

## Farhat confirms their stance

CRICINFO, undated

Lahore Badshahs opener Imran Farhat has dismissed suggestions that Pakistani players in the ICL wanted to end their contracts and play for the national side again given the unofficial league's uncertain future.

He also refuted claims that along with other players they had given it in writing to the PCB that they would terminate their ICL contracts if reconsidered for selection. "I think there is some misunderstanding," Farhat told a private TV channel. "I have given no undertaking to the board that I will cancel my ICL contract if they select me for Pakistan."

"It is also wrong to say that the ICL is being wound up and that they have already cancelled our contracts which is why some of the players now are offering to play for Pakistan again."

Farhat, 26, who has played 26 Tests and 33 ODIs for Pakistan, said the ICL had not informed him or most of the other players of any plans to cancel their contracts. However, Farhat and Mumbai Champs batsman Hasan Raza, who was also present during the talk show, said their priority was to always play for Pakistan and if they were selected they would rethink their future options.

"As it is, the ICL contract never prevented us from playing for our country even during the League if we were required for national duty," Raza said. "It is the board's decision to ban us and this only hurt Pakistan."

"We got a chance to play in the ICL at a time when, despite consistent performances, the national selectors and the board were ignoring us. Cricket is our bread and butter and the ICL took good care of us financially," Farhat said.

He also said the players were not worried about not receiving any payments from the ICL for some months. "They are good paymasters and have taken good care of us. A few months' delay is no issue. We know eventually we will have our dues cleared."

## Kallis

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unchanged team, while Australia brought in seam bowler Gieves for Ben Laughlin.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of South Africa innings in the third one-day international against Australia at Newlands in Cape Town on Thursday:

### SOUTH AFRICA

Gibbs c Hopes b Bracken 26  
Smith c Haddin b Johnson 8  
Kallis c Hopes b Gieves 70  
De Villiers c Hauritz b Johnson 80  
Duminy c MEK Hussey b Johnson 32  
Morkel b Johnson 29  
Boucher not out 28  
Van der Merwe not out 6  
Extras: (lb-4, w-2, nb-4) 10  
Total: (For 6 wickets in 50 overs) 289  
To bat: Botha, Steyn, Parnell.  
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-50, 3-164, 4-198, 5-230, 6-283.

**Bowler** O M R W  
Johnson 10 2 34 4  
Bracken 10 0 58 1  
Gieves 10 0 67 1  
Hauritz 8 0 37 0  
Hopes 8 0 64 0  
Hussey 4 0 25 0

**AUSTRALIA:** Haddin, Clarke, Ponting, D Hussey, M Hussey, Ferguson, Hopes, Johnson, Hauritz, Gieves, Bracken  
Toss: South Africa.

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

**FROM PAGE 17**  
Sangha amassed 300 runs for six wickets in stipulated 50 overs with Imtiaz scoring 88 runs. Tapash Sharma grabbed three wickets for 47 runs.

In reply, Body Line was dismissed cheaply for 107 runs in 26.5 overs with Omar Faruk making 18 runs. Ariful Islam captured five wickets for 21 runs.

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S HANDBALL**  
Six 'Ka' zone matches of the EXIM Bank 20th National Women's Handball Championship were held at the local stadium in Rangpur.

In the day's matches host Rangpur beat Gaibandha 12-2, Kurigram defeated Joypurhat 5-3, Rajshahi outplayed Natore 15-0, Rangpur thrashed Tangail 9-6, Dinajpur DSA beat Kurigram 9-7 and Nilphamari crushed Natore 15-2.

Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi M Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan opened the zonal phase of the national women's handball meet at the function.

# Safina set to take over Serena

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Russia's Dinara Safina will depose Serena Williams as world number one, despite never having won a Grand Slam title.

The 22-year-old Safina, whose brother Marat Safin was the men's top player in the world in 2000, will replace Williams who has been on top for 11 consecutive weeks and 72 in all on April 20.

"It's a great honour to reach the No. 1 ranking and it is a dream that every girl who has ever wanted to play professional tennis shares," said Safina, the runner-up to Williams at the Australian Open this year.

"It is even extra special for

me since my brother Marat was able to reach the No. 1 ranking and I am happy to share this achievement with him."

"There's no question that while I am very proud of my results over the past year, I would have liked to reach this achievement in a different manner. I hope to prove to everyone over the coming months that I merit the honour of being World No. 1."

Safina is only the second Russian woman, along with Maria Sharapova, to hold the top spot.

Her elevation was announced just after Williams suffered a shock 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 first-round defeat against world number 95 Klara Zakopalova of the Czech Republic in Marbella.

Safina becomes the 19th

world number one following Chris Evert, Evonne Goolagong-Cawley, Martina Navratilova, Tracy Austin, Serena Williams, Venus Williams, Justine Henin, Kim Clijsters, Jennifer Capriati, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Amelie Mauresmo, Monica Seles, Steffi Graf, Martina Hingis, Lindsay Davenport, Sharapova, Ana Ivanovic and Jelena Jankovic.

Over the past year, Safina has won four WTA Tour singles titles - Montreal, Los Angeles, Berlin and Tokyo and was runner-up five times, including the Australian Open and Roland Garros.

She was also a silver medalist at the Beijing Olympics. Her move up the rankings will represent the first time a brother and sister have been number one in the world.



DINARA SAFINA

## Barca blitz Bayern

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Bayern coach Juergen Klinsmann said. "It will be a short night. A defeat like that is hard to digest."

Liverpool attacked Chelsea from the outset at Anfield, but after taking the early lead, Chelsea's threat was growing.

Ivanovic soon raced in undetected between Martin Skrtel and Albert Riera and soared to meet Florent Malouda's corner for the equalizer in the 39th minute.

Chelsea nearly took the lead in the 51st but Jamie Carragher cleared a shot from Droghda off the line after the Ivory Coast striker had taken hold of Fabio Aurelio's back pass.

Ivanovic, however, replicated his first goal by beating Liverpool goalkeeper Pepe Reina after rising to meet a corner from Frank Lampard in the 62nd.

"We had three players around but we didn't stop him," Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez said. "It was a freeheader."

Droghda tapped in the final goal in the 67th when

Malouda released Michael Ballack, who squared the ball across the penalty area for the onrushing striker to tap into the net.

"We aimed to score and when you can score three, that's a luxury," Chelsea manager Guus Hiddink said.

"It's halftime. If we think we can play a relaxed game, that's not what might happen because Liverpool have shown in the past they can do unthinkable things, and we have to avoid that."

In the second leg, Chelsea will be without captain John Terry. The central defender got a yellow card for running into Reina and will have to sit out the team's next match.

Liverpool had its chances, but Ivanovic diverted Dirk Kuyt's third-minute shot as it was heading into the top corner.

Torres then gave the host team the lead after Kuyt picked up possession and backheeled to Alvaro Arbeloa, who crossed for the unmarked Spaniard to divert the ball into

the bottom of Petr Cech's net.

On Tuesday, FC Porto scored a late equalizer to hold defending champion Manchester United to a 2-2 draw at Old Trafford, and Arsenal earned in the second half to earn a 1-1 draw at Villarreal. The second legs will be played Wednesday.

The final is scheduled for May 27 in Rome.

## Bangladesh

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tournament," Anvir said. "We will try to beat Oman, a comparatively weaker tea and we will also try to play competitive hockey with the other contesting teams."

Bangladesh finished 8th in the last Asia Cup Hockey.

Anvir has also informed that after a three-day short vacation, German coaching director Rach Gerhard Peter and team coach Oliver Michael would join the camp today to take charge of the team till the tournament starts.

# 'We started a dream'

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DS: Do you think that the Super Cup was a cosmetic surgery done to give football in Dhaka a facelift because what happened here is not the real picture of the whole country?

AR: The life people see in Dhaka is not real. Outside it is completely different and more than 60 percent people are below poverty. So doing some cosmetic surgery in the capital doesn't have value. We want to reach those people through football. We will not get overnight results by building football schools or academies. We need to go to grassroots and make resources available for them. The target should be qualifying for the 2022 World Cup. It's not impossible.

If a country like Australia with 20 million people can be world class in cricket, hockey, swimming and even football, Bangladesh can do it with 150 million people because the talent is definitely there. We just need to discover them and give them opportunity. We have to put a structure so boys can be trained from early age and go on. If that happens, there is no reason why we can't go far.

DS: Any special message for football?

AR: The special message is that you don't stop after achieving some initial results. It's a temptation to sit back and say yes we have done a good job. But the job we have done so far is just the beginning. If we stop here, all the good work we've done is wasted. We have been here for a short time. Our responsibility is to lay a foundation on which our future generations can achieve better results.

And if we don't do that, we have done a great disturbance for the future generation. We've

achieved something and we need to carry on. Within our lifetime we have set a vision: Bangladesh qualifying for the 2020 WC. May be we will achieve it, may be we won't. But if we don't try, we can't get close to it. If we try and get close to it, may be the next generation will be able to do it.

We had a generation of players like Salahuddin who took the game to one level. But we didn't build on it and take it to the next level. We went backwards. Now we have to start from the beginning. Whether we stay or not doesn't matter, Citycell wants to be remembered as the company that started the revival of football.

One day Bangladesh will be somewhere else and Citycell no longer be there but we can say we started a dream. We don't remain satisfied with what we have. We need to go forward.

But England's dismal Test winter against India and West Indies, where their bowlers failed to take 20 wickets in any match, has shifted the focus onto hopefuls like Mahmood to deliver against Ricky Ponting's Australia.

"When I first went in for England, I was a little bit young, I had not really played too much cricket," said Mahmood.

"To go and play in places like Australia, against some of the best players in the world, you learn a lot about your game."

"I learnt a lot from the Ashes tour: playing against the best team in the world at that time in their own backyard was brilliant for me."

"Subsequently, being left out and realising why I had been left out - mainly my consistency, as everyone knows - has made me go back and work really hard."

## POINTS TABLE

	M	W	L	T/A	Pts
Khelaghar	16	12	4	0	24
Kalabagan	16	11	5	0	22
Bandhara	16	10	5	1	21
Bangladesh Boys	16	10	6	0	20
Eskaton	16	10	6	0	20
Jatrabari	16	9	7	0	18
Azad Sporting	16	8	8	0	16
Indira Road	16	8	8	0	16

## Roger changes his mind

AFP, Paris

Roger Federer has reversed his initial decision and will now take part in the opening claycourt tournament of the season, the Monte Carlo Masters, organisers said Thursday.

The world number two from Switzerland had originally planned to play less in claycourt competition in 2009 than in past years, and he has only signed up for Rome and Madrid as preparation for the French Open.

Organisers of the April 11-19 Monte Carlo Masters had kept Federer a wildcard in the hope he changed his mind.

"We never lost hope that he would play," admitted tournament director Zeljko Franulovic.

Federer has endured a disappointing start to the season in his own high standards, failing to win a tournament and losing more ground on arch-rival and world number one Rafael Nadal of Spain.

Federer has never won in Monte Carlo, and has lost the final of the last three tournaments to the Spaniard.

## More seeds stumble out

AFP, Houston

Austrian Jurgen Melzer and Frenchman Jeremy Chardy, who had been the highest remaining seeds at the ATP US Clay Court Championships, were each ousted in straight sets here on Wednesday.

One night after US top seed James Blake and American second seed Mardy Fish made their exits in the first round of the 500,000-dollar event, American Wayne Odesnik defeated third seed Melzer 6-4, 6-0.

Fourth seed Chardy also fell without taking a game in the second set, losing 6-1, 6-0 to Spaniard Guillermo Garcia-Lopez in another second-round match.

Also advancing to the third round was hard-serving American John Isner, who outlasted Chile's Paul Capdeville 4-6, 7-6 (7/1), 7-6 (7/5).

Not since 2000 had the top two seeds failed to get out of the first round of the French Open tune-up event.

## Sajid raring for Ashes

AFP, London

Forgotten England bowler Sajid Mahmood believes he can be an Ashes winner this summer by providing the Test cutting edge Andrew Strauss's team is desperately missing.

The 27-year-old gets an early opportunity to make his case when he plays for the MCC against county champions Durham at Lord's in the traditional county season opener on Thursday.

"My pace is there and the consistency is getting better all the time. I am a lot more streetwise and stronger both mentally and physically," said Mahmood who has been overlooked by the selectors for two years.

"The Ashes might just be around the corner but I am not too far away from it. I think everyone will see a slightly different me, someone who can hit an area consistently. I have been working pretty hard on it, and I will be pretty disappointed if I can't do it this year."

Mahmood played eight Tests and 25 one-day internationals before being dumped after the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean.

But England's dismal Test winter against India and West Indies, where their bowlers failed to take 20 wickets in any match, has shifted the focus onto hopefuls like Mahmood to deliver against Ricky Ponting's Australia.

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"To go and play in places like Australia, against some of the best players in the world, you learn a lot about your game."

"I learnt a lot from the Ashes tour: playing against the best team in the world at that time in their own backyard was brilliant for me."

"Subsequently, being left out and realising why I had been left out - mainly my consistency, as everyone knows - has made me go back and work really hard."

# Watson surprised

CRICINFO, undated



Shane Watson didn't see it coming. Stationed in Johannesburg with the Rajasthan Royals, the Australian allrounder was caught completely off-guard when Michael Brown, Cricket Australia's operations manager, phoned on Wednesday to inform him of his recall to the national squad for the one-day tour of Pakistan.

Watson had identified the IPL as the platform from which to continue his comeback from back stress fractures. From there, he hoped to steadily increase his bowling workload throughout April and May and, should all have gone to plan, to catch the attention of Australia's selectors ahead of the ICC World Twenty20 in June.

The selectors, however, have opted for a faster track. Chosen as a specialist batsman, Watson will almost certainly be restored to the top of the Australian one-day order - the position he held down throughout last year's West Indies tour - alongside the recalled Shaun Marsh in the UAE. That has resulted in a major alteration to Watson's comeback blueprint, and his immediate travel schedule.

"I wasn't counting on it at all," Watson told Cricinfo. "I only arrived in South Africa on Monday night, and was looking ahead to the couple of practice games coming up for Rajasthan in the next few days. Now it looks like I'll probably

only be here for a week or so before I fly to Dubai."

"Things have moved faster than I expected. I have spoken with the owner and the coach (of Rajasthan) and they are disappointed that I won't be available for them for a while, but very excited for me. They know that to get back into the Australian side and play international cricket is my ultimate objective. I will still be available for two weeks after returning from Dubai. Hopefully Rajasthan can make it through to the finals, so I can extend my time with them for as long as I can."

In all, Watson has opened the batting for Australia 15 times in one-day internationals, and in each of his last seven innings. He made a significant breakthrough last year with his first international century - a powerful 126 against West Indies in Grenada - and along with Marsh forged a combination Ricky Ponting, the Australian captain, had hoped would endure through to the next World Cup.

Injuries to both batsmen scuppered those plans in recent series against New Zealand and South Africa, and the makeshift combination of Michael Clarke and Brad Haddin have struggled for consistency. That opened the door for both Watson and Marsh to earn national recalls, as Australia seek to settle upon a batting line-up ahead of the World Twenty20.

But Australia's gain is the IPL's loss. Watson, the Player of the Tournament, and Marsh, the highest run-scorer, were among the IPL's brightest

lights in 2008, and figured prominently in their respective franchises' plans this year. Such is his star power after last season's performance, Marsh was chosen to travel to America last month for an IPL promotion featuring Manny Ramirez, one of Major League Baseball's biggest names. Now, he is likely to figure only in the final fortnight of the tournament.

"The hamstringing has been fine for a while now," Marsh told AAP. "I've been running and doing my rehab for two months. I thought I was fit (for Australia's tour of South Africa) but obviously the selectors thought otherwise. It's something I've had to live with. I was disappointed at the time but I kind of understood the reasons. I've had an extra three or four weeks now to get myself 110% right and I'm looking forward to the series."

Just what role, if any, Watson's bowling will play in the UAE remains unclear. His initial plan was to commence competitive bowling in May, and then only in the four-over allotments of the IPL. Watson will meet with Alex Kountouris, the Australian team physiotherapist, in South Africa in the coming days to map out new strategy, but it seems unlikely he will be used in longer spells against Pakistan.

"That structure and schedule I had in mind is obviously going to change a bit now in terms of my bowling," he said. "I certainly won't be pushing it in trying to get to ten overs. The plan was to slowly build up the bowling over May, but I'm not quite sure how that will work out now."

# Cooling period for rebels

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Following a dramatic flip-flop by the Pakistan Cricket Board over picking three ICL players in its list of probabilities for the ICC World Twenty20, a top PCB official told Cricinfo that administrators are considering a "cooling period" ranging from six to 12 months for players who wish to return to national teams from the unauthorised league.

Salim Altaf, PCB's chief operating officer, said that such a cooling period would be on the lines of the ban that was imposed on cricketers who went on rebel tours to South Africa during the Apartheid era. "Of course, the ICC's executive board (it meets in Dubai on April 17-18) will have to take a final decision," he said.

"If you play unauthorised cricket, and then you rescind the contract and want to play for your national side, there may be a recommendation that there should be a cooling period," Altaf said. "It could be six months, could be 12 months. If you remember the days when people were going to play in South Africa, there used to be an automatic ban for two years on anybody who appeared there. So there has been some discussion on having a resolution to have some kind of a cooling period like that."

On Monday, the PCB had named three ICL players - Abdul Razzaq, Imran Nazir and Naved-ul-Hasan - in its list of 30 probabilities, only to replace them the day after. Altaf said Pakistan's national selectors were unaware they needed to get a clearance from the ICC before announcing the team. "I think initially they thought that they can include these players, but subsequently, they were told that we need a prior clearance from the ICC," he said.

Asked whether these three players had cut all ties with the ICL, Altaf said that he has written to Kapil Dev, the chairman of the ICL's board, seeking clarifications on their player contracts. "So far Kapil Dev has not replied," Altaf said.

When contacted, Kapil Dev said that he is yet to discuss the matter with the ICL management. In the response of L. Manshu Mody, the league's business head, highlighted the PCB's predicament. "We have not received any letter from the PCB," Mody told Cricinfo. "I can confirm that the three ICL players who were named in the probabilities list are still on contract with us. However, we have no problems with them playing for the national side and can issue any letter that is needed for them to get back into the Pakistan team."

Altaf also admitted that the current ICC rules that govern official and unofficial cricket had some grey areas, and said that a clear picture would emerge when new, stricter laws on the matter come into force from June 1. But the problem for various national boards like the PCB, he said, was that the new rules could not be applied in a retrospective manner.

"If you have a look at the new ICC resolution No. 22 (on official and unofficial cricket), which will be applicable from June 1, that's a very tight resolution," he said. "It tightens up everything. But you cannot penalise people on that resolution retroactively. Any unauthorised cricket played before that comes under a different ruling but these are grey areas."

According to the ICC's current laws, organisers of unauthorised leagues have the option of approaching the ICC directly for recognition. But apparently, the new rules specify that only the respective home boards - the BCCI, in the case of ICL - can take a decision on any such request. It's under-

stood that the ICC will henceforth only consider applications from organisers of "unapproved forms of cricket", which fall outside the 50-overs, Twenty20 and Test formats, such as the Hong Kong Sixes tournament.

The PCB has found itself in a tight corner on the ICL issue since February when the Sindh High Court allowed players associated with the ICL to play in domestic cricket, overturning a BCCI-led initiative to bar cricketers associated with the private league from any official country in any ICC member country.

## Mash starts

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warm-up games, albeit with little success. The first two games against the same opposition on Tuesday, with Laxmi Ratan Shukla at the helm, resulted in heavy defeats - by 48 runs and four wickets respectively.

Ganguly, who sat out both those matches, replaced Aakash Chopra on Wednesday. Although it remains uncertain if the side would have a regular or rotating captain, Ganguly would no doubt have made a firm claim.

Ajit Agarkar and Charl Langeveldt also showed good form with the ball picking up two wickets apiece. However, an injury to wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha, who underwent surgery on his left thumb late on Monday, caused some concern.

"Nothing can be assumed till the stitches are removed. For now, we've just got to wait and watch," said Joy Bhattacharya, KKR's team director.

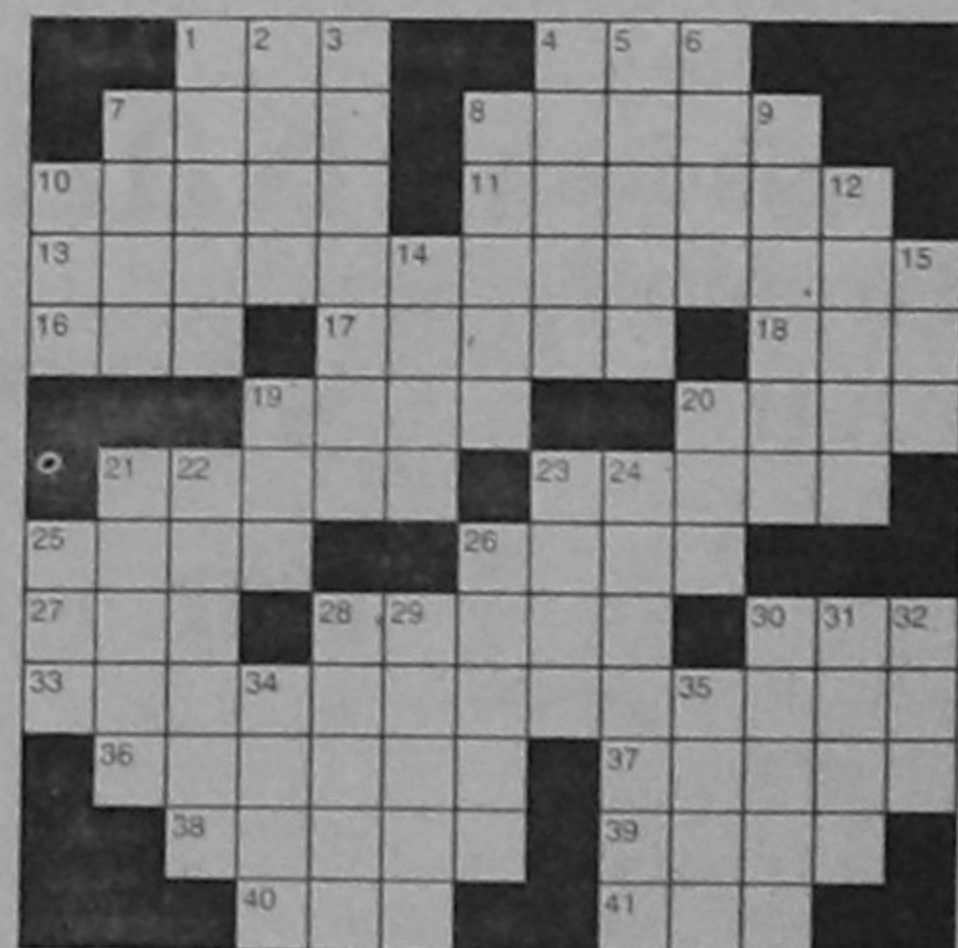
The next warm-up game is on Saturday, when the Knights will be playing amongst themselves. The one after that is on Tuesday, once again against Free State.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS** 27 Blackbird  
1 Ventilate  
4 Be  
a perpen-  
couch dicular  
potato  
7 Peru's  
capital  
8 Partook  
at a  
banquet  
10 Man  
of  
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11 Invest  
officially  
13 Not  
mincing  
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16 — out  
living  
17 Find  
18 Water  
barrier  
19 Cohort  
20 Actress  
21 Diarist  
23 Samuel  
25 Go  
limp  
26 Strictly  
entre —

**DOWN** 1 Super-  
market  
2 "No  
harm  
done"  
3 Apace  
4 Esthetic  
taste  
5 Finish  
6 Para-  
phenalia  
7 Plumbing  
problem  
8 Pooch  
9 Smail  
10 Noshed  
12 Ap-  
proaches  
14 Rock  
guitarist  
Lofgren  
Solution time: 21 mins.

**Answers:**  
ACROSS: 1. Ventilator, 2. Crow, 3. Be, 4. Perpendicular, 5. Spud, 6. Partook, 7. Lima, 8. Partook, 9. Partook, 10. Man of the Year, 11. Invested, 12. Appliance, 13. Not a word, 14. Pooch, 15. Smail, 16. Outliving, 17. Find, 18. Water, 19. Cohort, 20. Actress, 21. Diarist, 22. Samuel, 23. Samuel, 24. Samuel, 25. Go, 26. Strictly, 27. Blackbird.  
DOWN: 1. Supermarket, 2. No harm done, 3. Apace, 4. Esthetic taste, 5. Finish, 6. Paraphernalia, 7. Plumbing problem, 8. Pooch, 9. Smail, 10. Noshed, 11. Appliance, 12. Appliance, 13. Not a word, 14. Pooch, 15. Smail, 16. Outliving, 17. Find, 18. Water, 19. Cohort, 20. Actress, 21. Diarist, 22. Samuel, 23. Samuel, 24. Samuel, 25. Go, 26. Strictly, 27. Blackbird.



## CRYPTOQUIP

HE AKO TSN QNPRA XJHZZNJP  
KOZEHP ZK QOZ KD, H  
JNXRKD AKO WHTLZ XSGG  
ZLNW BSJWHDZP' TSJWNDZP.</