

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

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

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.

Akhtar-powered Cyclones

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 staff.

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 Naem Islam, Junaed Siddiqui and Ejaz Ahmed.

Come & support us

FROM PAGE 17 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 times," opined Ashraf.

a good opportunity to draw the crowds through this tournament. "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 started this [NCL T20s] earlier," said Ashraf.

Terry's father

FROM PAGE 20 Basildon magistrates on May 13," a spokeswoman said.

The Dynamites also 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 arrived in the capital.

No room

FROM PAGE 20 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 able to play.

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".

Comilla ride on Rakibul

SPORTS REPORTER

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

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 balls.

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.

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.

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.

Gala show

FROM PAGE 17 opening ceremony's display.

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.

Deccan stay alive

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.

From 65 for 2 in eight overs, Chennai slowed down to reach the half-way stage at 74 for 2 with Symonds and Pragnan Ojha keeping a check with stump-to-stump 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 that 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 stabilised 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

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 Dzhrabek of Uzbekistan today.

India

FROM PAGE 17 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 Rezaq was Yemen's top scorer with 10 goals too.

Crossword

FROM PAGE 17 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.

2 Essex players under scrutiny



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

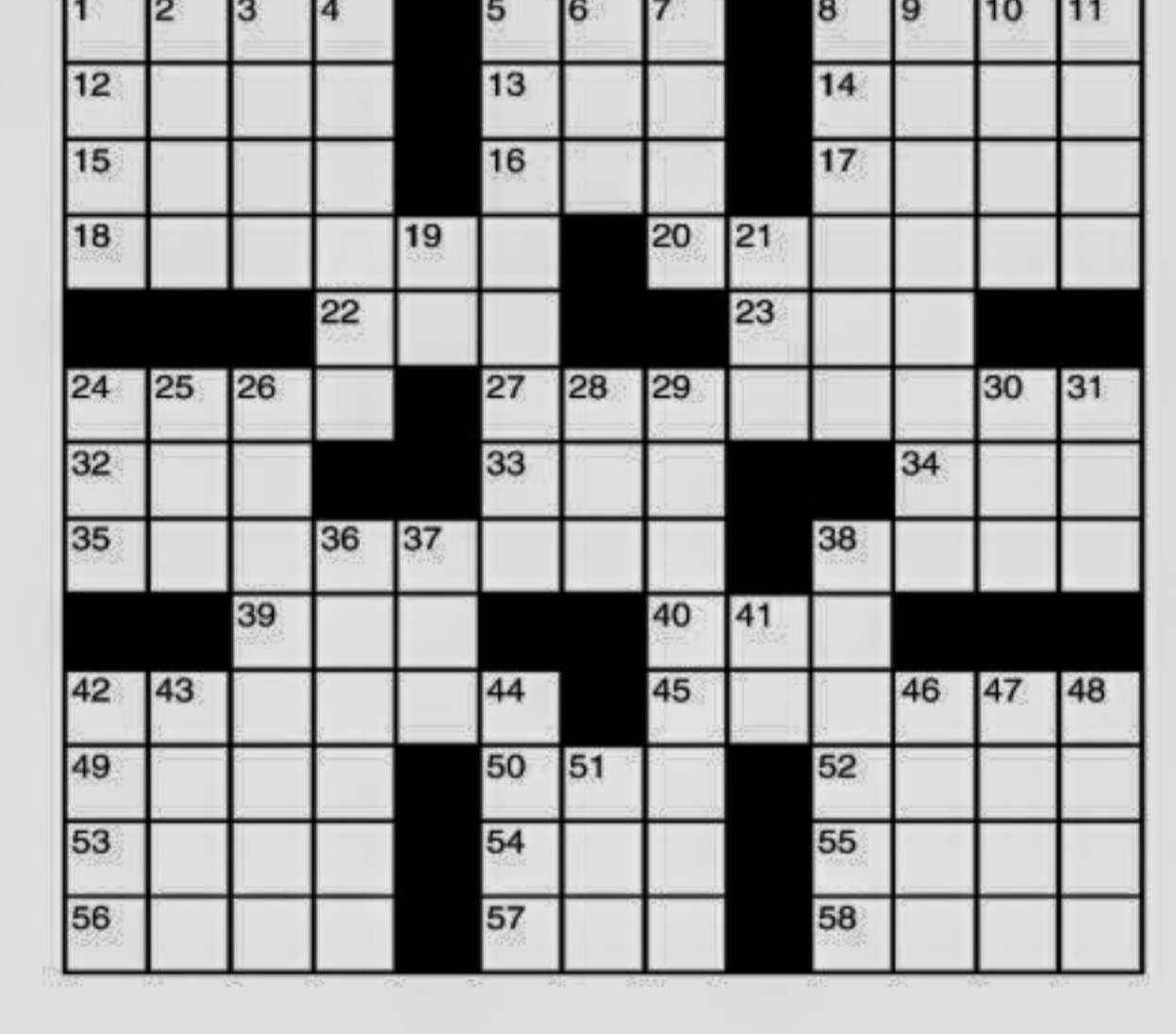
FROM PAGE 17 against the England Under-19s, from impressing Wasim Akram and Moin Khan with his tweekers in the Wills Cup to, eventually, a national berth.

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".

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 speculate 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 proves he may often tie himself in knots, but is equally adept at untangling them. A lasting cross-border marriage with the glamour queen of Indian sport may silence the cynics like never before. The unlikely hero may yet have the last laugh.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Not barefoot 5 High-lander's hat 8 Eject 12 Proof-reader's catch 13 Ortiz of "Ugly Betty" 14 Multi-national money 15 The same, in a bibliography 16 Family 17 Being, to Brutus 18 Cookbook entry 20 Snacks (on) 22 Pinch 23 List-ending abbr. 24 Building name 27 Fairway shot 32 Tramar contents 33 Marseille monarch



CRYPTOQUIP I V A H E U H W A P F A O O L K A H H A F V A P Q I H X T E U B L O B Q X K Q E U M U Q H E , U W T A E E M V Q E A I A P A P A E A ' E K U A B A E . 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