



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

IN SEARCH OF A HEALTHY FORMULA FOR THE FUTURE: Discussants express their views at a Daily Star Roundtable on cricket titled 'Building a More Competitive Team' yesterday. (L-R) Chief selector Faruque Ahmed, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director Mahmudul Haq, former national captain Gazi Ashraf Lipu, BCB's secretary development committee Khondkar Jamil Uddin, former chief selector Aliul Islam, former BCB president KZ Islam, Editor and publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, former BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, ex-chief selector Mainul Haq, BCB's grounds committee chairman Shafiqur Rahman Munnna, BCB's cricket committee chairman Mahbubul Anam, chief executive officer of the BCB Maqbul Hussein Durdia, umpire and former Bangladesh fast bowler Ziaul Islam Masud, national coach Sarwar Imran, coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury and daily Prothom Alo's sports editor Utpal Shuvro. BCB's chairman tournament committee Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen MP was also present.



Did U Know?

The 1996 cricket World Cup semifinal between India and Sri Lanka at Eden Gardens was the first to be awarded to a team by default, the crowd disturbance that forced match referee to award the match to Sri Lanka.



John Dyson
(Sri Lankan cricket coach)
"The Australians are vulnerable and we have to take inspiration from India and try to exploit that vulnerability when they arrive here in February."



TEN Sports
Sri Lanka vs England
Third Test, Day Four
Live at 10:00 am
ESPN
Australia A vs India
3-Day Tour Match, Day-3
Live at 5:57 am
STAR Sports
New Zealand vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Three
Live at 3:57 am
English Premier Football League
Southampton vs Portsmouth
Live at 6:25 pm
Tottenham Hotspur vs Man United
Live at 10:00 pm

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 203
Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm Jan 2, 2004 and draw

1. Who clinched the Intercontinental Cup?
Boce Juniors AC Milan Inter Milan

2. Who won the 2003 Asian footballer-of-the-year award?
Mahdaviakia Inamoto Cya Kyung-bok

3. Who is the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman?
Shaharyar Khan Tauqir Zik Intikhab Alam

4. Who won the FIFA player-of-the-year award?
Zidane Ronaldo Henry

Name:

Class: Roll No.

School Address:

Phone: (if any)

The Daily Star roundtable on cricket Professionalism, decentralization, strong domestic structure needed

SPORTS REPORTER

Decentralization of cricket, efficient management, a comprehensive policy, continuation of work towards a specific target and building a strong first-class structure that would not be too far away from Test level were the absolute necessities to build a better future for cricket in Bangladesh according to the concerted opinion of speakers.

Leading cricket officials and experts expressed these views on Saturday at a Roundtable organised by The

Daily Star with the slogan 'Building A More Competitive Team.'

The winter morning warmed up to the occasion at the Conference Room of the Daily Star when Editor and publisher of the newspaper Mahfuz Anam opened the unique discussion, which was attended by sixteen cricket personalities including former Bangladesh Cricket Board President (BCB) Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

The Daily Star Editor explained that the continuous poor performance at international level of the national cricket team has prompted this discussion which would try to come up with an ideal formula so that the future will be one of triumphs.

He started the proceedings calling upon the participants to identify the number one problem facing cricket in this country at the moment.

Making his first public appearance at an event very close to his heart since bowing out of cricket's hot seat, Saber hammered on the necessity of having an independent and sound management structure to make cricket the country's number one sport in every respect.

"Our goal should be to take cricket to a certain level and make it the number one sport in the country. There should also be a concrete guideline to help Bangladesh become the best cricketing nation in next 10 or 15 years," said Saber during the four-hour animated debate.

He said that a consensus must be reached before formulating the policy and once it was in place there should be no interference from the politicians.

"It should only be a question of execution and implementation," he said.

While Saber was speaking from the sidelines, his successor Ali Asghar was conspicuously absent from what should have been an ideal platform for the BNP lawmaker from Khulna to address his side of the story.

The presence of BCB's cricket committee chairman Mahbubul Anam along with the newly appointed CEO Mackey Durdia however partially made up for his no-show.

The youthful exuberance of KZ Islam, who is widely acknowledged for launching the Nirman School Cricket tournament in the 80s, was the other highlight of the roundtable.

Speaking highly of cricket the former BCB president said that the game has done more to raise the image of the nation around the world than the Foreign Office had achieved in the past 32 years.

BCB's tournament committee chairman Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen made a brief appearance. But the main talking point in the roundtable was his domain.

The need for a competitive domestic cricket structure was felt by all the participants. Everyone expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the competitions, sub-standard pitches and too much Dhaka-based cricket.

"We should take cricket to all 64 districts of the country and we must ensure that domestic calendar should in no way be interrupted because of any international event," said KZ Islam.

Saber however questioned the involvement of the Board in the affairs of each district.

"The focus of the Board should be towards providing a solid foundation for six divisions so that they can ultimately take care of the respective regions," said Saber adding it was already initiated during his time.

Emphasizing on a strong domestic set-up the Zimbabwean CEO Durdia cited Australia as a prime example.

"Why is Australia so strong

today? Because the difference between their Test team and those playing in the first-class competition is minimal. That's why any first-class player can walk into the Test team," he said.

It was accepted that decentralization and a strong domestic cricket structure were inter-linked and to achieve both, the majority of the speakers advocated for a simultaneous progression of the two vital components.

Take cricket out of Dhaka was on everybody's lips.

"Our cricketers can only play a handful of matches per season. But when I visited Maharashtra in India I learned that players had taken part in 26 matches in that region alone," said former national player-turned-umpire Ziaul Islam Masud.

"Now we identify a national player by the club he belongs to. But in future a player should be known by the region he represents. Only then can we generate a strong sense of belonging in any particular region," said a speaker.

But no wheels will move until the Board presents an efficient management team was the unanimous sentiment.

"I'm afraid all the people involved in the Board are not qualified to deliver high performance management. Besides, it also lacks a unified approach at present," said former Bangladesh captain Gazi Ashraf Hossain.

Mahbub however disagreed with Ashraf's observation saying that the appointment of the CEO was the first step to give a professional look to the Board.

The cricket committee chairman admitted that most of the Board officials were offering voluntary service at the moment but things hopefully will change for the better in six months time.

"We are aiming at having a team of managers who will be totally professional to execute the policies of the Board," said Mahbub.

He said that the Board was actively trying to give a legal authority to the post of CEO that contradicts the NSC Act of 1974, where a general secretary is recognised as the top executive.

While everybody appreciated the appointment of the CEO, most speakers however feared that it would not be successful unless he is only accountable to the president of the Board.

"Now heads of different committees are working on the same level as he is which is creating confusion. Moreover, historically speaking the paid persons in the Board are looked upon as subordinate to those offering voluntary service," said one speaker.

By going professional the amount of mistakes in implementing any policy would be minimized.

"The plans are there but we are just not able to implement them. Even if we carry out a small part then continuity is missing due to the lack of a professional set-up," said Saber while stressing upon the need for the Board to go professional.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	
1.	Saber Hossain Chowdhury (Former BCB president)
2.	KZ Islam (Former BCB president)
3.	Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen, MP (Chairman, Tournament Committee, BCB)
4.	Mahbubul Anam (Chairman, Cricket Committee, BCB)
5.	Shafiqur Rahman Munnna (Chairman, Grounds Committee, BCB)
6.	Maqbul Hussein Durdia (CEO, BCB)
7.	Mahmudul Haq Manu (Director, BCB)
8.	Aliul Islam (Former Chief Selector, BCB)
9.	Mainul Haq (Former Chief Selector)
10.	Faruque Ahmed (Chief Selector)
11.	Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury (Cricket Coach)
12.	Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu (Former National Captain)
13.	Ziaul Islam Masud (Former National Player and Umpire)
14.	Utpal Shuvro (Sports Editor, Prothom Alo)
15.	Khondkar Jamil Uddin (Secretary, Development Committee, BCB)
16.	Sarwar Imran (National Coach)



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan threaten the Dhaka Wanderers post during their Western Union Premier Division Football League fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Another MSC stalemate

SPORTS REPORTER

WESTERN UNION
Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club's misery continued as they dropped two vital points for the second game running in the Western Union Premier Division Football League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The Black and Whites were held 1-1 by Dhaka Wanderers Club and should count themselves lucky to have avoided defeat.

Mohammedan, who were

forced to a goalless draw in their opening match by promotees Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra last week, once again found the going tough yesterday as they had to come from behind to escape with a point.

Wanderers were thrashed 6-1 by Abahani in their opening match but were a changed side yesterday. They created early pressure on their more illustrious opponents and were rewarded when forward Mujibur Rahman Ritu found the net with just 10 minutes on the clock.

The lanky attacker pounced on a Yousuf cross from the right and placed the ball home before the Mohammedan defence could react

(1-0).

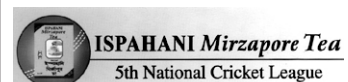
The goal brought Mohammedan to life as they went all out for the equaliser. But they had to wait until five minutes after the breather when midfielder Ashraf Kader Monju capitalised on a rebounder after Cameroon recruit Efiga's header hit the side bar and fell invitingly for him (1-1).

Yellow cards: Efiga (Mohammedan) and Yusuf (Wanderers)

SQUADS

Mohammedan SC: Chris, Basala, Jewel Rana, Faisal, Amin Rana, Shuvro, (Bakhtiar), Monju, Efiga.
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Rafique spins Dhaka ahead



SPORTS REPORTER

Country's most successful international bowler Mohammad Rafique grabbed six wickets as Dhaka bounced back against aspirants Chittagong on the third day of their four-day Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The star-studded Dhaka was in the driving seat at the end of third day's play as they took a 209-run overall lead after gaining an important first innings lead.

Away at Rangpur, a 91-run diligent innings by Parvez Ahmed enabled Sylhet fight back against Rajshahi in their second innings and set their opponents a 136-run victory target on the last day today.

There was good news at Jessore as the match between holders Khulna and Barisal finally started after two and half day's play being rained off.

One-day specialist Tushar Imran hit an unbeaten 73 to guide hosts Khulna score 143 for four wickets at stumps.

DHAKA VS CHITTAGONG
A devastating bowling display by left-arm spinner Rafique gave hosts Dhaka a slim nine-run first innings lead and later national discards Al Shahrar and Sanwar Hossain did the job with the bat to turn the match in the home team's favour.

After wrapping up the Chittagong first innings for 134 runs, Dhaka reached 220 for 6 in their second knock at stumps.

Earlier, the port city side resumed the day on 61 for two.

Stylish right-handed opening batsman Al Shahrar and Sanwar put up 116 runs for the second wicket to improve the hosts' batting in the second innings. Shahrar smashed 87 off 172 balls that produced eight boundaries while Sanwar added 52 off 92 balls, clouting five boundaries.

Tall off-spinner Sabir Khan captured four wickets conceding 77 runs in 28 overs.

Earlier, although two overnight batsmen Faisal Hossain and Azam Iqbal made a good start for the visitors, but the innings just fell apart once Azam returned to the dressing room after making 27 off 90 balls.

First round hero Faisal was the top scorer with 52 runs off 124 balls that saw eight boundaries.

Rafique finished with figures of 26-11-45-6 and he was ably supported by right-arm pacer Khaled Mahmud who took three wickets conceding 31 runs in 16.3 overs.

RAJSHAHI VS SYLHET

Meanwhile, Sylhet recovered from an early setback to score 233 before being all out to take a 135-run lead against Rajshahi at Rangpur Cricket Garden.

Sylhet had started their second innings with a 98-run deficit and were all out for a respectable 233 runs in 97 overs after resuming the day on 15 for two.

Number five batsman Parvez Ahmed made the team highest 91 runs off 190 balls with seven hits to the fence while Hemel added 36 off 87 balls and Tushar 34 off 124.

Humayun Kabir (22), Shahjada (41) and Saifullah Khan (83) cap
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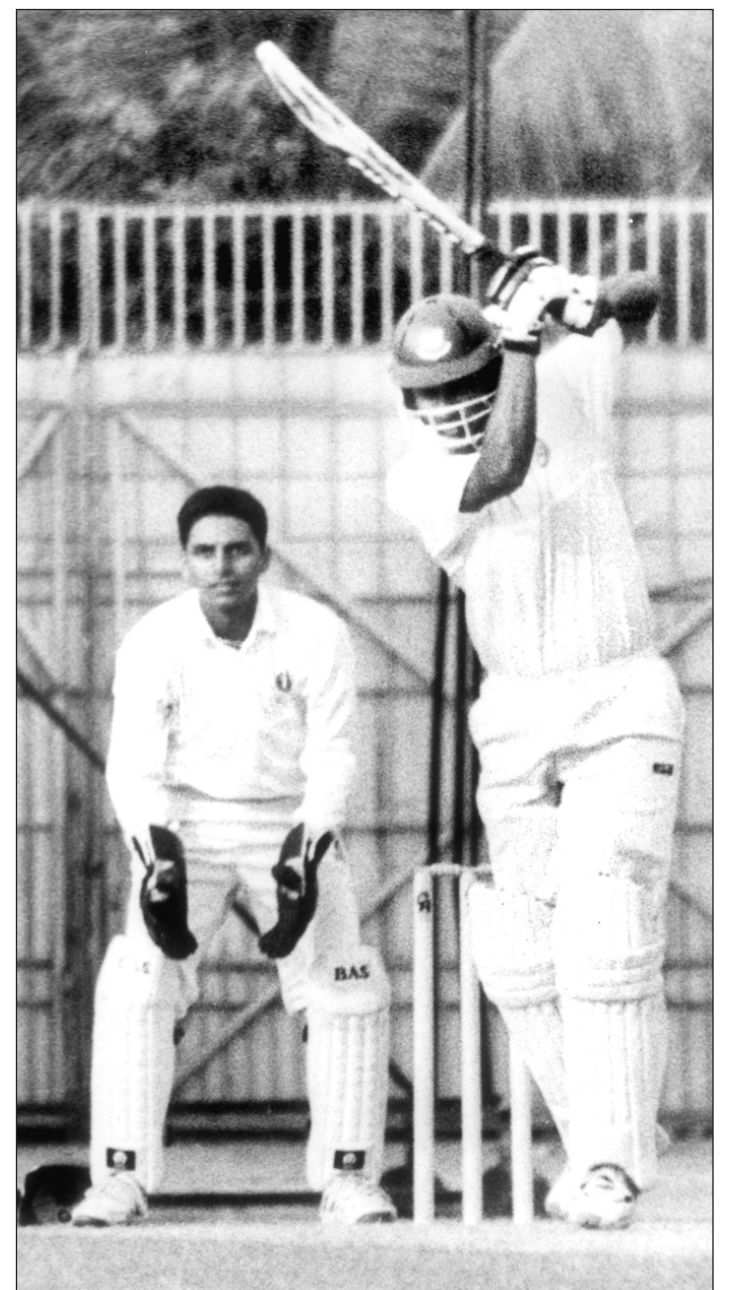


PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka batsman Al Shahrar executes an elegant drive off the back foot on the third day of their National Cricket League encounter against Chittagong at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.