



Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq dives to catch a ball during practice at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday, ahead of the first ODI against England here today.

PHOTO: AFP

## ASIAN BEACH GAMES Bangladesh to take part

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will take part in the 3rd Asian Beach Games to be held in China from June 16-22.

Bangladesh will participate in five disciplines -- basketball, volleyball, football, women's kabaddi and roller skating, said an official of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday.

Bangladesh had won a bronze medal in women's kabaddi in the 2nd Asian Beach Games in Mascot in 2010 and a gold in football in the first South Asian Beach Games in Sri Lanka last year.

## Blake starts with a bang

AFP, Kingston

World 100-metre champion Yohan Blake opened his season with a 400m personal best on Saturday at the Camperdown Classic while 100m world-record holder Usain Bolt skipped the Jamaican meet.

Blake's time of 46.49 seconds was .2 of a second behind winner Allodin Fothergill, a member of Jamaica's third-place 4x400m team at last year's World Championships in Daegu, South Korea.

Blake, who ran very easily for the first 200 metres, faded in the homestretch with Fothergill moving past in the last 10 metres for the victory.

"Alodin Fothergill is a 400m man so he got the better of me," Blake said. "I could have run faster if I had gotten out better. Today was just my first 400m so if I have one more, I will go faster."

"It's a wonderful feeling and I ran a personal best, which means the season is going quite well."

Blake warned his sprint rivals that he is "much, much stronger this year and faster. Running 46.4 in my first outing is wonderful."

Just as Blake skipped the 100, training partner and reigning Olympic champion Bolt passed on the entire meet after saying for more than a month that he planned to compete.

## Local snippets

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### Ball boy banned

A ball boy of Sheikh Russel KC has been suspended for the season after he hurled a water bottle at referee Tayeb Hasan after their Bangladesh Premier League encounter against Rahmatganj MFS.

The decision was taken on Saturday at the disciplinary committee which also served a show cause notice to Sheikh Russel KC on why monetary punishment should not be

## Meeting

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The BFF boss informed that they need at least Tk 3 crore to make the Sylhet football academy fully prepared for use it and then will need Tk 75 to 80 lakhs a month for its maintenance.

## USA send Swiss packing



AP, Fribourg

Given a supremely tough draw in the Davis Cup, the United States is off to an exhilarating start.

They swept Roger Federer and Switzerland in the first round, with Mardy Fish and Mike Bryan winning the doubles match on clay, a surface selected by Federer to exploit what was perceived as an American weakness.

But Fish and Bryan, paired for the first time in more than three years, were clearly up for this challenge on Saturday before a Swiss crowd that at times turned angry. They defeated Federer and Stanislas Wawrinka, the reigning Olympic champions, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-3.

"This is probably going down as one of the most memorable [wins]," said Bryan, who played on in the 2007 winning team.

The doubles victory gave the Americans a 3-0 lead in the best-of-five, first-round series. Fish and Bryan built on the momentum from Friday's riveting singles matches when John Isner stunned Federer in four sets and Fish outlasted Wawrinka in five.

"This was a big step forward for our guys to come in here and play against a team of this calibre," US captain Jim Courier said. "Our attitude remained strong all the while and we were ready for whatever. That is what you need for any road tie."

Handling partisan fans is among those demands, and sections of the crowd of some 7,000 were not pleased in the least when Bryan hit Federer and Wawrinka with volleys at close range.

The US will again be on the road for the next round of Davis Cup, an April 6-8 quarterfinal against France or Canada. France lead that match 2-1 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

If the favored French advance, they also would likely choose to put the US on clay

## Azarenka same as before



AFP, Doha

Victoria Azarenka says nothing much has changed for her since she achieved the twin feats of becoming the first player from Belarus to win a Grand Slam tournament and take the world number one ranking.

Azarenka has had a dream run since the beginning of the year during which she won the Australian Open and dethroned Caroline Wozniacki as the world's top ranked player.

But she reckons that apart from the extra attention she is receiving everywhere she pretty much remains the same person.

"My life has not changed suddenly after winning the Australian Open," Azarenka told journalists at the draw for Qatar Open beginning Monday.

"Surely, I am getting much more attention since becoming the world number one ranking and the Australian Open, but essentially I am

## Cool MS clinches win

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shot of the match was played by him," Gambhir said.

"He has done a fantastic job, he has always been a fantastic finisher, that is his game plan."

Australia was left rueing a host of missed run out opportunities during an unusually sloppy fielding performance.

The missed run outs included a regulation chance to remove Dhoni in the 48th over squandered by Clarke, who appeared to be hampered by a right hamstring injury in the last 10 overs of the Indian innings.

Clarke left the field for the 43rd over and regularly clutched at his hamstring when he returned, placing him in doubt for the upcoming matches.

In the Australian innings, there were half-centuries for David Hussey (72) and debu-

tant Peter Forrest (66).

Young Umesh Yadav was the best of the Indian bowlers, picking up two wickets at a cost of 49 runs from his 10 overs.

### SCOREBOARD

#### AUSTRALIA

Warner run out 18  
Ponting c Kohli b Vinay 6  
Clarke b Yadav 38  
Forrest c Vinay b Yadav 66  
D Hussey c Sehwaag b Zaheer 72  
Christian run out 39  
Wade b Vinay 16  
Harris not out 2  
McKay run out 3  
Extras: (lb-4, w-4, nb-1) 9  
Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs) 269  
Did not bat: Starc, Doherty  
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-53, 3-81, 4-179, 5-235, 6-254, 7-265, 8-269

#### Bowler

Zaheer 10 0 46 1  
Vinay 10 1 58 2

Jadeja 10 0 50 0  
Yadav 10 1 49 2  
Ashwin 8 0 47 0  
Sharma 2 0 15 0

#### INDIA

Gambhir lbw McKay 92  
Sehwaag c Hussey b McKay 20  
Kohli c Forrest b McKay 18  
Sharma c Starc b Harris 33  
Raina b Doherty 38  
Dhoni not out 44  
Jadeja c Ponting b Doherty 12  
Ashwin not out 1  
Extras: (lb-2, w-9, nb-1) 239, 6-257  
Total: (For 6 wkts in 49.4 overs) 270  
Did not bat: Vinay, Zaheer, Yadav  
Fall of wickets: 1-52, 2-90, 3-166, 4-178, 5-239, 6-257

#### Bowler

Harris 10 0 57 1  
Starc 8 0 49 0  
McKay 9.4 1 53 3  
Christian 10 0 45 0  
Hussey 3 0 13 0  
Doherty 9 0 51 2

instead of faster hard courts. The winner would progress to an away semifinal, probably against defending champion Spain and Rafael Nadal, the greatest player of all on the slowed red dust.

In the six other first-round series in the World Group, three other nations completed 3-0 sweeps Saturday: Czech Republic (v Italy), Spain (v Kazakhstan) and Argentina (v Germany). Ahead 2-1 are Japan (v Croatia), Serbia (v Sweden) and Austria (v Russia).

The US produced the upset of the round despite owning a higher Davis Cup ranking than Switzerland.

"They did really well and got the victory they deserved," Federer said. "We did have our chances but maybe they were just a touch better than us again today."

Later, speaking in French to Swiss media, Federer appeared less gracious. He claimed not to be too disappointed while pointing a finger at Wawrinka, who slumped back in his chair looking every inch the junior partner in the relationship.

Fish and Bryan certainly seized every opportunity to exploit Wawrinka's errors. His serve was broken in the second when he twice double-faulted before Fish hit a rare crosscourt winner from the baseline. In the third, Wawrinka hit back-to-back wayward volleys to drop serve.

As tension rose in the sold-out arena, Bryan upset the fans in the next game when he made Federer yelp with pain with a forehand volley that struck his leg.

On Federer's serve, the US held two set points and Bryan's volley down the middle split the Swiss pair. Bryan's double-fist pump celebration drew more whistles from Swiss fans.

Bryan became the villain again when he struck Wawrinka in the midriff with a volley in the opening game of the fourth set. Bryan's rapid apologies each time failed to quell the fans' frustration.

the same person, the same player," Azarenka added.

Azarenka knows that by winning the Australian Open to go with her top ranked status she has avoided the dreaded question that players like Wozniacki, Dinara Safina and Jelena Jankovic had to face often at press conferences when they were ranked number one without having a Grand Slam title to account for.

But at the same time she is aware that more would be expected of her.

"Obviously my goal is to win as many tournaments I can this year, hopefully another Grand Slam," she said.

"Surely there is pressure because people would now have more expectations from me, but I consider that as a challenge."

With all three wild cards and five of the eight qualifiers in her half of the draw, the toughest challenge she may face is from Italian Francesca Schiavone in the quarterfinals and a possible meeting with Agnieszka Radwanska in the semifinals.

# England bid to begin anew

## First ODI against Pakistan today



AFP, Abu Dhabi

England will bid to put their woeful showing in the Test series behind them when they take on Pakistan in the four-match one-day series which kicks off here on Monday, captain Alastair Cook said Sunday.

Pakistan blanked England 3-0 in Tests on the back of superb performance from their spinners with Saeed Ajmal (24 wickets), Abdul Rehman (19) and Mohammad Hafeez (five) plaguing rival batsmen no end.

Pakistan have been further boosted by the return of leg-spinner Shahid Afridi who took five wickets in their seven-wicket win in the lead-up match against Afghanistan in Sharjah on Friday.

Cook, who took over as captain after the 2011 World Cup, suffered a 5-0 thrashing in India but hoped that loss and defeat in Tests against Pakistan

were forgotten.

"It's been a tough five weeks as a Test tour but this is now a different, fresh side and hopefully we can bring that enthusiasm into the game tomorrow," said Cook on Sunday.

"It was a while ago (losing to India) but we tried as hard as we could and we came up short against India. There's no shame in that but there will be shame if we don't learn from that."

Cook hoped his team would better cope with Pakistan's spinners.

"Certainly the one-day game dictates you have to be more positive and we're not going to have men around the bat all the time so it changes your mentality as a batter, it frees you up," he said.

Cook said Pakistan were deservedly high on confidence.

Pakistan may counter England's ploy of using Pietersen at the top by opening the bowling with left-arm Rehman. Rehman opened the bowling in a World Cup match against Australia last year.

Misbah said his team was confident after winning the Tests, but starts afresh in one-days.

The remaining matches will be played in Abu Dhabi (February 15) Dubai (February 18 and 21). The teams will also play three Twenty20 internationals in Dubai (February 23 and 25) and Abu Dhabi (February 27).

### SQUADS

**PAKISTAN** (from): Misbahul Haq (captain), Younis Khan, Shahid Afridi, Mohammad Hafeez, Imran Farhat, Umar Akmal, Asad Shafiq, Adnan Akmal, Umar Gul, Junaid Khan, Aizaz Cheema, Saeed Ajmal, Abdul Rehman, Wahab Riaz, Azhar Ali, Hammad Azam, Shoaib Malik.

**ENGLAND** (from): Alastair Cook (captain), James Anderson, Jonny Bairstow, Ravi Bopara, Tim Bresnan, Danny Briggs, Stuart Broad, Jade Dernbach, Steven Finn, Craig Kieswetter, Eoin Morgan, Samit Patel, Kevin Pietersen, Graeme Swann, Jonathan Trott.

## Lee on for early return



PTI, Melbourne

Ruled out for over a month due to a broken toe, Australian pacer Brett Lee could make a stunning early comeback in the ongoing ODI tri-series against India and Sri Lanka this week itself.

Lee was expected to be out for six weeks after breaking the little toe on his right foot after stopping a powerful shot by Indian skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni during Australia's Twenty20 loss to India in Melbourne



PHOTO: AFP

Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia celebrates a point against Maria Kirilenko of Russia in the final of the Pattaya Open in Thailand on Saturday.

ken toe.

"People asked how I played with my toe split in half at the MCG, but you do these things when you play for your country. In terms of [my] pain threshold I've played a lot of games in pain ... the reason I took time off was to ensure there wasn't any long-term damage to the toe," he explained.

Lee said the early return would not hamper his speed and he would manage to send down deliveries at over 150kph.

"There was a ball in I delivered in the Twenty20 [in Melbourne] which may've surprised a lot of people because I think some of them didn't believe I could break 150kmph at my age."

"To hit 151 or 152 or whatever it felt great," Lee said.

## Hantuchova keeps title

AFP, Pattaya

Slovakia's third-seeded Daniela Hantuchova successfully defended her Pattaya Open title on Sunday, beating fourth seed Russian Maria Kirilenko in a marathon three hour 14-minute battle.

The three sets victory 6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 6-3 was Hantuchova's fifth career title, and means the world number 20 is now unbeaten in 10 matches at the Thai resort, where her victory this year brings her 37,000 dollars.

Her Russian opponent and world number 26 Kirilenko was playing in her 10th career final, and was hoping for her first title since she beat Samantha Stosur in Seoul in 2008.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

### ACROSS

1 Smallest prime number  
4 Disney's flying elephant  
9 Alias initials  
12 Water (Fr.)  
13 Asimov or Newton  
14 Mardi Gras parade  
15 Vegetable with a heart  
17 — Aviv  
18 Tall tale  
19 "Seinfeld" character  
21 Science lab  
24 Campus mil. org.  
25 Rowing need  
26 — U.S. Pat. Off.  
28 Hard to chew, as steak  
31 Table scraps  
33 "What's up, —?"

### 35 Appeal

36 Makes out of wool

### 38 Pooch

40 Qty. of solutions

41 Like sandpaper

43 Ravel master-work

44 Every last bit

45 Gorilla

46 Archaeologists' finds

47 Pitch

48 Tubular pasta

49 Erstwhile acorn

50 Crafty

### 10 Acute

11 Wheel connector

16 Sort

20 On

21 Library offering

22 Deserve

23 Launching weapons

27 Deity

29 Jewels

30 Detest

32 Eyelid woe

34 Illicit drug

37 Siesta cover-up

39 Jack Nicklaus, e.g.

42 Results of abrasion

44 — carte

45 Flying mammals

46 October birthstone

50 Explosive letters

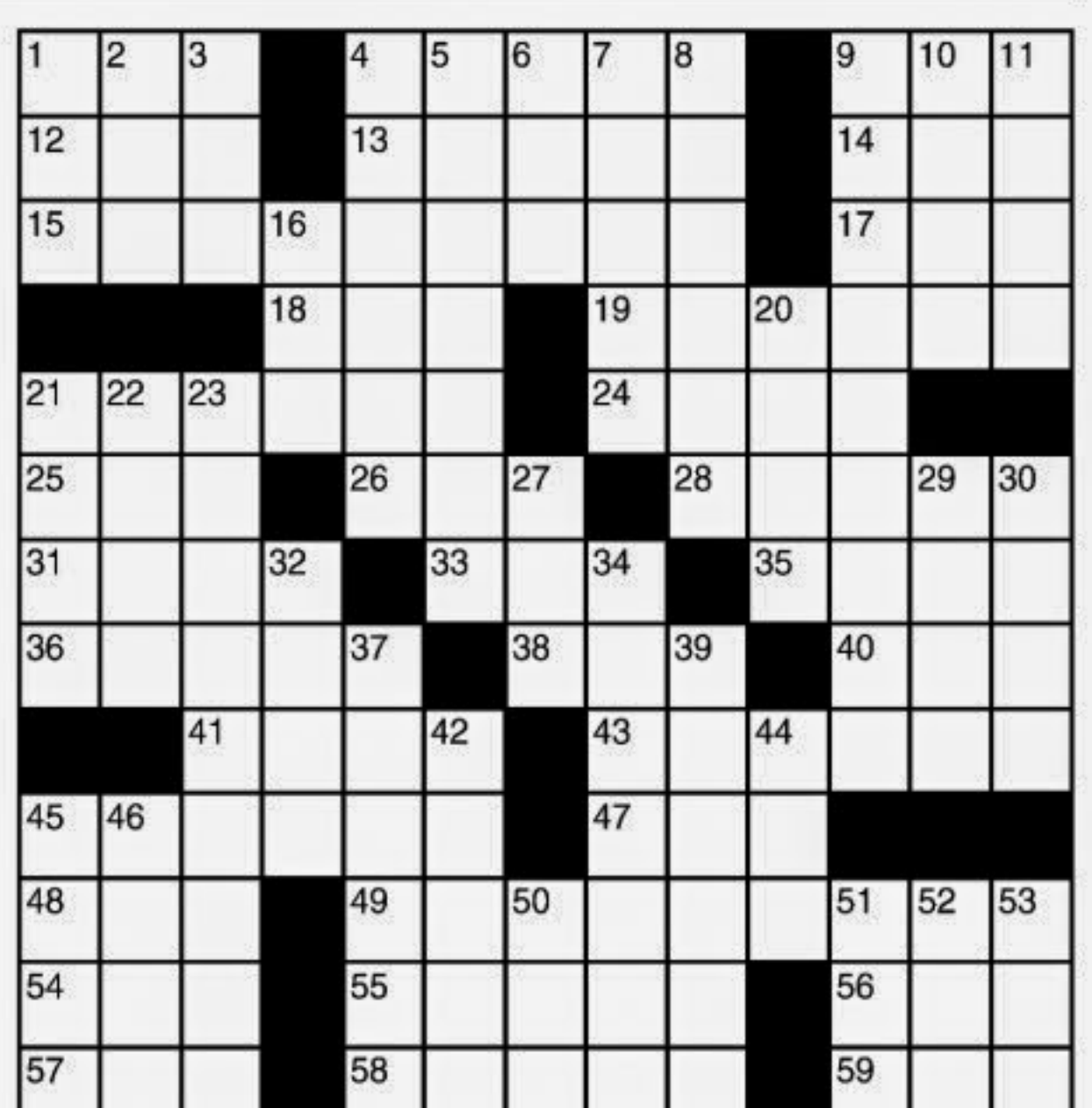
51 Bill's partner

52 Bill

53 Emulate Picabo Street

### Solution time: 24 mins.

J	A	R	G	A	S	P	T	H	I	S
A	G	O	I	D	E	A	W	A	L	K
D	O	B	E	R	M	A	N	I	D	L
A	G	E	N	D	A	A	L	L		
T	E	N	O	R	F	E	W	A	D	D
A	X	O	N	A	L	A	D	Y	E	D
M	P	G	I	V	Y	B	A	S	S	O
P	O	O	D	L	E	F	E	Z		
J	A	Z	Z	A	I	R	E	D	A	L
A	L	O	E	G	N	A	T	M		
N	E	O	N	E	N	D	S	B	R	O



### CRYPTOQUIP

C J Z A M E I H F R T P A V C

K H M Z E H F H J Z G H R A K M H Z A E F -

M E I G R A A V R, E G C V Z H

T R A R H P A U A F Z E U J U H R R.

**Saturday's Cryptquip: WHAT WOULD ONE CALL THE STATE OF BEING A RED-BREADED BIRD HATCHED FROM A BLUE EGG? ROBINHOOD.**

Today's Cryptquip Clue: H equals O