

## Afridi's desire

AFP, Karachi

Veteran all-rounder Shahid Afridi said Thursday he is targeting the 2015 World Cup after returning to the Pakistan side, but vowed to quit if he became a burden on the team.

The 33-year-old was left out of the squad for the one-day series against India in December before staging a comeback for the tour of South Africa, but his woeful run of form has continued.

Afridi's 88 in the third one-dayer in was his first half-century in the past 12 months and he has also struggled with his leg-breaks, failing to take a single wicket in his last six matches.

Despite the slide in performance, Afridi, who has scored 7,201 runs and taken 348 wickets in 354 ODIs, said he was still hopeful he could make the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

## Viru chapter closed?

CRICINFO, New Delhi

Former England batsman Geoffrey Boycott has said that Virender Sehwag may have played his last game for India. Sehwag was dropped for the last two Tests against Australia earlier this year and was also excluded from the list of 30 probables for the Champions Trophy.

"I don't think he'll play again," Boycott told ESPNcricinfo on the fortnightly show Bowl at Boys. "I think it's because India have gone the right way. It took a little while to come around to it. They've given youth a chance. After they lost to England, I kept saying you have to give these young batsmen a chance. You have to get them in and you have to build again for the World Cup. I've never changed my view on that. You are world champions in ODIs, you have to move on, and it doesn't matter who you are, I always say, age is not the barrier, it's about performance."

## Hopeful

**FROM PAGE 16**  
from initial 21, informed BOA acting secretary general Ashikur Rahman Miku adding that the torch rally of Games would start from the national martyrs' memorial at Savar on April 19 to take a pause at the Bangladesh Army Stadium in Banani before the rally resumes in the morning of the Games' opening day with the participation of renowned athletes.

## BD U-19s

**FROM PAGE 16**  
resuming the day on 82. Left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman provided the first breakthrough on the second day, removing Roshan Anuruddha off the very first ball while Rahatul Ferdous took two wickets.

## Maiden

**FROM PAGE 16**  
membership of the ICC. Bangladesh have toured India in the past for ODI tournaments, twice before they started to play Tests -- the Asia Cup in 1990 and a triangular series in 1998 -- and also participated in the Champions Trophy in 2006.

## Suktara's

**FROM PAGE 16**  
T20I series 3-0 against their hosts while also conceding an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match ODI series. The last ODI will be played in Ahmedabad today.



PHOTO: COURTESY

**Abel Rodriguez (L) lived out his dream, thanks to Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho (R).**

# Real's good-luck charm from LA



GRANT WAHL, *Sports Illustrated.com*

Abel Rodriguez is a 41-year-old Mexican-American who waxes floors in Los Angeles for Metro Transportation. Real Madrid's Jose Mourinho is one of the world's most famous managers. On the face of things, the two men have nothing in common. Yet recently they became the central figures in a surreal but true buddy story that took Rodriguez behind the scenes as a member of Real Madrid's team in the biggest games of world soccer against Barcelona and Manchester United.

How did Rodriguez become Mourinho's American good-luck charm and end up meeting Sir Alex Ferguson, Cristiano Ronaldo, Diego Maradona, Mesut Ozil, Kaka and Javier (Chicharito) Hernandez? For the past seven years, Rodriguez has taken two weeks of vacation every summer to work for free chasing down errant balls and doing support work for Mourinho's teams when they train in Los Angeles in the preseason.

It's no small effort. Every day during his unpaid "vacation," Rodriguez leaves his house in Fontana, California, at 5am, drives to the UCLA training site and spends the rest of the day setting up the practice field and helping with anything Mourinho and his staff need. He arrives home at 11pm, gets a few hours of sleep and starts over at 5am the next morning.

"I've been following European soccer since I was a kid," said Rodriguez, who moved to the LA area from Mexico at age 8. But he had never travelled to Europe, and he'd always wanted to attend a Real Madrid-Barcelona Clasico. With Mourinho likely to leave Madrid at season's end, Rodriguez decided the Clasico on March 2 might be his last, best chance to see the spectacle live.

But there were two barriers standing in his way. One, he had been saving for a vacation for his family, including his wife, Olga, and their daughters, Michelle (17), Eliana (13) and Paola (10). And two, he didn't have any contact information for Mourinho or any of his top lieutenants.

"I was really indecisive about going," Rodriguez said, "but the encouragement came from my wife, who said, 'You should go. It's always been your dream.' My oldest daughter came and said, 'You should go.'"

And so he did. On the morning of February 28, Rodriguez arrived in Madrid and showed up unannounced at Real Madrid's Valdebebas training complex. He didn't have a ticket for the game. He didn't even have a hotel reservation. And when the security guy at the guards' shack refused to let him in, Rodriguez was forced to sit on the side of the road. It had snowed the night before, and the conditions were frigid.

"Thank God I was wearing the big coat my wife told me to take," he said. "My toes were frozen."

Yet Rodriguez still couldn't get in. He sat on the roadside for the next five hours. "It was a miracle that I saw him," Mourinho said. "I saw Abel seated on the road outside the training ground. I was leaving in my assistant Rui Faria's car, and there are always a lot of people outside. But I told Rui, 'Stop! It's the guy from Los Angeles.'"

"Amigo! What are you doing here?" Mourinho asked. "I came to visit you guys," Rodriguez replied. "It's my first time in Europe, and my dream has been to come and see games. I was hoping to see El Clasico." "But there are no more tickets," Mourinho said. "Where are you staying?" "I haven't done anything about that," Rodriguez said. "My priority was to see you guys and then make my arrangements. If I didn't see you guys, I'd go to the stadium and try to get a ticket. And if that didn't work, I'd fly back home."

That was when the magic happened. Mourinho called an assistant and arranged for Rodriguez to have his own room at the fancy hotel where Real Madrid was staying before the Barcelona game. Mourinho instructed him to get some rest at the hotel and meet him at the training site the next morning. That evening, the night before El Clasico, the two men caught up for 90 minutes together before sharing dinner with the Real Madrid coaching staff.

As Rodriguez explained the story of his family wanting him to visit Europe, Mourinho stopped him. Real Madrid were leaving for England and their Champions League Round of 16 decider against Manchester United the day after the Barca game. Rodriguez was planning to return to LA, but Mourinho would have none of it.

"I told him, 'No way, you come to Manchester with us and work as a kit man,'" Mourinho said. "'You help us and you live a bigger dream, a Champions League match from the inside!'"

Rodriguez said he'd love to, but he would pay for everything. Mourinho shook his head and smiled. "When you're with me in Europe, you don't pay for s---."

Rodriguez started crying at that point -- tears of joy.

CONTINUES TOMORROW

## Tigers touch down in Zim

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket team reached Zimbabwean capital Harare yesterday afternoon.

The Tigers took off from Dhaka on Wednesday evening for the southern African country to play two Tests, three one-day internationals and two T20 Internationals in Harare and Bulawayo on the month-long tour.

The first Test begins at Harare Sports Club on April 17.

## Pune's win after long

AGENCIES, Pune

Pune Warriors ended an eleven-match losing streak across two IPL seasons by registering a seven-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals at the Subrata Roy Sahara Stadium here on Thursday.

After being humiliated by Kings XI Punjab in their last match, Pune were better prepared this time with Yuvraj Singh back in the side. The star player made his presence felt as Pune restricted Royals to a modest 145 and then smashed the winning runs with a towering six that crowned his 28-run cameo and ended the chase with eight balls to spare.

When Royals batted, Rahul Dravid (54) and Ajinkya Rahane (30) looked at one stage to get them to a bigger total, but two stunning catches -- by Angelo Mathews and Ross Taylor -- accounted for both. Leg-spinner Rahul Sharma conceded just 16 in his quota of four and was an effective option for skipper Mathews.

Pune exploded into the chase. Openers Robin Uthappa (32) and Aaron Finch (64) rustled up 58 in under five overs, making a hash of the required rate. It was regulation from then on and Finch's relentless hitting saw Pune home safely despite his dismissal later.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**RAJASTHAN ROYALS:** 145 for 5 in 20 overs (Dravid 54, Rahane 30, Hodge 22 not out; Sharma 2-16, Yuvraj 2-27)  
**PUNE WARRIORS:** 148 for 3 in 18.4 overs (Finch 64, Uthappa 32, Yuvraj 28 not out; Faulkner 2-17)  
**Result:** Pune Warriors won by 7 wickets.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Aaron Finch.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>										<b>DOWN</b>									
1	Departed	37	Visa rival	24	Midday	1	Praise highly	25	Small wagon	2	Lip	26	Line of fashion?	3	Autumn	4	Win	5	Pole
5	Id	40	Retain	41	Handy	45	Rivers or	47	Make a choice	49	Oxen's onus	50	Doing	51	Pi	52	English river	53	Antelope's
8	Unclear view	47	Make a choice	49	Oxen's onus	50	Doing	51	Pi	52	English river	53	Antelope's	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal
12	Hebrew month	47	Make a choice	49	Oxen's onus	50	Doing	51	Pi	52	English river	53	Antelope's	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal
13	High-arc shot	49	Oxen's onus	50	Doing	51	Pi	52	English river	53	Antelope's	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal	57	Equal
14	Leak slowly	50	Doing	51	Pi	52	English river	53	Antelope's	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal	57	Equal	58	Equal
15	Wrinkly fruit	51	Pi	52	English river	53	Antelope's	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal	57	Equal	58	Equal	59	Equal
16	Biden, Cheney, etc.	52	English river	53	Antelope's	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal	57	Equal	58	Equal	59	Equal	60	Equal
17	Earth	53	Antelope's	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal	57	Equal	58	Equal	59	Equal	60	Equal	61	Equal
18	Flood	54	— the season ...	55	Equal	56	Equal	57	Equal	58	Equal	59	Equal	60	Equal	61	Equal	62	Equal
20	Diner employee	55	Equal	56	Equal	57	Equal	58	Equal	59	Equal	60	Equal	61	Equal	62	Equal	63	Equal
22	Brains of the operation	56	Equal	57	Equal	58	Equal	59	Equal	60	Equal	61	Equal	62	Equal	63	Equal	64	Equal
26	Missteps	57	Equal	58	Equal	59	Equal	60	Equal	61	Equal	62	Equal	63	Equal	64	Equal	65	Equal
29	Individual	58	Equal	59	Equal	60	Equal	61	Equal	62	Equal	63	Equal	64	Equal	65	Equal	66	Equal
30	Neither mate	59	Equal	60	Equal	61	Equal	62	Equal	63	Equal	64	Equal	65	Equal	66	Equal	67	Equal
31	Apiece	60	Equal	61	Equal	62	Equal	63	Equal	64	Equal	65	Equal	66	Equal	67	Equal	68	Equal
32	Tin Man's prop	61	Equal	62	Equal	63	Equal	64	Equal	65	Equal	66	Equal	67	Equal	68	Equal	69	Equal
33	Old portico	62	Equal	63	Equal	64	Equal	65	Equal	66	Equal	67	Equal	68	Equal	69	Equal	70	Equal
34	Rd.	63	Equal	64	Equal	65	Equal	66	Equal	67	Equal	68	Equal	69	Equal	70	Equal	71	Equal
35	Nintendo console	64	Equal	65	Equal	66	Equal	67	Equal	68	Equal	69	Equal	70	Equal	71	Equal	72	Equal
36	Lost in reverie	65	Equal	66	Equal	67	Equal	68	Equal	69	Equal	70	Equal	71	Equal	72	Equal	73	Equal



## Gayle storm hits KKR

PTI, Bangalore

Chris Gayle played yet another scintillating knock as his unbeaten 85 ensured a convincing eight-wicket victory for Royal Challengers Bangalore over defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders in a Pepsi Indian Premier League match in Bangalore on Thursday. Chasing a decent target of 155, 'Gayle storm' struck KKR as RCB knocked off the runs with 15 balls to spare.

It is the third win for RCB in four matches while KKR suffered their second defeat on road having lost to Rajasthan Royals earlier this week.

The big-bodied Jamaican, who has been in prolific touch, got his runs off only 50 deliveries, hitting four boundaries and as many as nine sixes.

It was therefore no surprise that Gayle is leading the 'Maximum Sixes' list with 14 over-boundaries.

Gayle added 83 runs for the unbeaten third wicket with AB de Villiers (22 not out), who played the role of second fiddle to perfection. Gayle also added 63 runs for the second wicket with skipper Virat Kohli (35), who had an ugly on-field spat with rival captain Gautam Gambhir after he got out.

However the evening belonged to Gayle as almost all the KKR bowlers suffered in his hands except Sunil Narine who only gave away 17 runs in his four overs.

The ploy to include Delhi left-arm seamer Pradeep Sangwan backfired badly as he leaked 34 runs in only two overs which turned the match in RCB's favour.

Gayle, who has employed a different tactic in this IPL as he is not attacking the

bowlers during the Powerplay but has been brutal in his strokeplay during the back-10. With good support from Kohli and De Villiers, it has been easy for Gayle to launch during the later part of the innings with wickets in hand.

Earlier, captain Gautam Gambhir struck 46-ball 59 to propel KKR to 154 for eight after being out into bat.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**KKR:** 154 for 8 in 20 overs (Gambhir 59, Kallis 16, Pathan 27, Tiwary 23, Bhatia 13, RP Singh 3-27, Henriques 2-24, Vinay 2-36)  
**RCB:** 158 for 2 in 17.3 overs (Gayle 85 not out, Kohli 35, De Villiers 22 not out; Balaji 1-33)  
**Result:** Royal Challengers Bangalore won by 8 wickets.

**Player-of-the-match:** Chris Gayle.

## Sisters on Fed Cup team

AFP, New York

World number one Serena Williams and her sister Venus will join Sloane Stephens and Varvara Lepchenko on the US Fed Cup team facing Sweden later this month, the US Tennis Association said Wednesday.

The move ensures the Williams sisters, two-time defending Olympic women's doubles champions as well as the 2000 Sydney Olympic winners, will be eligible to play in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Serena Williams, a 15-time Grand Slam singles champion, is also the reigning Olympic singles champion.

## De Kruif plans around youth

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Ahmed of Brothers, Tapu Barman of Mohammedan who have been performing consistently in the professional football league.

De Kruif and his assistant Rene Koster will return Bangladesh in between May 15 to 17 to conduct the training of the England-bound Bangladesh national squad for a temporary basis for the two FIFA friendlies against India and Pakistan on June 1 and 7 respectively.

"Koster leaves Bangladesh tonight and I will leave on Sunday. The opponents are new to us and I think the England tour will be a nice one," said de Kruif.

Kruif said he had a good session with

the BFF coaches and briefed them about the youth development, talent spotting, football education and training of players in the Netherlands.

"It is important that the coaches were attentive during the discussion and they know about the right direction. So when the coaches will do better and better, the national team will get good players in future," said de Kruif.

BFF technical director BA Jubair Nipu said that the Dutch coach asked the local coaches to build up a unique system in all age-group training so that the future stars could easily catch the training of the national squad in future.



PHOTO: COURTESY

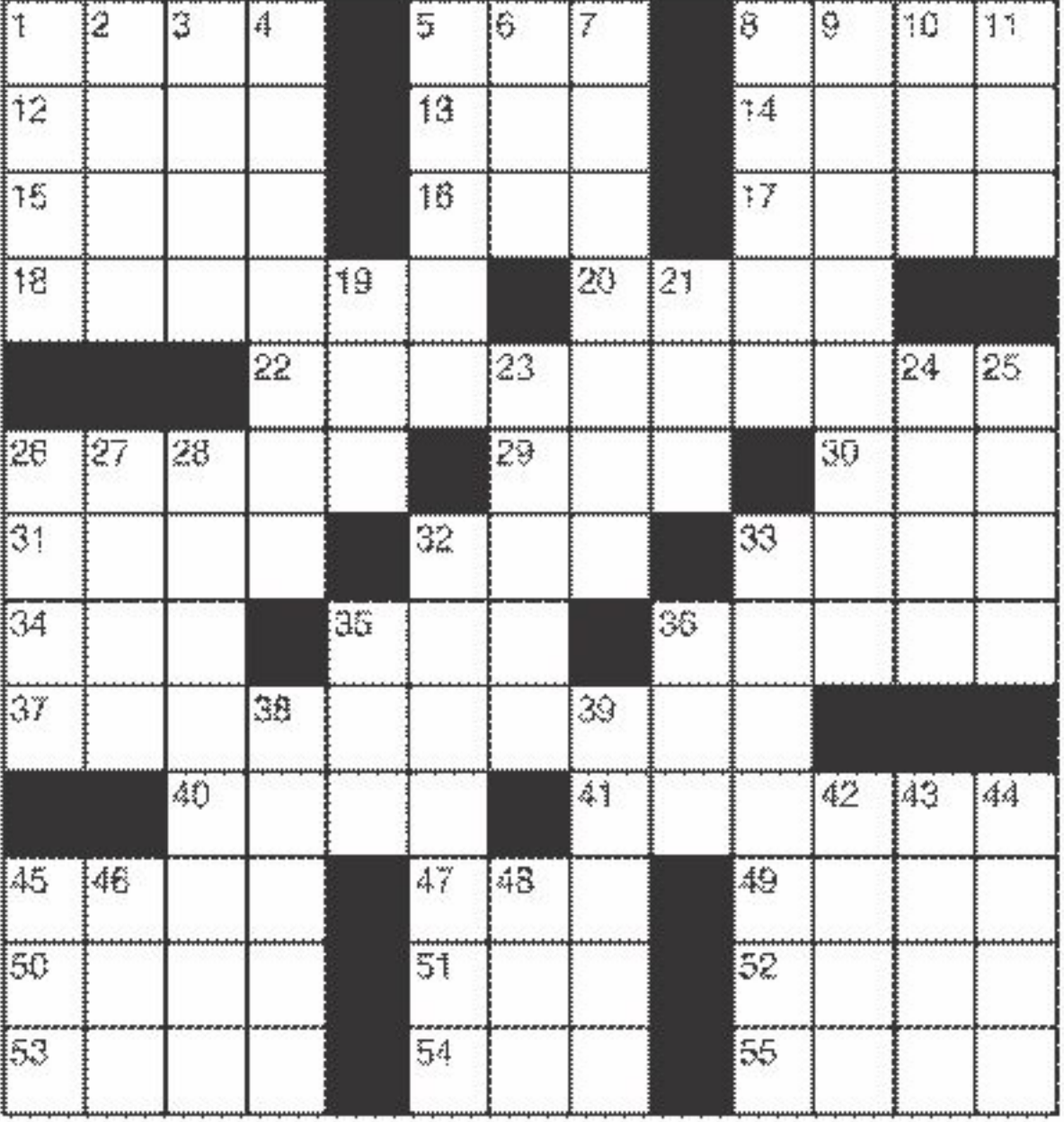
**Mymensingh Police Line School players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Creinse Cub Cricket Festival at the Mymensingh Circuit House ground recently. Macomm London Tigers Cricket Center and Kids Cricket World jointly organised the meet.**

## Thunder names Hathurusinghe as new coach

AFP, Sydney

Former Sri Lankan Test batsman Chandika Hathurusinghe has been appointed as the new coach of the Sydney Thunder in Australia's Big Bash League, the team said on Thursday.

The former opener, who played 26 Tests for Sri Lanka, takes over from Shane Duff and faces the task of turning around the struggling franchise after two disastrous seasons in the domestic Twenty20 competition.



### CRYPTOQUIP

Q R O D A Q C A ' Q N E L J Y Y L B R S A  
E R P Y C I N S C H A R G E W A N E C O V E T O R A  
Y C A B L N Y N O I P A G N P V  
" X L J ' S A B L Y Y N E A V R I I R O B I "

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** SOME FOLKS THINK THAT LEGENDARY SINGER TORME IS LIKABLE, BUT I HONESTLY FIND MEL ODIUS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals S