



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

(L) New Zealand spinner Daniel Vettori bowls in the nets during their practice session yesterday morning at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. (R) Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore (R) talks to Tareq Aziz Khan while spinner Mohammad Rafique passes by during their practice session at the Big Bowl.

Oram wants runs

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

In his three-year international career, Jacob Oram has risen to the stature of the most potential all-rounder in the New Zealand team after Chris Cairns.

Like Cairns, Oram also got into the side as a bowler. But his batting talent has added some depth to the Black Caps' line-up and the towering cricketer now wants to concentrate more on his big hitting abilities.

"It is my first visit to Bangladesh. I haven't got any personal goal but I am here to continue with my good form," the 26-year old right-arm pacer-cum-left-handed batsman said during the Kiwis' first training session in Dhaka yesterday.

"The subcontinent condition is not helpful for seam bowlers. We have heard and seen that the pitches here help the spinners. That's why I will concentrate on my batting here and try to make some big scores," said Oram, who has 80 wickets in 67 one-day internationals in addition to 801 runs at an average of 17.80.

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Improvement Dav's priority

BCB XI v Black Caps match starts today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

For Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore the word 'win' is apparently a burden rather than a thought of inspiration at the moment.

The 50-year old Australian agrees with New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming's views that the present Bangladesh side were stronger in comparison with the team that had played in New Zealand in 2001, but he was realistic enough to acknowledge that the two-Test and three-ODI series will be a battle between two unequal sides.

"The win seems very heavy on the shoulders right at the moment. You want to win, no doubt the public

also want that and even the Board want to win. But I am not concentrating on that," said Whatmore while talking to reporters at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) yesterday.

Rather, Whatmore will be keeping a close eye on the performance of some of the individuals who will be playing against the touring Black Caps from today in a three-day warm-up match.

New Zealand take on a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) XI in their tour opener at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP). The enigmatic Alok Kapali will lead the Board side which also has some of the most promising young batsmen of the country in Mohammed Ashraf, Nafees Iqbal and Aftab Ahmed.

"I am not focusing on the out-

come. I can't give you a definite time frame when we can start talking about the outcome. I never focus on the result. Rather I always focus on what we need to do to do well," said Whatmore while adding that batting remained his main area of concern

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A victory for women

Dhaka lift the inaugural title

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka District Sports Association clinched the title of the first ever Women's Football Tournament that came to a peaceful end yesterday despite threats from a section of fundamentalists.

Sheela slammed the match winner in Dhaka's solitary goal win over Bangladesh Ansar in the final at the Bir Shreshtha Mostafa Kamal

Stadium in Kamalapur. The security was not heavy around the venue but their presence was enough to keep the fundamentalists, who called for a ban on women's football in the country, away and apart from incessant drizzle, nothing could disrupt the match or the spirit of nearly a 2,000 spectators.

The pitch, however, proved substandard as it became waterlogged after very little rain.

The women footballers, most of

them joining the game from other sports, tried to be competitive in their first venture. But after the 10-day meet they admitted that they needed a lot of training and proper guidance to grow in strength.

Both finalists came to the game with an all-win record, but finally Dhaka striker Sheela separated the two sides capitalising on a defence lapse in the 34th minute when she drilled home from the top of the box.

Bangladesh Football Federation

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Wait till last for Bashar

SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors it seems will wait as late as possible to make sure captain Habibul Bashar plays in Bangladesh's first Test against New Zealand.

Bashar, the top batsman of the country with highest Test aggregate of 2079 with three centuries, is recovering fast from an injury but still complained of feeling pain on his right thumb.

He went through surgery in Australia and only began to bat in the first week of October.

Desperate to have the best batsman of the country fit, the selection panel is likely to announce a 14-member team instead of 13 players for the first Test starting in Dhaka from October 19.

The selectors are expected to name an additional batsman as backup in case Bashar is not fully fit to play. The squad will be announced on October 16, the last day of the three-day match between the visitors and the BCB XI.

Bashar complained that he felt pain during fielding sessions but so far, he had no such problem while

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PHOTO: STAR

HIP, HIP HOORAY! Players of Dhaka celebrate their victory over Bangladesh Ansar in the final of the women's football tournament yesterday.

What to WATCH

DD Sports
India vs Australia
Second Test, Day One
Live at 10:00 am

TEN Sports
2006 WC Football Qualifier
Brazil vs Colombia
Live at 6:30 am
Argentina vs Chile
Live at 8:45 am
Triangular Cricket Series
Pakistan vs Sri Lanka
Live at 2:45 pm

ESPN
Football Crazy
Live at 5:00 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports
Sportsline
Live at 8:00 pm



PHOTO: AFP

TIGHTEN YOURSELF UP: India captain Sourav Ganguly (C) listens to something from legendary Indian opener Sunil Gavaskar (R) while paceman Irfan Pathan is having a workout with the bat during a practice session at the Chepauk in Chennai yesterday.

'Deliver or face axe'

AFP, Madras



AUSTRALIA vs INDIA 2004-05

"It is high time the batsmen realise they have to come good," Ganguly told reporters on Wednesday, indicating he may reshuffle the batting for the crucial match.

"They have to think positive. These are players who have got double centuries against the best

fast bowling and on fast wickets. "Their records speak for themselves. I have faith in my batsmen to deliver but one can't wait for ever."

Sachin out of 2nd Test, not series

AFP, Madras

India's Sachin Tendulkar, who has been ruled out of the second Test against Australia starting here on Thursday, may still play the remaining two Tests, team officials said.

The star batsman, sidelined for the last two months with a tennis elbow injury, was still not fit enough to take on the world champions,

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India, missing star batsman Sachin Tendulkar due to a tennis elbow injury, were shot out for 246 and 239 in the first Test at Bangalore to lose by 217 runs.

"It is a big blow not to have Sachin around, but the others have to stand up and be counted," Ganguly said.

Tendulkar, the world's most prolific batsman with 33 Test and a record 37 one-day centuries, was on Wednesday ruled out of the second Test and remains a doubtful starter for the remaining two matches as well.

Ganguly sees the Test at the Chepauk here as his team's "best chance" to draw level after winning two successive matches against the world champions here in 1998 and 2001.

The Indian captain indicated

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John Howard
(Australia Prime Minister)

"He was an authentic character, he lived life to the full. He was a wonderful cricketer."

While paying tribute to Keith Miller.