

AUSTRALIA V ZIMBABWE: AHMEDABAD

# Another mismatch today?

AFP, Ahmedabad

Australia launch their World Cup bid against Zimbabwe without their usual favourites tag but banking on fearsome pace duo Brett Lee and Shaun Tait to fire them to a fourth successive title. Australia have lost just one of their 27 one-day internationals against their opponents with their lone defeat at the 1983 World Cup. Australia, victorious in 1999, 2003 and 2007, have not lost a single game in the past two World Cups in South Africa and the West Indies under skipper Ricky Ponting. Although they have lost some of their power in recent years following the retirements of Shane Warne, Matthew Hayden, Adam Gilchrist and Glenn McGrath, they are still the top-ranked side in the one-day game. And they come into the tournament buoyed by a 6-1 hammering of England, which went some way towards easing the pain of a thumping Ashes defeat.

Paceman Lee, who played a major role in Australia's one-day series win over England, taking 11 wickets, said he and Tait could still wreak havoc despite the spin-friendly wickets in the sub-continent. "I don't see any problem with the pace which we have and playing on the slow wickets. At the end of the day, the ball is still coming at 150 kmh (93

miles an hour) through the air," said Lee, who has impressed in the Indian Premier League Twenty20 competition.

"The pitch is a massive part of the equation. But if you have a bowler like Tait bowling around 160 kmh at the batsmen's toes, it doesn't matter where you are playing. It is still going to hit the batsmen on the full."

Australia, who struggled against spin in their practice matches, are likely to face another spin test as Zimbabwe have good slow bowlers in Raymond Price, Prosper Utseya and Graeme Cremer.

They will be relying on Shane Watson and Brad Haddin to lay the foundations for big totals.

All-rounder Watson is the man in form and is known for his hard and clean hitting, having scored 306 in six one-dayers against England with a hundred and two half-centuries, while Haddin has provided valuable support.

The onus will be on Ponting and Michael Clarke to provide solidity in

the middle order in the absence of the injured Michael Hussey.

The pair's form ahead of the tournament augurs well for Australia, with Ponting scoring two successive half-centuries in warm-up games against India and South Africa and Clarke one.

Zimbabwe, who lost a one-day series in Bangladesh recently, will be keen to put in a solid batting performance. They hope recent batting tips from West Indies great Brian Lara will stand them in good stead.

"He [Lara] shared his experience with us and it helped us a lot. Hopefully, we will be able to put it into practice," Zimbabwean captain Elton Chigumbura said.

Zimbabwe batting coach Grant Flower said troubled Zimbabwe were heading in the right direction.

"We've had our troubles with some of us leaving the country. We left under not the greatest circumstances but hopefully that is all in the past," he was quoted as saying on Cricinfo.

"Both parties probably made some mistakes but that's life, nothing's perfect. Things are moving in the right direction."

"We've got some good people there, and the players are playing some decent cricket. Quite a few of the guys have played quite a few one-day internationals now, so there's quite a bit of experience. We're expecting some good things at the World Cup," he added.

**AUSTRALIA v ZIMBABWE**

**Matches:** 27  
**Australia win:** 25  
**Zimbabwe win:** 1  
**Noresult:** 1  
**First meeting:** June 9, 1983, Trent Bridge -- Zimbabwe won by 13 runs  
**Last meeting:** May 29, 2004, Harare --

## United ward off Crawley upset

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United breathed a huge sigh of relief as they defeated non-League Crawley 1-0 on Saturday to book a place in the FA Cup quarter-finals despite a lacklustre display at Old Trafford.

United defender Wes Brown's first half header proved enough to sink the minnows, but the 11-times FA Cup winners were forced to endure an uncomfortable time at the hands of opponents 93 places below them on the league ladder.

Crawley were a credit to the fifth tier of English football as the Conference side produced a spirited performance which earned them a standing ovation from the near 75,000-capacity crowd at the end.

They could even have snatched a draw if Richard Brodie's stoppage time header, which struck the crossbar, had dropped an inch or two lower.

## Tamim

FROM PAGE 16

"When the going gets tough, you have to stick around and then again, there will be days when everything you hit will be fours and sixes. I spoke to him this morning and he said he was impressed," explained Tamim.

Shakib Al Hasan's contentious decision to bowl first drew ire in some quarters, but within his team there was unmitigated support, with his deputy leading the way. "I totally agree with the decision," he said Tamim, "India would have done the same and since our strength are the spinners, the dew would have been troublesome even if we had made 350 and our spinners couldn't bowl."

Tamim confirmed that it was a collective judgment, calling it a 'team decision'. "We felt bad but we didn't execute our plans. They gave us no chance, played solid cricket," he said.

For the build up to the Ireland game, Tamim believes that bowlers like Shafiqul Islam, who had a woeful game against India, and Abdur Razzak would bounce back. "We have to cut down on the bad balls, simple as that. [Abdur Razzak] Raj bhai and [Shafiqul Islam] Suhaz had some good enough bowlers," he added.

## Tigers praised in India

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi



Despite Bangladesh's 87-run defeat against India in the opening match of the World Cup 2011, the Tigers' run-chase came in for praise from Indian cricket writers who termed it as a "bold" attempt.

"Bangladesh will take immense pride and confidence in their effort [to chase India's mammoth score of 370 for 4], knowing that it could have been a whole lot different had Shakib [Al Hasan, the Bangladesh captain] not called the coin correctly," wrote Indian Express newspaper on Sunday.

"Bangladesh made a bold attempt to chase down the target but went down fighting," said the Times of India.

Openers Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes, Junaid Siddiqui and Shakib came in for praise for their batting who the daily said kept the home team in the game till the half-way stage.

The Indian dailies pointed out how pacer Shanthakumaran Sreesanth was punished by the Bangladeshi openers and said skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni would have to revisit his bowling strategy of playing three pace men.

There was however mixed reaction from the Indian media to Shakib's decision to bowl after winning the toss. While some said it was prompted by the fact that 13 of the previous 16 ODIs in Mirpur were won by sides batting second, others opined that he should have also considered the placid nature of the track at the stadium before deciding to put India into bat.

## Van Gaal wants meaner Bayern

AFP, Munich



Bayern Munich coach Louis van Gaal has said his side must stop giving away possession ahead of their last 16 match against holders Inter Milan in the Champions League on Wednesday.

The defending Bundesliga champions remain 13 points behind leaders Borussia Dortmund, but gave themselves a pre-Champions League boost with a 3-1 win at title-rivals Mainz on Saturday.

Goals by Germany stars Bastian Schweinsteiger and Thomas Mueller put Bayern in control before hot-shot Mario Gomez netted his 18th goal in 21 league matches with time almost up.

Tunisia striker Sami Allagui netted a late consolation goal for the hosts. Ahead of Wednesday's Champions League match at the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza and next Saturday's crucial

German league clash at home to Dortmund, van Gaal said victory had been 'crucial' but there was still improvements to be made.

"That was a crucial victory, I'm very happy, because it's always difficult against Mainz, although we did miss a lot of chances,"

RESULTS  
**Borussia Dortmund 2** (Barrios 39, Gunesch 49-og) St. Pauli 0  
**Hamburg 4** (Petric 42, Guerrero 64, 79, Ben-Hatira 87) Werder Bremen 0  
Hoffenheim 1 (Novakovic 48-og) Cologne 1 (Mohamad 69)  
**Freiburg 2** (Reisinger 43, Cisse 70) VfL Wolfsburg 1 (Helmes 28)  
**Hanover 96 3** (Schlaudraff 17, 57, Abdellaoue 45) Kaiserslautern 0  
Mainz 05 1 (Allagui 84) **Bayern Munich 3** (Schweinsteiger 9, Mueller

said the Dutchman. "We've played very well, created chance after chance, and scored three goals."

"But we gave the ball away unnecessarily far too often, we were very careless in the final quarter of the field. "We know that, and we'll improve. But overall, I'm very satisfied."

## Lloris back, Lisandro out

AFP, Lyon

Lyon's Argentinian star Lisandro Lopez will miss Tuesday's Champions League last 16 first leg match with Real Madrid, it was confirmed on Sunday.

Lopez had been rated as extremely doubtful for the match after he suffered a thigh injury in training on Thursday - though the club denied reports he had picked up the injury when he lashed out at the ball when informed he would not start Friday's league match with Nancy.

Lyon, though, received a boost as France international goalkeeper Hugo Lloris returned to training after missing the 4-0 win over Nancy due to illness.

**Italian Serie A RESULTS**  
**Saturday**  
**Bologna 1** (Paponi 90) Palermo 0  
**Inter Milan 1** (Ranocchia 7) Cagliari 0  
**Sunday**  
**Lecce 2** (Mesbah 32, Bertolacci 48) Juventus 0  
**Chievo 1** (Fernandes 61) **AC Milan 2** (Robinho 25, Pato 82)  
Fiorentina 0 Sampdoria 0  
**Genoa 4** (Palacio 52, 74, Paloschi 68, 85) Roma 3 (Mexes 6, Burdisso 16, Totti 51)  
**Lazio 1** (Hernanes 6) Bari 0  
**Parma 2** (Crespo 64-pen, Palladino 89) Cesena 2 (Rosina 31, Sammarco 79)

## U-23 booters

FROM PAGE 16 will later host them on March 9 in Dhaka.

"Kuwait are better than us both technically and tactically but we will play our game based on counter-attacks and try to play our best football," said assistant coach Saful Bari Titu on the eve of the departure yesterday.

Bangladesh's senior side have so far played twice against their Kuwaiti counterparts and lost both on occasions. The first defeat was in 1973 by 2-1 margin while the second one was a 4-0 defeat in 1986.

**SQUAD**  
Nehal, Sahidul Alam, Saikat Bhowmik, Touhidul Islam Siddique, Mohammad Yusuf, Touhidul Alam Sabuj, Mithun Chowdhury (captain), Alamgir Kabir Rana, Chomrin Rakhain, Monaem Khan Raju, Shahedul Alam, Habibur Rahman Sohag, Naimur Rahman, Mohammad Linkon, Mintu Sheikh, Yamin Munna, Uttam Kumar and Shahkawat Hossain Rony.



Australia pacer Brett Lee tests his balancing skills during a training session at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad on Friday. Australia are to face Zimbabwe in their first World Cup match today.

# Jose keeps up home record

AFP, Madrid



Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho celebrated nine years unbeaten in the league on home soil as his Real Madrid team defeated Levante 2-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday to close to within two points of league leaders Barcelona.

First half goals from French forward Karim Benzema and Portuguese centre-back Ricardo Carvalho helped Real make it a perfect 12 home league wins and keep the pressure on Barcelona in the title race.

It also meant Mourinho extended his personal unbeaten home league run with FC Porto, Chelsea, Inter Milan and Real to nine years with his last league home defeat back on February 23, 2002 when his Porto side lost 3-2 to Beira Mar.

"We don't depend on ourselves and really the pressure is on us in second, not on the team at the top," Mourinho said. "I don't know if I will watch Barcelona v Athletic (Bilbao)

on Sunday. We are travelling (to Lyon) on Monday so perhaps I will eat out with the family."

Mourinho rested Mesut Ozil, Xabi Alonso, and Emmanuel Adebayor with Tuesday's Champions League match in Lyon in mind, but his side were still too strong for a Levante side they had thrashed 8-0 in the Kings Cup.

"We gave a rest to (Mesut)

**RESULTS**  
Valencia 0 Sporting Gijon 0  
**Real Madrid 2** (Benzema 6, Carvalho 40) Levante 0  
Real Zaragoza 0 **Atletico Madrid 1**

Ozil and Xabi (Alonso). Everyone knows they will play against Lyon, who have had 24 hours more rest than us," added Mourinho.

With just six minutes gone Argentine Di Maria dribbled past three defenders before crossing to give Benzema an easy tap-in for only his third league goal of the season.

Di Maria, Cristiano Ronaldo and Marcelo all went close before Madrid got their second from a set-piece five minutes before the break.

Ronaldo floated in a cross from the left and compatriot

Carvalho volleyed home from close range as Levante got their back line all wrong.

Earlier third-placed Valencia missed the chance to pull away from Champions League rivals Villarreal following a disappointing 0-0 home draw with strugglers Sporting Gijon on Saturday.

In other matches, Atletico Madrid ended a run of four consecutive defeats with a 1-0 win at Real Zaragoza on Saturday to move four points off the top six.

Argentine international forward Sergio "Kun" Aguero scored the winning goal on 65 minutes to relieve the mounting pressure on coach Quique Sanchez Flores.

## Soderling wins Marseille Open

AFP, Marseille

Sweden's two-time French Open finalist Robin Soderling won his third tournament of the year here on Sunday, beating unseeded Croat Marin Cilic 6-7 (10/8), 6-3, 6-3 in the final of the Marseille Open.

Soderling, the top seed and world number four, had previously tasted success in Brisbane and Rotterdam.

## SL annihilate

FROM PAGE 18 hamstring problem after bowling only 13 balls.

Jayawardene, who survived two caught behind referral appeals against spinner Jimmy Hansra, upped the tempo by hitting the same bowler for the first six at this ground.

He then clobbered four boundaries in successive overs from Davison, but the veteran Canadian broke the partnership by having Sangakkara caught and bowled.

Sangakkara hit seven fours and a six during his 87-ball knock.

Sri Lanka now face Pakistan in their second match on February 26. Pakistan play Kenya here on Wednesday.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**SRI LANKA:** 332 for 7 (Tharanga 19, Dilshan 50, Sangakkara 92, Jayawardene 100, Mathews 21, Samaraweera 18 not out; Baidwan 2-59, Davison 2-56)

**CANADA:** 122 all out in 36.5 overs (Bagai 22, Cheema 37, Baidwan 16 not out; Kulasekara 3-16, Perera 3-24, Muralidaran 2-38)

**Result:** Sri Lanka won by 210 runs.  
**Man-of-the-match:** Mahela Jayawardene.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

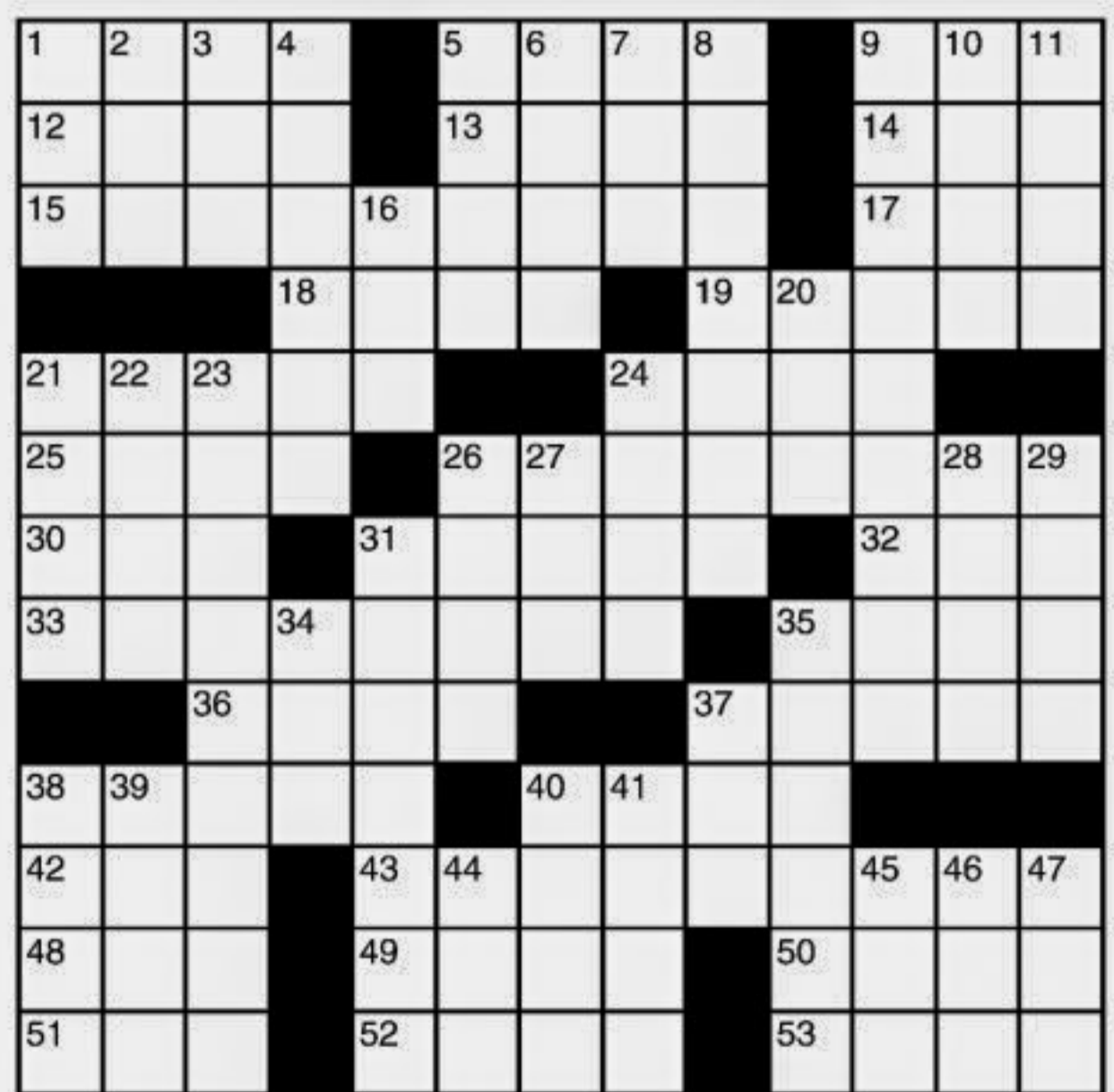
**ACROSS**  
1 Grouch  
5 —  
9 Abby  
12 Old airline initials  
13 Stereo alternative  
14 Fairy-tale villain  
15 Hairpiece  
17 David Lynch TV series  
18 Single  
19 Poet  
21 Elephant's ivory  
24 Station  
24 Fortune's partner  
25 Mideast nation  
26 Sky-walker's story  
30 Next-to-last Greek letter  
31 Minimum  
32 Skater  
33 Babilonia  
33 Three-striper

**DOWN**  
1 Nashville-based cable channel  
2 Tier  
3 Blackbird  
4 Chocolate-coated treat  
5 Active one  
6 "Zounds!"  
7 Noah's boat  
8 Take it from the top  
9 Small car  
10 Flirtatious gesture  
11 A long time

**16 Sajak or Summerall Diggers' grp.**  
**21 Quick swims**  
**22 Gaelic**  
**23 Found partners**  
**24 Rapid**  
**26 Connery or Penn**  
**27 Bronzed, at the beach**  
**28 Carry on**  
**29 Location**  
**31 Hero's hero**  
**34 Day — colors**  
**35 Attractive**  
**37 Adjective suffix**  
**38 Lotion additive**  
**39 Transaction**  
**40 Elmer's prey**  
**41 Help a hood**  
**44 Praise in verse**  
**45 Life story, for short**  
**46 Wapiti**  
**47 Coloring agent**

Solution time: 21 mins.

H I P S O T C L E F  
I N S I G N I A H O Y A  
S K I M M I L K I C E D  
P A P E U C H R E  
T O K E N D A S H  
A V E R G O T M I L K  
P U P S O N I C O E R  
M I L K S O P F R E Y  
L E S T A R E N A  
O T T A W A A N A  
M O O N M I L K M A I D  
E R G O E I T H E R O R  
N E S S R I O D E N Y



## CRYPTOQUIP

OMOLJFB IAMS XK SAXUA IXKZJN

ONMOJN XK F UNBWFXX

MAXM UXWH FBN PFWUANG

LO: "WAN GFHWMK ZFPN."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN WEALTHY

PEOPLE CLEAN ESTATE HOUSES, I GUESS YOU

COULD SAY THEY'RE MINDING THEIR MANORS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals I