

# Stargazing at Bangabandhu

Zakaria Simon

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But over the years, Anwar, a national side member for almost a decade, has proven to be a player who performs his best only when in the right frame of mind.

Still, Anwar is the type of a batsman one would not hesitate to spend money to watch and the followers of the game in this country would be expecting him to rise to the occasion.



SAEED ANWAR

Any big event, and the Test final at the Bangabandhu is no mean one, sends the adrenaline pumping to the extent of often bringing out the exceptional among men of premium quality. Dhaka and the world will be watching closely the events at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. And in the five days to come, one or two will emerge the better amongst the best. Both Pakistan and Sri Lanka house a number of world greats and also some stars that have just begun to twinkle. Only time will tell, which group will provide the star of the Dhaka Test. As an appetiser, we offer samplers from both sides: stars who have already made the grade.

**Saeed Anwar**  
In the game of cricket when the job is to score runs, Saeed Anwar's name can be found in the upper echelon of a list of batsmen who are best in doing so. The short and skinny Pakistan opener may not be an imposing figure but his occupancy of the crease means the score-board will find itself in motion. Once the Karachi-born left-hander gets going, runs seem very easy to come by. A sweet timer of the ball, Anwar has even command on both sides of the wicket and all the grace of a traditional left-hander. And after being in and out of the Pakistan team in the early days of his career, he has now become an indispensable member. His records testify to his talents. After an uncertain start to his career, Anwar has accu-

shamed 3,027 runs from 68 innings in 40 Test matches at an average of 45.86. He also has eight centuries and 18 fifties to his belt. His highest score is 188 not out.

Young and brimming with zeal and talent, Dhaka could be a perfect place for Shoaib to reign in pace.



CHAMINDA VAAS

Chaminda Vaas has in many ways been the architect-in-chief of Sri Lanka's recent upsurge in the international arena. His incisive left-arm pace bowling, which has invited comparisons with Wasim Akram, albeit somewhat prematurely, has given the Sri Lankan attack the bite that was sorely missing previously. Vaas became the first Sri Lankan to take 10 wickets in a Test match in 1994-95, and at 25, a veteran of 27 Tests, he still thinks himself as a learner of the game. The Colombo-born player, who plays for Colts Cricket Club, has 84 wickets to his name at an average of 30.65 with one ten-wicket and four five-wicket hauls. His best figures are six for 87.

Vaas clearly has much to give to the future of Sri Lankan cricket and the Asian championship final here in Dhaka.

MAHELA JAYAWARDENA

Born on the 27th of May in 1977, Mahela Jayawardena is in the genesis of his career. The Colombo-born batsman has so far played only eight Test

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## BEYOND THE BOUNDARY RULES, LAWS AND VIDEOTAPES

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paying public should be given their just desserts, by way of massive doses of excitement lurking in every nook and cranny of test cricket. Bonus points and outright wins are the jargon of today. So also are bets, bribes and match-fixing. There is talk of the Lahore match, that a team that "should not" be in the final has reached the rarefied atmosphere by default, totally discounting the fact that the team which "should have" been there had choked when the chips were down.

There is talk also that the point system be revised. How? Perhaps we could introduce a jackpot over, say the 66th, where if the batting side can hit three consecutive sixes, it earns two extra batting points. Or, say, in the 82nd over, if the bowling side gets two wickets in consecutive balls, it also bags two extra points. We can get carried away here and suggest that three diving catches by the keeper in an innings count for power play and three points. Or maybe even ... The possibilities are endless.

There is talk now of how the game needs to be revamped and how the poor, long-suffering,

But the framers of these rules have, in their time, played their cricket in quite the fashion that most dictionaries would term dour. Results were the farthest item on their cricket agenda. Great players they may have been, but not great enough surely to play god to this game. The world used to be amazed at the way they played the fastest of all bowling with the dead meant of the bat standing on tiptoe. There would in all likelihood be a collective hush, and collective oohs and aahs, as the ball would drop dead at their feet, mocking the vultures clustered around the batting crease.

They were also those who wheeled their arms over looping the ball in the air, pulling it back and forth with nobody beyond thirty yards from the bat. And not a run would be scored. And there were those like me, who were prepared to walk miles, spend a fortune and sit for hours transfixed by such spectacles.

Lata Mangeshkar cannot be asked for obvious reasons to sing her songs attired in leotards, nor can Shweta Shetty romp around in a Kanjeevaram. But they have their own slots and their own prime time ratings. Each in their own way. Why ask them to change? Does art imitate life, or does life imitate Jagmohan Dalimiya? Should I ask?

These gentlemen in question are, I understand, in Dhaka at the moment, perhaps only a three iron distance from where I am, but do I dare or do I dare? That's another story.

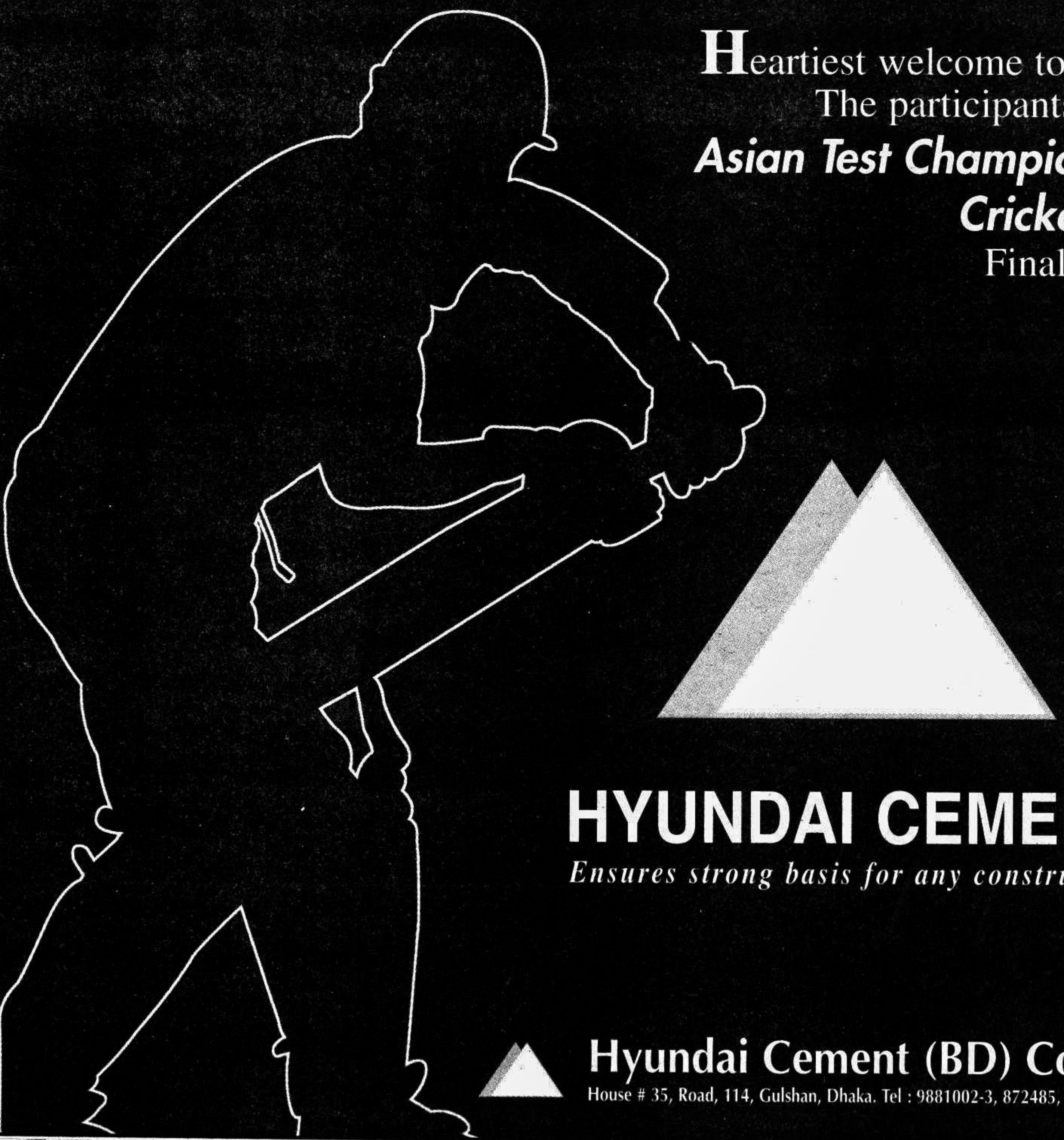


Sri Lanka's star batsman Mahela Jayawardena (L) is being attended to by the team physio after hurting his wrist during practice at the Bangabandhu Stadium yesterday.

—Star photo by Anisur Rahman

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### Heartiest welcome to Dhaka The participants of the **Asian Test Championship Cricket Cup** Final Match



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