



1) A FAMILY VISIT! Indian captain Saurav Ganguly (L) arrives at the team hotel with wife Dona and daughter Sana. 2) I'M A SPRINGBOK YOU KNOW! Dashing South African opener Herschelle Gibbs (R) leaves teammate Shaun Pollock in his wake as he sprints off with a rugby ball during a warm-up session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. 3) MR. SOUTH AFRICA! Fast bowler Makhaya Ntini showing off during practice yesterday.



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

Ganguly raring to go

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian captain Saurav Ganguly believes his team always looks for a win and that approach will not change in Dhaka during the TVS Cup triangular series.

World Cup runner's up India's campaign starts against Bangla-desh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow afternoon. This will be India's first international game since their 125-run thrashing at the hands of Australia in the final of the World Cup last month.

"India want to win wherever they go and we have come here to lift the tournament," said Ganguly after arriving with the 15-man Indian team at the Zia International Airport yesterday afternoon.

"Our mission is to win here and for that the team is mentally and physi-

cally prepared," said Ganguly adding that the absence of five experienced players including Sachin Tendulkar would not affect his squad that much.

"There are a few youngsters in the side. But I tell you they are all talented players and capable of playing good cricket.

"Sachin and Rahul (Dravid) are obviously great players. But I think their replacements also have match-winning potentials," added Ganguly who considers Dhaka as one of India's luckiest venues.

Apart from Tendulkar and Dravid, India will also miss the services of pacemen Javagal Srinath, Ashish Nehra and leg-spinner Anil Kumble.

When asked about losing to Australia in the World Cup final last month, Ganguly said that his target was to win the Cup that did not quiet materialise.

"I was in total shock after that loss as we had played superbly throughout the tournament. It was one of the biggest

disappointments in my three-year stint as Indian captain," said Ganguly.

Although the Indian captain was a bit reluctant at first to come to Bangladesh because of a back injury, he assured that as he is here he would play all the matches.

"I am not very sure whether I will open the batting because we have a talented young opener in Gautam Gambhir. If he opens with Virender Sehwag, I might play at number three," revealed Ganguly. Left-hander Gambhir has been drafted into the Indian squad as Tendulkar's replacement.

The bespectacled Indian captain is being accompanied by his wife Dona and daughter Sana in Dhaka.

Ganguly thought that a new-look South Africa under new captain Graeme Smith will put up some stiff challenge and hosts Bangladesh could also pose a threat or two in the competition.

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Proteas to start anew

Cricket

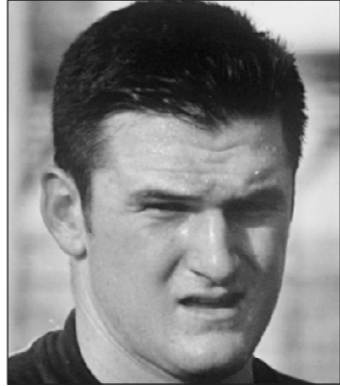
SPORTS REPORTER

A new look South Africa cricket team, led by Graeme Craig Smith, is taking the Bangladesh tour as it's best opportunity to get over the bitter World Cup memories and start afresh to show the world that they are among best in the game.

This was the view the 22-year-old Smith expressed while talking to a host of reporters at the VIP Lounge of Zia International Airport yesterday morning just after the 13-member Protea team's arrival here for the TVS Cup tri-nation tournament and a two-match Test series.

The TVS Cup, which also involving India and hosts Bangladesh, starts at the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow.

"We got a different squad from the World Cup. There are some new guys who are really keen to play good for the country. So I think it's a great



GRAEME CRAIG SMITH

opportunity for us to start our

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Sultan has his way

BFF elections on schedule

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

A persevering Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) boss SA Sultan has apparently removed the obstacles for holding the Federation's elections before the April 30 deadline set by FIFA.

After receiving a written warning from AFC general secretary Peter Vellappan only a week ago for not following the prescribed rules, Sultan looks to have pacified the Asian football supremo following a quick visit to Kuala Lumpur on Monday. But not before he complied with the AFC's demand of holding an EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) before the election.

Sultan, who has been in controversy ever since his appointment by the government nearly one and a half years ago, had invited a fresh debate by

announcing elections on April 26 without convening an EGM.

"The obstacles of holding a BFF election has now been removed and it

at the Conference Room of the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

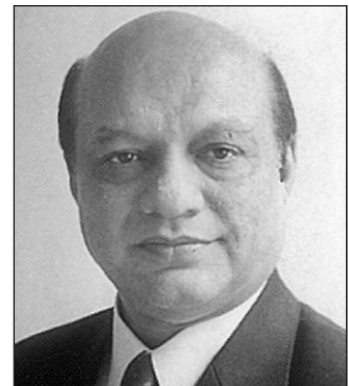
Presenting a letter from Vellappan, Sultan said that the BFF election would be held on April 26 according to a two-page AFC guideline that also elaborated the Congress schedule.

"The Extraordinary Congress (EGM) must be convened at 1100 hours on Saturday, April 26, 2003. The 30 days notification is not mandatory as the amendment Statutes has not yet been enforced.

"If the Extraordinary Congress approves, the Ordinary Congress shall be convened on the same day at 1500 hours. Elections of BFF shall be an item on the agenda of the Ordinary Congress," read the letter of AFC general secretary.

The AFC has also decided to send

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SA SULTAN

would be held as planned earlier," said Sultan at an impromptu press briefing



Bangladesh cricketers (L-R) Akram Khan, Tushar Imran and Talha Jubair stretch during a practice session at the Bangabandhu national Stadium yesterday.

Pakistan favourites

Sharjah Cup final today

Cricket

REUTERS/INTERNET, Sharjah

Things could not have gone any better for Rashid Latif since the Pakistan team arrived in the United Arab Emirates.

Newly appointed as captain and given the task, in tandem with coach Javed Miandad, of rebuilding the team after a disappointing World Cup, he has a 100 per cent record.

Convincing wins over Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and Kenya during the round robin phase have made them clear favourites for the final.

The Pakistan selectors took a bold gamble by leaving several established stars at home and it has paid off with younger members of the squad forced to take on greater responsibility.

"Give us another six to eight months and we will build a very strong team," is Latif's assessment of their progress so far.

They have an inexperienced bowling attack, but the batsmen have risen to the challenge and their ability to lift the scoring rate in the second half of their innings has been crucial.

Abdul Razzaq hit seven sixes in making 76 not out off 53 balls in their 68-run win over Zimbabwe and he is set to return to the side after being rested for the game against Kenya.

Batsman Younis Khan will also be back after scores of 67 and 57 not out in his two appearances so far.

Pre-tournament expectations were that Sri Lanka would meet Pakistan in the final, so Zimbabwe have done well to progress so far, especially as they now have to manage without Andy Flower, their one genuinely world-class batsman.

They will again look to opener Douglas Marillier to give them a good start with 191 runs behind him in the tournament, including an innings of 100 against Kenya.

"The tournament has been a learning process for us," said skipper Heath Streak.

"A victory in the final will certainly boost the morale of players ahead of our tour of England later this month."

Grant Flower, Andy's brother and now the team's leading batsman, crossed the 6,000-run mark in one-dayers during the event. "We have not been in many finals of late, but I feel we have it in us to win this one," Flower said.

History is against them, however, having won only two of their 31 previous one-day meetings with

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Reefat's 6th crown

Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master (IM) Reefat-bin-Sattar won the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Chess Championship title defeating FIDE Master Rezaul Haque at the NSC Chess room yesterday.

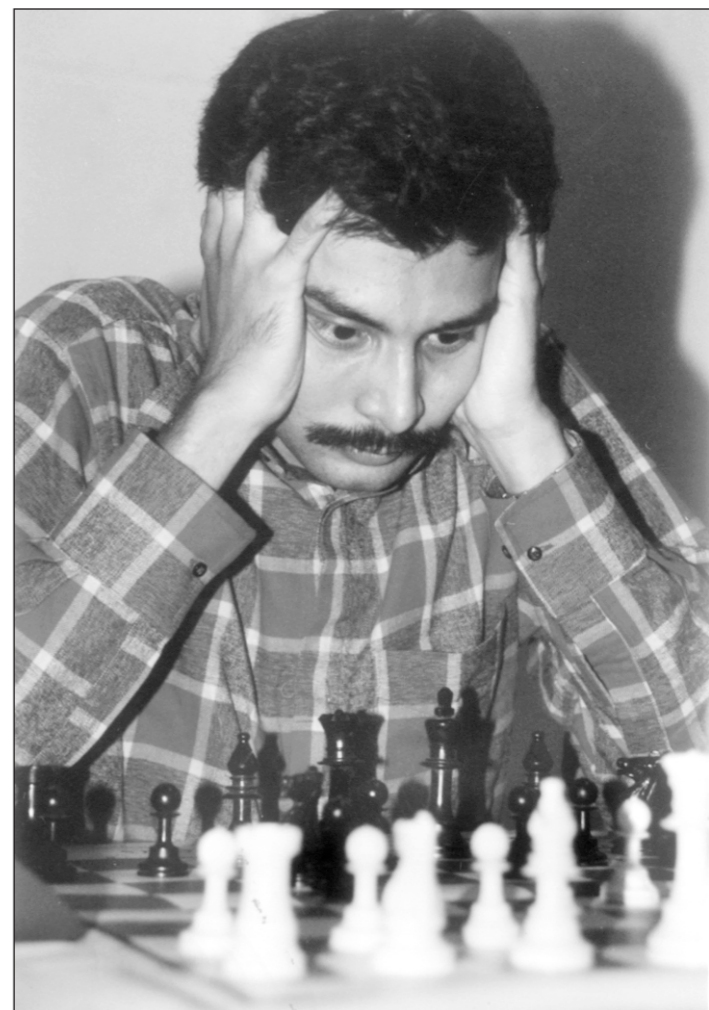
The win against his Biman teammate was more than what Reefat needed in the last round game as he went into the match with only a draw required to lift the national crown for a sixth time. His final point tally read 11.5.

It was after two years that the talented chess player won the prestigious title from Grand Master Ziaur Rahman who pulled out in the middle of the meet due to illness.

Grand Master Niaz Murshed and IM Abdullah Al-Rakib finished on equal 10.5 points and will lock horns in a play-off today for the runner-up and third spot.

IM Enamul Hossain Rajib finished fourth with nine points while Sheikh Nasir Ahmed and Shawkat Hossain Pallab ended up fifth and sixth respectively.

A total of 14 players took part in the 13-round meet.



REEFAT-BIN-SATTAR

Gayle angry at being dropped

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

West Indies opening batsman Chris Gayle has voiced his irritation at being left out of the West Indies squad for the opening Test against Australia.

He was left out by the selectors because of doubts over his eligibility after opting to play in the Double Wicket World Championship last weekend.

He travelled to St Lucia together with former West Indies captain Carl Hooper, rather than play for Jamaica in the Carib Beer series final against Barbados.

West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) rules state that a player may only be

selected if he is available to his first-class team "in a competition immediately preceding the selection of a senior West Indies team".

But Gayle insists he "obtained the necessary permission" before agreeing to play in the Double Wicket event.

In a statement to explain his decision, he said he was "disappointed" to be overlooked for the Test.

"When I agreed to participate in the Double Wicket tournament, I did so as a West Indies cricket player to play on a team representing the West Indies."

He added: "I would like to state strongly that I have always been very proud and extremely honoured to represent Jamaica and the West Indies on the cricket field."

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Waugh beginning record Test

Cricket

AFP, Georgetown

Steve Waugh will become cricket's most-capped player when he plays in his 157th Test match against the West Indies in the first Test at the Bourda ground here on Thursday.

The tenacious 37-year-old, battling to prolong his Test career before a majestic century against England in the fifth Ashes Test in Sydney in early January, is now firmly back in charge as the Aussies attempt to retain the Frank Worrell Trophy in the four-Test Caribbean series.

Waugh will pass another celebrated Australian cricketer Allan Border (156 Tests) in the Georgetown Test but has played down its significance.

"I'm aware that I'm about to become the most capped player in the history of Test cricket, which is

nice, but as they say records are made to be broken and someone will go past it," Waugh said on Wednesday.

"I'll have it for the moment which is nice but really it's not something I can hang my hat on and say it's the highlight of my career."

More pressing for Waugh is to get

the Australians away to a winning start against the West Indians, who again are in a mess of their own making.

Former West Indies captain Carl Hooper has pulled out of the series, reportedly saying he won't play under new skipper Brian Lara. And 28-Test opening batsman Chris

Gayle was left out amid reports the West Indies Cricket Board deemed him ineligible after playing in an ICC-sanctioned double-wicket competition in St Lucia.

Team vice-captain Ramnareh Sarwan is unavailable through injury and Gus Logie is the caretaker coach for the series after Roger Harper was dumped in the wake of the World Cup.

"It's difficult but this is the reality of the situation. The players will have to dig deep, obviously we all have to dig deep and try to get the players to play together as a team," Logie said.

"Team work and team spirit will be most important. We have to use whatever adversity we have in the past few days and weeks and build us up and make us stronger. That's the only way to go."

Lara scored three centuries one of them 213 in Kingston to help the West Indies to draw the 1999

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STEVE WAUGH



BRIAN LARA