion, became the fifth rider in history to win all three Grand Tours when he completed victory in the Vuelta a Espana on Sunday.

Astana boss Bruyneel managed Armstrong as director of the US Postal and Discovery Channel teams and is close friends with the American.

Australian officials, meanwhile, confirmed earlier reports that Armstrong would begin his comeback in Australia.

The American was due to reveal his plans at the same New York news conference where he is to announce his team intentions, but South Australia state premier Mike Rann beat him to it, announcing Armstrong would make his return at the 2009 Tour Down Under from January 18-25.

"Last year we edged out the toughest rivals, China, California and Russia, to be the first place outside Europe to host a ProTour event," Rann stated.

Bayliss wishes
Krejza well

CRICINFO, undated

Jason Krejza, Australia's uncapped off-spinner, has won an endorsement from his former mentor, the Sri Lanka coach Trevor Bayliss, ahead of the India Test series. Bayliss coached Krejza at New South Wales and he believes his propensity to turn the ball sharply could make him a dangerous weapon in India.

"He's a big spinner of the ball, and that could be an advantage," Bayliss told the Age. "If he does play, he could be a bit like Harbhajan (Singh). He could bowl some big-turning, bouncing balls that can be difficult to play."

Krejza's selection in the 15-man squad was a surprise and he is no certainty to play a Test on the tour. An attacking bowler who likes fighting the ball, Krejza moved to Tasmania during the 2006-07 season to further his prospects.

Bayliss said during their time together at New South Wales, Krejza had been working on a delivery that was not unlike Ajantha Mendis' carrom ball. Bayliss oversaw the recent Test series in Sri Lanka where his side beat India 2-1 and Mendis was named Player of the Series for his 26 wickets.

"We've now edged out another series of international rivals who were all vying to host Lance's comeback race."

He has already competed in two long-distance mountain-bike races in the United States but has not yet rejoined the professional tour.

Armstrong, a survivor of testicular cancer, said he was coming out of retirement to raise awareness about the disease that nearly took his life, but was still targeting an eighth win in the Tour de France.

The Tour Down Under, to be held in and around the South Australian capital Adelaide, rarely attracts the top riders but is the first stop on the professional circuit for 2009.

The only previous time Armstrong competed in Australia was at the Sydney 2000 Olympics, where he won a bronze medal in the time trial.

Tour Down Under race organisers and local government officials are hoping to cash in on Armstrong's fame while agreeing to help him promote cancer awareness.

Rann said the Australian federal government and local cancer research organisations had been heavily involved in the negotiations to bring Armstrong to Adelaide in a major coup for the city.

Abahani back on track

FROM PAGE 17

inch-perfect cross near the six-yard box where Emeka had no trouble to nod home for his second goal.

Emeka soon fired a chance wide from 20 yards while Toudid's hard work went down the drains when the visiting striker, having dodged Nazrul inside the penalty area, shot wide.

Abahani should have had a penalty on the stroke of half-time but referee Azad Rahman ignored a foul by Dhiman, who tripped Ujjal who went dangerously close to goal.

The Sky-blues looked clueless to the Mohammedan attacks after the break and Biplab had to work overtime to keep his side's two-goal lead.

Toudid once again fluffed a sitter eight minutes after resumption. This time, he had all the time and space to keep the ball straight but headed wide of the far post on a brilliant cross by Sharif.

Biplab then denied Anthony Doe's scorching drive from 20 yards on the hour and the resulting corner gave Raphael a chance to

reduce the arrears. But the Abahani keeper held the otherwise off-colour Guinean striker's drop-header on the line.

Two minutes later, Sujan made a risky backpass and Raphael should have done better than placing the ball onto the defensive wall of Biplab.

Ujjal, who had earlier forced a one-handed save by Mamun Khan, set a chance for Abul in the 69th minute but the midfielder's last shot of the match was too wild.

Mohammedan kept the pressure but Biplab once again left his goal to foil Raphael's solo run four minutes later.

Sujan left the ground with injury minutes later and his replacement Obaidur started as rightback as Nazrul returned to the central defence, keeping things tight in the last 15 minutes.

"The first half was really good but we had trouble in the second. The defence looked shaky, giving the opposition a lot of chances," said coach Amalash adding that he has yet to field his best side due to

injuries.

Amalash informed that injuries to Siraji, Pradeep and also to Sujan have been worrying.

"We have a long break and hope that they will recover before our next match," he added.

Chittagong Mohammedan coach Nazrul Islam blamed the fixture for their poor performance.

"It was our third game in eight days and after our last match, we did not get any time to train. During this period, we had to make two strenuous journeys. Still the boys created enough chances to take at least one point," the Mohammedan coach said.

TEAMS

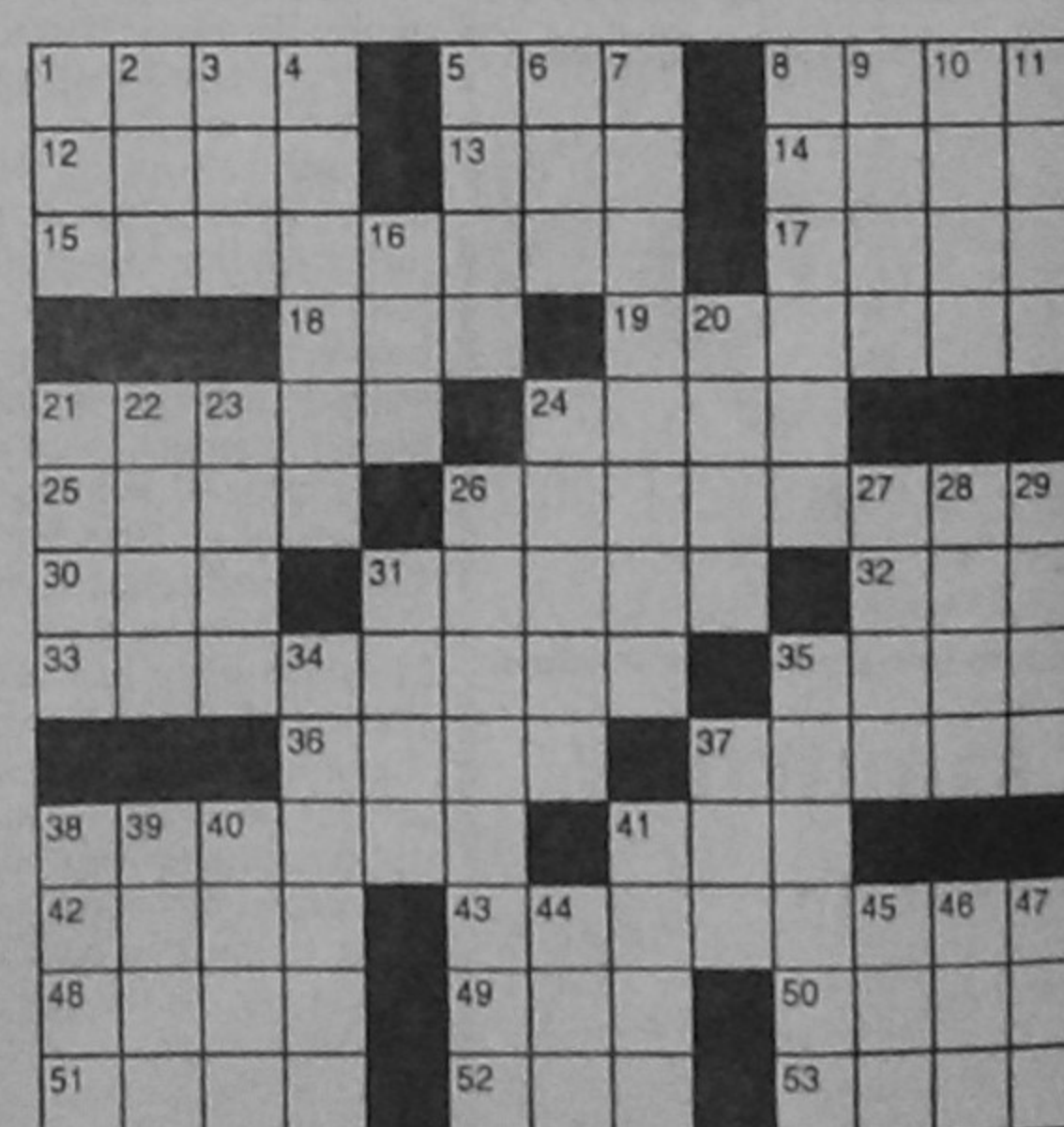
ABAHANI: Biplab, Nazrul, Sujan (Obaidur), Yussif, Waly, Abul (Zahed), Pranotosh, Emeka, Ujjal, Ibrahim and Emily.

CTG MOHAMMEDAN: Mamun, Sharif, Dhiman, Shawkat, Pradip, Lincoln (Pavel), Daulat (Shafi), Doe, Camara, Raphael and Toudid (Chowmin).

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	35 Crumbly earth	2 Eggs	20 Lascivious look
1 Runs for exercise	36 Stare stupidly	3 USO	21 Secular
5 Recede	37 Quiz answer	4 Hiding place for 45-	22 Hawkeye
8 Moolah	38 Fee	Down?	23 Colonial sewer
12 Satan's specialty	41 Help	5 Verve	24 Eskimo boat
13 Meadow	42 Hurler	6 Canto lead-in	26 Develop-
14 "— take arms against	43 Indy entries	7 Equitable	ed
15 National pastime	44 Wading bird	8 Network that suffers	27 October stone
17 Tolerate	49 Ordinal suffix	9 Neck of the woods	28 Galley supply
18 A billion years	50 Teen's woe	10 Remains	29 "South Park" kid
19 Through eternity	51 Agrees tacitly	11 — d'oeuvre	31 Banner
21 Pupa-to-be	52 Rotation duration	10 Remains	34 Exit
24 Elbow counter-part	53 — moss	11 — d'oeuvre	35 Wild and crazy
25 Lotion additive	1 Dubya's brother	16 Featherly	37 "A pox upon thee!"
26 MySpace alternative	39 Vagrant	38 Face feature	39 Vagrant
30 Picks out of a lineup	40 Eager, plus	41 Needing liniment	44 — glance
31 Aviator	41 Needing liniment	44 — glance	45 Blackjack part
32 Remuneration	45 Blackjack part	46 Genetic letters	47 Solitude
33 Court-room agenda	46 Genetic letters	47 Solitude	

Solution time: 21 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

NEEVNOGIU XIVIHOZOMQ

ZISOIZ NWMCX EIVWSOXOIZ

SIU SNZKIZ: "KOHIZ MD

XKI SOEK NQU DNGMCZ."

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN A COLLECTION OF GNATS CONGREGATE FOR A DAY OF ANGLING, WOULD YOU SAY THAT'S FLY FISHING?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals F



Age-group cricketers flocked to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday for their medical clearance before the season starts. They crowded near the Bangladesh dressing room for a glimpse of their heroes. Opener Tamim Iqbal signs a few autographs for them.

PHOTO: STAR