

Pakistan cricket captain Shahid Afridi (R) bowls under the supervision of the team's new coach Waqar Younis (C) during a practice session at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday.

Akmal worry for Pakistan

Akthar-powered Cyclones

face the sort regularly. Blizzard,

the Victorian opener who

recently played in the Port City

League in Sharjah, would be a

welcome addition to a side that

already boast big hitters like

Naeem Islam, Junaed Siddiqui

Mashud said at a press confer-

ence yesterday that he

expected his team to play like

champions since they won the

first-class competition only

champions so I expect every-

one to be serious," said the

former national captain who

has the likes of Shafiul Islam,

as the coach. Obviously we will

go for the championship but it

is important to take quick

decisions in this format and

those have to be right at most

firepower of Ashraful, Riyad,

Shamsur and Rafique, the team

owners were disappointed to

have missed out on another big

Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza]. We

cannot believe he will not be

with a team that is associated

with Beximco. But he won't be

Ashraful later explained

why they couldn't pick their

desired player. "Actually we

were unlucky as we were the

fifth team to pick a player while

Sylhet were third. They called

for Mashrafe in the first

attempt so we couldn't take

him," said Mashrafe's long-

time Bangladesh teammate

He also said that it would be

with us," rued Nazmul.

"We will surely miss

Although Dhaka have the

times," opined Ashraful.

Their captain Khaled

and Ejaz Ahmed.

recently.

CRICINFO, undated



FROM PAGE 17

in today's match.

staff.

hchi.

well on the day will win. Every

team will fight till the end that's

for sure," said Salahuddin, also

part of the Tigers coaching

Manzoor trained with the side

yesterday while Akhter was

scheduled to arrive late last

night. Both are expected to play

strong side on paper but it

would be tough to ignore a

workmanlike Rajshahi Rangers

side, boosted by the arrival of

Australian big-hitter Aiden

Blizzard and Sri Lankan all-

rounder Kaushal Lokuarac-

The 27-year-old

Lokuarachchi's leg-spin would

be key since few local batsmen

In a bid to clinch the elusive

professional league title,

Mohammedan this time

spent crores of taka to form a

strong side having roped in

most of the national players,

but the Motijheel-based

outfit have been going

through a financial crisis and

are failing to pay the remu-

nerations of their foreign

Terry's father

Basildon magistrates on May

having an extra-marital

affair with Vanessa

Perroncel, the former part-

ner of England team-mate

and close friend Wayne

Bridge, earlier this year,

He was later stripped of

the England captaincy by

head coach Fabio Capello but the central defender is

still expected to be a member

of England's squad for the

World Cup in South Africa

He said: "Rooney has scored

so many goals for them this

year he would be a massive

danger to us if he was fit and

"Wayne has scored the vast

"Sir Alex is one of the peo-

"When we meet up we like

ple in football I'm close to

along with Phil Brown, David

which starts in June.

No room

majority of their goals.

Moyes and Steve Bruce.

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able to play.

ball matters.

that.

prompting a media storm.

John Terry was accused of

13," a spokeswoman said.

MSC may

FROM PAGE 17

recruits.

Though the Cyclones look a

He also informed that

Umar Akmal, the Pakistan batsman, has picked up a side strain during the preparatory cc WORLD camp for the ICC World TWENTY20 Twenty20 but is expected to be west indies 2010 fit in time for the tournament which starts on April 30.

Akmal has stopped taking part in the nets sessions at the training camp in Lahore, and is the fourth player to be injured since the camp started -- Pakistan's leading Twenty20 bowler, Umar Gul, injured his shoulder earlier this week, while allrounder Yasir Arafat and batsman Fawad Alam are also facing fitness problems.

Shahid Afridi, who will lead Pakistan's defence of their World Twenty20 crown, was convinced his players would recover in the

three weeks remaining before the competition starts in the West Indies.

"There is nothing serious about the injuries, which is why I'm confident that the boys will be ready to give their best in the World Twenty20," he told the News.

He said both Akmal and Gul will return to practice in a few days. "Umar is getting troubled by the injury because it becomes painful when he bats which is why he is not attending the nets," he said. "[Regarding Gul] We are expecting to get the (MRI) report soon but I'm hoping that Gul will be back to training within the next three days."

The Pakistan squad is undergoing rigorous training in Lahore in a bid to improve fielding and general fitness. They are slated to play Bangladesh and Australia in the league phase, on May 1st and 2nd respectively.

attack.

"We are the first-class moniker remained the

Come & support us

Sohrawardi Shuvo and

Sanjamul Islam in his bowling

the official launch of the

Rajshahi Rangers franchise

where it was revealed that a

new owner had taken over

the team. Captain Saifur

Rahman, managing director

of Net World, also informed

that they had changed the

team logo as it represented

his hopes and aspirations

with the team but the team's

Citycell are the main spon-

sors of the team while AB Bank

a good opportunity to draw the

crowds through this tourna-

ment. "I hope it will be like IPL

[Indian Premier League] where

the crowds will come in like

they do in international

matches. We should have

The Dynamites also

started this [NCLT20s] earlier,"

informed that their foreign

contingent would be in full

force in tomorrow's encounter.

Swashbuckling Pakistani

opener Imran Nazir confirmed

his presence and he will arrive

today. The other imports

Jeewan Mendis and Milinda

Siriwardana have already

about the status of Nazir as

both the Rajshahi and

Chittagong franchises claimed

to have confirmed the services

of the Pakistani opener. "He

has signed a contract with us

and he will arrive tomorrow

[Sunday]," confirmed Beximco

director Shayan F Rahman.

There was some confusion

arrived in the capital.

said Ashraful.

are the co-sponsors.

The press conference was

SPORTS REPORTER

A blazing century from Rakibul helped Comilla emerge zonal champions in the 30th Inter-District Cricket Championship with a comprehensive sevenwicket win over Cox's Bazar in the final at the Comilla Stadium yesterday.

Comilla ride

on Rakibul

After being put in to bat first, Cox's Bazar posted a competitive total of 263 in the stipulated 50 overs riding on a brilliant knock from Kamrul, who was just two runs short of a century having played 117

However, the Kamrul knock was not enough to defend the total when Comilla came in to bat as they raced to 265 for just three wickets in 38.4 overs with man-of-the match Rakibul striking a 107-ball 125.

Nat'l Athletics from May

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Athletics Championship will be held in the first week of May at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The two-day 35th edition of the championship will begin on May 5 and the athletes will be getting the facilities of the electronic board, which was installed during the SA Games to judge their real timing after a

Bangladesh Atheletic Federation general secretary Shah Alam informed that they were going to start the training camp for the upcoming Commonwealth Games as they have already submitted an 18member list to the Bangladesh Olympic Association.

Div II Cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

An explosive century from Johnny guided Retired XI to record a convincing 50-run victory over Juger Alo Samity in the Khan Real Estate Second Division Cricket League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Chasing a challenging total of 220 for eight in the stipulated 25 overs set by Retired XI, Juger Alo Samity were skittled out for just 70 in 13 overs in the face of brilliant bowling from Pavel, who claimed five scalps while Sahidul chipped in with two wickets.

Earlier, Johnny struck an unbeaten 108 off 61 balls while Al Amin hammered a 36-ball 62 to help Retired XI cross the 200-mark.

Rogers opens tons account

AFP, London

Derbyshire's Australian captain Chris Rogers cracked the first century of the new English county season on Friday with an unbeaten 178 helping his side reach 306 for five over Surrey.

In his first innings since a fractured left hand forced him to miss the Sheffield Shield final, the Victorian clattered 25 boundaries in a six-hour virtuoso performance through to stumps in the second division fixture.

In stark contrast, England skipper Andrew Strauss was dismissed for a single in Middlesex's match against Worcestershire at New Road on the first day of the new season.

Deccan stay alive From 65 for 2 in eight overs, Chennai

CRICINFO, Nagpur



Deccan Chargers continued to climb up the Indian Premier League points table by beating Chennai Super Kings comprehensively by six wickets

yesterday at their "home" venue in Nagpur to draw level with Royal Challengers Bangalore, Kolkata Knight Riders and the losing side.

The win was set up by their bowlers, after MS Dhoni decided to bat on a scorching afternoon, who restricted Chennai to 138, allowing the batsmen to chase at a comfortable pace despite two early jolts and the sapping heat. Deccan struggled against spin initially, losing three wickets to the slow stuff, but rode on another fifty from T Suman and Andrew Symonds' cool head to seal victory with five balls to spare. The only bit that really went right for

Chennai was the toss, which Dhoni won and had little hesitation in choosing to bat. When Chennai accelerated from 21 after three overs to 55 for 1 from six it seemed a run-fest was on the cards. As it turned out, Chennai had little to celebrate thereafter. In the eighth over, M Vijay called for a suicidal second run and that momentary brain freeze changed the complexion of Chennai's innings. It was another example of the schizophrenic series he's had, with aborted starts amid some match-winning knocks, and from there Deccan never let the initiative slip.

slowed down to reach the half-way stage at 74 for 2 with Symonds and Pragyan Ojha keeping a check with stump-tostump bowling. Chennai's predicament had been brought about by their batsmen's urge to dominate and as wickets fell around him, Suresh Raina began to improvise cleverly. He moved to leg to clip the ball fine and walked down the pitch to upset the bowlers, but also reined in his attacking instincts, knocking the ball in the gaps during the middle overs. Gilchrist put down a tough chance when Raina was 27 and he broke a 38-ball period without a boundary by stepping out and launching Ojha for a straight six and repeated the shot to Symonds in the following over. Raina struggled to keep a partner at the other end, as Michael Hussey pulled Symonds to deep midwicket and S Badrinath fell for 6.

When Raina fell for 52, Chennai only had 122 on the board with 16 deliveries to go and no recognised batsman to follow. Deccan never allowed matters to slip their grasp as Harmeet Singh stymied runs and Ryan Harris returned to pick up wickets in the last over. In a team which had more experienced names in their bowling lineup, the hero of the innings was Harmeet, who bowled with excellent control, changing his pace and offering the batsmen no width to score off. His dismissal of Matthew Hayden with his first ball, drawn into a drive, and final two frugal overs were a blow to Chennai's hopes of getting a challenging total on the board.

A target of 139 meant than Chennai had to strike early to have any chance of a successful defense. The very impressive R Ashwin's dismissal of the Deccan openers in the fifth over, with lovely traditional offspin, gave Chennai a sniff but Suman emphasised how crucial his presence at No. 3 was with a sensible innings. Against Bangalore two nights ago, Suman had batted aggressively because Deccan where chasing 185 but today he focused on staying at the crease.

He reigned in the big shots and along with Symonds -after Rohit Sharma fell to another aerial shot outside off stump - he stablised the innings, allowing himself to gain confidence against spin. Suman chipped Shadab Jakati for four and swung Raina for six, Symonds launched Jakati down the ground for maximum to negate the pressure, and the equation came to 49 from 36 balls. Dhoni had to turn to Sudeep Tyagi for his first over, the 15th, and Suman greeted him with four and six to cross fifty, the striking point being the use of a straight bat and clean swing. He fell with 32 needed from 24, a task which Symonds made sure was accomplished without too many jitters.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 138 for 8 in 20 overs (Raina 52, Vijay 23, Hayden 19; Harris 3-18)

DECCAN CHARGERS: 139 for 4 in 19.1 overs (Suman 55, Symonds 27 not out, Mishra 21, Smith 13 not out; Ashwin 2-13) Man-of-the-match: Ryan Harris

KL CHESS

Ziaur, Niaz in 2nd spot

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Ziaur Rahman and GM Niaz Murshed along with eight other players shared the second position at the close of the sixth round games of the third Kuala Lumpur Chess Championship in Malaysia yesterday. Niaz beat Indian FM

Sayantan Das while Zia drew with Vietnamese GM Nguyen Anh Dung and both of them secured 4.5 points from six outings.

Zia will play against IM Irwanto Saidikin of Indonesia while Niaz will face Khamrakulov Dzhurabek o Uzbekistan today.

India

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first-half performance to the second half.

Bangladesh finished third after recording a hard-fought 31-28 win over Yemen in the place-deciding match though the hosts enjoyed dominance in the first half with a 15-9 lead.

Imdadul Haque scored 10 goals while Shohag Hossain and Sudhan Kumar scored seven and five goals respectively for the winners. Abdul Nasser Rezq was Yemen's top scorer with 10 goals too.

Gala show

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opening ceremony's display. But the most unique part of it would be the team introduction where we will try to combine the theme with the six teams' nicknames, "he added.

But before all the fun and games, Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith will inaugurate the event as chief guest at 5:30pm. The Bangladesh Cricket

Board also revealed the ticket rates: VIP Grand Stand at Tk 100, club house at Tk 20, special enclosures Tk 10 and there will be free entry at all the galleries. The inauguration show and

the match will be televised live on satellite channel ATN Bangla.

35 Inventor,

often

cargo

40 Chinese

42 "Thanks

38 Pack

39 Crafty

tea

—!"

45 Impede

49 "Yikes!"

50 Savings-

plan

52 Show-

room

sample

acronym

ACROSS

5 High-

hat

8 Eject

12 Proof-

barefoot

lander's

reader's

catch

"Ugly

Betty"

national

money

same, in

14 Multi-

15 The

13 Ortiz of

1 Not

34 Fish eggs 57 Stick with 21 "- the

58 Lo-cal

1 Use a

3 Cartel

4 Mardi

Gras

mask

5 Join in

6 Singer

DiFranco

7 Herbie of

2 Steven-

son villain

acronym

DOWN

a kick

24 Prune

25 Mound

stat

movie

writer

Today"

graphic

partner

away

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Apple

shoe

42 Wields a

43 Curved

44 Intima-

tion

46 Party-

47 Send

forth

51 Director

48 Repetitive

routine

Howard

platter

preparer

needle

molding

29 "USA

30 Bill's

31 Chop

36 Gets

37 Big

teaspoon 26 Carell/

MATCH IRREGULARITIES

2 Essex players under scrutiny

Cricket

CRICINFO, Chelmsford

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have confirmed that two Essex county cricketers are at the centre of a police investigation, following allegations of "match irregularities". With the investigation still underway, the

ECB added that they would be making no comment on the matter, but quoted a statement they had received from Essex Police: "Following allegations received about two

Essex County Cricket players involved in match irregularities we have initiated an investigation,' read the statement, "and are working closely with Essex County Cricket Club and the ECB." The Essex team was called into the dressing-

room at the close of play on the opening day of their County Championship fixture against Hampshire at Chelmsford, where they were given a briefing from the county chief executive, David East. It is understood that the allegations first came to light a month ago, but Paul Grayson, the head coach, told reporters: "I am not allowed to comment on the matter."

Essex were at the centre of an investigation back in 1994, when their former seamer, Don Topley, alleged that collusion had taken place towards the end of the 1991 county season, when Essex were closing in on the Championship, and their opponents, Lancashire, were close to securing the Sunday League title. According to Topley, Lancashire agreed to

bowl badly in their three-day fixture in exchange for a quid pro quo in the one-day match that took place midway through the longer game. While Essex's subsequent win helped them to the County Championship, Lancashire's one-day victory couldn't prevent Nottinghamshire from claiming the Sunday League. The allegations were dismissed by the ECB as

being without foundation, although they did resurface again six years later in 2000. A spokesman for Essex said there would be

no official comment from the club until the investigation was concluded. Essex Police were not prepared to name the players involved at this stage, nor reveal the exact nature of the allegations.



German football association president Theo Zwanziger (R) poses with national team coach Joachim Loew after a meeting in Frankfurt on Friday. Loew got a vote of confidence from Zwanziger for the upcoming 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Shoaib: A storm rider

against the England Under-19

Ashraful.

s, from impressing Wasim Akram and Moin Khan with his tweakers in the Wills Cup to, eventually, a national berth. In all this, Shoaib never

forgot his father's support. When Malik Salim died of throat cancer in 2006, Shoaib broke down in an interview, acknowledging how his father used to pack cricket gear into his school bag instead of books. There are rumours Salim was vehemently against Shoaib jilting Ayesha, but they remain, much like everything else in this relationship, more shadowplay than acknowledged fact.

to have a drink together and Always a prolific scorer chew the fat and discuss footagainst India, his effectiveness as a handy middle-order bul-"I consider him to be the wark soon began to emerge. In Tests, he averages a modest 36. greatest manager of a team the world has seen over the last two 11 from only 29 games. In ODIs, where he is more effective, decades, so you would always centuries have come as an accept advice from someone like opener, at one-down and at number four, though his most "It's a nice thing to know entertaining innings remains

would not have emerged without the late Bob Woolmer's tutelage, and Pakistan's shambolic 2007 World Cup campaign in the wake of which he was made captain. Shoaib was only 25, and

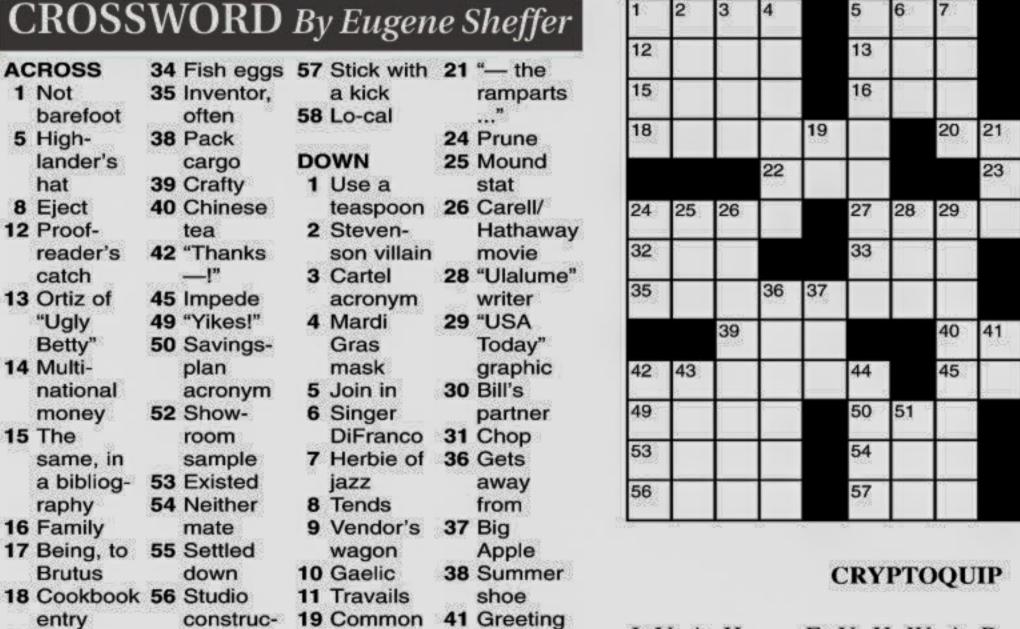
marked for greatness by none other than Imran Khan for his "sharp cricketing brain". But sadly, when he lost the captaincy in February 2009 after a string of indifferent performances and perennial infighting, the PCB accused him of being "aloof", stating there was "nothing exciting in his captaincy". He couldn't command a place by virtue of form alone and he had problems with seniors, notably Mohammad Yousuf, once his best friend in the team. "It was unanimously decided he should play just as a player," the PCB said.

Even the highs of that period, notably the run to the final in the World T20 in Johannesburg, were soured by Shoaib's often blunt and uncultivated comments, like when he said after Pakistan lost

in a bowlout, he said he had no idea what the rules were. Back in 2005, in Hyderabad, he had accepted marrying a local girl during a game before immediately retracting his statement. Increasingly, it was becoming clear Shoaib's reliability had always been a matter of perspective. Today, professionally and

personally, he seems to be at his lowest ebb. A string of defeats to Australia have resulted in another knee-jerk reaction from the administration and a one-year ban for unspecified reasons, though local media speculated he was suspected of match-fixing. With the impending marriage to Sania will come intense media and public scrutiny, especially in Pakistan. Perhaps even talk of his past foibles and anxieties about a looming culture clash. Yet Shoaib is nothing if not resilient. That famed suppleness and flexibility may again see this man through. His cricketing career

a bibliog- 53 Existed jazz 54 Neither 8 Tends raphy 16 Family 9 Vendor's 17 Being, to 55 Settled wagon Brutus 10 Gaelic down 11 Travails 18 Cookbook 56 Studio construc- 19 Common entry 20 Snacks tions ratio (on) 22 Pinch Solution time: 25 mins. 23 List-A R C O A L P A L S O G I L L B O O L O A D ending HEADCASE INTO abbr. A L P H A M E A G E R
A R T S A S S 24 Building block P E S T S E C S U F O E M U K A P U T I O U name PSI IRIS STET 27 Fairway TOWAPSE shot H E C T I C A L G A E
U T A H H E A D L O N G
M U S E A W L E T N A 32 Tramcar contents PIER TEE ROOD 33 Marseille monarch



EUHWAP FAOOL IVAH

KAHHAF VAP QIH XTEUBLO BQXKQEUMUQHE, U WTAEE

MVQEA IAPA PAAEA'E KUABAE.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF AN ANIMAL'S ANATOMY WERE MUCH THE SAME AS A WEASEL FAMILY MEMBER, COULD IT BE SABLE-BODIED?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals E

you have got in your locker the proves he may often tie himself the 41-ball 82 against South the final to India: "I want to ability, if for whatever reason in knots, but is equally adept at Africa in 2003, at No. 6. In 2006, thank you back home [in] you're struggling with someuntangling them. A lasting he had a glorious run against Pakistan and where the Muslim thing, to pick the phone up cross-border marriage with the India, scoring 90, 95 and 108 in lives all over the world." and discuss it with someone glamour queen of Indian sport successive home ODIs. The Outrage followed, but he would who has the guile, the knowmay silence the cynics like first Test hundred too came soon follow it up with a never before. The unlikely hero that year, against Sri Lanka, but how and the experience he's bloomer in Durban when, after the Shoaib we know today his team lost to India this time may yet have the last laugh. got."