



Mohammedan Sporting Club's prolific Nigerian striker Bukola (L) leaves a Khulna Abahani player in his wake during their Citycell B League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Bukola struck four goals in his side's 4-0 win against the Khulna lightweights.

Police arrest 8 from Phelps party photo

AFP, Columbia

Police have made eight arrests in connection with the party that led to publication of a photograph of Beijing Olympic hero Michael Phelps...

Phelps, the American swim star who won a record eight gold medals at Beijing six months ago, was not among those charged in a probe by the Richland County Sheriff's Department...

LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 17

IUT ATHLETICS

Islamic University of Technology (IUT), a subsidiary of Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), will hold its annual athletic competition tomorrow at the university playground at Board Bazar in Gazipur.

BANANI BEAT

RIFLES 15-1

Banani Bidya Niketan made a flying start beating BMAR Rifles School by 15-1 goals in the Sunnydale 6th Mini Handball Boys tournament yesterday at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

In the opening days matches, Scholastica beat Aga Khan School 4-1, Siddiqui's defeated Play-Pen 3-1, BIS beat South Breeze School 13-3, Loreto School beat Hope Int School 8-1, Ansar & VDP High School beat Dhanmondi Tutorial 13-3, Sunnydale defeated the British School 5-3 and Shisu Palli defeated Oxford Int School 7-5.

Kalabagan

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At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Uttara emerged victorious against Jatrabari when they beat them by 61 runs. The victors batted first and put up a commanding 282-8. Uttara rose on Mona and Pappu's 68 and 63 respectively. Jatrabari started their chase brilliantly but failed to carry it on to the end due some fine bowling from Kalabagan's Ripon who picked up five wickets for just 24 runs in ten overs. Jatrabari eventually finished 221-8.

In the other match of the day at the Dhaka University Ground, Bangladesh Boys scored a huge 178-run win against Shadharon Bima.

Chasing 244 to win Bima were skittled out for just 65 runs when Alauddin ripped through the batting order taking eight wickets conceding 28 runs in 8.2 overs.



Did U Know?

The best shuttlecocks are made with the feathers from the left wing of a goose.

The 'Lara' of England

Cricket

AFP, St John's

A few years ago when Brian Lara ruled the world of batting, West Indies were accused of being a one-man show and now Kevin Pietersen has done the same for England.

Following Saturday's capitulation for their third-lowest total of 51, and subsequent defeat to West Indies by an innings and 23 runs at Kingston, suggestions and evidence have emerged that England may be falling into a similar boat.

Arguments have emerged that Kevin Pietersen has been carrying England's batting on his broad shoulders for the last few years, and the rest of the batting has simply failed to consistently turn up.

It has been observed that Pietersen is the only batsman scoring hundreds regularly. He has collected nine in his last 23 Tests, plus two scores between 90 and 100, and has averaged about 45 during this same period.

Meantime, England captain Andrew Strauss has been the most productive with four hundreds in his last 26 matches and averages close to 40 in that time. All the other main batsmen have one or two hundred, and average in the mid-30s.

To some, it appeared the rest of the England batting surrendered tamely, after Pietersen was spectacularly bowled by a well-pitched leg-cutter from Jerome Taylor for one in England's second innings of the opening Test.

Senior England coach Andy Flower hopes this was not the case.

"When you have got big characters in your side like KP and Freddie Flintoff, there might be a tendency for others to shrink a little," he said.

"It is their responsibility to rise to the challenge and their responsibility to grow, and their responsibility to take responsibility, and make sure that their performances are up to speed."

But Flower does not believe he has seen any signs of this over-dependence on Pietersen. "It is something for which we would have to look out though," he said. "I think we have got

Gazi sink Abahani

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wickets fell like ninepins with only number seven Rezaul Karim standing in the ruins with an unbeaten 21.

Abahani brought veteran Indian batsman Amol Muzumdar to strengthen the middle-order but the right-hander made a first-ball duck with national pacer Rubel Hossain having him trapped lbw.

Robiul finished with 6 for 37 runs while Enamul Haque took two wickets for 11 runs.

Abahani's poor fielding added more woes to their misery as Talha Jubair dropped both openers Imrul Kayes and Mohammad Mithun. Mashrafe finally removed Kayes with the scoreboard reading on 23 as Gazi's innings underwent a glitch when they lost three more wickets in the span of seven runs.

But Ashrafuzzol took the charge hitting eight dazzling boundaries during his unbeaten 28-ball 36 as Gazi reached their winning target losing four wickets in 22 overs, after a half an hour lunch break.

MOHAMMEDAN - PARTEX

The fate of the match was all but written on the wall in the very second over, when Sajedul Islam removed Wasiur Rahman, Mushfiqur Rahim and Tareq Ahmed in successive deliveries to strike the first hat-trick of the league as Partex were reduced to 4 for 14 after they decided to bat first.

Partex failed to recover from the initial hiccup and were bundled out for 87 runs in 26.3 overs.

Sajedul claimed five wickets for 18 runs while Tareq Aziz Khan and left-arm spinner Sohrawardi Shuvo took two wickets each.

In reply, Mohammedan

traversed on Nasiruddin Faruque's unbeaten 77-ball 45 to reach the target in 26.2 overs.

BIMAN-PEGASUS

Zahurul Islam struck an unbeaten 74 after Mahbulul's five-wicket haul as Biman earned a comfortable victory against Young Pegasus.

One-down Zahurul smashed seven fours and a six in his 103-ball knock while inform Shakib Al Hasan hit five fours during his 40-ball 41 as the last year's runner-up made 168 for 4 in reply to Pegasus's 166.

Earlier, Sri Lankan Ruvin Pieres scored 52 off 89 deliveries with the help of four boundaries and Mohammad Jubair contributed 40 off 53 balls that contained two fours and six as Pegasus recovered from 31 for three to make 166 runs.

Mahbulul captured five wickets conceding only 21 runs in 8.5 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

ABAHANI: 105 all out in 24.3 overs (Tamim 6, Rony 30, Sahagiri 15, Nasir 0, Amol 0, Nadif 1, Rezaul 21 not out, Sunny 4, Mashrafe 9, Zia 0, Talha 7, extras 12; Robiul 6-37, Rubel 1-43, Enamul 2-11, Ashrafuzul 1-8)

GAZI TANK: 106-4 in 22 overs (Kayes 14, Mithun 26, Anwar 8, Nayeem 1, Ashrafuzul 36 not out, Pravanjan 11 not out, extras 10; Mashrafe 2-36, Zia 2-22) Result: Gazi Tank won by six wickets.

PARTEX: 87 all out in 26.3 overs (Wasiur 10, Sazzadul 17, Nazmul 10, Azim 13, extras 22; Tareq 2-26, Sajedul 5-18, Shuvo 2-10, Pankaj 1-11)

MOHAMMEDAN: 89-2 in 26.2 overs (Shamsur 13, Nasiruddin 45, extras 4; Rashid 1-6, Rezaul 1-21) Result: Mohammedan won by eight wickets.

PEGASUS: 166 all out in 47.5

enough men in our squad of 16 that this would not be the case."

Flower also defended Pietersen's dismissal in the first innings of the Test. He was perched on 97 having struck beanope left-arm spin bowler Suleiman Benn for two fours and a six off successive deliveries.

But Pietersen tried to catch the headlines with another big hit and only succeeded in skying a simple catch for the 'keeper off Benn.

"He is a different sort of player," Flower said. "He is an instinctive sort of player, and I think with guys like him, you have got to take the rough with the smooth."

"You can't expect a brilliant counter-attack without it looking horrible when he gets dismissed sometimes. You have got to take a bit of both."

West Indies too, have recognised the importance of Pietersen to the balance of power for England, and their coach John Dyson feels there is some truth about England's over-dependence on Pietersen.

"Kevin is an excellent player, we know that," he said. "We've all seen what he has done over the last 12 to 18 months, and I must swear that when I saw that 'off-peg' go, I was very, very happy."

"I do think they depend on him, and I would like to see us knock him over as cheaply as possible for the rest of the series."

"He batted extremely well in the first innings, and I think he was the one that handled the conditions in the first innings with the most ease."

But questions still abound about whether he has retreated humbly to the background since his decision to step down as captain, and his commitment to the cause.

Flower disclosed that he has been handling things very well and has been getting on well with Strauss.

"They get on like two adults," he said. "They get on well in the changing room. They are fine."

"I do not think there is any mistrust. Both of them have been through quite a lot in their lives, and in a lot of ways, there are very mature about putting things behind them and getting on with the job. I can only commend them for it."

Asif banned

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sport's ruling body, said Asif was unlikely to represent Pakistan until his IPL ban had expired.

"The ICC confirms its expectation that all member boards will adopt the ban and as such the player will not be available for official cricket until the ban has been completed," an ICC statement said.

Asif said he had been expecting the decision.

"I had to suffer eight to nine months, so I wanted it to be decided one way or the other, but I am considering to appeal against this," he told AFP by telephone from Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore.

"I am consulting my lawyer to appeal and explore whether the ban can be reduced to three months," said Asif, 26.

"I didn't take any banned substances intentionally. I don't want to carry the stigma of having been found guilty of taking banned substances," he said.

PCB chairman Ijaz Butt said: "We feel it's a fair decision. He [Asif] is an asset for Pakistan cricket and will soon be playing for the country."

Asif has taken 51 wickets in 11 Tests, 36 wickets in 31 one-dayers and 12 wickets in nine Twenty20 internationals since his debut in 2005.

Slow over-rate earns SL fines

AFP, Dubai

Sri Lanka were fined for slow over-rate, two overs short of their target, during their three-wicket loss to India in the one-off Twenty20 International in Colombo on Tuesday.

Captain Tillakaratne Dilshan was fined 20 per cent of his match fee while the other players were fined half that.

The match was Dilshan's second Twenty20 international in charge of Sri Lanka having also captained the side against Pakistan at King City in Ontario, Canada in October 2008.

Australia call up Moises for T20

CRICINFO, Sydney

Moises Henriques, the New South Wales all-rounder, has won a surprise call-up into Australia's Twenty20 squad for the match against New Zealand in Sydney on Sunday. David Warner has also been recalled to a side that will be led by Michael Clarke with Ricky Ponting to take a rest after he talked the selectors out of an extended break during the Chappell-Hadlee Series.

Wicketkeeper Brad Haddin has been rewarded after less than a year as a full-time member of the team and has been handed the vice-captaincy in the absence of Michael Hussey, who will also be rested. It adds a remarkable run for Hussey, who has not missed an international match in any format since September 2006.

"Given the high workload of Ricky Ponting and Mike Hussey since the Indian Test series in October we have decided, in consultation with these players, it is appropriate they miss this game," Andrew Hilditch, the chairman of selectors, said. "With a hectic and competitive South African campaign departing the day after this match, we felt this option was best in the interest of the players' workload management."

SQUAD

Michael Clarke (captain), David Warner, Brad Haddin, Callum Ferguson, Adam Voges, Moises Henriques, James Hopes, Mitchell Johnson, Peter Siddle, Nathan Bracken, Ben Hilfenhaus.

Another Bukola

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whipped a well-judged cross from the left to Bukola, who rose maximum to head the cross home, completing his hat-trick to join Alfaz on 15 goals each.

Bukola extended the margin by scoring his fourth goal three minutes from time.

It was the league's eighth hat-trick after Alfaz, Arambagh's Nicodemus Ananda, Abahani's Zahid Hasan Emily, Rahmatganj's Idris Kasiry, Farahganj's Anamul Haq and Chittagong Mohammedan's Mithun Chowdhury.

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Himel, Saikat, Munna, Dami, Sharif, Arman, Maruf (Faisal), Hazem (Pappu), Bukola, Komol and Ripon.

KHULNA ABAHANI: Saifullah, Nahid, Kochi, Shahinoor, Ranjit, Ashikul, Kamruzzaman, Tarikul, Monjurul, Hakim and Milton (Hadiuzzaman).

Referee: Abdul Hannan Miran.

Breathtaking

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his marker with a neat back-flick and driving a low shot into the far corner.

Debutant midfielder Felipe Melo was driving Brazil forward impressively and the Italians were being made to look distinctly second-rate.

There was no sign of Brazil easing off, with Elano sending a stinging drive inches over on the stroke of half-time.

The capacity crowd of 60,077 were lapping up every feint and flick from Brazil's showmen, but Italy emerged after half-time determined to salvage some pride.

Luca Toni beat Cesar with a bundled effort midway through the second half, only to see his strike disallowed because he had handled while trying to control Pirlo's pass.

Both teams were fiercely competitive until the end. It was Italy who finished on top though and it took a brilliant reflex stop from Cesar to deny Toni a late consolation goal.

Gilberto, who left Arsenal in the summer for Greek club Panathinaikos, told Sky Sports he was happy to be back at his former club's ground. "It was very special to be here after six years with Arsenal," Gilberto said.

"This is the first time I have come back to England since and to see so many people here at the Emirates made me happy to be back. I think this stadium is now the Brazilians home in Europe."

Flintoff eyes series win

Cricket

AFP, St John's

Andrew Flintoff believes England have the character to rebound in the second Test against West Indies at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground, starting on Friday.

The England all-rounder also believes England can not only draw level in the four-Test series which West Indies lead following a sensational innings and 23-run victory in the opening Test at Kingston, but that the visitors can also take the series.

"The spirit's been good, but maybe we need to draw on each other a little bit more," Flintoff told reporters.

"Help your mates out, help each other to try and make the side successful."

"We have all the ingredients of a successful side and we have to put them all together."

"That's going to be the test for people, when you go through something like that you still have to back yourself and that's going to be the big test of character."

Flintoff hit the top score of 24, as England, trailing by 74 runs from the first innings, were dismissed for 51 in their second innings at Sabina Park.

It was their third lowest total in Tests following a spectacular new-ball spell from Jerome Taylor in which he claimed five wickets for 11 runs from nine overs that earned him the Man-of-the-Match award.

"You can talk about technique and work in the nets, but it is all about how people respond to what's happened," Flintoff said. "It's very important we come back strong on Friday."

"Sides who perform well and perform well for a time are the ones who people say have a good relationship between them and this is a true test of us now, a real challenge."

The reasons for England's capitulation have varied between inability to handle pressure to distractions caused by the Indian Premier League auction to the rift which led to the sacking of former coach Peter Moores and the resignation of Kevin Pietersen from the post of captain.

But Flintoff acknowledged the side had "an honest chat" on Monday night, their first official team meeting following the debacle, and he believes they will come out stronger for it.

"After the game, we were very flat, and probably a bit numb, but as bad as it was in Jamaica, we can still win the series, we have to believe that," he said.

"I can say this and that but on the cricket field we have to start scoring our runs and taking our wickets - I am confident we can do that."

PCB to abide by HC

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket authorities Wednesday said they would respect a court decision suspending a ban on players who featured in the unofficial Indian Cricket League (ICL), paving the way for their return to domestic matches.

The move came a week after the Sindh High Court suspended the ban saying it was unjust.

Nineteen Pakistani players featured in the ICL, bankrolled by India's largest media group, Zee Television, but not recognised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India or the International Cricket Council (ICC).

In 2007, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) barred the players, who included former Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq and star batsman Mohammad Yousuf, from playing at all levels in the country.

"All the eleven players who contested the ban are now allowed to play in the domestic matches. The procedure adopted to ban the players was wrong," PCB legal adviser Shan Gul told reporters outside the court after a further hearing was adjourned.

"We bow before the court's decision and there is no bar on these eleven players from playing in domestic matches. If other ICL players contest the case they will also be allowed to play."

Mohammad Yousuf is among the 11 players who can now return to domestic cricket after lining up for the Lahore Badshahs in the ICL. The side was a major attraction, winning the

Twenty20 league last year.

Gul said the PCB will fight the court's ruling in Yousuf's case because "he took ten million rupees (125,000 dollars) from the Board for not playing in the ICL, and shamelessly went there to play."

"However, Yousuf is still allowed to play first class cricket," said Gul.

Gul moved to dispel the impression that it was the PCB that imposed the ban on ICL players.

"ICC is the governing body and their rulings are binding on all member boards. ICC Executive Board gave the rulings on the ICL-related matters and according to that, the boards banned the players," said Gul.

PCB chairman Ijaz Butt told a press conference in Lahore that ICL players would not play international cricket.

"As per the court ruling we have allowed the players to feature in domestic cricket, but as far as international cricket is allowed, it's up to the ICC to take a decision," said Butt.

An ICC spokesman told AFP that the ICC had nothing to do with domestic bans on ICL players. "Banning a player from playing in domestic cricket because he participated in the ICL is not a matter for the ICC. Instead, only a member board can take such action," said the spokesman.

"The ICC executive board, therefore, resolved in 2008 that member boards should take such action against ICL players as they considered appropriate, in light of and in accordance with the requirements of their own local laws."

In a meeting earlier this month, the ICC put off a decision on the ICL's request for recognition.

SA drop Prince

Cricket

CRICINFO, Johannesburg

Ashwell Prince has been left out of the first two Tests against Australia at home, as South Africa picked the 11 who played the three Tests in Australia recently, as well as left-arm swing bowler Lonwabo Tsotsobe. Tsotsobe is the 12th player in the squad for the Johannesburg and Durban Tests, while Prince, Robin Peterson and Monde Zondeki have been dropped.

Selection convener Mike Procter said it was a "difficult decision" to leave out Prince. "We are in the fortunate position of having seven world-class batsmen competing for six positions. It is a very healthy position for South African cricket," said Procter. "Ashwell is understandably bitterly disappointed but he appreciates that he has not had the opportunity to play much cricket since his injury."

Prince averaged 75 in the successful Test series against

England last summer but missed the Test series in Australia due to a broken thumb.

"Tsotsobe performed very impressively from limited opportunities in Australia and he gives us extra bowling variety and depth," said Procter. "We are monitoring Mark Boucher's recovery from injury and we are confident that he will be fit to play by the time the series starts."

Mickey Arthur, South Africa's coach, said the recent tour to Australia demonstrated the depth that the team had developed in the batting and bowling departments. "This augurs well for the Test squad going forward into another tough series against Australia. There is also the No. 1 ICC Test ranking at stake which will make the upcoming series even more special for players and supporters."

SQUAD

Graeme Smith (captain), Hashim Amla, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Paul Harris, Jacques Kallis, Neil McKenzie, Morne Morkel, Makhaya Ntini, Dale Steyn, Lonwabo Tsotsobe.

Mahela quits

FROM PAGE 17

current vice-captain and Jayawardene's close friend, was likely to take over as skipper, local media speculated.

Jayawardene, in an interview with Cricinfo last year, said Sangakkara would make a good captain.

"Kumar is definitely a suitable person to lead Sri Lanka," he said in the interview.

"His knowledge of the game and his approach is brilliant. He has been a brilliant deputy too. We talk a lot about planning and strategising, so there is not much difference in our thinking, which is very important."

"If I suddenly lose the hunger to lead then ideally Kumar should take over."

Jayawardene guided Sri Lanka to the World Cup final in the West Indies in 2007, where they lost to Australia.

He captained Sri Lanka in 26 Tests, winning 15, losing seven with four draws.

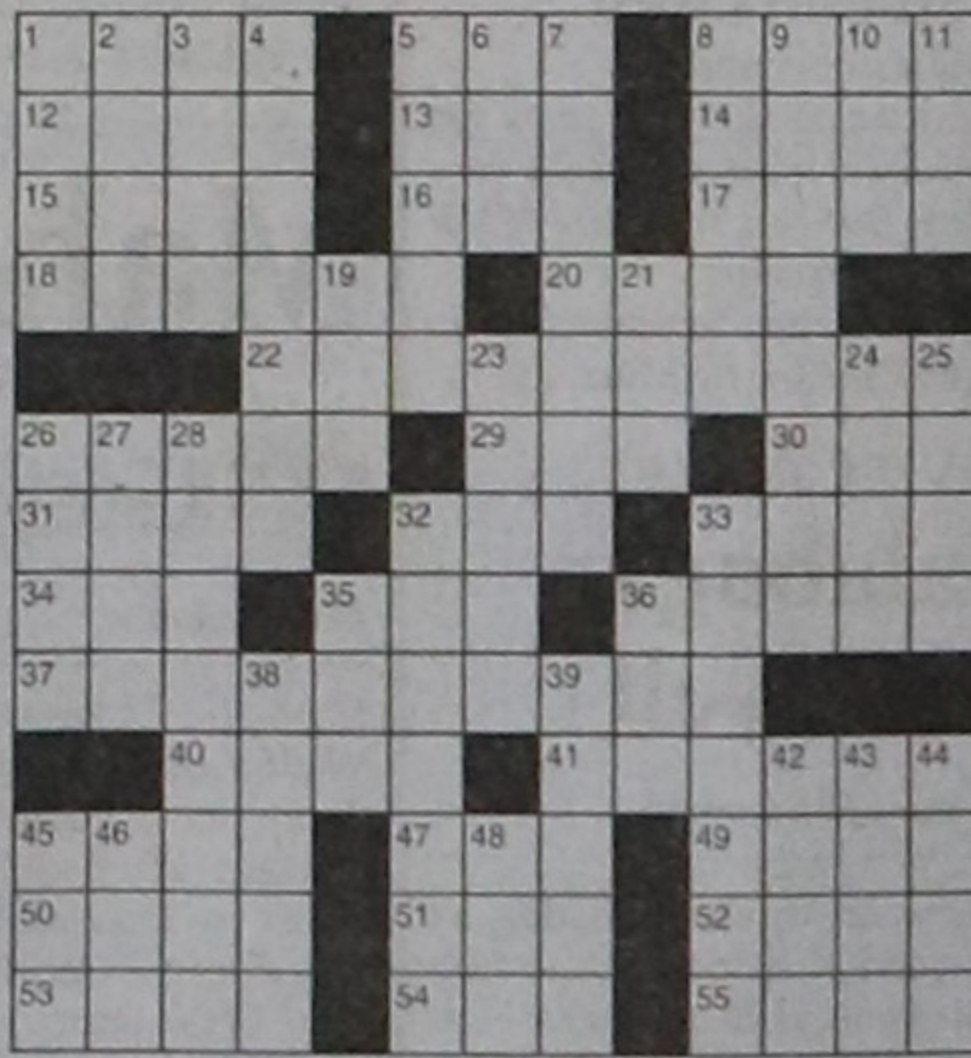
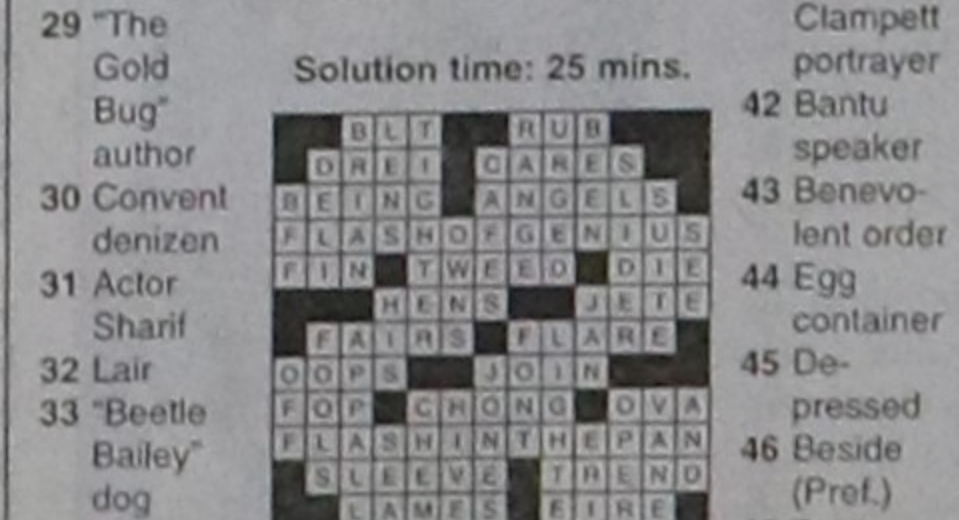
In 94 one-day internationals under him, Sri Lanka won 54 and lost 35 while the rest ended in no-results.

The first Test in Pakistan will be played in Karachi from February 21-25, while the second and final match will be played in Lahore from March 1-5.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 35 Shell game 1 Super-market 24 Just stack 25 Entanglement 26 Leave your cell area 27 June 28 Storing 29 Motown 30 Eastern-most Great Lake 31 Omega precursor 32 Ramparts 33 The 34 Clamptt portrayer 35 speaker 36 Benevolent order 37 Egg container 38 pressed 39 Beside (Pref.) 40 Paid player

Solution time: 25 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

DJX YZMK UJM KMGLMG PU ZQG YWRMG PCDPKK EMU WCC? W HMCWMLM WU SQKU HM KZSMUJWRE WR UJM DPWUMG. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A PERSON WHO'S REPLYING IS TRULY MELANCHOLY, YOU MIGHT CALL HIM A DESPONDENT RESPONDENT. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals L.