

Khulna dethrones

FROM PAGE 13 presentation ceremony. Hasanuzzaman is also the top scorer in the League with 448 runs that included a double hundred. His Dhaka counterpart and former national captain Naimur Rahman said that it was their second innings debacle that proved costly for them. "We did not bat well in the second innings except for Shipon. Besides, the umpires' decision to take a new ball after 29 overs also let us down. Because we had to reintroduce the tired fast bowlers when the spinners should have actually operated," said Naimur. Dhaka collapsed to 191 in the second innings after they piled up a massive 362 in the first essay. The two teams will lock horns again in the final of day-night limited overs competition at the same venue today.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the Ispahani Mirzapore Fourth National League final between Dhaka and Khulna at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. DHAKA: First innings 362 (Mazharul 119, Rashedul 50, Naimur 45, Hasanuzzaman 4-65, Manjarul 3-68) KHULNA: First innings 338 all out in 99.1 overs (Jamaluddin 121, Sajjadul 68, Razzak 43, Monirul 3-93, Naimur 3-104) DHAKA: Second innings 196 all out in 67.1 overs (Sajjad 90, Fahim 44, Al-Amin 3-52, Razzak 2-18, Jamaluddin 2-37, Masud 2-46) KHULNA: Second innings Sajjadul lbw b Anwar 15 Raju b Anwar 17 Monirul b Neeyamur 6 Jamaluddin c Kadir b Neeyamur 1 Hasanuzzaman c Kadir b Anwar 12 Salim b Arafat 60 Asadullah not out 72 Manjarul lbw b Naimur 8 Razzak not out 10 Extras: (b-6, nb-4, w-7, penalties-5) 17 Total: (For 7 wkts in 76.4 overs) 223 Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-36, 3-41, 4-42, 5-88, 6-161, 7-186. Bowler O M R W Anwar 29 4 73 3 Neeyamur 20 5 42 2 Sajjad 5 1 20 0 Arafat 12 5 22 1 Fahim 3 1 10 0 Naimur 7 1 33 1 Mazharul 0.4 0 8 0 Result: Khulna won the match by three wickets. Man-of-the-final: Jamaluddin Ahmed (Khulna). Man-of-the-tournament: Manjarul Islam (Khulna).

Champs leave home today



AFP, Melbourne

Australia's squad will leave for southern Africa on Thursday unsure whether its World Cup cricket match in Zimbabwe will go ahead as scheduled. Several players admitted to growing concerns on Wednesday about playing on February 24 in the strife-torn nation. But Australian Cricketers Association chief Tim May said there would be no rushed decision to call the match off or ask for it to be moved. Security issues dominate the build-up to the eighth World Cup, with England's players making an urgent request for their match in Harare to be shifted to South Africa. The New Zealand team is also

unwilling to play in Kenya after it learnt of the existence of an active terrorist cell which allegedly had the means to attack targets in the capital Nairobi. The International Cricket Council and the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) have supported matches going ahead as scheduled in Zimbabwe and Kenya. But ACB chief executive James Sutherland said the board would still be prepared to call off the February 24 match if necessary, as it had done in the past. The ICC will discuss the issue at an executive board meeting later this week. The Australian squad arrives in Johannesburg late on Thursday. "We have growing concerns but I don't want them to be exaggerated," May said on Wednesday. "The players have agreed to the process that we typically have put in place for tours like this where there

are security concerns. "We have the process of regular contact with the government and the ACB, getting that information and communicating it to the players, nothing has changed in that regard. "We understand the implications of such a decision are far reaching for numerous stakeholders here and numerous bodies of people, so we are not going to rush into any particular decision. "The players have some concerns, that doesn't mean they're not going to go." Australian Prime Minister John Howard on Wednesday renewed calls for the ICC to call off matches in Zimbabwe and said the Australian government was prepared to contribute to any cost to cricket authorities of a boycott. "My suspicion is that a lot of the players feel that way, but...I don't put prohibitions on the freedom of movement of Australian citizens, particularly sports men and women who are free to travel wherever they like," he said in a television interview. Australia pulled out of last year's planned tour of Zimbabwe after receiving advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and also forfeited a 1996 World Cup match in Sri Lanka because of concerns about player safety. As a result, skipper Ricky Ponting said on Wednesday he had full confidence that the ACB would do the right thing by the players. "What they've done over the last couple of years has been fantastic as far as player safety is concerned, so we've got no reason to be nervous," Ponting said. "They're a cricket organisation and we're cricketers so all we can do is travel around these different parts of the world and play cricket." ACB chief executive James Sutherland said recent changes to the situation in Zimbabwe had added to the players' uncertainty about whether they should be playing there. "Tim and I were fortunate to have been on a security delegation there six weeks or so ago and we have a reasonable level of comfort as to what it's like there," he said. "We've said all along the safety of our players for any tour is of paramount concern, and if we have a problem with that then we will take necessary action and if we can't fix the problem we will take the decision not to play there."

Nawaz smells a 'mafia'

AFP, Karachi

Former Pakistan pacer Sarfaraz Nawaz said Wednesday a gambling and match-fixing mafia is active ahead of next month's World Cup in southern Africa and a clean event was not possible. "The gambling mafia is active and World Cup cannot be held without match fixing," Nawaz, who played 55 Tests and 45 one-day internationals for Pakistan, told AFP. The International Cricket Council (ICC) last month claimed cricket's quadrennial event, due to be staged in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya from February 8 until March 23, will be corruption free. The ICC was forced to form an Anti-corruption Unit (ACU) in 2000 headed by former London police chief Sir Paul Condon after late South African captain Hansie Cronje confessed to taking 130,000 dollars to influence results of international matches. Besides Cronje, Pakistan's Salim Malik and Ataur Rehman and India's Mohammad Azharuddin and Ajay Sharma were banned for life after investigations carried out in their respective countries.



Eidur Gudjohnsen of Chelsea scoring with a spectacular overhead kick to equalise against Leeds at Stamford Bridge on January 27.

Premiership Chelsea, Villa victorious



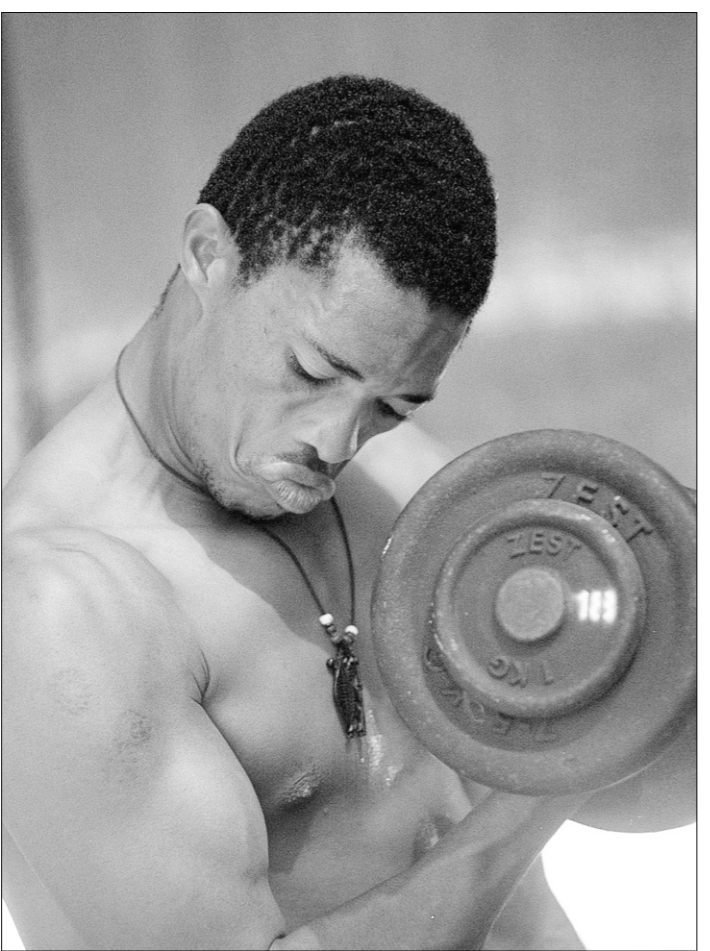
AFP, London

Middlesbrough's fortress Riverside was finally overrun on Tuesday by the most unlikely raiders. Having maintained their unbeaten home record longer than the likes of Arsenal and Manchester United, Boro finally succumbed to a 5-2 defeat at the hands of an Aston Villa side that had not won away all season. Second-half goals from Gareth Barry, England striker Darius Vassell, and a late Dion Dublin effort saw Villa run out comfortable winners after a rollercoaster first half. Boro had fought back from two down with a header from Massimo Maccarone and a Jonathan Greening strike in the space of three minutes just after the half-hour mark. Vassell had fired the visitors ahead before Johannes Gudjonsson, a recent loan signing from Real Betis, marked his Villa debut with a fierce free-kick that Mark Schwarzer should have held. Boro manager Steve McClaren said the defeat had demonstrated his squad's lack of depth and helped to explain why he is planning to bring in Malcolm Christie and Chris Riggott to the Riverside. "You saw tonight that once we get injuries to some of our senior

players, underneath that we are young," McClaren said. Chelsea edged out Leeds in a five-goal thriller at Stamford Bridge after twice coming from behind. Harry Kewell, after 11 minutes, then Teddy Lucic, had given Leeds the advantage in both halves. But Kewell's effort was cancelled out by a spectacular overhead kick from Eidur Gudjohnsen, Lucic's strike was matched by a Frank Lampard drive ten minutes from time and Chelsea nicked the points thanks to a Dominic Matteo own goal three minutes later. A first-half double from defender Steve Watson, the first brace of his career, gave Everton a 2-1 win over struggling Bolton that keeps the Merseysiders' push for a place in next season's Champions League on track. The win keeps Everton in fifth place, two behind Chelsea. Despite the defeat, Bolton remain just above the relegation zone as fellow strugglers

Sunderland went down at home to Southampton. James Beattie waltzed in from the left wing and rounded Thomas Sorensen for his 16th Premiership goal of the season to clinch the three points five minutes after the break. Sunderland manager Howard Wilkinson was left fuming at the way his side had been outplayed. "It's bitterly disappointing," he said. "Tonight can't be defended. We all have to take responsibility, players and staff. I'm the manager and I have to take responsibility. "We have got extremely passionate fans and no matter how hard we might try to explain things, the bottom line is that the fans are not getting what they deserve. "The commitment and passion don't seem to be there. It's not because people don't care but the bottom line is that is what it looks like."

TOP SIX English Premiership table after Tuesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points): Arsenal 24 16 4 4 52 25 52 Man Utd 24 14 5 5 40 24 47 Newcastle 24 14 3 7 40 31 45 Chelsea 25 12 8 5 44 25 44 Everton 25 12 6 7 32 30 42 Southampton 25 10 9 6 28 23 39



TRYING SOME BODYBUILDING? South Africa fast bowler Makghaya Ntini works out at the gym of Newlands Cricket Stadium in Cape Town yesterday.

Azhar to appeal for arbitrator

REUTERS, Hyderabad

Banned former Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin is to challenge a court decision refusing to hand over his match-fixing case to an arbitrator. "We will be definitely going in for another appeal," Azharuddin's lawyer K Jagadeesh told Reuters in the southern city of Hyderabad on Wednesday. Azharuddin was banned for life from all cricket by India's national cricket board in December 2000 over match-fixing allegations following an independent inquiry into a federal police report on corruption in cricket. "Tim and I were fortunate to have been on a security delegation there six weeks or so ago and we have a reasonable level of comfort as to what it's like there," he said. "We've said all along the safety of our players for any tour is of paramount concern, and if we have a problem with that then we will take necessary action and if we can't fix the problem we will take the decision not to play there."

What to watch

FROM PAGE 13 Live at 7:30 pm Sportsline Tonight Sport News Live at 8:00 pm Harsha Online Cricket Talk Show Taped Version at 10:00 pm Futbol Mundial Taped Version at 11:00 pm

'We're ready'



INTERNET, St. John's

West Indies captain Carl Hooper believes his team is "ready" for the tough task of doing well in the World Cup in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya next month following the conclusion of a two-week camp in Antigua on Sunday. A Hooper Eleven, scoring 275 for two off 46.2 overs, recorded an eight-wicket win over a Ridley Jacobs side (252 for 6 off 50 overs) in the last of two practice matches under lights at the Stanford Cricket Ground. "I thought it was a very good two weeks. I think you can see that from (the game on Sunday) it was a vast improvement on the game we played on Thursday. I think we are ready and good for go," Hooper told reporters at the end of the game. "I think the pitch was better (than that for the first game). We have been fine tuning slowly but surely and building the momentum up since the first week. I was quite happy with the way things went (on Sunday). "I think it is a good send off for us.

The batsmen look good. The bowling could have been a bit better but having said that the pitch was good (for batting). "I think there is going to be a lot of pressure (on the bowlers) not only (our) fast bowlers but also generally most teams. "The composition of our team in the last 10 to 12 one-dayers has been three quicks with the part-time bowlers filling in. We were expecting the pacers to bowl 30 overs. So of course they will be up against it." Hooper defended the decision to have a camp rather than being involved in a series. "We just came back from a tour of Bangladesh and India so we are really not short of cricket. The guys have had only a Christmas break so while we may want to play as much cricket as possible we have got to be careful not to burn ourselves out," he said. The Guyanese batsman said part of their game plan is to beat South Africa in their opening match on February 9. "I think it is important to win our first game against South Africa. I've got a feeling that how well we do in the first game is going to set the tone for the rest of competition, so it is important for us to try get off on a positive note and no better than

beating the South Africans. "I'm optimistic about our chances at the World Cup. The last big tournament we had was the ICC (International Cricket Council) Champions Trophy and it was very disappointing to lose (narrowly) to the South Africans. "Having said that, we hope to play some good cricket. There were a lot of positives we took from that tour and the India series, so we have got a lot of plusses to look forward to in this World Cup." Hooper, who missed the last two World Cups in 1996 and 1999 for personal reasons, said he has not set himself any individual goals. "This World Cup is not about Carl Hooper. It is about West Indies cricket. We have slowly but surely turned the corner. This is going to be good launch pad to say 'look West Indies cricket is back and a force to be reckoned with'," he said. "I've always enjoyed playing for the West Indies whether it is a World Cup game or ordinary one-day international. Obviously, the World Cup is a big tournament but I don't think my effort is going to be any more than it has been for some 215-220 one-day internationals." Commenting on star batsman Brian Lara's form, Hooper said he would be in nick for the opening

game. "Brian had two knocks here and didn't post a big score. But a player like Brian Lara come the first game against South Africa, I'm sure he is going to be ready. I'll be ready too." He said batsman Marlon Samuels' withdrawal because of injury was a "big blow", but his replacement Ryan Hinds should be capable of filling in. "I think Marlon has been playing well since he returned to the team after surgery. He played well in India and was very handy with the ball. (His withdrawal) is a big blow to us so somebody else has got to step up. I think Ryan Hinds is being asked to fill his shoes and he is quite capable of doing it. He (effected) a run out. He looked good batting and also looked good bowling." When asked about his knees which he had surgery on last December, Hooper said: "they are holding up." The West Indies will play in Pool B of the World Cup, alongside Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Kenya, Canada, and South Africa, who they open against on February 9.

England in land of WC



AFP, Johannesburg

An embattled England arrived in South Africa Tuesday from Australia to start their World Cup cricket quest with captain Nasser Hussain opting to stay out of the political furor over Zimbabwe. As the team hoped to be told Thursday whether their plea to move their World Cup match in Zimbabwe to South Africa, Hussain said he would not like to comment before then. "All we asked for is an urgent review of the game in Zimbabwe, nothing more, and I don't think it would be wise for me to comment until that review has taken place," Hussain said on arrival at Johannesburg International Airport. But pressed on the issue of Zimbabwe, a tired-looking and irritated Hussain said: "I don't really want to run around in circles here. "This tournament is about the World Cup, its about Africa, its about all the hard work that's been put in already.

"We have released one statement - if you read that statement any questions should be referred to Richard Bevan, our representative," he said. Hussain said he did not believe the team had been given added security, but on arrival was met by police and private security guards. "It's no more than for any other team. We have been out to this part of the world before - My first tour and (coach) Duncan (Fletcher) first tour have been to South Africa - we were very well looked after on and off the field - South Africa Zimbabwe, Kenya." Hussain said the team planned to play golf for the next few days at the casino resort of Sun City "getting some time away from cricket" before starting its preparations in earnest over the weekend. "We are just trying to get to be a unit - it's all about the key games. It's a bit of a cliché but it's all about peaking at the right time," Hussain said. England believe they have made a strong case for switching the February 13 fixture from Harare, citing the "moral, political and safety" issues surrounding a fixture

played in a country ruled by President Robert Mugabe. The International Cricket Council bosses, whose deadline to move the game is February 9, hold a teleconference Thursday to review the situation. England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive Tim Lamb, who is furious with what he called the British Government's "misleading" tactics during the crisis, vowed to pull the England team out if the Foreign Office advised they would be at risk. "There is a further independent review of security going on ... but, regardless of the ICC security report, if the ECB get advice from the Foreign Office saying players will be at risk, we'll say we don't expect our players to go against Foreign Office advice," he said. "We will not send any player into an arena where they could be at risk. We will take the players' concerns on board, listening carefully to what the players have to say."



Bangladesh Sports Journalists' Association hosted a reception to the SAFF Championship winning Bangladesh team at the National Sports Council Conference Room yesterday.

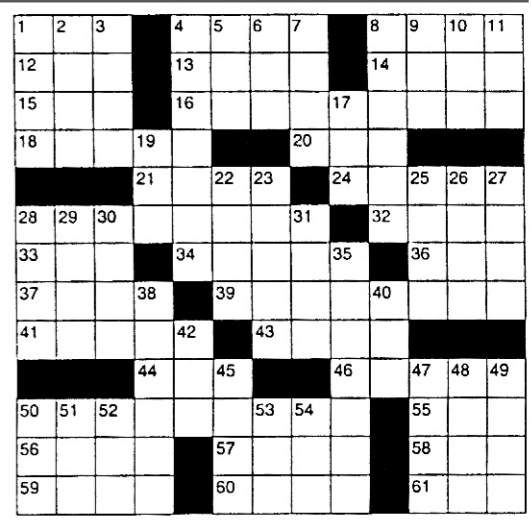
Proteas have dope tests

AFP, Cape Town

South Africa's World Cup cricketers underwent drug tests Wednesday ahead of the tournament which starts on February 8. For the first time at a major cricket tournament, drug testing will take place during the World Cup, with two players from both sides likely to be selected at random for tests after each match. Coach Eric Simons said all the 15 South African players were tested. "It's something that has been coming for about a year. The players have had lectures over the past few months and they have been given booklets setting out what substances are prohibited," said Simons. India against FROM PAGE 13 expectations. "You can't write any team off," Ganguly said. "It's what happens on the field during 100 overs that counts." World Cup organiser Ali Bacher welcomed the team and extended special praise to India's superstar batsman, Sachin Tendulkar. "It's my belief, that second only to Sir Donald Bradman, he will become the greatest batsman of all time," Bacher said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Weight loss venue 4 Read bar codes 8 Made cotton candy 12 Charged bit 13 Dublin's place 14 Big lunch 15 Wacko rouser 18 Sorrow 20 Maui memento 21 Puppy's barks 24 Grind the tooth 28 Dangerous old building 32 Pennsylvania port 33 Harry's successor 34 Pops 36 Sick 37 Telescope part 39 Vim-and-vigor sort 41 Brit. calculations 43 Cookware name 44 Author Fleming 46 Driver's maneuver 50 Booze 55 Reuben holder 56 "I dig it, daddy-o!" 57 Double agent 58 Needlefish 59 Prompted 60 Okla-homa city 61 Conclusion 62 Sorrow 63 Harry's successor 64 Pops 66 Sick 67 Telescope part 69 Vim-and-vigor sort 71 Brit. calculations 73 Cookware name 75 Greek letter 76 Publicize 77 "The First" 8 Idolaters' place 9 Shell-game need 10 Coffee vessel 11 Affirmative action? 12 Command to Fido 19 See 22 Instructor, for short 23 Miss 24 Tool 45 Appellation 47 Incite 48 Stiles of "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" 49 Dweeb 50 TV watchdog 51 Debtor's letters 52 Wade opponent 53 Oodles of pounds 54 Yalie



CRYPTOQUIP V Y O V R L A C B W D U V X C F D P . V O V I B R W D L F X V D I J L V Y J L Q V D I N V D U J P N W L D V Q J Z C A F L Z W D I V L J . Yesterday's Cryptquip: REIGNING CARD-GAME CHAMPION PRODUCES NEW DOCUMENTARY: "HOW THE WHIST WAS WON." Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals N The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.