



Did U Know?

Five cricketers-- Victor Richardson (Australia), Yajurvindra Singh, Mohammad Azharuddin and K Srikanth (India) and Stephen Fleming (NZ)-- share the record of taking maximum 5 catches in an innings of a Test match. But, of those, Yajurvindra Singh's feat bears extra significance as he became the only player to take 5 catches on debut.



TALK TURKEY



Roberto Baggio

(Italian soccer star)
"There is a good chance I could close my career at the end of this season."



What to WATCH

ESPN
World Cup Soccer Mix 9:30 am
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News Live at 8:30 pm
ATP Tennis show 11:00 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News 11:30 pm
STAR Sports
Sportline Today Sport News 7:30 am
Harsha Online Cricket Talk Show 8:30 am
Futbol Mundial 12:00 pm
Sportline Today Sport News 12:30 pm
South Africa Tri Series
Kenya vs India Fourth ODI Preview Live at 5:30 pm
South Africa Tri Series
Kenya vs India Fourth ODI Live at 6:30 pm

Change is the most unchangeable aspect of life: Saber Hossain

Saber Hossain Chowdhury is undoubtedly the pioneer cricket organiser of Bangladesh. The former Awami League MP and Deputy Minister for LGRD, headed the country's most flourishing sports organisation the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for the past five years. It was his vision and dynamism that is widely regarded as the main force behind Bangladesh's elevation to a Test playing nation. With the change of government, Saber is no longer the chief of Bangladesh cricket. But his absence is being badly felt in the sports fraternity. The torch-bearer of the sports-loving nation in the International Cricket Council (ICC) has not spoken since his unceremonious exit in August. But when Rabeed Imam and Al-Amin of The Daily Star Sport caught up with this articulate personality who has done wonders to enhance the image of Bangladesh in the international arena, at his HR Bhaban office on Thursday, Saber candidly deliberated on a wide range of subjects. Details of the exclusive interview follow:

Daily Star Sport (DSS): You are a cricket chief no more. How does it feel like?

Saber Hossain (SH): Change is the most unchangeable aspect of life. I never saw myself at the cricket board forever. You see, achieving something is different from realising the fruits of that achievement. Getting the Test status was a goal in the context of the time I took over. Once that was achieved, I often asked myself the question, am I the right person to lead? So the feeling, I will not be here forever, was always on the back of my mind. Whatever I did in my time, was from the love of cricket.

DSS: What is the difference between the time you took over and when you left?

SH: Well in the beginning, it was a one-off challenge. It was just a matter of setting the goals, defining the vision and realising it. It is very important to proceed in that sequence be it in statecraft or running a sports organisation.

When you set your goal, you won't find too many people around you. But once you realise part of that goal, suddenly you begin to get support from all over. So, in the beginning it was a lonely existence for me in terms of numbers but I wasn't lonely inside myself. I knew what needed to be done and I worked passionately in that direction.

When I left office, it was a matter of reflecting back with a sense of

satisfaction because many people can plan, but to achieve those things within a span of five years was hugely satisfying. But I am not trying to blow my own trumpet because at the end of the day it was a team effort.

DSS: Despite being a popular figure, you had to endure your fair share of criticism too. There were controversies regarding transparency of the BCB's financial matters, your policy of keeping faith in a select group of people and off-course the BCB's election fiasco. How do you reflect on it?

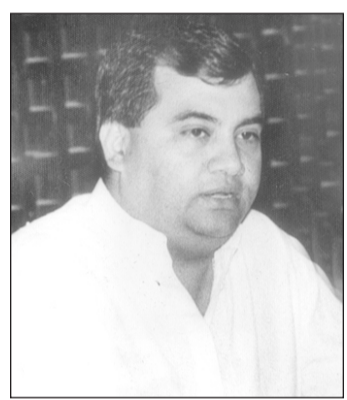
SH: There are three parts to your question. Let me answer those one by one. Firstly, I don't think there was a lack of transparency in the BCB's financial matters rather it was the structural weakness of the Board. I wanted a proper financial system. You will find that we don't have separate bodies to look after the financial matters in any sports federation and hardly acknowledge the need either. After a certain period, we found out that the BCB's structure had outgrown itself. It has become a dinosaur.

You should understand that the people who worked there were all on a voluntary basis. How much authority could you exercise over them? Therefore we worked to put in a financial system. It is in place now I believe.

On keeping faith in a certain group of people, well, I'm not going

to deny it. I believe you have to be single-minded in any pursuit. If you are single-minded then you must have a team, which may not necessarily share your vision, but believes in you as a leader.

Even one of the features of Bangabandhu's (Sheikh Mujibur



Saber Hossain Chowdhury, former president of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Rahman) leadership was that he had the four national leaders in his team. I am not talking in such broad terms. But I relied on certain people who I felt could deliver the goods and help me achieve my goals. I have no regrets because you can never be successful without it. Even the next board president has to follow the same path.

About the election, I consider it to

be a part of the BCB's growing up phase. Even in our parliamentary polls, you can't expect 100 per cent fairness. But a process is in place and it is improving. So the BCB polls were a learning curve. In time the councilors will become more matured and aware of the growing expectations.

DSS: It seems that the BCB's Board of Directors has forgotten your plans of revamping the Board and making it corruption-free. They are yet to announce a date for an AGM to amend the constitution.

SH: I don't think you should look at it that way. As I was not there, there was a sense of uncertainty regarding who would come in my place. I'm sure they will address the issues in time.

DSS: What challenges do you think the new cricket chief is going to face?

SH: Now everybody in the cricket board wants proper leadership. Whoever comes, one of his first priorities would be to provide that leadership. But if he prefers to rest on the laurels of achieving Test status, that would be the biggest mistake. Not only in cricket but in any aspect of life, you must push the boundaries. The new chief must gain the trust through his work. He will be under much more pressure than what I had to endure when I took over five years ago.

The expectation factor was low on us. What we tried to do was to push cricket higher up. Now it has reached a point. The next president's job will be to hold it at that level and proceed even higher which is a very difficult task.

DSS: Is it true that that you wanted to run the Board in an autocratic fashion? If not, what was your concept of democracy?

SH: I wanted to be enlightened, but I wasn't an enlightened dictator. As I have said earlier, you must be single-minded. There are instances where I had to bulldoze through certain things to achieve my goals. But I have done that for the betterment of the game. Subsequently, people have realised what I have done is for the good. Still, I have always encouraged people to speak their mind. Democracy is not an end in itself, it is the means to the end, and to me the end is always more important.

DSS: What will be your role regarding the BCB and cricket in general in the coming days?

SH: Fortunately or unfortunately, I am not in a position to decide that. However as cricket is in my system, it is very difficult to flush it out. I would like to see cricket in Bangladesh go forward. If I see any opportunity of contributing to that cause, I will try my very best.

DSS: What describes you best a sports personality-cum-politician or vice versa?

SH: Well, I never mixed the two roles. When I was in the BCB office, although it was located in my constituency, I never entertained any political discussions or elements there even though I could have. Similarly, when I concentrated on political issues, I kept cricket out of my mind.

DSS: You have lost your job the way you got it through a circular from the National Sports Council (NSC). Do you support this process?

SH: I don't think you can help it. The government has the authority to do it, but if you speak in the context of cricket, I feel that politics should be kept out of it.

Cricket has reached a level where for the sake of continuity, you will have to identify a team regardless of political affiliation who will take the game forward, and they should be given the chance to work for 5-10 years.

Although, I myself am a product of the political system, but personally, I feel that the Board president should always be elected from within the cricket community.

But I think it is wishful thinking. The BCB president's post has become so high profile and lucrative, that it is probably more attractive than a cabinet position. In Bangladesh, be it an Awami League government or a

Juvenile soccer practice drawn

BSS, Dhaka

The practice match between Bangladesh Under-16 and Bangladesh Under-14 football teams ended in a goal less draw at the Sher-e-Bangla stadium here yesterday.

BSJA greets new minister

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Sports Journalists' Association (BSJA) yesterday congratulated Fazlur Rahman Patal on his appointment as State Minister for Youth and Sports.

BSJA hoped that his strong leadership would spur dynamism in the country's sports and create a congenial atmosphere in the sector.

It said Bangladesh would achieve more honour and success in the world sports under his dynamic leadership.

Waugh can practise

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia captain Steve Waugh has been given the all-clear to resume full training ahead of the Test series against New Zealand after being ordered to take blood-thinning drugs.

Waugh, prescribed the medication after suffering a blood clot in his left leg, will begin test sessions next week after consulting with a vascular physician in Sydney.

Australian Cricket Board physiotherapist Errol Alcott said Waugh had responded well and should be available for the first Test in Brisbane beginning on November 8.

"Steve has undergone the necessary treatment to return to full fitness, and I am pleased to say that his prognosis is very good," Alcott said.

"There is no further management of the condition required."
The 36-year-old Waugh, fresh from leading Australia to a 4-1.

BCB's sponsor woe



SPORTS REPORTER

The Marketing Committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is looking for new sponsors to support its different age-group development programmes as its present promoters have shown their reluctance in renewing contracts.

Milo is sponsoring the BCB under-13 and under-17 development programmes while mobile phone company GrameenPhone is financing the under-17 and under 19 plans for one year.

But Milo, whose contract expires at the end of October, has already informed the Board that they do not want any extension. On the other hand, Grameen Phone, whose one-year contract ends in November, is also not making any positive response to the Board for the last few months.

Talking to The Daily Star Sport Thursday, Mobassher Hossain, a Board director and a member secretary of the Marketing Committee, confirmed it. They are looking for

new sponsors for the development programmes, he said.

"Milo has already informed us that they are no longer interested to sponsor under-13 and under-15 development programmes. We are also not getting any positive answer from GrameenPhone. The cell phone company is yet to pay taka ten lakh it owes the Board," he said.

"Our deputy director development Shafiqul Haq Hira has been trying to contact GrameenPhone for the last couple of months. But, so far they have not responded to those calls," said Mobassher, adding that he himself would try to contact the sponsor next week.

When asked about the new sponsors, Mobassher revealed that they have already communicated with a few parties and all of them have responded positively.

BCB has already invited interested parties for

Mobassher also informed that ground boards at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and Abdul Aziz Stadium in Chittagong are up for advertisements during the forthcoming tour of Zimbabwe in November.



Australia-bound Bangladesh under-19 cricket team captain Nafis Iqbal is on his cellphone while some of his colleagues spending a light-hearted moment in front of the BCB office at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

BAAF sans bosses



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Amateur Athletics Federation (BAAF) is being run virtually without leaders as most of its top officials remain absent from their duties for unofficial reasons.

General secretary Ibrahim Chengis is the latest name missing on the list of key office-bearers. The man from Narayanganj is reported to have left for Canada along with his family on October 5 immediately after he was released from police custody.

Chengis, known as the deputy of former Awami League MP Shamim Osman, was arrested on October 1 by security personnel for playing 'objectionable' role in the parliamentary elections at a Narayanganj

constituency.

Chengis was elected general secretary of the BAAF early this year, and he obtained the Canadian Visa in July to attend the congress of International Amateur Athletics Federation in Edmonton. He however postponed that trip amidst criticism in the press for nominating a good contingent of officials for the occasion.

But his two other colleagues--Iqbal Hossain, a joint-secretary, and Mustafa Ahmed, a member of BAAF-- cashed in on their visa as observers for the IAAF congress. They silently departed for Canada in July and never came back till to date.

Chengis' rivals at the federation predicted that he might not come home soon as his party is no longer in power. But Abul Kashem, a vice-president of BAAF, denied the

allegation last night saying Chengis has gone aboard on a holiday trip and would return on October 20.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone, Kashem, an Awami League leader in Mirpur, claimed that everything in the federation including the camp for the SAF Games was going in full swing in absence of Chengis.

The SAF Games was postponed late last month, but BOA (Bangladesh Olympic Association), funnily though, decided to continue the camp for reasons best known to them.

Former Awami League MP Kamal Ahmed Majumder was the president of BAAF until the caretaker government took over in July. He was replaced by Home Secretary Dr. Sadat Hossain in early August.

England coming to India



AFF, New Delhi

England's cricket tour of India will go ahead as scheduled next month despite security concerns over US strikes against Afghanistan, officials announced here on Thursday.

"As far as we are concerned, the tour is on," Jagmohan Dalmyia, newly-elected president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), told reporters here.

He added that the tour was "absolutely going ahead...nothing has been received to the contrary" despite security concerns in the region following the attacks on the United States.

Dalmyia added the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had not demanded any change in venues and he hoped to cement details of the tour during his meetings with English officials in Malaysia next week.

Dalmyia, former chief of the International Cricket Council (ICC), is due to attend the executive board meeting of the sport's governing body in Kuala Lumpur from October 15-19.

England's tour, interrupted by a Christmas break, will run from November 18 to February 3, comprising three Tests and five one-dayers.

The Englishmen are scheduled to play the Tests in Mohali, Ahmedabad and Bangalore during the first part of the tour.

The tourists will return home for Christmas before arriving back in India in mid-January for the five-game one-day international series.

Doubts over the tour arose after the Indian government cancelled the inaugural Afro-Asian Games in New Delhi in November soon after the September 11 terrorist strikes in New York and Washington.

New Zealand and Sri Lanka have cancelled cricket tours of neighbouring Pakistan over the last month.

England's cricket official Tim Lamb had on Wednesday expressed confidence the tour of India would go ahead, but said the

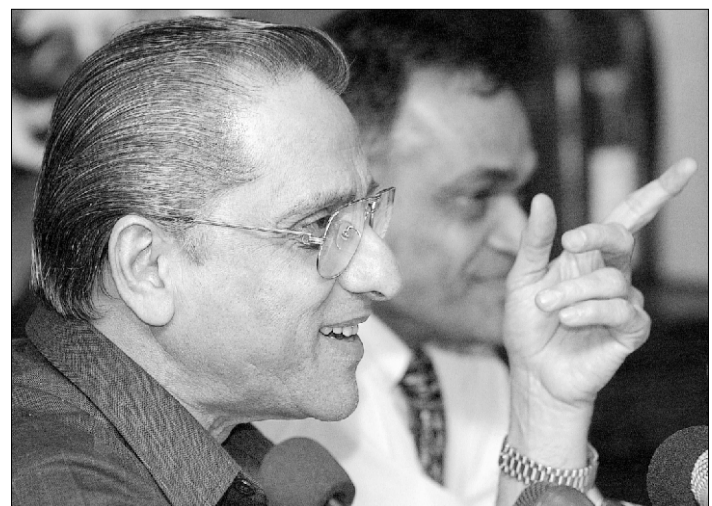
situation was being closely monitored.

"We are obviously in touch with our High Commission in India and will take specific advice, as we always do," Lamb said.

"I don't want people to think we are blindly going without taking advice. We have never knowingly sent our players to parts of the world where their safety was at risk.

"If we need to consider any changes we will do in the light of events that may occur up to the date of our departure in the middle of next month," he said.

"We are monitoring the situation on a day-to-day basis but we don't know what it is going to be like in the next five weeks."



BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmyia smiles while listening to a query during a press briefing in New Delhi yesterday.

AFC's rigid stand



AFF, Kuala Lumpur

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Thursday upheld tough sanctions imposed on five countries in May for fielding over-age players, despite a FIFA move to invalidate the punishment.

The five countries found guilty of cheating in last year's Asian Youth Under-16 championships were Thailand, Nepal, Oman, Iran and Bangladesh.

In addition to fines of 10,000 dollars, the countries were barred from competing in the 2002 AFC Under-17 tournament, the regional body said in a statement.

It said the 13 players concerned would also remain suspended for two years while the respective team managers were suspended for a year.

AFC supremo Peter Velappan, who made the announcement after a meeting of the executive committee in Kuala Lumpur, said the penalties would stand despite FIFA's recent decision to annul the X-ray

tests conducted to identify over-age players.

"The AFC is of the opinion that it was correct in the first instance to use X-ray examination...to identify the players concerned and this is provided for in the tournament regulations," he said.

Velappan said the AFC was also responsible for football in Asia and should be free to use any tool to prevent cheating, including X-ray tests.

"We want to see an orderly and stable growth of football in Asia and this objective cannot be attained if there is cheating in the ages of players being fielded."

"The AFC has sought for a long time to put an end to this problem and the recent tough sanctions imposed on the countries and suspending the players and officials was our next response," he said.

Velappan said the AFC expected FIFA to support its decision, adding that it would meet the world governing body later this month to discuss the issue.

FIFA had allowed five suspended players from Iran and three from Oman to play in the FIFA Under-17 World Championship.

The AFC took a similarly tough stand against hooliganism in the sport, fining the Bangladesh Football Association 3,000 dollars for its failure to exercise due care during a domestic league game.

It also announced the dates of the group runners-up (home and away) matches between two Asian sides for the right to meet Ireland in the Asia/Europe play-off for a berth in next year's World Cup.

The AFC said the runner-up in Asia's Group A would play at home in the first fixture against the Group B runner-up on October 25, with the order reversed for the second leg on October 31.

The United Arab Emirates currently occupy second spot in Group B with 10 points from seven matches, Qatar are third with nine points from seven while Uzbekistan have seven points from six games.

Whoever emerges from the scrap will face either Iran or Saudi Arabia.

Malaysia, Qatar and Uzbekistan will play in the Granatkin Cup (Under-18) football tournament in St Petersburg, Russia from January 4 to 12, 2002, the AFC also said.

SA in Singh, Kumble spin



AFF, Centurion

Indian spin bowlers Harbhajan Singh and Anil Kumble sparked India to a 41-run win over South Africa in their Standard Bank triangular limited-overs series international match at Centurion Park Wednesday.

Chasing a modest Indian total of 233 after skipper Shaun Pollock had taken five for 37, South Africa tumbled to 106 for seven before a 77-run stand between Lance Klusener and Mark Boucher gave hope to a packed home crowd.

Boucher fell to a catch on the boundary off part-time off-spinner Virendra Sehwal in the 44th over and South Africa were eventually all out for 192.

Harbhajan, who destroyed Australia in a Test series earlier this year, took three for 27 in his first career appearance against South Africa.

The 21-year-old from Punjab gave a masterly display of off-spin

bowling, varying his pace and flight and mixing sharply-spun off-breaks with balls that fizzed straight through or drifted away from the right-handed batsmen.



HARBHAJAN SINGH...m-o-m

New ball bowlers Javagal Srinath and Ajit Agarkar dismissed South Africa's in-form opening batsmen Gary Kirsten and Herschelle Gibbs cheaply.

Then Kumble and Harbhajan

sent South Africa crashing, although reckless strokes by Neil McKenzie and Jonty Rhodes contributed to their downfall.

The key breakthrough was when Harbhajan fummoxed Jacques Kallis with his flight and drift to have the batsman stumped for 29.

Harbhajan said he was proud to be part of a much-improved Indian performance after their six-wicket loss to South Africa in Johannesburg Friday, when he was not picked.

"They were not attacking much and I put the ball in the right place," he said.

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly said India had not batted well enough but "we bowled pretty well". The inclusion of Harbhajan made a big difference. "He's something special," said Ganguly.

India's win gave a boost to a series in which the third team, Kenya, are virtual no-hopers. After India lost in Johannesburg, despite centuries by Ganguly and Sachin Tendulkar, it was feared they might

SEE PAGE 15