

Rafa triumphs in Brazil

Tennis

AFP, Sao Paulo

Rafael Nadal showed he is back in business by clinching his first tournament title since ending a seven-month knee injury layoff, winning the Brazil Open here Sunday.

The Spanish former world number one, who has been complaining of nagging knee pain, beat Argentine David Nalbandian in straight sets 6-2, 6-3 in 78 minutes.

Currently the world number five, Nadal went on the attack from the start, breaking his opponent's service before racing to take the first set.

The 31-year-old Nalbandian, a former world number three who now languishes in 93rd place in the ATP rankings, fought back early in the second set but Nadal came from behind to win the match, sparking wild cheers from the crowd.

The Spaniard pocketed a check of \$82,300 dollars for his win and thanked the public for "the great support" he received throughout the tournament.

Nadal was the top seed in this 455,775-dollar tournament, his second comeback event following his long absence.

He competed in the Vina del Mar Open in Chile earlier this month, losing the

singles and doubles finals last Sunday.

Considered by many to be the best ever clay-court player, Nadal was back on the court in Chile for the first time since suffering a surprise second-round exit at Wimbledon in June.

Since then he has been sidelined by a torn tendon and inflammation in his left knee, with his return this year further delayed by a stomach virus.

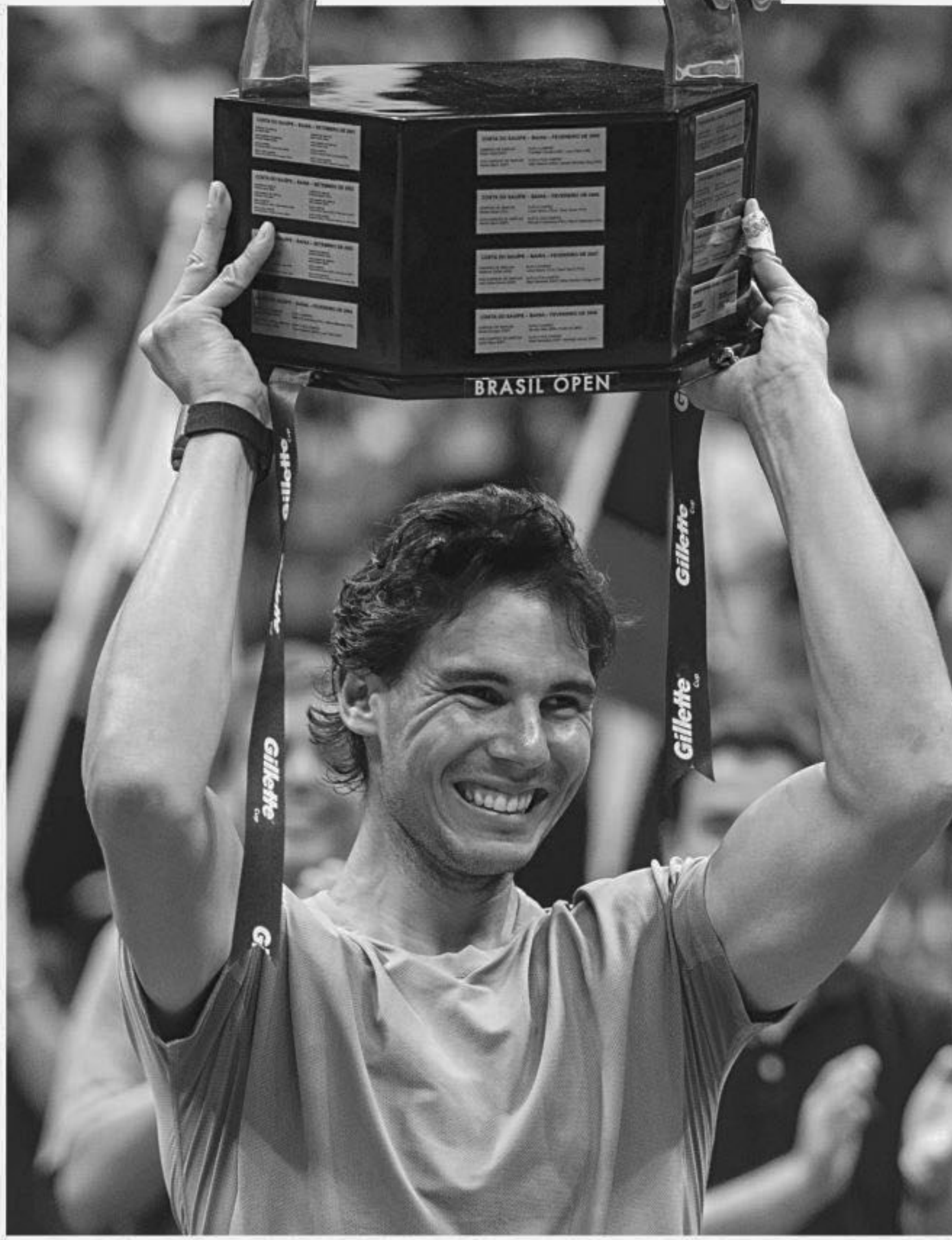
The world number five, who has 11 Grand Slam titles under his belt, also won the Brazil Open in 2005, when it was held in Costa do Saupe in eastern Bahia state.

Last year, the tournament, Brazil's premier tennis event, was moved to Sao Paulo.

It is part of the Latin American clay court swing, along with the Vina del Mar event and the Mexico Open, in Acapulco, where Nadal plans to compete later this month.

The three low-profile Latin American events are routinely ignored by the world's top three players -- Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer and Andy Murray.

Earlier Sunday, Brazilian Bruno Soares teamed up with Austrian Alexander Peya to win the Sao Paulo doubles final against Czech pair Frantisek Cermak and Slovak Michal Mertinak in three sets 6-7 (5), 6-2, 10-7.



Spanish tennis star Rafael Nadal holds aloft the winner's trophy after beating Argentinian David Nalbandian in the Brazil Open final in Sao Paulo on Sunday. Nadal won 6-2, 6-3.

PHOTO: AFP

Lambasted back home

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricketers came under fire Monday after their series defeat in South Africa, with former players blaming the team's timid approach for their loss in the second Test.

South Africa, the number one ranked team in Test cricket, beat the visitors by four wickets in the Cape Town Test on Sunday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Former captain Inzamamul Haq said Pakistan had looked overawed by the world's top team.

"This Pakistan team had the ability to beat South Africa but they seemed to be thinking a lot about their rival's world number one status and that their bowling is very dangerous," Inzamam told AFP.

Pakistan lost the first Test in Johannesburg by 211 runs after crumbling to 49 all out in the first innings in the face of the hosts' hostile pace bowling attack.

Inzamam worked with the team as a "batting consultant" before their one-day tour of India in December and there were calls for him to be kept on permanently, though nothing came of them.

"Pakistan must show more aggression in its approach," said Inzamam, who hit an unbeaten 92 in Pakistan's last Test win in South Africa in 2007.

"What I saw was that a batsman scores 50 in 150 balls, that gives bowlers more domination. Once a batsman is set he should attack and score freely."

Inzamam said Pakistan should have gone for the kill when they had South Africa wobbling at 164-6 in their first innings.

Oscar cancels his scheduled appearances

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Paralympic star Oscar Pistorius has cancelled all his scheduled track appearances in the next few months to allow him to concentrate on defending himself against a murder charge in his native South Africa, his agent said.

Pistorius, known worldwide as the "Blade Runner" for his prosthetic legs, was formally accused last week of the premeditated shooting of girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp, a charge that could put him behind bars for life if he is convicted.

"I have decided that following these tragic events we have no option but to cancel all future races that Oscar Pistorius had been contracted to compete in," his agent, Peet van Zyl, said in a statement released late on Sunday.

The cancelled races include two appearances in Australia and one in Brazil in March, one in the United States in April and one in Britain in May.

Van Zyl, who visited Pistorius on Sunday at the Pretoria police station where he is being held, said the athlete's sponsors were sticking with him pending the outcome of his trial.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 16

Jimmy had lost the ball to Carson.

Christopher Cargo made it 3-2 for Ireland after a save from Zahid came his way just one minute before the breather.

After resumption, Bangladesh looked determined to pull back the deficit but lapses from substitute Asaduzzaman Chandan put Bangladesh on the back foot as the defender awarded three penalty corners to Ireland.

Donoghue widened the margin in the 55th minute by capitalising on one of those three penalty corners.

Capitalising on a through-pass from Eugene Magee, Alan Sothern struck his third and team's fifth goal in the 64th minute to wrap up the victory.

Bangladesh will play their second match against China tomorrow.

Reeva's funeral today

Her mother seeks many answers

Athletics

AFP, Johannesburg

The family of Oscar Pistorius's slain girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp on Monday prepared to hold a funeral service for the 29-year-old model, as her bereaved mother pleaded for answers about the death of "the most beautiful person who ever lived".

The former cover girl, who was shot dead at Pistorius's luxury home in Pretoria on Valentine's Day, will be cremated on Tuesday in her home town of Port Elizabeth, in a private ceremony for family and friends.

Pistorius, a double amputee who became a sporting hero to millions when he competed at the Olympics last year, has been charged with killing Steenkamp and will appear in a Pretoria court on Tuesday for a bail hearing.

In an interview published on Monday,

Steenkamp's mother described her death as "horrendous."

"Why my little girl? Why did this happen? Why did he do this?" June Steenkamp told the Times of South Africa. "What for?"

"She had so much of herself to give and now all that is gone. Just like that, she is gone... In the blink of an eye and a single breath, the most beautiful person who ever lived is no longer here.

"All we have is this horrendous death to deal with... to get to grips with. All we want are answers... answers as to why this had to happen, why our beautiful daughter had to die like this."

More than 100 people are expected to attend an hour-long memorial service Tuesday for Steenkamp, a law graduate who had been going out with the 26-year-old Pistorius since late last year.

Well-wishers have already begun placing bouquets of flowers outside the family home.

Ryan drives Chittagong

FROM PAGE 16

successive deliveries in the penultimate over, which yielded only three runs. Ten Doeschate however, ensured that that was the end of the drama.

Earlier, Sylhet Royals made it to a respectable 149 after being put in to bat, thanks mainly to Elton Chigumbura; the Zimbabwean played another gem of an innings after his team's progress was hampered by the regular fall of wickets.

It was a good total in the end, considering the fact that they lost four wickets for 68 runs in 12 overs. Paul Stirling fell victim to a magnificent run-out effected by ten Doeschate, whose effort in the field set up his brilliance with the bat later. That paved the

way for left-arm spinner Enamul Haque to remove Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Dwayne Smith and the crisis deepened for Sylhet when Ravi Bopara dismissed Mohammad Nabi. But then the in-form Mushfiqur Rahim and Chigumbura played pivotal roles to take their team to a fighting total. Mushfiqur, fresh off a brilliant 86 in a losing cause against Dhaka in the Race to the Final on Friday, carried on his good form to revive his team's hopes with a 20-ball 36 that contained three fours and two sixes.

But Chigumbura deserved the lion's share of the credit for giving his team a total to defend in the crucial encounter as the right-hander smote three fours and as many sixes during

his unbeaten 25-ball 42. After a tight penultimate over from Taskin that yielded only two runs, Chigumbura punished Kevon Cooper for two sixes as Sylhet plundered 20 from the last over.

Gladiators

FROM PAGE 16

"We don't want to take any pressure in the finals. The fact that we are playing without a break can actually be an advantage for us since we will be in the groove," said Mahmudullah Riyad, captain of Chittagong Kings.

"While Dhaka may seem stronger, it's never possible to predict what's going to happen. All I know is that we'll be putting up our best performance on Tuesday," he added.

Preliminary

FROM PAGE 16

Mariana Island.

"We did not consider those players who are irregular in their respective club sides and Shahed has been excluded in that criterion," said coach Syed Golam Jillani, who along with goalkeeping coach Atiqur Rahman, will conduct the training camp until Kruij takes charge of the squad.

Of the 33-member squad, goalkeeper Maksudur Rahman Mustak, winger Shakil Ahmed and defender Rezaul Karim Reza are reportedly injured and the trio might skip the camp after reporting to manager Iqbal Hossain tonight at the BFF House. The training will get underway from tomorrow.

ZIMBABWE ODIS Sammy given rest, Gayle allowed rest

AFP, St John's

West Indies captain Darren Sammy and big-hitting opener Chris Gayle have been left out of the squad to face Zimbabwe in a three-match ODI series which starts on Friday.

Sammy is rested after playing every match for the West Indies in the past two years with Dwayne Bravo taking over the captaincy.

"Gayle has asked to miss the ODI Series and has been granted permission accordingly," said a West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) statement.

No reason was given for Gayle's decision to skip the series.

The West Indies endured a disappointing tour of Australia which ended last week.

SQUAD Dwayne Bravo (captain), Tino Best, Darren Bravo, Johnson Charles, Narsingh Deonarine, Sunil Narine, Veerasammy Permaul, Kieron Pollard, Kieran Powell, Denesh Ramdin, Kemar Roach, Andre Russell, Ramnaresh Sarwan.

'Vern can get better'

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

South African opening bowler Vernon Philander has built up a phenomenal record since his Test debut against Australia in November 2011 but his captain Graeme Smith is looking for more.

"Vern has got the results but he is still a work in progress," said Smith. "I think he can get better."

Philander, 27, has taken 87 wickets in 15 Tests at an average of 16.81 -- a strike rate and an average unmatched by any other contemporary Test bowler.

He has shot up the International Cricket Council rankings and is second only to his South African new ball partner, Dale Steyn.

Together Philander and Steyn have been part of the three lowest totals made against South Africa -- 47 by Australia in his debut Test, 45 by New Zealand and 49 by Pakistan in the first Test of the current series.

In those three innings alone, Philander picked up 12 wickets and conceded only 38 runs.

Philander was again a prime architect of South Africa's four-wicket win in the second Test against Pakistan which ended at Newlands on Sunday, taking five for 59 in the first innings and four for 40 in the second.

Smith pointed out that Philander had suffered "a few niggles" -- which have caused him to miss three Tests because of injury since his debut -- and that he could improve on his performances when the ball loses its shine if he was able to bowl slightly faster.

"I think he himself would like to see his pace up a little bit," said Smith.

"Outside of that his skill factor is immense. The seam action that he gets out of his hand... the questions he asks batters.

"It's great to stand at slip and watch that happen. If he can pick up a little bit of pace, which he has definitely got, his old ball spells will get even better.

"His new ball spells are so effective that if he can get his old ball spells to the same level he can really produce. I know it's asking a lot but I do believe he can get there."

Qatar title stays with Azarenka

AFP, Doha

Victoria Azarenka beat Serena Williams 7-6 (8/6), 2-6, 6-3 to retain her Qatar Open title on Sunday, only her second win in 13 meetings with the American.

It was also completed back-to-back trophy defences for the Belarusian who last month defended the Australian Open title.

Azarenka served superbly in the first and third sets of her win, reducing the 15-time Grand Slam title-winner's opportunities to unleash her ferocious ground strokes.

It prevented a triumphant epilogue to Williams' recapture of the world number one position after an interval of two and a half years, and denied the tennis legend the 42nd title of her career.

BJMC down

FROM PAGE 16

Jean Jules Ikanga played on Ismael on the right side and the Guinean striker raced to the danger zone to place the ball at the far post with a left-footed angular shot.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Dillon or Damon
- 5 Greek vowel
- 8 Heap
- 12 Cooling drink
- 14 Smell
- 15 Execrate
- 16 Island garlands
- 17 Sch. org.
- 18 Not quite upright
- 20 Big name in California wines
- 23 Soreness
- 24 Do as you're told
- 25 Wide ruffle
- 28 Conk out
- 29 Lead the way
- 30 Playwright
- 32 Beat decisively
- 34 Follow closely
- 35 Manitoba native

DOWN

- 2 High card
- 3 Roman numeral
- 4 Doubly thick
- 5 Sicilian volcano
- 6 Sleuth, briefly
- 7 212 or 718, e.g.
- 8 Allergy sufferer's woe
- 9 Concept
- 10 Pork cut
- 11 Formerly, formerly
- 13 Car
- 19 Actress Elisabeth
- 20 Deity
- 21 Somewhat
- 1 Central

22 Sly look

23 Carroll heroine

25 Solemn occasions

26 "Arrivederci"

27 Ireland

29 Mentor

31 Beer

33 Spotted wildcat

34 Emotional upset

36 Trudge

37 Crooner Jerry

38 As yet unpaid

39 Boo-Boo's companion

40 "Karenina"

43 Siesta

44 Run-down horse

45 French vineyard

46 — out a living

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 1-14

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TO CATCH A NICE
 JOLT OF ENERGY BEFORE ASCENDING, THE
 MOUNTAINEER LIKES TO DRINK CLIMB JUICE.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals T