

Recommendations of the Probe Report

After a sensational disclosure of the Findings of the Probe Report on Bangladesh's debacle in the South Africa World Cup 2003, The Daily Star Sports also deemed it necessary to publish the recommendations of the two-member probe body of Commodore (retd.) Mujibur Rahman and Syed Shamim Ahsan for the betterment of the game in the future. And with the publication of the recommendation The Daily Star Sports is fulfilling its commitment to keep its valued readers abreast of the entire 31-page top-secret document.

3.1 No Form of Politics Should Exist

The first thing that the Committee recommends is that the BCB be devoid of any kind of political influence. In the past, cricket has been plagued by club and national politics. This Committee strongly feels that the influence of politics should be totally eliminated from cricket and for this, much would depend on the President of the Board. While it may not be unusual for third world countries to make political appointments the head of the Board when it is a question of cricket, he must be supported by only those elements that are well conversant with the game. We are happy to note that when we discussed this issue with the President of the Board as well with former Presidents like KZ Islam, Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Commodore Mujibur Rahman, they held the same opinion.

3.2 The Concept of A Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

This leads us to the issue of reorganisation of the Board. Laws have been passed about elections. Our first recommendation is that the Board should be reconstituted as a corporate body to be headed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will function under the overall policy directives of the Board. The Board will have to delegate sufficient authority to the CEO for him to perform to the best of his ability and should be given a free hand. This is not to say that the CEO will be all in all. This has been stated earlier and is being reiterated that the Board while delegating authority to the CEO will supervise and provide policy guidelines from time to time.

He should not only have executive authority but also financial authority and when the CEO feels that certain expenditures go beyond

Dhaka. Among other things, the point discussed was that, beyond the Board, the President must have a set of advisors consisting of three to five persons selected from former national players, so that the President has the freedom to test options offered in a forum outside the Board.

3.4 Selecting The Coach & The Selectors

We do not want to dwell on the past. The Committee however, strongly recommends that in the matter of selection of coach etc. two things are desirable. One is that this should be internationally advertised and two, merit and merit alone should be the consideration for selection of the Coach. For now, we have been able to obtain the services of Mr. Dav Whatmore and undoubtedly, he is one of the best available in the market. The Committee is fully supportive of the choice and would very strongly recommend that he be provided with a free hand and given all facilities that he may require. He should be in a position to communicate with the CEO, the Secretary of the Cricket Committee, the Advisors in charge of Development and finally with the President. We strongly recommend that the Coach also be an important component of the Selection Committee.

We would go to the extent of suggesting that if he needs more supportive hands in his effort to build up the team, that he be provided with them. It may be added that today BCB does not suffer from fund constraint, which might have been a case in the past. We wish to add that organisations such as ACC would be willing to provide free of cost, coaches for training our squad as well as umpiring etc. Agreed that, these may not be on a long-term basis. However, Bangladesh needs

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his authority or certain administrative actions call for Board's approval, he will seek the Board's approval. Secondly, the CEO must be assisted by suitable and qualified manpower, which could be formatted as committees. These committees would be answerable to the CEO and whose position must be advertised with qualifications properly laid out so that the right type of person can be chosen. We however would like to emphasise that the Board in consultation with the CEO would have to decide the levels of the appointments and removals as in line with the corporate bodies. Necessarily, these positions must be filled up through advertisements, shortlists and proper Selection Committee. In the case of the CEO himself, at least for the time being, the Committee recommends a well-trained foreigner with enough background and experience to run an organisation of this type. He should have a contract of 4 (four) years within which period he could groom his second in command to take over in course of time. The Board is responsive to the concept and we are happy to note that they are in touch with some foreign established cricket organisation for the selection of a CEO. We wholeheartedly support this move.

Once the CEO has been appointed, the BCB will function on the basis of Committees. The draft organogram is enclosed. It is imperative that Committees have their budgetary provisions and will have full independence to operate within their purview subject to certain financial limitations. If their financial limitation were to be exceeded, the Committee would require the approval of the CEO. It may be added that in the case of divergence of views between the CEO and the Chairman of any Committee, the matter should be referred to the President of the Board. The President will enjoy the discretion of decision as an arbiter or may decide to take it to the Board.

It is unfortunate but true that the Committee got the impression that there exists a division among the members of the Board and there are groupings in it. It is vital for the Board that the President ensure homogeneity and eliminate grouping at all cost at the level of cricket management, which is to say that the Board must be above all kinds of politics.

3.3 A Set of Advisors

We had a very productive meeting with the Board with only one member absent who was out of

men/Advisors/Officials are in any manner connected with any business related to the Board in general and cricket in particular. This is imperative to set a good example for the subordinates as well and for the Board to earn the respect of the cricket fans as well as the general public.

3.6 Matters of Finance and Funding

Yet another issue that comes to our mind is the matter of finance. We have heard of examples in the past where lots of financial irregularities were committed. To cite all of them

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would create another volume. Rather than going into that, we recommend that a qualified CA or FCA should control the expenditure under strict financial rules. If certain out of turn expenditures are considered absolutely essential, then it must be justified, agreed upon by the Director Finance, CEO and approved by the President of the Board.

We were told and material has been provided to us that only recently, external audit for the last four years has been completed. The CEO or any other foreign employee or local employee on contract could be removed on proven charges of misconduct, corruption, malpractice etc for which charges would have to be framed and he would have to be given hearing and a separate committee should be constituted by the Board to take decisions about the matter. There are some objections in the external audit, which are yet to be made. Further query reveals that internal audit has not taken place at all.

The Board and the CEO must give priority to regularise the financial irregularities of the Board. The Board must prepare an annual budget to be countersigned by the CEO and presented to the Board for approval. The Board in turn should also provide adequate fund and financial authority to the heads of various committees. Their expenditures are to be countersigned by the CEO and then given to the Director of Finance.

We have mentioned briefly about the Chairman of the Finance Committee and the role that the Finance Department must play to ensure the financial discipline of the Board. It is imperative and we consider this as an obligation on the part of the President to ensure with the Assistance of the Finance Committee Chairman that funds are properly used and spent.

3.7 Matters of Procurement

In matters of purchase, there must be a regularly constituted Purchase Committee. The legal department should be strengthened and should be headed by a very competent lawyer or a bar-at-law

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and all documents relating to purchases, contracts, etc must be vetted by the legal department, before any signature is affixed. In future, we would very strongly recommend that before entering into any contractual obligation either with a supplier or any foreign firm, the documents must be vetted by the legal department. Thus we can avoid losses and future embarrassments.

This should be one of the primary responsibilities of the CEO. Finally, we list below, some of the functions of the financial department that we consider worthwhile for that department to enjoy as without these, it will be difficult for the Board to maintain financial discipline.

It was brought to our notice that we had paid about \$500,000 to India for their participation in the TVS Cup but did not have to pay anything to South Africa. We probed into this and ascertained that according to the ICC program, Bangladesh visited South Africa in October last year for a bilateral series. Again, according to the ICC program South Africa's return visit to Bangladesh was due. However, the Board decided to make it a Triangular Series and consulted ICC about the

availability of any particular team, which might have had a slot available to participate in the tournament in Bangladesh. ICC blessed the move of the Triangular and it was found that India was the only test-playing nation at that time that had no commitments. Approach was made for India to join the Triangular. It was reportedly stated that since this was not part of the ICC program, the BCB would have to pay a fee for the full Indian team to come and participate in the TVS Cup. Ultimately, the figure agreed upon was \$500,000. We further understand that the payment has not yet been

effected despite the contract, for the simple reason that the full Indian team did not come to Bangladesh. The Board has reportedly written to the Indian Board to renegotiate the amount since prominent players like Tendulkar, Dravid, and Srinath did not turn up. The Committee will be happy to learn the outcome and the final settlement.

3.8 Keeping within the Budget

Before the process of preparation of the budget, the Director of Finance would take into consideration in consultation with the heads of various committees relating to their field of expenditure and make provisions for expenditure for the same. These expenditures reflected in the budget would be spent on the basis of counter signature of the CEO. We would like to add that while the committees would like to have their own budgetary provisions and will have the freedom to spend the money under the heads specified, there has to be a limit up to which this freedom of expenditure can be enjoyed by the committee heads and the CEO. To give an example, if the committee budget for one year is Taka 1 crore, the head of the committee can be authorised to spend up to Taka 20 lakhs with the approval of the CEO. Any figure exceeding 20 lakhs will have to be approved through the CEO by the Board. This does not include expenditure of emergency nature about which we have already specified the procedure above. The committee is aware of the fact that, through various sources now, money is flowing into the coffers of the BCB, all the more reason why financial stringency and regulations are crucial.

In this connection, the committee has observed that people working under Finance and Accounts with the exception of the Manager Finance and Accounts, are far below the desired level. BCB should ensure that qualified and experienced manpower is placed there or recruited to man the Finance Department.

Presently, person responsible for store and maintenance of store records is far below the standard. BCB should ensure that an experienced person be recruited for maintenance of stores and relevant records. We are further told that financial and administrative manuals are under preparation. To run the BCB in a corporate manner, these are vital documents. It is therefore necessary that immediate attention be given so that the following manuals 1) Administration Manual 2) Accounts Manual 3) Purchase Manual/Procurement Policy 4) Establishment of Line Authority (Chain of Command) 5) Financial Discipline and 6) Finance Power/Cheque signing Authority are immediately prepared and put into effective use to guide the Board and in particular, the Finance Department.

It is known that committees have to procure items from time to time, which may include playing gears etc. Here again, some limitations to procurement should be imposed and clean-cut mechanisms established for such procurements. In matters of local procurement, there is considerable amount of scope for malpractice and corruption by those subordinates who are responsible for obtaining quotations. It is commonly known that some of the

quotations are fictitious and again it is well known that any supplier that we wish to favour, given an indication that he will produce a few quotations, his being the lowest, the award can well go to him. This has to be guarded against. The best therefore is to advertise, and when the bids come in, to examine that these offers are genuine and this can be very simply done to establish the bona fide of the supplier.

3.9 Record Keeping

For any Corporate Structure to be efficiently run, the following items are vital. The Committee recommends that the following be treated as an essential part of the Corporate Administration. They are:

- 1) Annual report
- 2) Annual Assessment Form
- 3) Proper Maintenance of Minute Books
- 4) Proper Employees Record
- 5) Provident Fund Rules and its registration

In so far as the signing of Cheques is concerned, the BCB should look into the procedures followed by Multinational Companies/Corporate bodies and adopt the same for its use.

3.10 Two Envelope Systems

In so far as the international procurements are concerned, the two-envelope systems of technical and financial offers must be introduced. The best technical and financial offer should be accepted. We wish to add that while the committee would have the freedom of procurement within the guidelines, finance must be involved and finally the CEO and or if the case warrants the President's approval in absence of the Board, must be obtained. More importantly, the Board must work towards its own sustainability and financial matters, so that their freedom of action is not curtailed.

Allegations were brought to our notice that in the past, TV rights were awarded without proper international tender and formalities. The Board in future must ensure that under the Two-Envelope System again, the best is awarded the contract.

3.11 Domestic Cricket

It is well know among cricket pundits that in order to produce quality players for both Test and ODI, it is imperative to have high class domestic cricket that is well organised at all levels. ICC has emphasised for regular First Class cricket fixtures but it is sad that it is getting very little organisational support from the BCB. So far, the BCB has failed to settle on a permanent structure for the National League and the changes in structure made every season is detrimental to establishing a strong league capable of producing quality Test cricketers.

In order to prepare our cricketers for the longer version of the game, the National League should be given the highest priority. The National League must include the six divisional sides and be played on a basis of Home and Away fixtures. Cricket schedules of the First Class Divisional Tournament must start in early November and so should all age levels of school, college, and university tournaments irrespective of Test and ODI fixtures. It is recommended that longer version matches be introduced at the age levels as well. These tournaments should take place in all districts and cricket centres outside Dhaka to generate enthusiasm among cricket lovers across the country. Even if top players are involved in Test and ODI duties, these tournaments must start on schedule and continue without stoppages, as it is so in England, Australia, India etc. As stated earlier, proper coaches and infrastructure, such as cricket grounds and practice facilities must be available for all levels of cricket as proposed in the development Plan of BCB, which we also recommend.

3.12 Bangladesh "A"

The Committee would also like to recommend that more home and away series' be arranged for the Bangladesh "A" team so that players on the verge of the national side get the opportunity to play against the top players from the other Test playing nations. In the last few years, the England and West Indies "A" teams have toured Bangladesh. Also, the Bangladesh "A" team got the rare opportunity to participate in the First Class League in the West Indies, the Busta Cup in 2001/02, which provided valuable experience to the boys. If the "A" teams gets greater exposure, this can only benefit the national team in the years to come.

ment that the Government should immediately allocate either the BNS or the Mirpur Stadium to BCB for exclusive use for cricket matches and development. This will be the first step to fully utilise the services of Dav Whatmore who has been hired at a substantial salary.

Besides an exclusive cricket ground at Dhaka, BCB must acquire similar stadiums at other cricket centres e.g. Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna etc.

3.13 Development Programs

The Development Program prepared by the BCB has been studied and is fully endorsed by the committee as it feels that it is imperative that such a Development Plan should exist. The Committee urges that immediate action be taken by BCB to implement the Plan with immediate and full effect.

3.14 Retaining Players

During our meeting with the Board members, we had elaborate discussions about infrastructure development, training of the players, and other facilities required to be built in order to groom our boys. The budget of the Board should give this matter highest priority, keeping in view not only many more matches they will be playing in the next few years, but the next World Cup in four years time. In this connection, we strongly feel that a squad of 15-20 best players from Bangladesh should be selected and be trained and allowed to play with an assurance that, with the exception of repeated poor performance, they would be retained in the team. This will create consistency in the selection policy and stability within the team itself; attributes that we feel are necessary to improve our performance in international cricket. The players should be paid retainers and match fees when they only play the matches. The system of keeping a few players on regular payroll must be discontinued and uniform practice adopted. If some of the selected twenty fail to perform, they can be replaced with new talents. This has to be a continuous process as is done in any civilised cricket-playing nation.

Players who display talent should be provided with the opening to go abroad to South Africa, Australia, England or other test playing nations to play and get adequate exposure to foreign conditions that will benefit the cricket of Bangladesh. This international exposure is a must, as it would develop confidence among the players. Equal emphasis should be given to the first class cricket league as per ICC requirement and home and away cricket should be encouraged between the district and divisional teams. Selection should be devoid of political considerations.

3.15 Cricket Grounds

An exclusive stadium for cricket has been a crying need since the first MCC "A" team visited Bangladesh in the 1976/77 season. It is necessary to nurture the cricket pitches in the non-cricket season so that in winter we are ready to host visiting teams. However, by allowing soccer during the summer the pitches are ruined and every year has to be re-laid. The most unhappy situation is true even today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. After receiving Test Status, Bangladesh has to host both ODI's and Test matches at any time of the year in accordance with the schedules prepared by the ICC. These schedules invariably clash with soccer at the BNS. Cricket and Soccer co-existing at BNS cannot be sustained any longer.

The Committee met the newly appointed Coach, Mr Dav Whatmore on May 15, 2003 and he mentioned that there is immediate requirement of at least 8 turf pitches for net practice permanently throughout the year for cricketers of all age groups including net practice for national players. Besides nets, the cricket stadium must also have a well-equipped gymnasium, as physical training under a qualified trainer has also become part of coaching.

We therefore, strongly recom-

We strongly recommend that the Coach also be an important component of the Selection Committee. We strongly recommend that the Chief Selector should be a salaried person and funds should be made available to him and his supporting hands, to travel within the country to scout for talents.

teams are going to undertake. This is in accordance with the ICC program, which ensures that the required facilities needed for the team abroad has been fully met. This advance Committee should not only organise the facilities, but should also include an expert to assess the condition of wickets and obtain required materials about the strengths and weaknesses of the team that Bangladesh is going to face. This should be mostly in video forms, which in turn would be of

3.16 A Suitable Grounds Manager

Add to that, the Committee is not aware of the existence of any Grounds Manager that BCB might have employed. If they have, well and good, but the Manager must take full responsibility for all preparations relating to the grounds, including the drying of rain affected outfielders so that play may resume quickly after a downpour. Therefore the ground manager should not only be competent but should also have available facilities at his disposal. If

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the position of a manager does not exist, one should be created and through proper newspaper advertisements.

3.17 Producing New Pitches

The BCB urgently needs to produce pitches that have pace and bounce. Our soil/clay do not have those properties. Playing in low and slow pitches will not provide the skill that our players must have if they are to perform well abroad. With the help of ICC we should obtain services of well known groundsman from UK, South Africa or Australia and if necessary import clay from those countries and produce wickets that have pace and bounce.

3.18 Coaches Training

We also recommend that local coaches be trained by qualified foreign coaches to improve the standard of cricket coaching in Bangladesh. This is particularly important to develop the level and standard of cricket outside Dhaka. A National Coaching Plan is embodied within the Development Plan prepared by the development

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Committee of the BCB. We endorse this plan and ask that it be implemented with vigor.

3.19 Disciplinary Committee

While talking to the Board, we were told that recently, a Disciplinary Committee has been set up. We are happy to know that this has been done. The Committee hopes that the Disciplinary Committee should be active enough to eliminate those responsible for breach of discipline, misconduct and or violation of the code of conduct, which every member of the team has to sign. Equally important is the fact that the management team, which is sent with the touring squad, has its role properly assigned in writing. This is not only to avoid overlapping, but also to ensure proper discipline and effectiveness of the management.

3.20 A Permanent Tour Committee

The Committee also recommends setting up of a permanent Tour Committee which will not only be responsible for ensuring all required facilities when our teams are playing in their home grounds, but also hosting other Test playing nations and for foreign tours that our

extension of the ICC 10-year span of programs is concerned, the President and important persons on the Board should take note of the fact that discrete lobbying could be necessary with the ICC. We were however told that there is every likelihood that the ICC would be responsive to this idea.

There is a big gap between Bangladesh's standard and that of other Test playing countries. It is important to understand that the gap cannot be closed overnight. It is only through build up of infrastructure in the nook and corners of Bangladesh, providing coaching facilities and at various age levels with modern coaching techniques and equipment's can make us achieve our goals that added with sheer hard work and sincerity will help us close the gap in the near future and earn the love and respect of the cricket loving people of Bangladesh. We understand from BCB that fund is not a problem anymore, as ICC will help with both experts and funds. All we need to do is put our house in order. Success will come.

We expect that the Board will appreciate the efforts that have been put by this Committee, to go into not only the debacle aspect, but also the functioning of the Board. In the process we have also recommended some restructuring of the Board. We emphasize that, these recommendations resulted from whatever little experience we have had, plus our dialogues and discussions with all those people whose names are attached in the Annexure. We would be very happy to see a Monitoring Committee being set up by the BCB with immediate effect to oversee the implementation of our recommendations.

great help not only to the Coach, but also to our players. Incidentally, this is now practically a universal phenomenon.

3.21 Travel Agents

There are allegations that when teams or management go abroad or when Board officials go abroad, only one or two selected travel agents are given the business and reportedly, these travel agents are connected to high officials of the Board. We recommend that the President and the CEO must have a look into

this. The best is to obtain open tenders from good travel agencies and obtain the best deal possible and keep the Board above any criticism on this matter.

3.22 Altering the ICC Schedule

Despite all the shortcomings of the Bangladesh team, which of late has not been performing well to the expectations of the cricket fans, ICC has set too many matches in a period of ten years for Bangladesh to participate. The Committee suggests that ICC be approached as tactfully and politely as possible to request that the Bangladesh itinerary is so arranged that we play more in our home grounds and the span of these matches be extended from ten to fifteen years. This will reduce the load on the Bangladesh team and will give us more time to train and face world-class cricket. At the same time, ICC must not be given the impression that Bangladesh is reluctant to honour its commitments and that we would honour those with as much sporting spirit as possible on our part. In so far as the