

MSM and WSG bag IPL rights

PTI, Mumbai

Multi Screen Media (MSM), formerly Sony Entertainment Television, and World Sports Group (WSG) have been signed as the official broadcast partners for the DLF Indian Premier League (IPL) in a fresh nine-year deal running through to 2017 for a whopping 8,200 crore rupees.

The new agreement, which is more than double the earlier deal signed last year for 10 years with the same two parties, gives MSM the exclusive audio visual rights (in India) to all the 59 matches of the second edition of the cash-rich IPL due to start on April 18 in South Africa, a media release said on Wednesday.

Talking about the deal, IPL chairman Lalit Modi expressed his confidence that MSM would pull out all the stops in ensuring that the best technology is utilized to deliver "excellent content that is creative, innovative and enriching for the cricket fans in India and indeed across the globe." "We are absolutely delighted with the new deal inked today with WSG and Multi Screen Media, we have what we believe to be the best deal for the DLF Indian Premier League and Indian cricket fans alike", Modi added.

Trouble in the Caribbean

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies' spring tour of England could be severely undermined after it emerged five senior Caribbean players are threatening to withdraw from the series and play in the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL).

Donald Peters, the chief executive of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), said a statement would be issued within the next two days revealing whether the players -- including the captain, Chris Gayle, and senior batsmen Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Ramnaresh Sarwan -- will make themselves available for the tour of England.

"We have players who have been selected for the IPL, and we have a policy on how to deal with this," Peters told Cricinfo. "At this point, the negotiations are still ongoing, and we will inform people of the decision at the appropriate time. We have agreed with the players' association not to make any comment until after the talks. We expect to issue a joint release either later today [Thursday] or tomorrow."

Vaughan bats for Strauss

AFP, London

Michael Vaughan believes Andrew Strauss is the right man to lead England into this year's Ashes despite the team's recent lack of success.

"I believe Strauss is the right man and a very, very good leader," Vaughan told Sky Sports.

"I hope he is going to be captain for the Ashes and well beyond that, because he creates a stability about the team."

"We just have to get that winning momentum back to the team. It will just happen, as long as they keep doing the right things."

Vaughan stepped down as England captain during last year's home series with South Africa and took time out from international cricket.

He has yet to force his way back into the England side although he hopes to make enough runs for his county Yorkshire to earn a Test recall.

Ganguly not

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of McCullum or Gayle too would have heard about such a concept," Ganguly said. "I am sure it will be new to them. At least, I have never been part of a team with four captains. We all need to first find out how it works."



Did U Know?

The 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles was the first time the three-level winner's stand was used for the medal ceremony.



McLaren drivers Heikki Kovalainen of Finland (C) and Lewis Hamilton of Great Britain (R) receive coaching tips from Australian cricket great Shane Warne (L) at a promotional event in Melbourne yesterday. Formula One teams and drivers are arriving for the first Grand Prix of the season, the Australian Grand Prix, to be held March 29.

Warner targets Steyn First SA-Aus T20 today

CRICINFO, undated

David Warner, the explosive opener, has Dale Steyn in his sights as he aims for a spot in Australia's squad for the Twenty20 World Cup in England in June. Warner and Shane Harwood, the Victoria fast bowler, have been brought into the visiting outfit for the two warm-ups for the one-day series in South Africa.

Warner, 22, said he wanted to take on Steyn and co, starting with Friday's opening Twenty20 contest in Johannesburg. "He [Steyn] is one of those guys that if he gets on top of you, he's hard to handle," Warner told AAP. "My goal is to try to take it to them."

"You don't want to be on the back foot to them because if they are going to get on top of you, you're cooked. He is definitely one of the best bowlers I've faced. He has got me out a couple of times. I think I'm his bunny."

Warner's international career is very short and he only made his first-class debut in New South Wales' final Sheffield Shield match of the Australian summer. However, he burst on to the limited-overs scene with 89 from 43 balls when

facing South Africa at the MCG and played six ODIs before being reduced to a Twenty20 role.

"That innings boosted my profile a bit and then it just came a bit of a surreal experience for myself," Warner said. "From being dropped, you learn a lot of stuff as well. From there [scoring 89] I made my mark. Sometimes it doesn't come off but that's cricket."

"I've gone back and scored a couple of hundreds in grade cricket. I've had time out in the middle, got my first first-class game. Come back here and score more runs and hopefully I can get back into the one-day team, eventually."

**SQUADS**  
**SOUTH AFRICA** (from): Johan Botha (captain), Yusuf Abdulla, Hashim Amla, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Herschelle Gibbs, Johann Louw, Albie Morkel, Justin Ontong, Wayne Parnell, Robin Peterson, Dale Steyn, Roelof van der Merwe, Vaughn van Jaarsveld.  
**AUSTRALIA** (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Clarke, Nathan Bracken, Callum Ferguson, Brett Gervase, Brad Haddin, Nathan Hauritz, James Hopes, David Hussey, Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Ben Laughlin, Marcus North, Cameron White, David Warner, Shane Harwood.

Kim announces return

AFP, Bree

Former world No.1 Kim Clijsters of Belgium on Thursday announced her return to competitive tennis almost two years after retiring from the sport at just 23 years old.

"I intend to play in the US Open and almost certainly in the tournaments at Cincinnati (early August) - my first official tournament back - and Toronto," she told a press conference in her hometown.

"I have been practicing on a regular basis with my training partner Wim Fissette and by physical coach Sam Verslegers, sometimes as much as six hours a day."

"The desire is back!" The right-hander, famous for her trademark splits defensive play, won 34 WTA tournaments and 11 doubles' crowns, including the 2005 US Open title when she defeated French player Mary Pierce 6-3, 6-1 at Flushing Meadows.

She also won the 2002 and 2003 women's season-ending tour championship titles. Clijsters lost four Grand Slam finals notably the 2003 French Open and US Open championship matches, as well as the 2004 Australian Open to compatriot and rival Justine Henin, who has also since retired.

She reached the top of the world rankings in

August 2003 and had a record of 427 wins against 104 defeats as well as having the rare distinction of holding the number one spot in both singles and doubles in 2003.

But hampered by a succession of injuries and eager to start a family with new husband Brian Lynch, an American basketball player, she abruptly announced her retirement in May 2007 at just 23 years old.

Clijsters married Lynch in 2007 and the couple celebrated the birth of their daughter Jade Elie in February 2008.

She was also engaged to Australian former number one Leyton Hewitt before suddenly pulling out of the relationship in 2004, shortly before the couple were due to be married.

The popular Belgian has been competing in a number of exhibition events in recent months and is also set to play at an exhibition tournament this summer at Wimbledon along with Andre Agassi, Steffi Graf and Tim Henman.

Since the shock retirement of Henin a year ago, the top spot in women's tennis has been up for grabs with Maria Sharapova, Ana Ivanovic, Jelena Jankovic and currently Serena Williams successively filling the spot.

At just 25, Clijsters is almost two years younger than Williams and has time on her side in possibly regaining the world No.1 position and adding to her Grand Slam collection.

What happens after Flushing Meadows in early September, however, depends on several factors, she insisted.

Flintoff boost for Eng Third ODI against West Indies today

CRICINFO, undated

England bowler James Anderson admits the return of all-rounder Andrew Flintoff has boosted the side ahead of Friday's third one-day international.

The 31-year-old has shaken off his hip injury and is ready to return when England face the West Indies in Barbados level 1-1 in the series.

"Just having him around the squad has had a big impact," said Anderson.

"Freddie has a lot to offer, he has a lot of experience and

the opposition do fear him, it's great to see him back."

Flintoff's return gives England a selection headache as to who makes way for the all-rounder for the third match of the five-game series.

Anderson and Steve Harmison both impressed in Sunday's match, while Stuart Broad excelled in Friday's opener.

Gareth Batty could be the man to suffer -- if England decide to go in without a spinner.

The series is currently level at 1-1 after England won the first match by one run on the Duckworth-Lewis method in farcical circumstances when

home coach John Dyson misread the situation and called his side in prematurely.

The West Indies, inspired by a masterful Shivnarine Chanderpaul century, then won the second match by 21 runs.

Anderson himself is pleased with his form and is hoping England can go some way to winning the series with victory on Friday.

Anderson, who took three wickets in Sunday's defeat, said: "I'm happy with my cricket, and my bowling and also the direction I'm going in."

"I just want to continue improving and working on my game and put myself in pole position for the Ashes series."

Battle of 1cr today

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footballer, whose side lost the Federation Cup final to Mohammedan in tiebreakers, gave up a 2-1 lead to draw the first leg of the B. League but came from behind to defeat their perennial foes 2-1 in the return leg.

Maruf confirmed that Bukola will play and he felt no effect of their 1-0 loss to Chittagong Mohammedan in the second-leg semifinal that Mohammedan eventually won 3-2 on penalties. The Dhaka outfit had won the first leg 1-0.

"We haven't justified our

status as a big team in the Super Cup. But we have improved and the players are motivated to go all out in the final.

"Abahani will miss two big names but they have options and I am not thinking about that. My concern is my own team. My attackers are not fully fit and that could be a problem," said Maruf admitting that recent criticisms on his style have affected his boys.

"I am a human being and when someone says negative things, you have to react. My

players looked agitated but they have the confidence in me. I will tell the fans to expect the level best from two top Bangladeshi teams tomorrow, but not what they watch in international matches on TV."

In spite of all the positive talks, one could hardly expect the two teams to repeat the magnificent matches like the B. League due to too much pressure -- pressure of high expectations, pressure of big crowd and finally the pressure of losing the expensive winners' prize.

DIV I CRICKET Rupali, Uttara win

SPORTS REPORTER

Rupali Bank and Uttara SC won their respective matches in the relegation phase of the First Division Cricket League yesterday.

Rupali Bank defeated Badda AS by 25 runs at the Dhaka University Ground. Winning the toss the bankers opted to bat first and posted a competitive total of 216-8 in 50 overs. Rezwan and Monirul contributed healthily with 61 and 54 respectively. Badda's innings was then folded for 191 in 48.5 overs, despite a resilient 54 by Imran. Monjur picked up a four-wicket haul conceding 29 runs to brighten Rupali's hope to survive in the First Division.

In another match, Uttara beat Sadharon Bima by two wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Bima struggled to cope up with their opponents disciplined bowling and mustered 193 runs for the loss of nine wickets in 50 overs, after choosing to bat first. Khalid picked up four wickets for Uttara but proved a little expensive giving away 50 runs in ten overs. However, Uttara nearly choked in their chase but an unbeaten 53 by Shaiful saw them victorious with six balls and two wickets to spare.

Independence Day Sports

SPORTS REPORTER

Jahangirnagar University held an Independence and National Day Chancellor Cup Football Competition at the university premises in Savar, to mark March 26 yesterday.

A.F.M. Kamaluddin Hall beat Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall 1-0 in the final to become the champions.

**BASKETBALL**  
Bangladesh Basketball Federation organized an "Independence Day Basketball Tournament" at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium.

Dhukmetu Club beat Bakshibazar 80-51 in the opening match.

In another match, Bangladesh Navy defeated Rangers Club 100-60.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

**FROM PAGE 17**  
Saiful, Jamal beat Protab, Liza beat Raju, Samiun beat Shahin and Ullash beat Shibu.

The third round games will start today from 3:30pm at the same venue.

DIV-III FOOTBALL

Power and Works Development became champions of the Citycell 3rd Division Football League beating Swadhinota KS 5-4 in the tie-breakers at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Rana, Pulok, Rajib, Tushar and Ghalib scored for the winning team and Shumon, Masud, Masud Rana and Sharif netted for the runner up.

Both teams are now through to the second division for next season.

Yousuf

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and is looking at restarting their international programme only in October. The ICL took this step in February due to the deepening economic recession and the Pakistan government's refusal to let any player from that country play in India following the Mumbai terror attacks.

The players fear that the current freeze in political ties between India and Pakistan would prevent them from playing in India in the near future.

The report also claimed that if the Pakistan players part ways with the ICL, they could be immediately included in the national team for the one-day series against Australia -- the squad is expected to be named early in April.

Yousuf, in particular, has had a troubled relationship with the ICL after initially signing a three-year contract with the league and then trying to pull out in favour of the IPL. However, he was not picked up by any IPL team and returned to the ICL on a fresh contract after both sides agreed to call off a legal case that "had been lodged on the issue. "It's a personal call that he has to take now," an ICL official said.

Players associated with the ICL have been barred from all official cricket in most countries, especially in India where the BCCI has adopted a hard-line stance against the private venture, and the league's request for recognition is still pending with the ICC.

SA paceman Nel quits

Strikes three-year deal with Surrey

CRICINFO, London

South Africa fast bowler Andre Nel joined English county Surrey on a three-year contract after announcing his retirement from international cricket on Wednesday.

The 31-year-old's stint will begin when the new English season gets underway next month.

"I am delighted to be joining Surrey as I enter a new phase of my career," Nel, who knows English cricket well, said in a statement issued by the county.

"I have had a number of fantastic experiences here in the UK with South Africa, Northamptonshire and Essex and cannot wait to return to join up with Surrey."

"Surrey are a huge club, entering an exciting new era with Chris Adams at the helm, and I am looking forward to using my experience to work with some of the younger bowlers on the staff and ensure they get back to the top of the English game."

"I cannot wait to arrive in April and pull on the Surrey shirt for the first game of the season." Surrey cricket manager

Chris Adams said: "The addition of Andre Nel to the Surrey dressing room underlines the ambition I have for the club. He has proven pace, power and wicket taking ability and will be a fantastic addition to our pace team."

Thanks to his nationality, Nel has joined Surrey under the controversial Kolpak

half of the English season. Nel joins a Surrey pace attack which also includes West Indies' left-armers Pedro Collins and ex-England quick Alex Tudor.

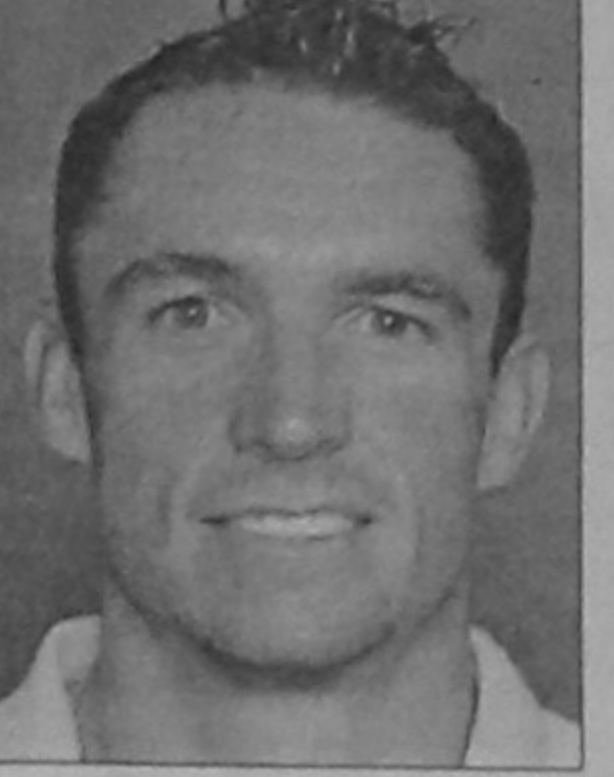
He played the last of his 36 Tests against England at the Oval in August and finished his five-day career with 123 wickets at an average of 31.86.

Nel took five wickets in a Test innings on three occasions, with a best return of six for 32 when the West Indies were bowled out for just 166 in Barbados in April 2005. Nel also appeared in 79 one-day internationals.

Renowned for his verbal spats with opposition batsmen, Nel has often seemed to enjoy the role of 'pantomime villain' rather than bearing any sense of genuine grievance.

A much calmer figure beyond the boundary, Nel was dubbed 'Gunter' by former South Africa fast bowler Allan Donald to describe how his personality changed when he was playing cricket.

Last season Surrey, whose three most recent County Championship titles came in 1999, 2000 and 2002, were relegated to the second division of English cricket's first-class competition without winning a game.



ANDRE NEL

ruling which allows the citizens of countries who've trade agreements with the European Union to effectively be classed as 'home' players.

That means Surrey can employ New Zealand all-rounder Grant Elliott as an overseas player for the first

Super Cup bits

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semifinal while national striker Emily's three goals have inspired Abahani two crucial come-from-behind wins.

Aminal saved three penalties against Chittagong Mohammedan in the tie-breakers to take his team into the final. Aminal is also in a battle to win the Tk one lakh best goalkeeper's award against his national team deputy Biplab Bhattachariya, who was in poor form in the first leg semifinal but returned to best in the next match, flogging a Brothers penalty in the first half of the second leg after starting the match as stand-in captain.

**WHAT THEY SAID**  
Abahani captain Nazrul Islam did not play in the second leg semifinal but is certain to start today. "We are expecting the biggest crowd in 6-7 years. It would be a pressure on our nerves but also inspiring for football," said the recent national discard central defender.

"There will be little opportunities and we have to use it to win. We also want to finish the match in regulation time."

Sky Blues manager Satyajit Das Rupa believes his side are ready to give their best. "The

honour matters most, the money is additional. We will play to win this tournament to end an excellent season on a high," said the former national midfielder adding that the club will offer a big bonus for the team if they win.

"We have played well in all but one match but the final is another game. It depends on how the players react to the situation during the match. If it goes into penalties, things could be different because we haven't lost to Mohammedan in the last 5-6 years other than tiebreakers."

Mohammedan manager Amirul Islam Babu wants to use the money for the future of the team.

"If we win this trophy, we will use the prize money to hold on to the players for the next season," said Babu.

Arman Aziz was upbeat about the final and reminded that Mohammedan will play their best football. "We will correct our mistakes and play to win the trophy. The management has been with us round the clock for the past three days to motivate us," said the Black And Whites captain, who missed the first leg semifinal through suspension.

Flower backed

AFP, Bridgetown

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff on Wednesday threw his support behind caretaker coach Andy Flower who has overseen just one victory on the Caribbean tour.

England's lone win came in bizarre circumstances when the West Indies miscalculated the Duckworth-Lewis rule in the first one-day international, but Flintoff believes the former Zimbabwe batsman shouldn't be singled out for blame for the team's poor form.

"He's doing a good job. It has been tough, I am sure, for him. When you have had the winter that we have as a side I think everyone has felt it," Flintoff told Sky Sports.

"When you are not winning games there is a certain amount of pressure which is put on us as a team and probably as a coaching staff as well, but Andy is a solid bloke and he wants the best for the team. I think every day he gives his best he can try and improve the side each time."

Taylor-Ryder record

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There were nervous moments on 99 when he edged one delivery that fell just in front of Rahul Dravid at slip, there was a close call on a Harbhajan Singh lbw appeal, and Ryder was nearly run out when pulling out of a possible quick single.

"You'd have thought it was my first hundred the way I was jumping around," Taylor said.

But Taylor brought up his milestone from the next ball after the run mix-up, driving Zaheer wide of gully to the boundary in the final over before tea.

While "fairly happy with his day's work," Taylor was disappointed to have been dismissed with a reckless shot.

Sehwag said he had not raised his hopes too high when New Zealand's openers crumbled.

"We knew it was a good track and someone will get 100

here," he added. "It's a good track to bat on and nothing for the bowlers."

Ryder, who scored his maiden Test century against India last week, notched his 100 by driving Zaheer to the cover-point boundary. In more than five hours at the crease he hit 220 balls, hitting 17 boundaries and one six.

New Zealand had made two changes from the first Test, with How in for the injured Daniel Flynn and off-spinner Jeetan Patel replacing out-of-form fast bowler Kyle Mills.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni pulled out of the Indian side before the toss with a back strain, bringing Karthik in as wicketkeeper with Sehwag taking over as captain.

**SCOREBOARD**  
Scoreboard at close of play on the first day of the second Test between New Zealand and India at McLean Park in

Napier on Thursday:  
**NEW ZEALAND:** First innings  
Guptill c Sehwag b Zaheer 8  
McIntosh c Karthik b Sharma 12  
How b Zaheer 1  
Taylor c Yuwraj b Harbhajan 151  
Ryder not out 137  
Franklin not out 26  
Extras: (b-6, lb-3, nb-7) 16  
Total: (For 4 wks in 90 overs) 351  
Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-22, 3-23, 4-294

To bat: McCullum, Vettori, Patel, O'Brien, Martin  
**Bowler** O M R W  
Zaheer 23 4 94 2  
Sharma 17 4 61 1  
Patel 18 2 78 0  
Harbhajan 26 6 61 1  
Sehwag 5 0 34 0  
Yuwraj 1 0 14 0

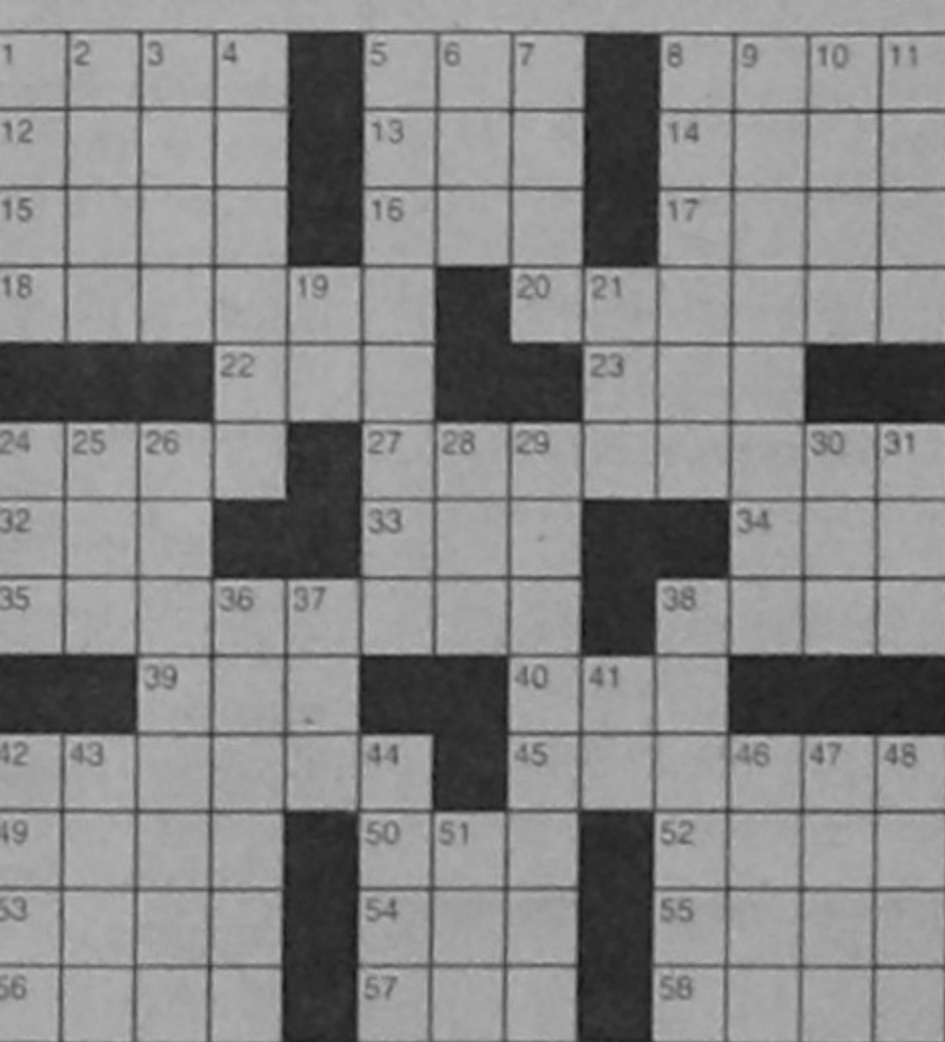
**INDIA:** Sehwag, Gambhir, Dravid, Tendulkar, Laxman, Yuwraj, Karthik, Harbhajan, Zaheer, Sharma, Patel  
**Toss:** New Zealand.  
**Umpires:** Billy Doctrove and Ian Gould.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Equitable grading  
5 Picks out of 42-  
8 Music lover's setup  
12 Be cattle call  
13 Cattle call  
14 Sulfanale  
15 Rib reline-craft  
16 Space-craft  
17 Makes up one's mind  
18 Cole-ridge's pleasure dome  
20 Quick PC program  
22 Kvelch  
23 Carle lead-in  
24 Eager, plus  
27 Pest  
32 Poorly lit  
33 Shade provider  
34 Paving material  
35 Fastened a fly

**DOWN**  
11 Linen source  
2 Verdi opera  
3 Terrible guy?  
4 Send back into custody  
5 Assaulted verbally  
6 Scooby-aid  
7 Pop  
8 To-do  
9 Surgical grafts  
10 Kismet  
11 Meet  
12 "Unmentionables"  
13 Lindbergh book  
14 Easter entree  
15 Hippobosc  
16 Tropical tree  
17 Incline  
18 Winter garment  
19 Tackles  
20 Team-mates  
21 Shell-game need

**Solution time: 25 mins.**



**CRYPTOQUIP**  
Q D M K F H B X E J H X Y S J L  
K I D N Z D H X Y S Y D T R R T N D B S J L  
C D M H C D C H S Z T E S H F D S K  
J D T I D S Y D R T E S T Q D Y H B C Y H F  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN A TROUBLING BUG IS ABOUT TO CRAWL INTO YOUR HOME, I SUPPOSE THE PEST IS YET TO COME.  
Today's Cryptquip Clue: Y equals H