

Veeru out of IPL: report

AFP, New Delhi

Prolific opener Virender Sehwag has been ruled out of the remainder of the Indian Premier League (IPL) with a shoulder injury, reports said Monday, depriving the event of its current top scorer.

Sehwag, captain of the Delhi Daredevils franchise, has decided to undergo surgery as soon as possible and could also miss India's tour of the West Indies starting next month.

"It will be a miracle if he plays another match," PB Vanchi, director of GMR Sports, owners of Delhi Daredevils, was quoted as saying by the cricinfo website.

Sehwag, 32, currently leads the IPL batting charts with 424 runs from 11 matches, the highlight being a sizzling century against Deccan Chargers on Thursday.

With three league games to go, Delhi are seventh in the points table and have a slim chance of making it to the knockout round.

"He has a problem. In the last match too, he struggled. The BCCI [Board of Control for Cricket in India] is making the arrangements for the surgery," Vanchi said.

"They are waiting for a date. If he needs the surgery we are not going to be coming in the way."

Sehwag has been troubled by the injury for some time and was declared fit for the World Cup only after undergoing intensive rehabilitation in Bangalore.

Though he did not bowl during India's title-winning World Cup campaign, Sehwag finished seventh in the run charts in the tournament, including a century in the opening game against Bangladesh.

Sehwag has scored 7,694 Test runs and another 7,760 in one-dayers, averaging more than a run a ball in the shorter format.

INDEPENDENCE CUP HOCKEY Navy, S Bima sail through

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Navy and Shadharan Bima moved into the semifinals of the Independence Cup hockey tournament, beating their respective rivals at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Navy came from behind to register a massive 10-1 win over Armanitola Juniors while Shadharan Bima were declared victors over Bangladesh Air Force by a 2-0 margin after refusing to play following the umpires' ruling out of the match's first goal, which they struck in the 23rd minute.

Armanitola went ahead with a first-minute strike from Rakib but they could not restrict Navy's goal feast after conceding five goals in the first half.

Belal scored three, Rimon and Shihab struck two goals each while Shohag, Murtaza and Yakub scored one goal apiece for Navy.

SLC polls ordered

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) is set for an overhaul after the Supreme Court on Monday ordered that the island's richest sporting body, which has been run by an interim committee since 2004, should be elected.

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court asked the sports ministry to hold elections and make the appointments by July 6, a court official said.

The sports minister had been using his powers till now to appoint officials to the interim committee.

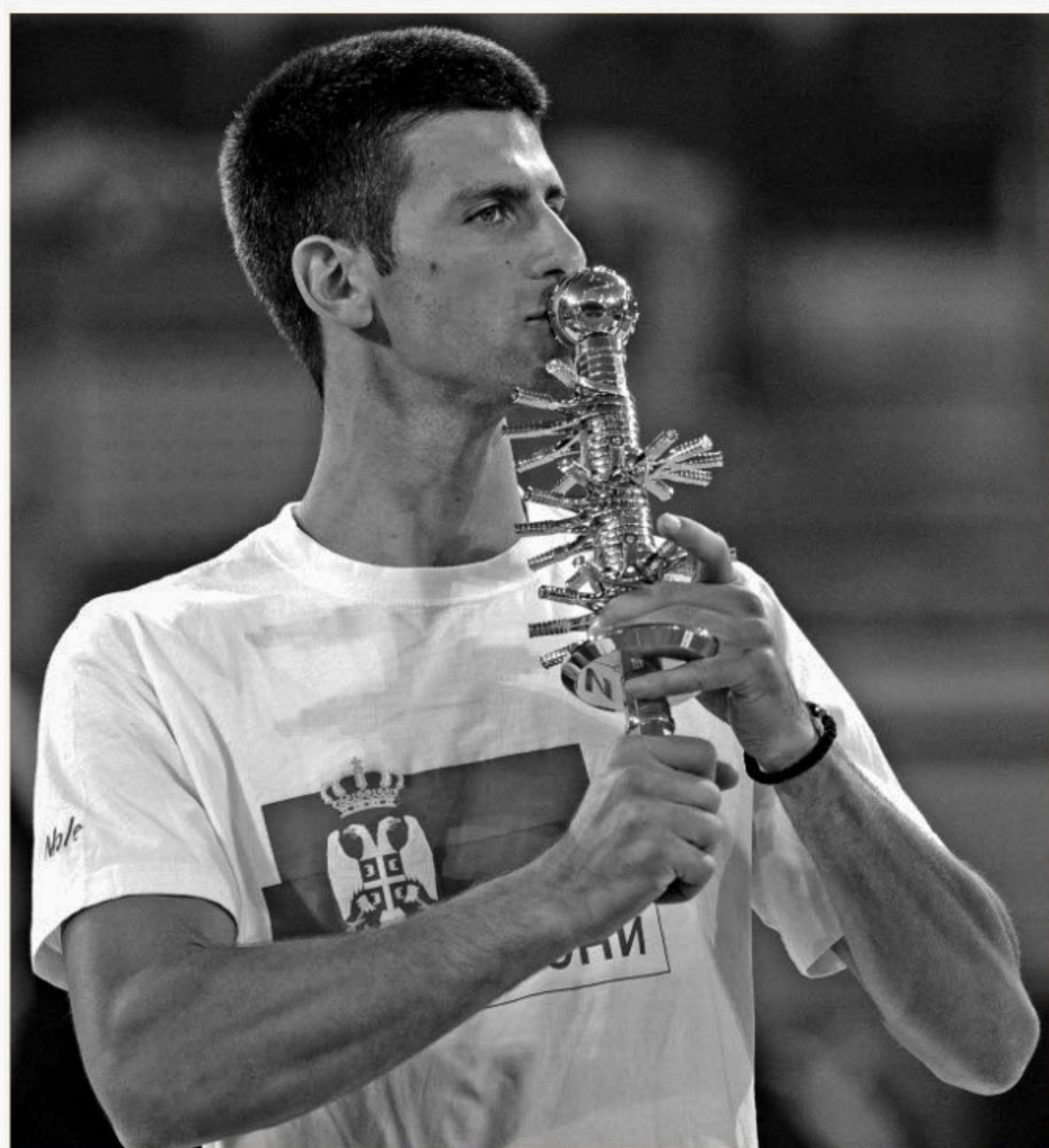


PHOTO: AFP

Serbian world No.2 tennis star Novak Djokovic kisses his trophy after defeating Spanish world No.1 Rafael Nadal in the final of the Madrid Masters in Madrid on Sunday.

Novak nullifies Rafa

Tennis

AFP, Madrid

Novak Djokovic extended his victory streak to 34 matches when he stunned Rafael Nadal 7-5, 6-4 to win the Madrid Masters on Sunday, handing the world number one Spaniard his first loss on clay in two years.

Nadal, the defending champion, was last beaten on the surface in the French Open fourth round by Robin Soderling in May, 2009, making it 37 matches without a defeat.

World number two Djokovic has now won three straight Masters 1000 trophies over Nadal after defeating the number one at Indian Wells and Miami in March and April respectively.

Sunday's win was also the Serb's first over Nadal on clay after losing their nine previous meetings on the dirt.

His winning streak is made up of 32 matches in 2011 and his two Davis Cup victories in December.

Djokovic's start is the best to a season since John McEnroe in 1984 when he went 42-0.

He suffered his last loss against Roger Federer in the semifinals at the World Tour Finals in London on November 27, 2010.

"I walked onto the court thinking I could win," said Djokovic. "I'm very happy with the way I played. This court was fast today, and I took advantage."

Djokovic had kind words for a distraught

Nadal, who faces an immediate turnaround on court with the clay season continuing in Rome next week before the start of the French Open on May 22.

"It's always a pleasure playing you -- you are a great champion."

Nadal said he had been hoping to be "third time lucky" after his losses to Djokovic in Indian Wells and Miami.

"I'll have to keep working to try and beat you," said the world number one. "You are really off to a great start of the season."

Djokovic constructed his two-hour, 17-minute win through 27 winners and 26 unforced errors, while Nadal, playing in front of 15,000 of his home public at the Caya Magica, had just 17 winners.

With his eighth career Masters triumph, Djokovic has lifted trophies at six different venues in the elite series.

Djokovic traded away to a stunning 4-0 lead with two breaks of Nadal which left the Spaniard on the back foot.

Nadal retrieved them by the ninth game when he pulled to 4-5.

He then saved two set points in the tenth game, levelling for 5-5 before Djokovic nosed ahead by taking the set on a net cord winner after 69 minutes.

The pair traded breaks in the first two games of the second before the Serb settled, finally earning the triumph with a concluding break of the top seed.

Nadal saved one match point put then hit a backhand wide on a second in the final game.

Fidel fit, ready for comeback

Cricket

CRICINFO

Fidel Edwards, the West Indies fast bowler, is confident that he is ready for a return to international cricket after nearly two years out.

Edwards, 29, made his first-class comeback in February after back surgery had kept him on the sidelines since the 2009 Champions League, and he was named for this week's two-day practice match in Guyana.

That could pave the way for Edwards to play in the first Test against Pakistan, starting on Thursday. He has had a successful comeback for Barbados in the regional four-day competition, and collected 22 wickets at 23.77 from his six outings.

"I'm very happy to be back," Edwards said. "I spent a long time out but I've made a full recovery and my body is ready to play five-day cricket again. I did a lot of good work with my trainer and the physio in Barbados and they were tremendous help to me during my comeback period."

"I felt I bowled well for Barbados and that helped me. I spent some time at the camp in Barbados before the series started and I felt comfortable. I did some work with the head coach (Ottis Gibson) during the camp and things have been going smoothly."

"I'm really looking ahead to what is upcoming. This series against Pakistan is a

good place to start. I'm focussed and I'm looking to stay fit and strong. I'm looking to get wickets and help the West Indies to success. There is a lot to play for and I'm looking forward."

"I have some goals I'm looking to achieve and one thing is to help the team win and move back up the ladder. This is vitally important to the team overall and to the supporters of West Indies cricket."

West Indies are currently seventh on the Test rankings table, but they will move up to sixth if they win the two-match series against Pakistan. However, they will need to turn around some poor form in the longest format; West Indies haven't won any of their past 17 Tests, a winless streak stretching back to February 2009.

ICC's crucial

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former England captain Tony Greig, who led the World XI in WSC, has said: "That [white] ball created monstrous problems for us, and those problems, to my way of thinking, still exist."

The ICC's cricket committee, whose members include former Australia captain Mark Taylor and former South Africa coach Gary Kirsten, will also consider the use of artificial lights to extend play in Test matches and whether injured batsmen should still be allowed to use a runner in international matches.

Farzana ton helps BKSP cruise

SPORTS REPORTER

Farzana Haque struck a century in BKSP's crushing 264-run victory over Indira Road at the Gulshan Youth Club ground in the 3rd Women's Club Cup cricket tournament yesterday.

Batting first, BKSP amassed 323-6 in 40 overs with Farzana hammering a 90-ball 101 that had fourteen boundaries. Indira Road were pathetic in reply, scoring only 59 runs before being bowled out in the 16th over.

In the day's other match, Mohammedan Sporting Club beat Orient Sporting Club by nine wickets at the City Club ground.

Rubic sets

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professional league and it certainly will hinder the formation of a good squad."

Rubic also believes that Bangladesh is a better side than Pakistan and have a good chance to qualify for the next round. Bangladesh will take on Pakistan on June 29 before playing the away match on July 3.

The 46-year-old coach was also excited to learn of a friendly match between Argentina and Nigeria to be held in Bangladesh.

"I learnt of it today (Monday) that Argentina will come here to play a match against Nigeria and I believe a change will come in Bangladesh football through this game."

Pak players in for SLPL

Cricket

CRICINFO

Up to eight top Pakistan players are likely to be in the running to play in the first edition of the Sri Lanka Premier League (SLPL), allowing players from that country to finally benefit from some of the riches on offer in lucrative Twenty20 leagues around the world. The SLPL, likely to feature players from around the world, is scheduled to be held at the end of July and beginning of August this year, a window in the FTP where Pakistan has no commitments currently.

Both Pakistan captains -- Shahid Afridi from the limited-overs side and Misbahul Haq from the Test side -- have been approached, as have Shoaib Akhtar, Shoaib Malik and Umar Gul.

The players were first approached directly by the organisers of the tournament, the Singapore-based Somerset Entertainment, something that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) wasn't pleased about. But eventually the organisers contacted the PCB asking for clearance for the players to participate and they have been given a posi-

itive response. "We told them, in theory, we have no issues with our players taking part in the tournament," a senior board official told ESPNcricinfo. "The first priority of each player of course will be Pakistan's international commitments and if there is something on in that window and the player concerned is picked for Pakistan, that commitment will take priority."

The participation of Malik will depend on whether he will be cleared by the PCB's integrity committee, a condition which has kept him out of the national side since last summer.

Players from Pakistan are currently the only ones from the Test-playing nations not to be taking part in the richest domestic Twenty20 league of all, the Indian Premier League (IPL). Though a number of players took part in the inaugural season of the tournament, in 2008, deteriorating political ties between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the Mumbai terror attacks later that year have led to them missing out since, much to the chagrin of the players themselves, some of whom can rightly claim to be among the best international players in the format. The players were even put into the auction for the third season of the IPL but no

franchise was willing to buy them, given the potentially tricky diplomatic and logistical issues that could have emerged.

For similar reasons, no Pakistan domestic side has taken part in the equally lucrative IPL spin-off, the Champions League, which brings together the best domestic Twenty20 sides from around the world. A few Pakistan players, including Afridi, Gul and Navedul Hasan have taken part in the Australian Big Bash but the timing of it generally tends to clash with international commitments and so curtails participation.

There is also regular participation in Twenty20 competitions in England, as well as longer-term county contracts but by and large, Pakistan's players have missed out on the bonanza of the last few years. "We are aware that our players have not benefitted as others around the world have done, though much of this is out of our hands," the official said. "This will be a good opportunity, if things work out, for them to take part."

Though full financial details of the league are yet to emerge, one estimate suggests that there will be three salary tabs with the highest at 30,000 dollars.

Mymensingh, Comilla into semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER

Comilla and Mymensingh moved into the semifinals of the 31st Inter-district Cricket Championship through wins in their group stage matches yesterday.

In Jessore, Mymensingh beat Khulna by 17 runs with Arafat Salahuddin starring with the bat in a low-scoring affair. Batting first, Mymensingh made 161-8 in 50 overs with the portly all-rounder making an unbeaten 60.

Khulna were bowled out for 144 runs in 46.5 overs, Mosaddek and Naymur taking three wickets each.

Away at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Comilla trounced Khulna by seven wickets. Swapan struck an unbeaten 91 while Mamun scored 62 as Comilla reached the target of 211-3 in 33.5 overs.

Earlier, discarded national cricketer Faisal Hossain took four wickets as Kushtia made 210 all out in 50 overs.

Pilot's final

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also balanced as national players like Mohammad Ashraf and Mahmudullah Riyad will play. We lost the second round game but we came on top in the first and I firmly believe that the final will be a different ball game," added Sharif.

Petra takes Madrid title

Tennis

AFP, Madrid

Petra Kvitova defeated Victoria Azarenka 7-6, 6-4 on Sunday to win the ATP-WTA Madrid Masters women's title and earn herself a place in the top 10 in the world rankings.

The upset victory in one hour, 42 minutes prevented the Belarus player from winning her third title of the spring campaign after winning Miami and Marbella back-to-back.

Azarenka, ranked fifth, has been one of the form players of recent months, and still stands a respectable 19-3 on the season.

"I played some of my best tennis today. This has been an amazing tournament for me," said Kvitova, the only left-hander in the top 10 and ranked 62nd a year ago.

Her resounding victory further cemented her reputation as a giant killer, with Azarenka her ninth career top 10 victim.

The Kvitova list of wins also includes successes over Venus Williams (2008 Memphis), Dinara Safina (2009 US Open), Caroline Wozniacki (2010 Wimbledon), Samantha Stosur (2011 Australian Open) and Kim Clijsters (2011 Paris Indoors).

On Sunday, Kvitova dominated with 40 winners to 10 for Azarenka.

PCB asks Afridi to explain

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday demanded Shahid Afridi explain why he criticised coach Waqar Younis, saying the one-day captain had violated the code of conduct.

Afridi criticised Younis for interfering in team selection during the 3-2 one-day series win over the West Indies.

"Waqar interferes with the team selec-

tion and everyone should do his job," Afridi said on his return from the West Indies Sunday.

"PCB has taken notice of the statements made by Afridi in the media about the differences within the tour management in West Indies. It is a violation of code of conduct on part of Afridi," the PCB said.

"An explanation has been sought from him for the reasons to make such statements publicly. PCB will take appropriate action after submission of the tour-report at the conclusion of the tour."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Solution time: 27 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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BAKED TREATS, I NAMED HER "COOKIE DOE."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals O