

## Zia takes 24th spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman lost the last round against his Kazakistani counterpart Murtas Kazhgaleyev to finish 24th in the Open Section of the 8th Asian Continental Chess Championship at Subic Freepoint, Olongapo City in Philippines.

After the 11th and last round matches on Saturday, Zia and the country's first Grand Master Niaz Murshed both bagged six points each, but Zia got the 24th place and Niaz 26th in tiebreaker.

Another Bangladeshi Grand Master Enamul Hossain Rajib secured 5.5 points to finish 49th and FM Abu Sufian Shakil finished 74th with four points.

In the last round, Niaz drew with Gao Rui of China, Rajib drew with IM Harika Dronavalli of India.

Indian Grand Master Surya Shekhar Ganguly became champion while GM Zhuo Wei of China finished runner-up, both securing eight points each.

## Ordinary World Cup for Asif

SPORTS REPORTER

Asif Hossain Khan was eliminated from the ISSF World Cup as the Commonwealth gold medalist shooter finished 54th among 75 participants in the qualifying round in Milan yesterday.

Asif, who bagged gold in the same event in the SAFF Shooting last year, scored 88 out of 600 in his favourite 10m air rifle event.

He made a bad start scoring 94 with the first shot, but gradually improved to score 97, 100, 100, 99 and 98 with the remaining shots.

Asif was scheduled to leave Milan on Saturday for Wesbaden to take part in a high-profile training at the Wesbaden Olympic Training Centre for one month in a bid to earn a quota place in the 2012 London Olympics.

The training will begin on May 24. Atikur Rahman will accompany Asif as a trainer.

## It's Bangalore

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Dhoni reached 28 without hitting a boundary before he hit Roelof van der Merwe high to long-on and fell to a well-judged catch by Vinay Kumar who managed to maintain his balance just inside the rope.

With the pitch playing slower as the innings progressed even the normally free-scoring Albie Morkel could only manage an unbeaten 20 off 17 balls.

Bangalore started their innings aggressively, with Pandey hitting Morkel through the covers for two fours in the first over, with Kallis punching Manpreet Gony past point for two more boundaries in the next over before edging a drive to be caught behind.

Van der Merwe was sent in as a pinch hitter but after being dural by Muttiah Muralitharan back-peddalling at mid-off against Morkel in the third over he was bowled next ball.

But Pandey continued to bat fluently and found ideal support from Dravid as the pair added 72 for the third wicket before Pandey missed a sweep against left-arm spinner Shadap Jakati in the 13th over.

Dravid was leg before to Muralitharan, who bowled superbly to take one for 15 in four overs, but Kohli and New Zealanders Ross Taylor both hit sixes as Bangalore won with seven balls to spare.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**CHENNAI SUPER KINGS:** 146-5 in 20 overs (Patel 36, Dhoni 28, Hayden 26, Raina 20, Morkel 20 not out, Kumar 2-38).

**ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE:** 149-4 in 18.5 overs (Pandey 48, Dravid 44, Kohli 24 not out, Taylor 17 not out).

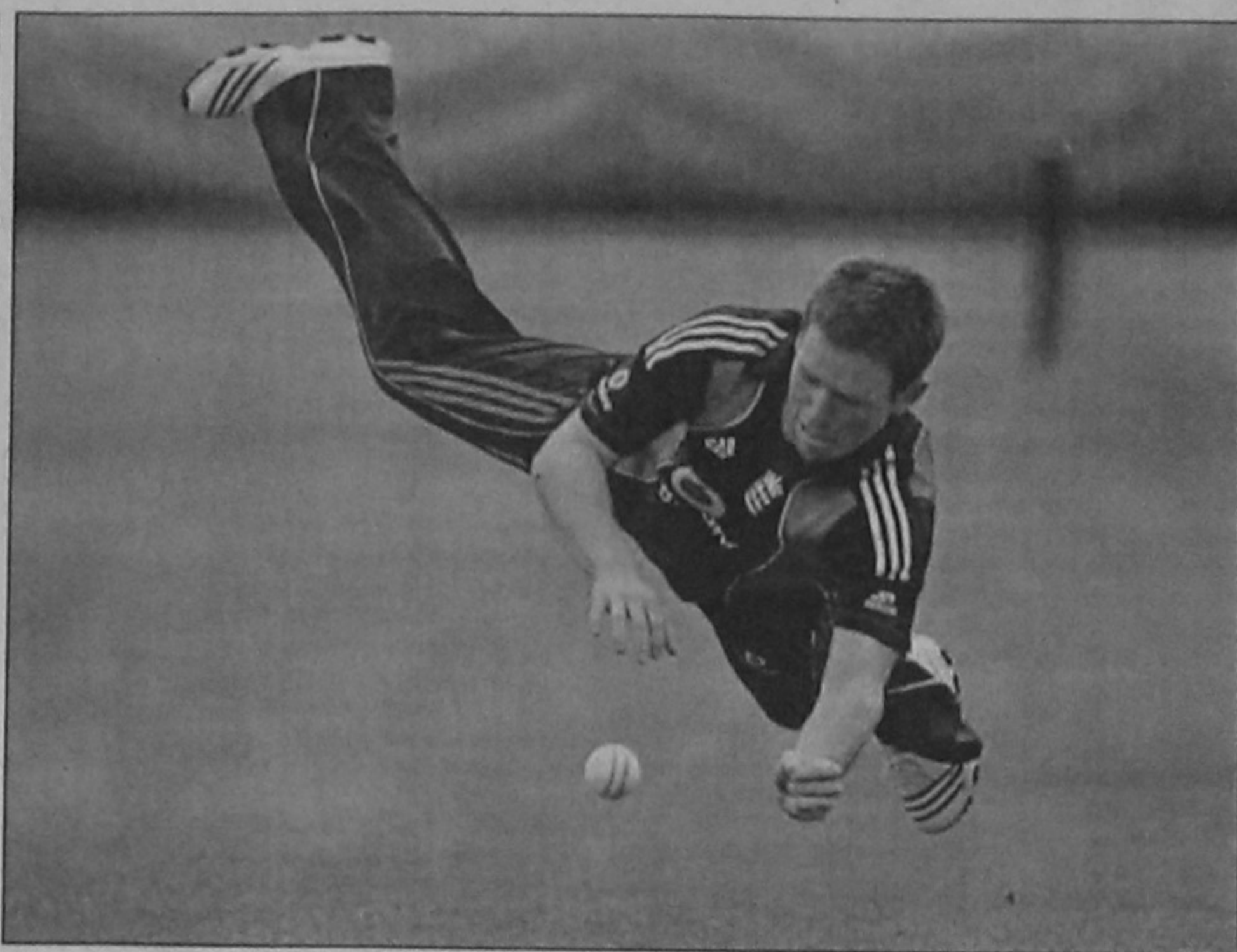
**Result:** Bangalore won by six wickets.

**Man-of-the-match:** Manish Pandey.



## Did U Know?

In 1968, the French Tennis Championships became the first Grand Slam tournament to go 'open', allowing both amateurs and professionals to compete.



England new boy Eoin Morgan shows off his fielding skills during a training session at the Nevill Road county ground in Bristol yesterday.

## Thorpe weighs in

Cricket

AFP, London

Graham Thorpe has said Australia's middle-order must 'backfire' if England are to regain the Ashes.

Opening batsman Phillip Hughes made plenty of headlines during his recent brief stint with Middlesex in county cricket, becoming the first Australian to score hundreds in his first three first-class matches in England.

But Thorpe, who coached the now 20-year-old Hughes when he was in charge of the New South Wales Second XI three years ago, said the key wickets for England to target were those of Australia captain Ricky Ponting, Michael Clarke and Michael Hussey.

"I think a key part of the series will come down to how well Australia's middle order play," Thorpe, now coaching his old county side Surrey, said here on Friday at the launch of Darren Gough's 'Love Cricket Tour'. "They've got experience in the batting line-up in terms of the middle order. If England are to do well in series then the likes of Clarke, Hussey and Ponting will have to backfire."

"I know a lot has been said about Hughes and I know him well from when I was at New South Wales, but he will give you a chance at the top of the order with the way he plays. (Simon) Katich is the same. He is experienced but he is not really an opener."

Thorpe, a left-handed middle-order batsman who played 100 Tests for England before calling time on his international career when

Kevin Pietersen was selected ahead of him for the first Ashes Test of 2005, said: "It comes down to those three in the middle order who are very, very good players."

"They will play a key role for Australia."

Not long after retiring, Thorpe found himself coaching in New South Wales and admitted he may not have done England a favour by telling officials Hughes was ready for the senior state side.

"I was asked if I thought he was good enough to play for New South Wales' first team. The answer had to be yes," Thorpe recalled.

"It was obvious he was tough enough to handle higher honours, he had a great hand-eye co-ordination and was what I call a big hitter of the ball."

"I saw him bat a lot and it was apparent pretty soon he had what it took to be a very good player, although I didn't think he would progress quite as quickly as he has."

Hughes made centuries in both innings of just his second Test earlier this year in South Africa and his unorthodox technique allied to a rapid run-rate has left many observers pondering the best way to get him out.

"England will have to bowl smart against him," Thorpe said. "But any player who is able to score runs quickly, if you can keep him quiet you'll get him to play a rash shot."

"That's the sort of thing that the England bowlers need to do. They need to keep it really simple. Bowl as straight as you can."

Australia whitewashed England 5-0 on home soil in 2006-07. The first Test of this year's Ashes gets underway in Cardiff on July 8.

## Strauss cool over star absences

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

England captain Andrew Strauss insists injuries to star players Andrew Flintoff and Kevin Pietersen are not casting a shadow over the side's preparations for the World Twenty20 and the Ashes.

All-rounder Flintoff suffered a knee injury playing in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and is doubtful for the hosts' World Twenty20 opener against the Netherlands at Lord's on June 5.

Star batsman Pietersen, who played in both of England's Tests in their recent 2-0 win over the West Indies, has been ruled out of the ongoing three-match one-day series against the same opponents with an Achilles injury.

Thursday's first match in the one-day campaign at Headingley was washed out without a ball being bowled but Flintoff and Pietersen's

absence could count against England in the second one-day international at Bristol on Sunday.

"It's not an ideal situation, but any time you get injuries is not an ideal situation," said Strauss. "It's so hard to second guess whether Fred (Flintoff) would have been injured anyway, you just don't know."

"Thankfully there is still plenty of time before the Ashes and I think we fully expect KP (Pietersen) to be ready in 10 days or so - there's no need to panic just yet injury-wise, it's something we can manage."

England would rather that Pietersen, who did not make a major score in the Test rout of the West Indies, and Flintoff, whose absence has been covered by international novices Graham Onions and Tim Bresnan, were on the field.

But Strauss said: "I don't think the fact they are not playing right now is a cause for concern."

"The guys who came in and played in the two match series

played well and that's encouraging rather than something to be concerned about."

Opening batsman Strauss, who opted out of the World Twenty20 because he felt he wasn't good enough in that form of the game, added: "The T20 is not something I'm involved with, but there are quite a few of the Ashes squad involved in that and if we can get more wins under the belt that will really help us."

England beat the West Indies 3-2 in their one-day series in the Caribbean and Strauss is aiming for similar success in this campaign.

His Middlesex colleague Eoin Morgan, the former Ireland batsman, could benefit from Pietersen's absence by making his England debut at Bristol, especially as he has also been selected for the Twenty20 squad.

## Four-star

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before completing his hat-trick in the 38th minute before adding his fourth at the hour mark. Apart from the four-goal hero, Khokhon scored twice while Babu and Pulok scored one each.

But the Sherpur Stadium saw the day's biggest crowd when 10,000 people turned up to watch Ukilpara Sporting Club of Sirajganj beat Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool 2-1 with Faizur and Robin scoring for the Sirajganj club.

GRC Sporting Club (Narsingdi) smashed three past a hapless Young Star (Moulavibazar) at the Habiganj Stadium. Brothers Union (Cox's Bazar) also won by the same margin against Marmia Juba Kalyan Sangsad (Khagrachari) at the Bandarban Stadium.

Aleya Fashion (Bogra), Unmachan (Bagerhat), Titas (Jhalakathi), Sabuj Sena (Faridpur), Purbani Tarun Sangha (Noakhali), Shuktara Juba Sangsad (Narayanganj) and Ujjiban Sporting Club (Joypurhat) won their respective matches while the match between Pui Smriti Sangsad (Jhenidah) and Crescent Club (Kushtia) was drawn.

## Duminy learns from the Master

AFP, Cape Town

Superstar Sachin Tendulkar limits his private time to just 'five or six friends', according to Mumbai Indians teammate JP Duminy.

Writing in the Cape Times newspaper Friday, Duminy said the most valuable lesson he learnt from Tendulkar, his franchise captain, was how the man he described as the "Little Master" conducted himself off the field.

The South African left-hander, who justified a 950,000-dollar price tag by being the leading run-scorer for the Mumbai team, said the highlight of his first Indian Premier League stint was playing alongside legends like Tendulkar and Sri Lankan Sanath Jayasuriya.

Duminy wrote that he admired Tendulkar's 'exemplary off-field record'.

"I will cherish a conversation I had with him where he revealed that he only has about five or six friends, along with his close-knit family, who he spends his precious freetime with."

"The fact that he can trust them 100 per cent is very important to him and that is something I have really taken to heart."

Duminy said the IPL had been an exhilarating experience, but Mumbai lost too many games in failing to qualify for the semi-finals.

"We really tried our best, but in the end we needed to be on the right side of a few close matches. The entire team are very disappointed, as we have built a big fan base in South Africa, let alone the millions in India."

"To let so many people down is a bad feeling."

## Bashar fooling

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possibly some non-playing role with the national team that he had made his name with.

That would be impossible with the ten-year ban imposed upon him by the BCB. Luckily, cricket boards across the world were at that very time, putting out amnesty windows for all their players. Bashir had just to wait for his one.

And when it came, the former national captain, and more recently rebel and critic of the national "structure", duly rediscovered his love for the country and rejoined the national fold.

And what of the improper structure that he had cited?

Coach Jamie Siddons, said by Bashir himself to be a chief cause of chagrin, still remains in charge. Rafiqul Alam, chief selector at the time of the defect is also incumbent. And Mohammad Ashraful is also still captain. The alleged root of Bashir's discontent remains absolutely unchanged and active.

The only thing that's changed is Bashir's circumstances.

At the press conference to announce his 'comeback', Bashir urged the country's young players to think twice before going down his path.

Pride stopped him short from making an apology to the nation or the public, but he can rest assured that his example will be one most youngsters would be loathe to follow.

Money is not everything, said the 're-born nationalist' at the press conference. For once he is being truthful. Because for Bashir, it is the only thing.

## French Open starts today

### No clear favourites

Tennis

AFP, Paris

An air of uncertainty surrounds the women's event at next week's French Open, with many of the would-be favourites going into the tournament struggling for form and fitness.

World number two and perennial Grand Slam contender Serena Williams has won the last two majors but hasn't tasted victory on clay in a year and pulled out of her first round match at last week's Madrid Masters with a knee injury.

Serena, who holds the US and Australian Open titles, and her sister Venus, the reigning Wimbledon champion, are bidding to complete a clean sweep of the four Grand Slams, but Serena insists her only goal in Paris is to improve on her third-round exit from last year.

"I'm just glad to be here," she said. "I don't think I am the favourite. It is what it is. Now I feel I want to make all my memories this year."

Reigning champion Ana Ivanovic picked up her first major title at Roland Garros last summer but it precipitated an alarming loss of form that saw her slide from number one to number eight in the world rankings.

"It's true, just after Roland Garros I really lost my way," she said. "But it's in the past now and it's all a good experience."

Maria Sharapova is another former world number one to have lost ground on her rivals, having been sidelined with a shoulder injury for almost 10 months before returning to action at this week's Warsaw Open.

"I don't have any expectations," she said after losing to Ukraine's Alona Bondarenko in the quarterfinals in Poland.

"I don't think this is the time in my career to have expectations."

The tribulations of the sport's leading lights means the field for this year's tournament looks more open than ever, although current world number one Dinara Safina is in ominous form after winning back-to-back clay tournaments in Rome and Madrid.

Safina will also be under threat from fellow Russian top tenners Elena Dementieva, Vera Zvonareva and Svetlana Kuznetsova, while Ivanovic's Serbian compatriot Jelena Jankovic could also threaten.

But while the Williams sisters can point to a Grand Slam pedigree that has seen them amass 17 singles titles between them, the same cannot be said of the Russians and eastern Europeans.

No-one sums that up better than Safina. The little sister of Marat Safin knocked Serena off the top spot in April despite never having won a Grand Slam title and admits her priority now is to prove to everyone that she deserves to be where she is.

"It's going to be another step," said the determined Russian.

"You have steps to take in your life. The first step for me was either to win a Grand Slam or become number one, so I already have one."

"For the next step, I have my whole career and I'm going to continue working hard to win a Grand Slam."

Similarly Dementieva has yet to win a Slam, having lost in the 2004 French and US Open finals, while Svetlana Kuznetsova has struggled to live up to her upset win in the 2006 US Open.

The two Serbs are even more perplexing. Ivanovic was a popular and convincing winner in Paris last year, defeating Safina in a one-sided final, but with the tennis world at her feet, she then went into a slump from which she is still struggling to emerge.

A knee injury that kept her out of the Madrid Masters has done little to raise the hopes of her fans, but the ever-sunny Belgrade beauty is hopeful that Paris will once again bring out the best in her.

"As soon as I set foot on Philippe Chatrier court, all the emotions come flooding back every time," she said.

"It really gives me an extraordinary feeling. I can't wait to get back to Paris."

Jankovic, like Safina, reached the world number one spot last year despite failing to win a Grand Slam event, but her form has been poor recently as injuries have taken their toll.

## Abu Dhabi ready for 2011 WC

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Dilawar Mani, the chief executive of the Abu Dhabi Cricket Council, will be meeting the PCB chairman Ijaz Butt in the coming week to discuss the possibility of Pakistan hosting their World Cup matches at Abu Dhabi as a neutral venue. Pakistan's share of matches in the 2011 World Cup were taken away by the ICC due to concerns over security in the aftermath of the shootings in Lahore, where gunmen targeted a team bus carrying Sri Lankan cricketers.

Butt is currently in South Africa to watch the IPL, and is expected to meet officials of the South Africa and Zimbabwe cricket boards. "On the way back from South Africa, Mr. Butt will be making a stopover in Abu Dhabi and I will be meeting with him," Mani told AP.

Mani has offered to host all of Pakistan's international matches in Abu Dhabi, including those of the 2011 World Cup. "If asked (by the PCB), we are willing to organize all its international matches including the World Cup," he said. "It's difficult times for Pakistan and we want to help them."

The Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi has hosted four bilateral tournaments involving Pakistan. They played India in a two-match ODI series in 2006, Sri Lanka in a three-match series in 2007 followed by three ODIs against West Indies last year. Most recently, they split a five-ODI series against Australia between Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The ICC is scheduled to meet the chiefs of cricket boards of the four countries - India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh - co-hosting the 2011 World Cup in Dubai on June 3. The PCB had earlier issued a legal notice against the ICC for moving the competition out of Pakistan, and filed a case in a Lahore court, disputing the transfer of the headquarters of the tournament from Lahore to Mumbai.

Earlier this week, Butt revealed to Cricinfo that the PCB were presenting a security plan for Pakistan's venues first and if that failed to convince members, would then propose a neutral venue. "We will, as per the agreement we have all signed, submit a satisfactory security plan to the ICC for games in Pakistan," Butt said. "Should that plan not be satisfactory then we will put forward a proposal for a neutral venue, be that in the Middle East or Kuala Lumpur. That process and procedure is part of the hosting agreement that we all signed."

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>DOWN</b>
1 Branch	40 "Monopoly"
5 Scoundrel	1 Child of 54-Across
8 Break suddenly	2 Concept
12 Hebrew month	3 Geometry or algebra
13 Bullring cry	24 Mess up
14 Ringlet	25 Schuss
15 Apportion (out)	26 Drone
16 CB kin	27 Einstein's birthplace
18 Nassau's island group	28 Cage component
20 Mountain nymph	29 Univ. transcript stat
21 "The Da Vinci Code" author	31 April 15 payment
32 Back talk	34 Scabbard
33 "The Firm" author	35 Captain's place
36 Ballroom dance	36 Pouch
38 Whammy	37 Turkey's capital
39 Has the ability	39 Stop
	40 Corned beef recipe
	41 —
	42 Just one of those things?
	43 Concoct, in a way
	44 Colored
	45 N. Mex. neighbor
	46 Lion's pride?
	48 "See ya"

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

SWAB	MUM	TOBM
LILLY	IRE	NOLO
ANTE	SNOWDROP	
MOOLAH	WHENCE	
	ALEC	YEW
SNOWBALL	DAMP	
RIV	ARIES	LIE
OPEC	SNOWFLOW	
	RNO	GNAR
ASTER	IN	NAJAM
SNOWBIRD	YULE	
KINE	CIA	ETAL
SFED	EMS	RENT

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12										
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### CRYPTOQUIP

J Z Q T G V G M O W T V T A Q V B B  
 L O K Z Q W S G V P C Z K Q S M  
 J Q G G W T C M, A L P B G I L P M V I  
 K Z Q I ' S Q O P T G W T C O V K Z Q S M ?

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** SINCE MY HOME DECOR ISN'T VERY FANCY LIKE YOURS, FOLKS COULD SAY I HAVE AN INFERIOR INTERIOR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals T