



PHOTO: STAR

India fast bowler Zaheer Khan bowls in the nets at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Mahmud hopes for a turnaround

SPORTS REPORTER



The Khaled Mahmud era begins for Bangladesh when the hosts take on India in the inaugural match of the TVS Cup tri-nation series 2003 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The day-night affair is scheduled for a 2pm start with ESPN-Star Sports and Bangladesh Television providing live coverage.

South Africa, the other side in the series, will play their opening match of the two-tier robin league against India on Sunday.

This will be the first international outing for both Bangladesh and India after the World Cup in South Africa. Bangladesh, who lost five matches out of six in the Cup, are desperately looking forward to a much-improved display against the powerful Indians.

The home side will also hoping to

break their 32-match losing streak. In their previous 67 ODI appearances, Bangladesh have won only three matches and lost 63. Two matches were abandoned. Their last win came against Pakistan at Northamptonshire in May 31 during the 1999 World Cup.

Bangladesh's record against India is understandably unimpressive. Bangladesh have lost all of their eight matches so far. The last meeting between the two teams was in Asia Cup in Dhaka in May 2000 where the Indians won by eight wickets.

Although the World Cup finalists India, who will be without five experienced players including Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid, Mahmud still thought they were the tournament favourites.

Talking to The Daily Star Sport yesterday at the team's hotel, the new Bangladesh skipper said that Indians boasted batsmen like Saurav Ganguly, Virender Sehwag, Mohammad Kaif, Yuvraj Singh, Dinesh Mongia.

"Besides, most of them are all-rounders also. So, you cannot say they

are a weak side," said Mahmud.

He revealed that his team's approach would be positive on the field.

Mahmud also said that they were yet to name the playing eleven since they had to decide the number three batting slot.

"We have to choose between Habibul Bashar and Tushar Imran," he said.

It was learnt that Mohammad Ashraful and Mehrab Hossain would open followed by Tushar Imran or

Habibul Bashar. Alok Kapali is set to bat at number four followed by Akram Khan and Sanwar Hossain. Mahmud will come in at number seven.

Mahmud revealed that he would certainly bat if he won the toss and try to score around 230.

"Our first target will be to cross the 200-mark because our scores have been in the 180s for last few matches. We have to cross this mind-barrier and bat for a good total."

While Mahmud was putting up a brave face, his Indian counterpart Saurav Ganguly was looking forward to seeing his young guns perform in the Dhaka tournament.

"We need a good start since this is our first match after the World Cup. There are some youngsters in the side who are really hungry to show their mettle. Hopefully they would take this tournament as a platform to perform so that they can be part of the full strength Indian team in the future," said Ganguly adding that young opener Gautam Gambhir and

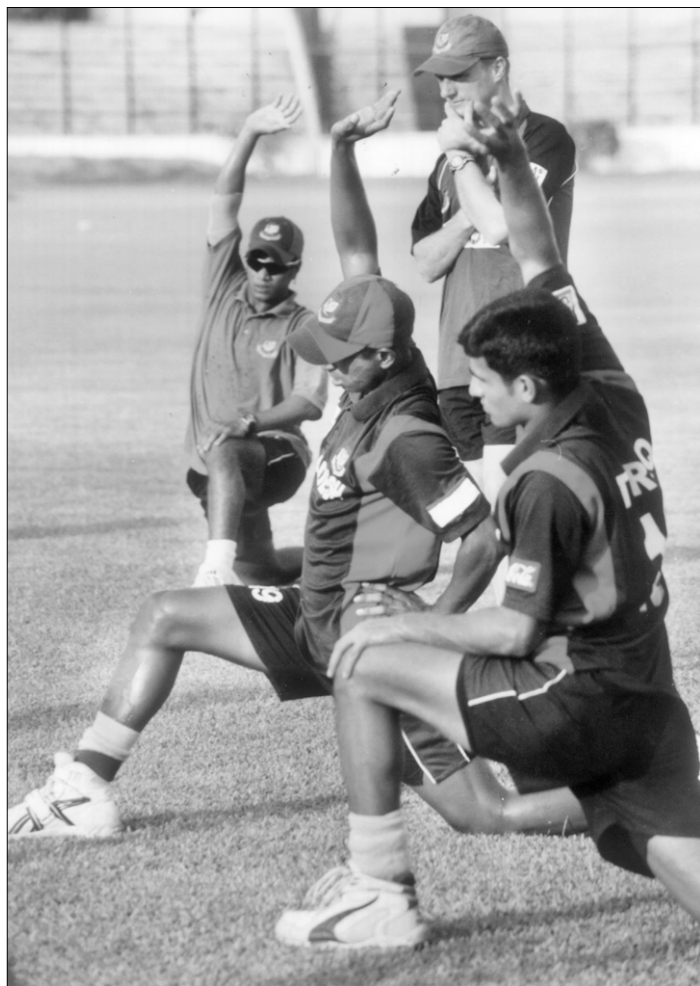


PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh's (R-L) Tareq Aziz, Tapas Baisya and Alok Kapali stretch during a practice session at the BNS yesterday.

### TVS CUP SCHEDULE

Apr 11	Ban v India
Apr 12	Rest day
Apr 13	India v S Africa
Apr 14	Ban v S Africa
Apr 15	Rest day
Apr 16	Ban v India
Apr 17	Ban v S Africa
Apr 18	India v S Africa
Apr 19	Rest day
Apr 20	Final
Apr 21	Reserve day

## Simons can't wait

SPORTS REPORTER



South African coach Eric Simons feels that two days of practice would certainly help his team get used to the local conditions here before they roll into action.

The former South African cricketer, who took over a year ago, also thought that Friday's match against the BCB Eleven at the BKSP ground in Savar would also help him to name the playing eleven for Sunday's TVS Cup game against India.

"It was fantastic that we had two good practice sessions here. The boys have adjusted themselves with the weather here. It's really good to get such opportunities before you start playing

competitive matches," said Simons to a group of reporters at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

He said that Friday's warm-up game would be very helpful for his new-look side.

"Rather than spending time in the nets the boys will get a lot of chances to work on their game."

Simons was satisfied with the wicket at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"The wicket looks a very good one to bat on. Also it will help the spinners and we have plenty of them in our side," he said.

Simons also praised the facilities provided by the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

"The facilities here are as good as we have in South Africa. The boys are quite happy with that. What they are now looking forward to is tomorrow's match," said Simons adding that select-

ing the final eleven would be a little difficult because they had too many all-rounders to choose from.

"Graeme Smith, Shaun Pollock and Andrew Hall are good all-rounders. We have to see the pitch first and then decide who will play. It's not a problem because we have only 13 guys," joked Simons.

Today's practice match at BKSP is scheduled to start at 9:30 am.

The BCB selection would be led by young opener Nafees Iqbal while right-arm fast bowler Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza, who is on his way back from an injury, is also expected to play.

The game is very important for Mashrafe as he is working very hard to regain fitness. Although he is not in the one-day side, there is a strong possibility of him playing in the first Test, starting in Chittagong on April 24.

## Talha out of action

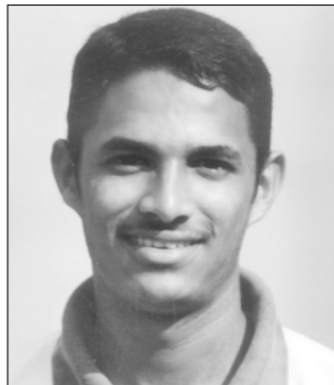
SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh paceman Talha Jubair has been ruled out of the TVS Cup squad because of a hairline fracture on his left ankle.

Talha, the 19-year-old right arm bowler had suffered the injury during Bangladesh's last World Cup match against Kenya in South Africa last month. As X-rays initially suggested that there was no damage, Talha continued to train with Bangladesh team. But the young bowler was still in pain so he underwent a bone scan on Tuesday.

The scan report confirmed that he had a hairline fracture, which will require at least three weeks to heal.



TALHA JUBAIR

Talking to The Daily Star Sport yesterday, a dejected Talha said that the pain never left him.

The scan findings suggest that

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## Steve eyes SL job

Sanath yet to say anything

REUTERS/AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan cricket officials are still waiting to hear whether Sanath Jayasuriya will step down as captain after his side crashed out of the Sharjah Cup.

The 33-year-old all-rounder offered his resignation after Sri Lanka lost to Australia in the World Cup semifinal in March, but it was turned down by national team selectors.

"There hasn't been anything official expressed to the cricket board. He has only intimated he wants to relinquish the captaincy to media in Sharjah," Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) chief executive Anura Tennekoon told Reuters on Thursday.

Despite being favourites to qualify for the Sharjah final Sri Lanka were knocked out of the four-team tournament after losing to

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## Aussies always mean business

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia will field a full-strength team irrespective of Bangladesh's modest performances when they play their inaugural Test series here in July-August, according to leading cricket officials on Thursday.

Australia will play two Tests and three one-dayers against Bangla-desh in the northern cities of Darwin and Cairns.

Bangladesh is the worst team in international cricket losing 11 of its 17 Tests by more than an innings as well as recording losses by nine wickets, eight wickets (twice), seven wickets and 288 runs.

It has one drawn result when more than two days were lost to rain against Zimbabwe.

With Australia's cricketers in the midst of a heavy playing schedule there was some speculation that it would be an ideal opportunity to rest key players against the Bangladeshis.

"It won't happen," selector and Australian Cricket Board member Allan Border said on Thursday. "It's a Test match it doesn't matter who it's against."

"We wouldn't be doing the right thing by Bangladesh nor by our own players if we didn't pick a full-strength team."

Chief selector Trevor Hohns said other factors like "statistics and money" were factors which would count against fielding a B team.

"My job is to pick the best side for

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PHOTO: STAR

FEELING THE HEAT! South Africa opener Herschelle Gibbs (L) and spinner Paul Adams hide themselves from sunshine during their practice session at the BNS yesterday.

## Zim shot out for 168

Cricket

AFP, Sharjah

New-look Pakistan were on course to win the limited-overs Sharjah Cup after they shot out Zimbabwe for 168 in the final here on Thursday.

The 2,000th one-day international in cricket's history saw a procession of Zimbabwe batsmen go in and out after Heath Streak won the toss and opted to take first strike.

Young wicketkeeper Tatenda Taibu was the lone batsman to defy the Pakistani bowlers, making an unbeaten 74 as seven others failed to reach double figures.

Zimbabwe were struggling at 133-9 before last man Douglas Hondo (nine) helped Taibu add 35 valuable runs.

Fast bowler Mohammad Sami and

off-spinner Shoab Malik finished with three wickets apiece. Danish Kaneria and Mohammad Hafeez picked up two each.

Pakistan sacked eight senior stars, including Wasim Akram and captain Waqar Younis, following the first round exit at last month's World Cup, and picked a young squad under the guidance of seasoned Rashid Latif and coach Javed Miandad.

A full house of 20,000 at the Sharjah cricket stadium saw Pakistan dominate the first-half of the final after breezing through their three league matches against Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

Zimbabwe never recovered after the three-wicket burst from Sami reduced them to 36-4 by the 13th over.

Sami, who claimed a career-best 4-22 against Kenya on Tuesday, struck with the third delivery of the match when he had Craig Wishart caught

behind by the Pakistani captain.

Latif then caught Gavin Rennie off Sami, who later clean bowled Douglas Marillier for 14 in the ninth over.

As Sami ended a fruitful six-over spell of 3-20, Malik gained the valuable wicket of Grant Flower who was caught at square-leg by Younis Khan for seven.

Taibu and Sean Ervine dug in to retrieve the situation, but their 46-run stand for the fifth wicket was rudely cut short by Indian umpire Avi Jayaprakash, who ruled Ervine caught down the leg-side by Latif as the batsman attempted to sweep.

Television replays showed the ball clearly miss the edge of the bat. Ervine made 25.

Zimbabwe moved to 122-5 when three wickets crashed in the space of five runs as Kaneria dismissed Dion Ebrahim and Hafeez got rid of Streak and Andy Blythe in consecutive overs.

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## India keep Wright

Cricket

REUTERS, New Delhi

The Indian cricket board has decided to extend coach John Wright's contract by a year, a senior official said on Wednesday.

"We have decided to extend by one year the tenure of the coach, physio and trainer," said the official, who did not want to be named.

The tenure of former New Zealand captain Wright, who took over as India's first foreign coach in November 2000, physio Andrew Leipus and trainer Adrian le Roux had ended with last month's World Cup in South Africa.

The trio had been expected to keep their jobs after India's good run until their tame defeat in the Cup final to champions Australia.

Senior officials of the Board of



JOHN WRIGHT

Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) made the decision at an informal meeting held earlier this week which is expected to be ratified at the BCCI's working committee on April 26-27.

The BCCI has already given a two-month extension to Wright to

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## ACB decides about Warne this week

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) said they will this weekend decide what disgraced Shane Warne can do during his one-year doping ban.

The ACB board meets in Bowral, in the New South Wales southern highlands, from Friday with Warne's immediate future on the agenda.

Warne has been outed from cricket until February 10 next year after testing positive to a banned diuretic in January. The Lashings cricket club in England has offered him a place in their line-up, while he has also been informally linked with the St Kilda AFL club.

Earlier in his ban, Victoria coach

David Hookes said he was prepared to allow Warne to practise in the nets with the state team.

Warne also has a contract with Channel Nine and when he was out of action with a dislocated shoulder was employed to commentate. But he hasn't done any commentary since his drugs ban.

"Regardless of what cricket is proposed, whether it's official or unofficial, we need to see it before it can be approved under the terms of Warne's playing contract," ACB public affairs manager Peter Young said last month.

"On the face of it, a privately-owned club (Lashings) does not seem appropriate."

Warne cannot play for money while he's banned but the issue of playing for charity will be discussed

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## PCB finds seniors at fault

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricket chiefs on Thursday blamed skipper Waqar Younis and senior players for the country's dismal World Cup performance.

A report released by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said pace bowler Waqar's "stubborn" style of captaincy had left him unable to get the best out of his players.

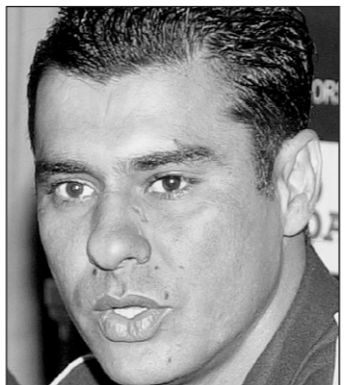
The speed-king's straight-talking approach had also led to a damaging rift with vice-captain Inzamamul Haq, who in turn was blamed in the report for not meeting Waqar's standards.

"Waqar is a seasoned campaigner who is straightforward but at times stubborn, and struggled to communicate with some of the players resulting in frustration for himself and others," the report by the PCB's three-member

review committee said.

The committee, comprising former Test players Naushad Ali, and Aaqub Javed, and first class player Sultan Rana, was set up to examine the circumstances of Pakistan's first round exit from the World Cup.

While the committee supported the



WAQAR YOUNIS

decision to retain Waqar as captain for the World Cup, it questioned his form as bowler.

"During the World Cup, Waqar did not bowl at his best taking only seven wickets at an average of 25. He is an attacking bowler but his economy rate was much too high at nearly six runs per over," it said.

Pakistan lost three of its six matches and could win only against minnows Namibia and the Netherlands and its match against Zimbabwe was rained off.

The committee also blamed senior players as well as Inzamam for lack of co-operation with the captain.

"Waqar expected high level of commitment from his players but unfortunately did not get the same, including from the vice-captain," the report said.

Inzamam, Pakistan's key batsman for the event, failed miserably with only 19 runs from five matches.

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PHOTO: STAR

I'M A RELIEVED MAN NOW! Shaun Pollock (R), who was sacked as South African captain just after the World Cup, chats with India skipper Saurav Ganguly at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.