

Only 17 turn up at rally for S'kara

AFP, Colombo

A campaign by fans of Sri Lanka's World Cup-losing skipper Kumar Sangakkara to demand his reinstatement ended in a flop Saturday, with only a handful of supporters turning up.

Sangakkara loyalists had organised the demonstration as a Facebook event, with 6,512 fans signing up to attend, but reporters counted only 17 people at Colombo's Independence Square public park.

"It is possible that some of the fans may have gone to another park because of a misunderstanding about the location," an organiser told reporters.

The "peaceful demonstration to take Sanga back to the captaincy" urged supporters to wear blue or white shirts, the colours of the national team, and carry the national flag.

Sangakkara, 33, quit one-day captaincy earlier this week but said he will stay on as Test captain for an interim period for the forthcoming series with England, and possibly Australia.

The wicketkeeper-batsman, currently in India to play in the lucrative Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament, has said he has no plans yet to retire as a player.

Sangakkara's deputy, Mahela Jayawardene, has also given up his position and the three-member team of selectors followed suit, leaving Sri Lankan cricket in limbo.

Kahlin clinches title

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian golfer Kahlin Joshi clinched the title of Runner Group 26th Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship after playing seven under par with a four-day score of 281 at Kurmitola Golf Course in Cantonment yesterday.

Kahlin, who led the table having scored 69, 70 and 69 in the first three rounds, was not up to mark on the final day after scoring one over par 73, but it did not stop him from clinching his first-ever trophy in Bangladesh.

Pakistani Ali Hai, who lifted the trophy in the last edition, became runner-up after scoring a three under par 69 on the final day.

Local golfers Sajib Ali and Jakiruzzaman finished third and fourth respectively.

Independence Day Handball

SPORTS REPORTER

Border Guard of Bangladesh recorded a 35-21 win over Bangladesh Police in the opening match of the Konka Independence Day Handball tournament at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

BGB led the first half 16-11, with Khairuzzaman top-scoring with eight goals.

Nurul Alam Atique, managing director of sponsor Electra Mart, inaugurated the tournament while Bangladesh Handball Federation president AKM Nurul Fazle Bulbul was present.

Bangladesh A

FROM PAGE 16
wickets while right-arm medium fast bowler Andrew Brich took three wickets to cause the damage to the Bangladesh A second innings.

Earlier, South Africa A declared their second innings closed at 312 runs for the loss of six wickets, having started the day on 105 for three, to take an overall lead of 457 runs.

S van Zyl, who resumed the day on 30, hit an unbeaten 101 runs off 165 balls that featured seven boundaries and Heino Kuhn smashed an 83-ball 89 with eight fours and two sixes.

The second and final four-day match will be held at the Maritzburg Oval in Pietermaritzburg from April 13.



Rajasthan Royals skipper Shane Warne delivers a sendoff to JP Duminy after casting the Deccan Chargers left-hander during their IPL match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Royal start by Rajasthan

AFP, Hyderabad

Johan Botha showed rare skill with the bat to guide Rajasthan Royals to an emphatic eight-wicket victory over a listless Deccan Chargers in the Indian Premier League on Saturday.

The South African spinner hit eight fours and a six in his unbeaten 67 off 47 balls as Rajasthan overhauled Deccan's 137-8 with seven balls to spare at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

Botha, a surprise promotion to number three in the batting order, shared 52 runs with veteran India batsman Rahul Dravid (28) and another 58 with New Zealand's Ross Taylor (21 not out).

Earlier, Deccan were off to a confident start after being put in to bat by Rajasthan skipper Shane Warne but lost their way

against Siddharth Trivedi and Amit Singh, each picking three wickets.

Australian spin legend Warne, who led Royals to a surprise title triumph in the inaugural IPL edition in 2008, chipped in with two wickets, including that of dangerman JP Duminy (14).

Kumar Sangakkara's new stint as Deccan skipper got off to a poor start as he edged Trivedi behind the wicket for a duck.

Australian Daniel Christian, one of the most expensive buys in the auction this year with a price tag of 900,000 dollars, hit two sixes in his 19-ball 26 before falling to Trivedi.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DECCAN CHARGERS: 137-8 (Ravi Teja 28, Christian 26; Trivedi 3-15, Singh 3-35)

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 141-2 in 18.5 overs (Botha 67 not out, Dravid 28)

Result: Rajasthan Royals won by 8 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Siddharth Trivedi.

Clash of big guns today

PTI, New Delhi

It will be a 'clash of titans' at the Feroz Shah Kotla when Sachin Tendulkar's Mumbai Indians take on a new-look Delhi Daredevils led by Virender Sehwag in their opening match of the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

There are enough ingredients for a mouth-watering contest as two of the biggest names in Indian cricket will be out to prove their supremacy.

Mumbai Indians, who were the finalists last year, are easily the favourites on paper with Tendulkar, Kieron Pollard, Andrew Symonds ready to take any attack to the cleaners with their murderous approach.

Nat'l Badminton

SPORTS REPORTER

Five players advanced to the pre-quarterfinals of the men's singles event in the Ruchi 31st National Badminton Championship after beating respective rivals in the second round in Panna yesterday.

Lalchad beat Ramjan 2-0, Saifuddin beat Almas 2-0, Parash beat Faruque 2-0, Enayet defeated Leon 2-0 and Joyal defeated Helal 2-0 to move into the pre-quarterfinals.

In the mixed doubles event, Javed and Shapla defeated Alamgir and Putul 2-0, Rehana and Lalchad defeated Sajjad and Nabila 2-0, Enayet and Rojina defeated Peter and Brishti 2-0 and Razu and Elina routed Zashed and Ankhi 2-0 to move into the next round.

Champs' winning start

AFP, Chennai

Chennai Super Kings pulled off a thrilling two-run victory over Kolkata Knight Riders in Friday's opening Indian Premier League Twenty20 match, watched by a capacity crowd and millions on television.

Chasing 154, Kolkata were cruising at 112-2 before losing five wickets for 35 runs to hand the defending champions a last-ball victory at the Chidambaram Stadium, which had hosted World Cup matches only a few days back.

Needing nine runs off the final over bowled by pacesman Tim Southee, Kolkata could manage just six while losing one wicket.

"We took some time to think about the last ball instead of rushing through it," said Southee. "We worked out our options and went for

the right one with the field in mind in the end."

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who led India to World Cup victory last week, hugged his Chennai teammates as cheerleaders danced merrily in the background, marking a rollicking start for the tournament which was hit by scandals last year.

Jacques Kallis top-scored for Chennai with 54 off 42 balls.

Kolkata were playing with just two foreign players with Australia's Brett Lee and Brad Haddin and Bangladesh spinner Shakib Al Hasan set to join the squad only after the end of a three-match one-day series in Dhaka next week.

Srikanth Anirudha starred for Chennai, making a fine 55-ball 64 containing six fours and two sixes after losing his opening partner Murali Vijay in the first over.

Suresh Raina chipped in with a useful 33 and Dhoni carted 29 off 21 balls includ-

ing two sixes in an over by leg-spinner Sarabjit Ladda.

Kolkata, the only team to have not made the semi-finals in any of the three previous IPL editions, were sloppy in the field with Yusuf Pathan grassing two simple catches and Eoin Morgan another at deep midwicket. A glitzy opening ceremony earlier kickstarted the cricket carnival with superstar and Kolkata owner Shah Rukh Khan grooving to popular Bollywood numbers amid wild cheers from nearly 40,000 delirious fans.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 153 for 4 (Anirudha 64, Raina 33, Dhoni 29; Kallis 2-34, Pathan 1-19)

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 151 for 7 (Kallis 54, Bisla 27, Tiwary 27; Raina 1-3, Jakati 1-26, Ashwin 1-26)

Result: Chennai won by 2 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Srikanth Anirudha.

Ghosts return for a day

FROM PAGE 16

Shakib: No, you can't ask me questions in this way. How can I tell you if you ask me like this?

Question: What was your thinking behind...
Shakib: You are not asking things the way it should be.

The realistic approach after your batting unit relinquished a challenge should have been grace, or at the very least, calmness. Graeme Smith has to regularly manage his mouth when reporters use the word "chokers". Mahendra Singh Dhoni handles the largest media with a smile on his face while Shahid Afridi deflects vitriol with comedy.

In this day and age of media training, Shakib looks to have forgotten the catch-phrases or the dead-bat approach. Instead, he goes after reporters much like he used to attack pace bowlers last year. As captain of the national cricket team, Shakib has fine command of on-field proceedings.

But once again, Shakib has showed how hopeless he is at handling things off the field, a smudge that also falls on the thorny face of the cricket board.

Some say that the BCB, as a professional setup, has lost control. Only a handful of directors now dictate terms with strong claims that the 14-member team selected for this series did not have anything to do with the selection committee.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's inclusion was not done by cricketers hands nor for cricketing purposes. How else would one explain a half-fit, mentally down pace bowler sharing the new ball in an international match?

It is perceived wrong to blame the organisers for a batting collapse or for out-of-form batsmen. But trouble, like flood water, seeps through.

Right now it seems another calamity, like Shakib's heated exchange yesterday, is just around the corner.

Pune to make IPL debut

PTI, Mumbai

After a stunning all-round show for triumphant Team India in the World Cup, Yuvraj Singh is all set to lead debutantes Pune Warriors in the fourth Indian Premier League against Kings XI Punjab at the D Y Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on Sunday.

The talented left-hander, who received the man of the tournament award in the World Cup for his superb display, has to put behind those heady feelings and celebrations and inspire his team to a dream debut against his former franchise outfit tomorrow.

Yuvraj has, at his command, what on paper appears to be a good and balanced outfit. But injuries to key bowlers, India's Cup-winning member Ashish Nehra and Angelo Matthews of Sri Lanka, present him with a challenge to shuffle his attack.

BD & Zim to blame?

Cricket

PTI, Karachi

Bangladesh and Zimbabwe played an influential role in keeping the Associate teams out of the next 2015 World Cup, sources have claimed.

Sources aware of the developments at the International Cricket Council meetings in India said that both the lower-placed full members of the ICC had pushed for restricting the next World Cup to just the 10 full member teams.

In the just concluded 2011 World Cup, 14 teams competed, leading to a debate on whether the ICC was reducing the importance of the event by allowing four Associate teams.

The contention was that due to the participation of the weaker teams from the Affiliate nations, a lot of one-sided matches were played.

"Basically the format of having a qualification process for four teams to qualify for the World Cup was discussed at the recent meetings and Bangladesh and Zimbabwe were not keen on having a qualification process," one source said.

The source said while the ICC would have given direct entries to the top six or eight

teams in the World Cup the remaining four places would have been completed through the qualification process.

"Apparently Bangladesh and Zimbabwe were not comfortable with this situation and supported having a straight 10-team format for the next World Cup and got support of other boards as well on this front," the source added.

But the source said that the format for the 2015 World Cup could still be debated and discussed at future ICC meetings due to growing support for giving associate teams like Ireland, which impressed in the just concluded event.

"This time the ICC officials and even the members of the other boards were so busy with the World Cup knockout matches and functions that the executive board meeting didn't last long when it was held in Mumbai," the source said.

"Even the future tours programme that was to be discussed couldn't be debated upon at the meeting due to the busy schedule of the board members in the World Cup," he said.

Ireland has vociferously opposed the ICC move to keep out Associate members from the next World Cup while the ICC has talked about having a qualification process for the 2019 edition.

'Tendulkar getting better each day'

Cricket

PTI, London

Iconic Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar has been "unbelievable" in the last two years and keeps getting better with age, feels 1983 World Cup-winning captain Kapil Dev.

"Sachin in the last two years has been unbelievable. This genius is other way around, more he gets older more he plays like a champion," Kapil Dev, known as the Haryana Hurricane, told members of the Indian Journalists Association here on Friday evening.

The former all-rounder was all praise for the current Indian team under Mahendra Singh Dhoni which won the World Cup last week in Mumbai.

"India has a team who can beat anybody. They still are not playing to their potential," he said.

"The Indian team is far better than any other team, without doubt."

Asked about the secret of the Indian

team's success, Kapil said, "India's growth is seen in every championship - Commonwealth, Asian games and World Cup. We are definitely flying and flying very well and shining. Now India is the World Champions, besides being No 1 Team in the world in Test cricket."

"We have put money on the table and we have shown that we can play well too. That is what World Cup has done to India. Now only thing is when you reach the top position, your attitude changes."

Asked why the team had faltered in the run up to the final, Kapil said, "When you have such a strong batting line up, complacency sometimes sets in. Despite that they were winning. They are far, far better players than they performed. Even Dhoni fired only when it needed most, in the final."

The former pacer was also lavish in his praise for India's dashing opener Virender Sehwag.

"He is a ruthless player. He changes the dynamics of the cricket altogether. He keeps the game so simple."

Independence Cup from today

FROM PAGE 16

Sri Lankan coach Packeer Ali.

"However, we will certainly go for the tournament title as the players have had enough time -- one month -- to recover from their tiredness," said Ali.

Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu expressed similar views.

"A team like Abahani that always plays for the title will always be under pressure to get in the proper mindset for such a tournament at such short notice. While we obviously will go there to bring the season's second title home, for us the league is more important than the tournament," said Rupu.

The scenario, though, is totally different for teams that are not in the league race;

they are expected to take the Independence Cup seriously in a bid to add some silverware to their trophy cabinets.

Mid-table teams like Mohammedan, Brothers Union, Arambagh and Rahmatganj, are not as concerned as the table-toppers since they have a slim chance of climbing up the table.

"It would have been better had the Independence Cup started two weeks before as all teams are out of competitive match play for one month. However, we take the tournament seriously and the target is to play the final," said Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik.

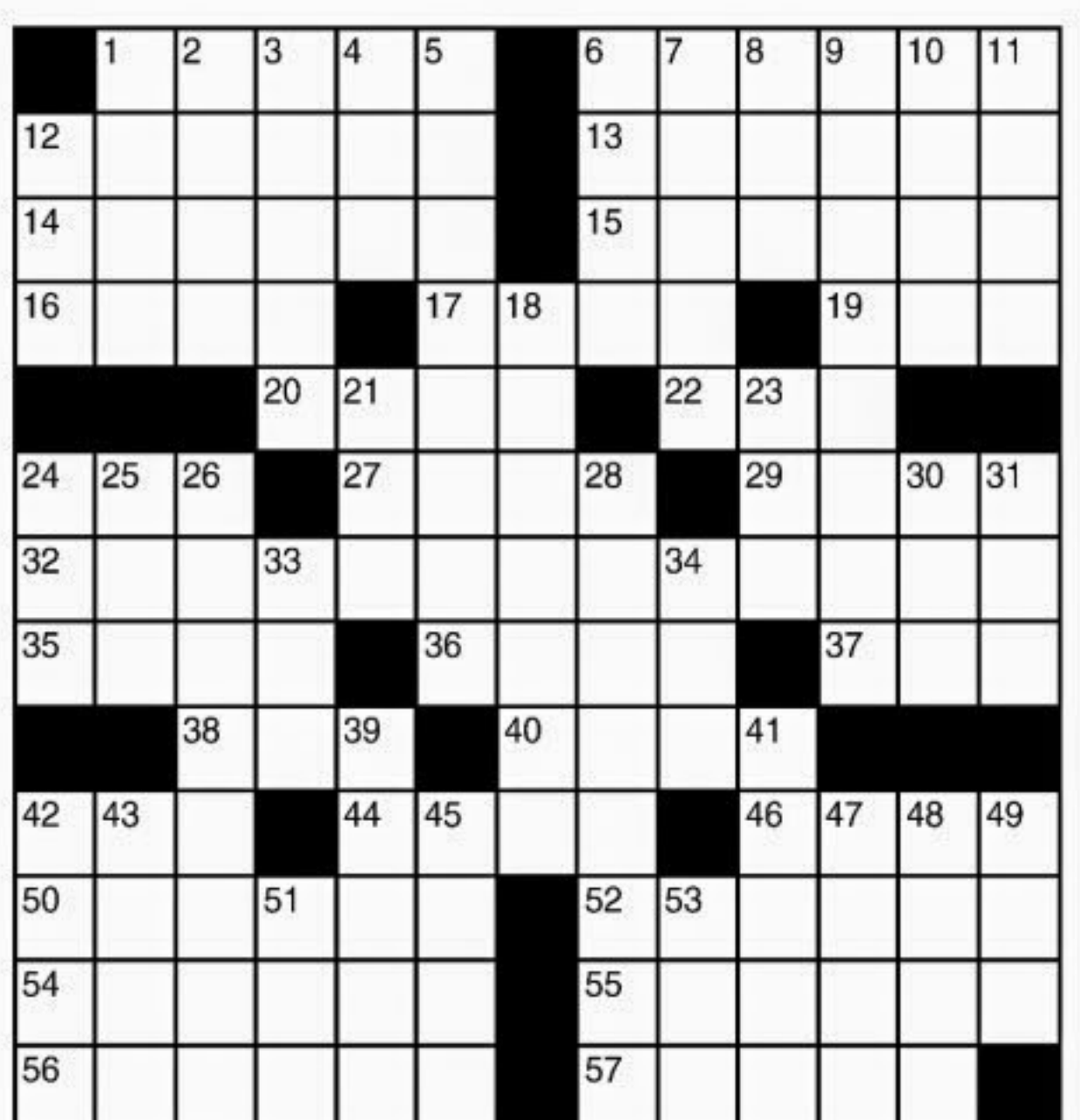
Sheikh Jamal take on Farashganj SC while Abahani face Chittagong Mohammedan in the opening day's matches.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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|---|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 37 Put into words | DOWN | 21 Feline |
| 1 Burn with steam | 38 Talk on and on | 1 Old portico | 23 Petrol |
| 6 Drift ashore | 40 Moreover | 2 — d'état | 24 Mensa stats |
| 12 Unimprovable place | 42 Shooter ammo | 3 Church sections | 25 Wish otherwise |
| 13 Relaxed | 44 Nevada city | 4 Golfer's concern | 26 Outback hopper |
| 14 Reveille, e.g. | 46 Mail carriers (Abbr.) | 5 Primitive period | 28 Having a job |
| 15 Replacement during repair | 50 Leno's successor, and vice versa | 6 Partition | 30 Meadow |
| 16 Scruff | 52 Northerner | 7 Expiate | 31 Parched |
| 17 Oven | 54 Gizmo | 8 Vast expanse | 33 Vitamin no. |
| 19 Banned bug spray | 55 Confine, in a way | 9 Gifts to beggars | 34 Fool |
| 20 Wound cover | 56 Hairnets | 10 Second-hand | 39 Moolah |
| 22 Id counterpart | 57 Regiments | 11 Saucy vessel | 41 Cup fraction |
| 24 Annoy | | 12 Grecian | 42 Spacecraft compartments |
| 27 Pulitzer winner James "— Lang Syne" | | 18 Basque, e.g. | 43 Black, in verse |
| 29 "— Lang Syne" | | | 45 Make — meet |
| 32 Officer in charge of provisions | | | 47 Old card game |
| 35 Transmit | | | 48 Riddle scorers |
| 36 Tastes the tea | | | 49 Witness |

Solution time: 27 mins.

F O P F L O G H A R M
E M U L A V E A R I A
T E M P O R A L R E D S
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A D O T E M P T S
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CRYPTOQUIP

G F C L D M U C K J T D R M D D S H M
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E N V F K U : I V U K D M H S L C F D V M K U .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: RETAILER SELLING ALL SORTS OF EQUIPMENT FOR A POPULAR COURT GAME: THE MERCHANT OF TENNIS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals F