TOTHEREDITOR

How to improve the situation?

Indeed something should be done. Having seen the dismal performance, there is not even a shadow of doubt there is deep trouble; it will not go away just by finding lame excuses. Without being in a position to direct the cricketing matter of Bangladesh, let me think aloud and share ideas for possible debate and if there is merit possible action.

First, a major policy issue has to be settled. Given resources and records, does Bangladesh want to stay in international cricket? Are we there just because some of us wish to or because we go wild to celebrate World Cup Cricket matches? Wisdom lies in judgement based on realism. The ideal is often the enemy of the real: dreams without deeds get us nowhere except unnecessary frustrations. There are many other frustrations regarding our national situation; do we need an additional one that we can

The team's fielding has improved a lot. They looked much more confident than before and their commitment was high in the field in the ICC Cup. The bowling department have a few problems. Fast bowlers bowled short balls outside off-stump with no real pace, which enabled opponents to score comfortably. They only needed to bowl good length deliveries to make the life difficult for the batsmen. Spinners like Rafique and Alok were fine.

The team needs quality coaches who can teach the basic batting skills, bowling tricks and advanced techniques of fielding. The government must make the domestic cricket strong. Only good and competitive domestic cricket can bring out quality players in the future. The current team should play more cricket with the English domestic teams like Surrey and Kent etc. I am sure these will bring out good results.

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Somebody please

Don't lose heart

At present our national cricket team is performing very poorly and we are not likely to see any positive change soon. But before passing any harsh judgement or criticism we should remember that most of the cricket playing nations had gone through this initial stage of losing streak so we shouldn't lose heart.

First of all we should build a proper system which will nurture potential young talents from the school level.

In order to make such system work we need a visionary leader in the cricket board who can guide and chalk out longterm plan and work hard to make it successful.

Only lip service and criticism would take us no where!

Not so long ago, Sri Lanka used to suffer heavy defeats and was considered one of the weakest teams. But look at

They have already won the world cup once and are considered one of the best teams. We surely can learn something from Sri Lanka's gradual improvement.

In the mean time we, the



Those were the days

cricket fans have to support start believing in themselves. our team wholeheartedly and believe in them before they

Mohammed Sohel Hara Topkhanad Road, Dhaka

a test-playing nation.

Test status for being able to defeat

tower, relinquish the Test status

and get engaged in developing

infrastructure and nurturing tal-

ents. We should not try to find

solace from the fact that New

Zealand took 20 years to taste their

first Test win. Bangladesh cannot

bear with this punching bag status

for that long. Sri Lanka and Zimba-

bwe had to win the ICC Trophy a

number of times in a row and cause

a few upsets to get into the Test

fold. We too need to repeat our

fabulous performance against

Pakistan for a number of times in

one-dayers before facing South

Africa or Australia in Test series.

Gordon Greenidge

With the departure of Coach

Gordon Greenidge, the standard of

our cricket team deteriorated

Ahmed Zamil

Need another

We need to stop living in ivory

If, however, we are determined to stay, then let us also be as determined and serious about the things we have to do; be willing and show ability to invest needed resources, design long term (10 year) or at least medium term (5 years) strategy and implement consistently. Let us avoid empty rhetoric and lofty hyperbole. I like to offer a few

specific ideas. We must have a cricket academy, find, train, and groom young talents throughout the country, and do all this purely on demonstrated and potential merit, enable and empower the promising ones. Let them play more cricket in country and, by special arrangement, abroad, throughout the entire year or most of it in different conditions. A Bangladesh cricket academy by national consensus surely can do this and do without fancy fanfare and political confusion. Training not only in specific skills but also in attitude: this will do well with psychological counselling and sup-

Discipline is a must; it must be inculcated and enforced when needed with zero tolerance for the contrary. Performance, attitude, and discipline are three criteria for selection, support and promotion; nothing else should interfere. Between batting and bowling, more seems to be needed to improve batting performance. Variety, judgement, restraint when needed and flamboyance when possible; all these are a matter of discipline

as mentioned earlier. Finally, even cricket demands stamina; physical fitness is a precondition for good stamina and endurance. Again, a matter of workout and discipline. Above all, there is much to be said of the motto: If it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing it well. That goes for cricket as for many other

endeavours **A Cricket Patriot**

I am a great fan of Bangladesh cricket team though the team's performance is deteriorating. The problem lies with the basics as well as confidence. From the last match against New Zealand we saw how our players lost their wickets. Most of the wickets fell when the NZ bowlers kept their bowling line on the off-stump or just outside the offstump. The footwork was very disappointing by all of our players when the balls pitched on these regions. They were also impatient, wanted to play big shots at the early stage of the innings when the ball was new and swinging around the off stump. I must mention that Tushar Imran played some beautiful shots around the off stump and he was the only confident looking batsman in the whole lot. Al-Shariar continued to open the innings despite his regular failure as an opening batsman. He should have batted in number four of five

wake them up!

Even the hard-earned Test status could not stop Bangladesh Test Cricket team biting the dust in each and every game against the senior rivals. But the Cricket Control Board appears to be satisfied with our cricketers current wisdom because after each inexcusable performance the only step they took is to axe the ve and replace him with a neophyte, as if the proxy will be a better version than the real thing.

It seems that everybody except the cricket authority identifies that our cricketers are actually void of mentors who will show the right path to upsurge four major departments-- batting, bowling, fielding and wicket keeping. In the contrary, a couple of days ago it looks like Cricket Board has finally woken up from their sleeping spell by calling up 5 deserving pace bowlers--Mashrafi, Tarek Aziz, Musfiq, Sharif and Hasibul-- for a special 2 week training program. We hope this will not be the only step, out of the usual curriculum, that the Cricket Board is going to take.

One can easily sense the urgency of many more extra strides like this to prepare our players in all respects-- technically, physically and mentally in the verge of World Cup 2003.

M. S. Hamid (Bobby) Old DOHS, Dhaka

Test status: Get rid of this liability

International Cricket Council (ICC) awarded Test status to Bangladesh in 1999 considering the infrastructure and huge enthusiasm for cricket in the country rather than its performance. At that time Bangladesh had three one-day wins to its credit, one of which was against World Cup finalist Pakistan.

Three years on, Bangladesh could not win any more one-day internationals. They even failed to make a single match closely contested. A decent defeat is what they can aim for. As far as the Test performance goes, the least said

about it the better Since the sweet memories of defeating Pakistan and getting Test status immediately have faded, it is now time for some soul searching. Everything that Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Mr Syed Ashraful Haque said about sound infrastructure for cricket in the country was hoax. The football and cricket authorities are still engaged in a tug of war over the possession of Bangabandhu National Stadium. A three-year old Test-playing nation doesn't have a permanent ground of international standard exclu-

sively for cricket! Despite the existence of hundreds of cricket clubs across the country, the nation failed to produce a few quality cricketers. We still squabble over the exclusion of veterans like Akram or Bulbul from

the national squad. If we could get a regular supply of young, talented cricketers they would have naturally replaced the old players. Only recently Bangladesh 'A'

side lost heavily to the Kenyan national side in three limited over matches in Nairobi. This portends more humiliation for Bangladesh in the World Cup next year. Besides heavy losses to old Test-playing nations, we now run the risk of losing to associate member states as well. This will certainly put ICC in an embarrassing position. One or two associate members may claim

alarmingly. It was Coach Greenidge who led the team to the international arena and made us recognisable to the outside world But the then Bangladesh Cricket Board failed to recognise his contribution and hence let him go. Bangladesh's win over Pakistan in the last World Cup was possible because of Gordon Greenidge's excellent coaching. After his departure what did we achieve? Most of the Test matches we played were over within three days and forget about the one-dayers!

BANGLADESH CRICKET

Unless the BCB sets their priorities right and work unitedly to uphold national interest. I do not see anything good coming out of our national team. The BCB is not serious about appointing a good coach like Gordon Greenidge. And even if BCB did approach an 'A' grade coach he is likely to turn down the offer. When he learns about the fate of Gordon Greenidge who would be willing to take the risk

However, if possible, I suggest BCB to try to appoint Australia's Mark Waugh as the coach for our national team

A. L. Haque Sidheshwari, Dhaka

Young cricketers are the only hope

Bangladesh Cricket Team should give up playing Test match and ask ICC to postpone the Test status of Bangladesh for at least a year. In the mean time, BCB should find some new faces for the future.

Moreover, BCB should set up a cricket academy and work with various age groups. If it is important, some players may be sent overseas for training. BCB should have made various teams for various age groups (for instance, Under17, Under19 etc) and made them play in different conditions. Obviously, they wouldn't always play on the flat peach.

Also the government should form a body to monitor the whole process. The body may consist of sports-personality, sportsjournalists and representative from the parliament. And we must say good-bye to our veteran players as they have already got enough opportunity.

Oli Md. Abdullah Chowdhury Khasdobir, Svlhet

Local coach for the national team

It is quite acceptable in the Test arena to have a foreign coach and it is always followed by an improveour experiences in this regard are guite the opposite. Would the BCB say what improvement the national team made after the appointments of Trevor Chappell or current coach Mohsin Kamal? In fact, our performance has worsened.

We have our two lowest totals under the current coach in a gap of just one-month. The BCB can think of appointing a local coach. We have some talented coaches who deserve a chance.

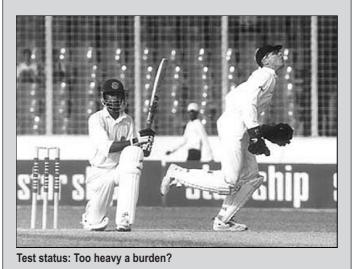
Sarwar Imran can be a good option. He is very successful at the local level and also has brief expe-

Bangladesh has lost every Test match we have played. Our rating has dropped to 831 points; this is the worst rating by any nation in history. We have shown no sign of improvement since being granted Test status. We are actually the worst team in

According to one sceptical article, "If Bangladesh's momentous, but controversial World Cup win over Pakistan, convinced the ICC that they were ready for higher honours, why was such consideration not shown to Kenya who upset the mighty West Indies in the previous World Cup in 1996? It was not the African nation's only success against a Test-playing nation. The Kenyans also defeated India in a one-dayer at Gwalior. Yet, Kenyan coach Sandeep Patil, the former Indian Test star, admits his team is not ready for Test cricket. "We don't want to be easy meat for the others, but our time will

If only we had shown the same restraint and maturity as the

Thor, Dhaka



rience as a national coach. Would the BCB appoint a local coach instead of wasting so much money on the foreign coach for nothing? Mohibul

Keep politics out

of sports As we watched our team losing badly at the ICC championship trophy, we wonder what is wrong with the team. Our players may lack commitment, but the main problem lies with the Management. They are politically appointed, have lack of vision, and hardly understand how the international sports work.

Any sports either cricket or football should have permanent regular yearly domestic schedules We never had one and we don't know when will the next domestic cricket league take place. We also do not have any age group compe-

 λ If we can maintain an expensive cricket office, why cannot we hire a recognised coach, why do we have to go for second grade coach?

We also need a psychiatrist for the team; the players are not at all confident and need some kind of psychoanalysis.

Also need to make new pay scale for the players. If the players perform well they'll get good salary and additional bonus. But if they fail to perform up to the standard they'll be paid less and there won't be any bonus.

λ Last but not the least, we need to elect the president or secretary or member of the cricket board from former cricket personnel, who wil work for the love of the game and won't seek any personal benefit. We need to stop making the MPs president of any federation. These people do not have any clue how international sports work. Soccer crazy

Los Angeles, USA

We should not drag politics into our sports arena and cultural events. Both the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina have significant contributions in upgrading our sports sector and cultural affairs. It is for the national interest that from time to time their consensus and positive decisions are imperative.

In my opinion Major (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, Minister for Jute should be given the Sports portfolio. He is the deserving person. Mr Saber Hossain Chowdhury must be brought back and given the post of the President of BCB. The former cricket stars like Sved Shameem Ahsan, Syed Ashraful Haq, Yousuf Rahman Babu, Jahangir Shah Badsha, Gazi Ashraf Lipu and others should be included in the Board in order to proceed further with our cricket and improve our image in the sports Golam Ashraf, Dhaka

What's the point?

provide? They won't. Then why

of ours and it should have given

We offered our players and the concerned everything we had and what they give us in return! Humiliation and embarrassment.

Purana Palatan, Dhaka

I felt extremely ashamed when one of the commentators of the ICC Championship Tournament commented that Kenya is a lot better team than Bangladesh and they should have been given the Test status instead of Bangladesh.

any positive performance at the international level then it is just a matter of time ICC withdrew our Test status

Naureen Sofia Rahman, DU

Whither 'Royal **Bengal Tigers'?**

We didn't do justice to our title "Royal Bengal Tigers".

It would be unfair to tell our boys

has definitely given the country fair measure of international expo sure. In order to utilise it, we must be able to enhance our organising and sporting management skills.

An international sporting event certainly puts the country into focus. There are indirect benefits in the form of infrastructure, hospitality and media industry development. I guess it also puts an indirect pressure on the concerned authorities to keep the affairs fairly presentable. Cricket is a mediafriendly game. It's a boon for advertisers as they get a slot after every over. There are lots of money in cricket these days. And true to their colours our politicians are the dons of the game in Bangladesh. We must not allow cricket to be used to gain political mileage. Our cricketing administration must be de-clutched from political influ-

If we can take in our stride the title of "No.1 Corrupt Country in the World", we should not feel embarrassed by the ignominious defeats suffered by our cricket team. It sure hurts but we must keep on fighting (politicians too!) till we prove our

Abeer Chowdhury, Ang Mo Kio, Singapore We need to do

something It is really frustrating to see Bangladesh cricket team performing so badly in the international tourna-

In order to improve the situation we need to have a long-term and a

They should pay heed

gives us immense pleasure to see them win.

Reshmi Dasgupta, Mohammedpur, Dhaka

I really think The Daily Star is doing a good job inviting the

readers' comments on Bangladesh cricket. I hope they are

planning to do a full page on it because this is indeed a good

way to attract the attention of the concerned i.e. the players,

but their well wishers and when we criticise them we have the

best interest in mind. It hurts us to see the team loose and

I hope our message reaches them. We are not their enemy

With such a frustrating state of the society, it is the crickets

team we look up to upgrade our image both at home and

the BCB and who knows, may be the Sports Minister!

to our suggestion

freely exclusively for playing cricket could receive a tax-benefit Any private or government company producing standard cricket equipment could also get a tax benefit of some kind. The media should be encouraged to provide live coverage of Test cricket.

Fahmida Waliullah

Time to do some soul searching

It is without a doubt that our boys are out of form as we saw on televi sion in their latest match in the ICC The problems that could be seen are their lack of concentration and poor judgement in the field. It's about time they knew the techniques required as international

On TV it looked like they were almost reluctant to react to every action by the opposite team. The overall result is they are not at all in good form and needs to know how to improve their technical faults. It doesn't matter how many international matches they play the total knowledge of the game must come from themselves. If they were devoted, at least they would've scored something respectable and

In order to improve the situation, like the Pakistani, Indian, Sri Lankan cricket teams more youngsters from the division teams must be recruited and be given a chance to play. Younger players are more active and energetic and can play for longer hours. Our selection committee should be more active and start taking steps to upgrade the team's standard. In the field, our boys don't look good at all! Shamim Ahmad Salim

What is in store for us?

The continued dismal performance of the Bangladesh cricket team is nothing short of a national disgrace. It has come to the point where there is growing murmur within the ranks of commentators

the recent ICC tournament, all I can say is that this team is nothing but a failed team and if our Test status gets scrapped, I would be shocked, but not surprised. From the performance of other teams in the tournament, I can confidently say that even Holland would do a lot better (than Bangla-

Shocked but

not surprised

After the terrible perfor-

mance of our cricket team in

world will be shattered. Thanks to politicisation of even our sports sector, we have managed to destroy our future in cricket. Shagor Khan, Banani, Dhaka

desh of course) in a few

years time. But as for our

team, I have a feeling that it

will deteriorate more and

our image in the outside



national team has fielders who cannot field. All these allegations are in the context of our team's performance in the international

Even a year ago the team's performance was relatively better. Why has it slumped to this state? Who are responsible? Wahid Shafi

Teach us how to dream

Whenever our team is about to play a game, the skipper, the Board and the coach assure us that they'll try their best not to let us down. And we, the general viewers, with high hopes, sit in front of the TV hoping for at least a competitive perfor mance if not a victory. But they let us down in every match with terrible performance and shameful

The cricketers should know that their learning period is almost over. We have already played almost 50 matches and still no sign of improvement!

Just look at the performance of other countries. Even Kenya has exceeded in almost all the departments and we are lagging far behind with the advent of time.

We are the hapless citizens of a hapless nation. We have innumerable problems and sufferings. One of the few things we can be hopeful about is cricket. But watching the pitiable condition of our team, that hope is also fading day by day. And unless we do some serious soul searching and take immediate steps, the day is not far away when we'd have to be ashamed of ourselves for entering the cricketing

Dhaka College

What happened to our golden boys?

First of all, I would like to say something about the comment made by our national coach Mohsin Kamal Just before the departure for the ICC champions trophy in Sri Lanka he said that Bangladesh will beat Australia. Amusing indeed!

When we cannot even expect a competitive performance from our team, the coach was dreaming of beating the world champion! The coach should not make these kind of comments because it is virtually an impossible task and then again our players get flattered by these type comments and perform worse.

The way the team has performed in this year's ICC tournament is really pathetic but instead of admitting their failure our coach said that they could have done well only if they were mentally strong. These types of sweeping remarks won't help the team in any way rather deteriorate the situation. We need positive approach and have work hard to improve our standard. Faisal Hassan

Topkhana Road, Dhaka

NOTICE

The coming 10th of October will

make the 1st anniversary of the present BNP led alliance government. On this occasion we invite our readers to write us letters in 200 words-- giving their assessment of the government's performance preferably mentioning the biggest success and the worst failure. The readers may also wish to refer to the BNP's election manifesto, PM's pledges, role of parliament, MPs, party activities including that of student and youth wing. -- Editor.

Toying with Test status?

This cricket team of ours is a national disgrace.

Kenvans

The only respectable decision we can take is to withdraw from test cricket until such time that we prove ourselves ready to play the five-day game and not just a occasional one-day

What's the point in writing about Bangladesh cricket? Would the concerned, i.e. the players, the coach, the BCB and the government read our comments? Would they follow the suggestions we

waste our time and energy? We had high hopes for our cricket team that at least they would make us proud and improve our image abroad. But in reality they did the very opposite. Do they have idea how ashamed we were to hear one of the ICC Championship's commentators saying that Kenya is a far better team than that

Test status instead of Bangladesh!

Shankar Shaha

If Bangladesh team fails to show

Our cricket team is performing as good as our political parties. Our cricket is just a reflection of our hapless management skills. We simply failed to manage the team and ruining our opportunities. We sure are not world-beaters, but must be able to go down fighting.

to give up Test status as suggested by some quarters. Nothing is easy in this global village. Cricket is the only sport where we have some kind of international recognition. It

short-term goal. To achieve the short-term goal, first the authorities should sack Coach Mohsin Kamal and his associate Ali Zia. They have already said too much and done very little. Moreover, instead of paving attention and keeping notes of the players' performance they were found talking with each other (aired on TV during a recent match). A local coach someone like

The real strength of the game

Imran Sarwar could be appointed co-ordinator or a head coach for the national team. Three specialist coaches for the batting, bowling and the fielding department - preferably foreign coaches outside the sub-continent could also be hired to correct the mistakes made by the players. The amount of money spent on Mohsin Kamal and Ali Zia could be used for this purpose. And I'm sure it would be worth spend-

And as for long-term goal, a big amount of money should be invested. We could take advice from the former BCB President who has been quite successful (for example Champion in ICC Tournament). So far, we haven't heard of anything about our present BCB President Ali Asgar Lobi going to him for some advice or for any other help.

We used to organise SAARC one-day tournament participated by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka 'A' team and the Bangladesh national team. We don't hear about such tournament being organised these days. As Bangladesh is now a Test playing nation, the importance of holding such tournaments has become greater than before. As the current BCB President is

also the ACC president, he can convince other ICC Associate teams like Nepal or Bhutan to organise such tournaments in their own countries, where the 'A' teams from the four Test playing nations could participate along with the host countries.

The landowners of open space or fields, which are given away of international cricket that Bangladesh should be stripped of Test status or Kenya elevated to Test status. If Bangladesh were to be demoted from Test status, I feel that this will be one of the most shameful things to have happened to us as a nation. Although our current BNP government may think of this as just another feather in the cap of its overall ineptitude like the FIFA ban or being ranked as the most corrupt country in the world. Along with everything else, the

performance of our cricket team

too seems to have deteriorated

with the change in ruling party. Given the amount of money and facilities provided to our cricketers there is no reason that we should not be able to produce better performances at least in one-day cricket than the likes of Kenva and even Zimbabwe. Just look at the current Indian team. Don't tell me that, there is nobody in Bangladesh with the physical abilities and more importantly, the awesome fighting spirit of Saurav Ganguly, Zaheer Khan or Kaif! Surely if we had the right infrastructure and determination with the huge base of support and funds for the game in Bangladesh we can at least win one out of

> I really fear for our Test status with the upcoming tour of South Africa. More importantly the team can really humiliate the nation in next year's World Cup if their collective performances do not improve soon. Would it really be asking too much of these overpaid and pampered Prima Donnas to develop some strength of character so that they can try harder to avoid further humiliations? Sheiuti Khan

every 10 games. Is that too much to

ask?

Why this deterioration? Our national cricket team has

batsmen who cannot score. Our

national cricket team has bowlers

who cannot take wickets. Our

Banani, Dhaka