

Bangladesh cricket

Cricket as a microcosm of the nation at large.

It was nice to read people's opinions on the sorry state of Bangladesh cricket (Friday Full Page, October 4). A few readers touched on the role of the BCB, but I feel they did not go far enough. While players, coaches and even fans (for their unrealistic expectations) share the blame for the current debacle, I think the BCB should be singled out for special treatment. Much as the country has slid into relative anarchy over the years due to the AL/BNP stranglehold on our lives, so too has sports such as football, hockey and cricket for the same reasons.

Cricket is run mafia-style by politicians and their offspring. Even ex-cricketers soon begin to sound and act like those politicians. Just as the country is mismanaged by successive governments, now our cricket is showing symptoms of what happens when you cannot manage an organisation properly.

Setting a vision, planning for and using resources wisely, demonstrating accountability and professionalism, making decisions, growing the size and quality of the talent base, marketing a brand - the BCB lacks in all departments and appears to be completely incompetent. If they are on the job only to line their own pockets, as many believe the Test status has created the opportunity for, then I don't see how they can continue to profit when their product is so poor. Perhaps therein lies the real tragedy - a culture of being content to profit any way you can from a poor product without seeing a real need to improve it.

You can fire coaches, get new players with better skills and build bigger stadiums, but without a cohesive vision at the top it cannot improve anytime soon. If the team started winning soon, we would forget all this, but they are poorly equipped to have any immediate chance of success. Sports really has an effect on a nation's psyche, even in Bangladesh, where people have many other things to worry about. With cricket being one of the few positive things to come out of Bangladesh in recent times, and with the way it is run by the BCB today, God help us all. As with so many other potential successes in our country, we sadly tend to take a good thing and squeeze the life out of it.

If I may, here's a quick plug for a Bangladeshi cricket web portal whose participants include Bangladeshi cricket fans from around the world: www.banglacricket.com
Rafiq Ahmed, Chicago, USA

I would like to thank you, for generating the interest that led to so many thought-provoking letters on the state of our cricket (Friday Full Page, October 4). Two things are obvious - one that we are losing without any apparent resistance, and the other that, it hurts deeply the followers of Bangladesh cricket around the world.

The issue is whether we really are taking our cricket seriously, as a nation. The days of Abahani vs Mohammedan cricket - being the ultimate - is over. We need to handle teams like South Africa in their backyard. That is not easy for other teams in the subcontinent, either. But our abject surrender in places like Sri Lanka, as in the recently concluded ICC Champions Trophy, or the previous tours to Sri Lanka and Pakistan begs for answers from our cricket management.

It is widely believed, that our performance in Test matches are not up to the mark, since we do not play enough of the longer version. But what would explain our equally pathetic performance in the ODIs? The lack of experience does not hold any longer, when we have played some 55-odd ODI matches, and interestingly (or depressingly), we have not won any since we

attained Test status. It is not surprising that experts are talking about Kenya being better than Bangladesh.

The question of giving away the Test status is not relevant, as ICC alone can decide on that. While we have it, we should try our best to justify the status. We must play many more matches with the A-teams of the Test playing countries and build our confidence.

Our thin bowling puts up some reasonable performances once in a while. However, the top order batting is failing consistently. One fifty and two 30s or so is the best that we score. We can rarely cross a total of 200. What is wrong with our batsmen?

Except one or two players the rest seem psyched out more than being bowled out. The coach, manager and experts must be able to find the real problem and devise means of treating them individually.

New Jersey, USA

Bangladesh is a cricket loving nation. The very first Test was played in Dhaka Stadium way back in 1968 when the common people had little knowledge about cricket. Bangladesh became the ICC champion beating Kenya in 1997 and we all observed a wave of ovation from every corner of the country. As a result Bangladesh was awarded ODI status in 1997 and Test status in 1999 after successfully arranging the first ever ICC championship trophy in Dhaka in 1998. Since then almost half a decade have been passed and it is about time we had a reviewed our achievements.

Look at the average of our top order batsman and wicket taking average of our prominent bowlers. One thing that pokes me off and on that we are not noticing any improvement in the player's mind to pave their way to success slowly

come?

We all know that cricket is a game combining merit and practice. It is frustrating that our big cities crammed with meritorious juveniles and youths do not have infrastructural facilities to rear them up to their maturity for playing cricket. It is even more poignant that for our juveniles we have enough space to practice cricket in urban areas only to find that they do not have appropriate cricketing apparatus. Nation-wide drive for cricketing talents can be achieved by arranging several age group tournaments from district level to divisional level and finally to national level. In order to do that the country can be divided into several blocks or sectors and in each one, an office for managing the proceedings can be established under the jurisdiction of B. C. C. B.

We also expect that in future B.C.C.B and its all sister concerns will be protected from politicisation.

change these laws for making the world a better place to live in, and throw outdated theories into the trash can. Has not this taken place again and again? And as for this particular invention, it is the duty of all Bangladeshis to encourage and support him.

A science student, Dhaka

US-Iraq

It amazes me that there are still people who oppose the US and British plans on Iraq. I was quite surprised to see that the allies have agreed to try once more through the UN Security Council to try and resolve the weapons inspections issue peacefully.

If the UN does pass a new resolution asking for stricter inspection guidelines and Iraq does not accept, then war would be justified.

Arguing that the US supported Iraq in the past is no justification against action now.

After the Nazi take over of Germany, Britain, France and the US continued to be major trading partners. Almost up to the war itself. Should that have been a justification for not fighting Hitler?

During the World War II, the US and Britain actively supported Stalin in defeating Hitler. They did so knowing that Stalin would be the next threat to freedom.

The policies of the Reagan administration towards Iraq during the height of the Cold War, immediately after the fall of Iran and the invasion of Afghanistan cannot be held against Bush in a whole different world.

Removing Saddam Hossain would be a favour for Iraq. Continuing attempts to resolve the issues through the UN will just draw out the uncertainty.

Flashman, Dhaka

Positive step

The bold step taken by FBCCI, MCCI, ICC and others on the restriction of import of goods from India is the need of the hour. Though late it is better to be late than never. If we can stick to this decision we can not only protect our national interest but also pave the way for both national and international investment in the industrial sector thereby creating a congenial atmosphere to run the business smoothly.

Khairul Masud, Eskaton, Dhaka

"We Remember"

On October 2, on the 3rd page of your paper there is a small ad captioned "We Remember". It commemorates the death anniversary of Group Capt. Raas Masud of the BAF in 1977 during the JAL hijack.

Recently The Daily Star Letters Page was full of letters about English medium students not knowing their own language.

Well that pales in comparison to not knowing your own history.

How many English or Bengali medium students even know what happened at Dhaka Airport in 1977? Orlando, Dhaka

A river named Gorai

Almost a year ago, in Kushtia District Association's re-union meeting held at the 'Osmani Milanayatan', the stalwarts of the Association unequivocally declared that the Gorai Bridge work will be undertaken in three months time, and should be completed within one year. We applauded, and, applauded profusely and thanked the Association for undertaking a "NEED" that was long felt for, and which would minimise the sufferings of the people of Kushtia District and its suburb.

But the high sounding words of the Kushtia District Association became a sort of 'mockery' as nothing praiseworthy has set in.

Likewise, the Mohini Mills Ltd, established by a Hindu Zamindar, namely, Kanu Babu, whose dhuti, lungi, and cotton saree used to be a prized possession to the people of

Bengal is now lying as a skeleton over acres of land and neither the government, nor, the people of Kushtia could feel the importance of commissioning this mill, which, could provide employment to several thousand people.

May I, solicit the attention of the government to kindly look into these matters for the interest of the people and nation?
Tayab-ul-Huq, Uttara, Dhaka

Tyco or not Tyco!

I am astounded to find out how our media is supporting Tyco, over the submarine cable deal. Whereas, Tyco itself is under US Justice Department's investigation. Even the CEO of the company has been arrested recently. There are lots of ethical issues also raised about the business practices of this company. Following is the news clip from Dow Jones wire service:

"Investigators at the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in New York are looking into whether a secret \$40 million payment that Tyco International Ltd. (TYC, news) made to settle a lawsuit in 2000 represented a payoff to hide possible accounting improprieties, people familiar with the matter told The Wall Street Journal."

I am glad that Bangladesh didn't get associated with this company (whatever may be the reason), otherwise this submarine cable project would have faced the same fate as the Maharashtra Electricity Project (Mumbai, India) by Enron, already bankrupt, had to leave the project unfinished. India could survive this sort of disaster, but we can't. To take the e-leap, this project is essential for our IT infrastructure.

Nasim Haider
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Crime rate in Bangladesh and New York

In reference to the comments made by our Minister of Law regarding murders in New York (1 in every 5 minutes), I have looked into the crime statistics of New York for last few years. According to my findings, in the year 2000, New York had an estimated population of 18,976,457 and in that year New York had 952 murders. Also in the year 2000 New York had 5.0 Murders per 100,000 people, ranking the state as having the 23rd highest rate in the nation for murder. The total number of murders for 1998 and 1999 are 924 and 903 respectively.

I have found the above information from FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. Perhaps our Minister had a different and more credible source.
T Sengupta, Canada

Reforming our education system: A proposal

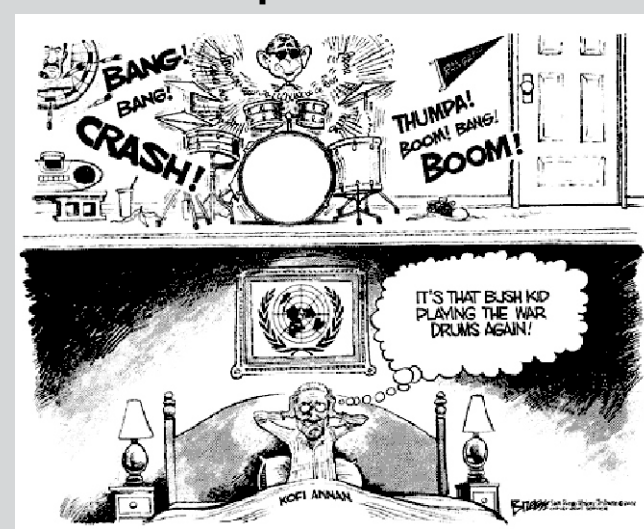
There are many thoughts on educational reform and almost every one of them is based on the premises that the 1973 Act can not be changed. I have a different proposal.

The problem of our nation is that we do not understand or made to realise the real cost of education. The existing system of subsidy keeps us all in the dark about the real cost of education. We never ask ourselves how much it cost our country to give us primary level education, then high school and college and university education.

Though we are a poor country, and our resources are limited, we get our education almost for free regardless of our ability to pay. I remember paying TK135/year for my undergraduate and master's degree from Dhaka University. The fee was the same for poor students whose parents sold their land to send their sons and daughters to the university and for the sons and daughters of the millionaires.

If we want to remove politics from

Hitler-Bush parallels



The recent remark by the German Minister comparing George Bush's methods to those of Hitler created an international flap, as if she (the Minister) had overstepped the line. However it so happens that I am currently re-reading that magnificent work, "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" by William H. Shirer, and have been struck by parallels between the actions of the German dictator and those of the Bush-Blair-Sharon faction these days.

From 1936 onwards Hitler re-occupied the Rhineland and gobbled up one by one

Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland with total disregard for international legality. His methods in each case were the same. While loudly proclaiming his own peaceful intentions he made elaborate and totally false accusations against the victim nations, in order to justify his aggression against them.

As Hitler explained with complete clarity in addressing his Generals on 22 August 1939.

"I shall give a propagandist reason for starting the war - never mind whether it is plausible or not. The victor will not be asked afterward whether he told the truth or not. In starting and waging a war it is not right that matters, but victory." Could anything be a more exact expression of the thinking of the US Administration today as it sets about trying to seize the oil resources of Iraq!

Bush's cheap tricks of rhetoric also seem to be cut of the same cloth as Hitler, down to the nauseating detail of proclaiming himself repeatedly "a man of peace". He talks of Iraq defying the UN for ten years when everyone knows that there was a long and sustained weapons inspection program from 1991-1998, which only came to a stop when the inspectors were ordered to leave by the US itself! He makes big play of Saddam's so-called flouting of "16 Security Council resolutions" whereas all the UN diplomats know that this is a grotesque simplification of a more complex reality.

The German nation remains extremely sensitive to the bitter history of Hitler's warmongering tactics. It is not surprising that they would be among the first to denounce George Bush for attempting to re-introduce in international relations the same spirit of naked aggression which the world believed had been buried for ever in the rubble of the Nazi defeat in 1945, brought about in significant measure by the great sacrifices made by the US itself!

Rafiqullah Bhuyian, Dhaka

Shady areas in the law



The damned and the denied?

While the verdict on Trisha's case was appreciated by the general mass, the penalty on the Simi case left us shocked. In both the cases, the victims committed suicide fearing further humiliation and harassment. The root of these separate incidents was the same: harassment by goons of the neighbourhood roaming around with political label.

Simi was an art college student, a girl with a bright future ahead. She dreamt of becoming independent and bring into life her artistic imaginations. She was involved in a lot of extra-curricular activities that took a lot of her time and often made her return home late like other art college students. The goons of her neighbourhood took advantage of this situation and often assaulted her verbally in the worst possible way. Being a middle-class girl with high moral values, her ego was struck but she could not do anything since her family was just an ordinary one and her father had no money or muscle power. She tried to tolerate the insult for herself and her helpless family, but the situation became unbearable when the goons brought along police with them at her place and threatened her. To everybody's shock, police 'the protector of the innocent' took the side of the goons and verbally abused Simi and her parents. He even dared to bring reference of the Holy Quran and Hadith stating that women should remain subdued in any society.

Simi could not take it any more and she committed suicide utterly frustrated with her life.

Living in a modern society, her parents failed to give her justice or minimum respect. The police involved in this case, AC Bashar was suspended and brought to trial like others, but the charge sheet was prepared as such that the trial took a long time to give a verdict. Such a heinous act should have given exemplary punishment to the culprits so that others learn a lesson. But since the police was involved in this case, it was manipulated and the criminals were punished just to 'show' to the public that the trial did end giving 'some punishment' to the guilty. And AC Bashar's posing a "V" sign at the end of the trial puts a tight slap on face of the law of this country.

The different loopholes of our law and order system let these criminals escape. Once they are out from jail, they would target a new victim and repeat their crime. We talk of equal rights for women and encourage girls to attain higher education. But can we even ensure them a safe life with minimum honour and dignity? The system needs to change and the authorities need to open their eyes to give us justice.

For how long do we have to see Simi and other flowers wilt out and watch on helplessly?

Arani Siddiqi
Dhaka

Those who were involved in inspiring Simi to commit suicide didn't receive any major punishment. The court felt inadequacy of law to provide them major punishment. It is a matter of regret that we didn't implement many articles of Convention on illumination of all kinds of discrimination against women.

As a result, women are suffering physically and mentally. We have to enact enough laws to ensure safe movement of women. Otherwise these culprits would feel encouraged to harass more and more women.

Oli Md. Abdullah Chowdhury
Khasdobir, Sylhet

Shoaib Ahmed

Green Road, Dhaka

Fuel-less electricity and a better world

From Mr. Sajjad Haider's letter (October 2), two things become very clear. Firstly his extreme astonishment and then his negative approach towards new inventions, hence any changes. But I would like to remind my honourable professor that if the scientists had cared a bit for rigid negative observations then science would not have advanced as it has advanced in today's world.

My question to both Mr. Rabbani and to Mr. Haider is -- are really our physicists so idle that instead of taking an effort to find out the truth they are just wasting their time by blaming other people?

I just want to add that it is man who has established scientific laws and also it is man himself who will

Although, it is not prudent to chop and trim the team frequently, every one should be accountable players, coaches, board members. A component of the player's salary should be performance-based. This is a very reasonable expectation, as the game is being played at a professional level. It is also advisable to replace the senior players, only gradually.

Finally, all the letter writers are well wishers of the team and love the game dearly, so the criticism is not levelled against any individual. We want Bangladesh team to perform better because we believe they can. Remember how the people celebrated when we won the ICC? Can we expect competitive performance in at least 50% of the matches? Losing per se does not feel as bad as does the manner in which it is orchestrated.
Mahmudul Huq Khan

and gradually like that of Sri Lanka. In our ODIs, we all watch with frustration how the wickets fall at a regular interval and the players suffer from acute match temperament, i.e. mental strength. Good cricket playing nations make their team with a combination of veterans and youths except Bangladesh. It's a natural process that youths will gradually be experienced and will become veterans and the vacant places will be filled up by more youths. But Bangladesh does not follow this procedure and makes changes too frequently in the national cricket team that creates too much pressure on the experienced players and hence a depressing performance. Are we suffering from enough exposure? Haven't those players, who have played at international level for more than 30 occasions, given enough exposure? But what is the out-

Protection of the ward commissioners!

While endorsing fully the views of Mr. Azad (October 5) I would like to say that no police resource should be wasted protecting the criminal ward commissioners. Police has other high priority work to do i.e. improve the overall law and order situation of the country particularly of Dhaka.

I am sure the general people are happy to see that the criminal ward commissioners are being eliminated this way. We have no sympathy for them. They deserve this type of punishment.

Mohammed Ashraf Ali
One-mail

There is no doubt that the death of four ward commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation deeply sadden many people of our country. When the country is in a state of development, such killing obviously creates a disruption to the peace, which ultimately brings suffering for the general people.

However, the immediate impact of the killing to public minds is not too great. Because, people of our country are accustomed to such killings. The instant question that comes to my mind is, why the terrorists are targeting the commissioners? Why not others like the members of parliament or ministers? A general public will answer that the commissioners are the persons who keep direct link with the terrorists and the MPs work behind the scene (though Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka and other commissioners alleged that they were the targets of the terrorists since they took different initiatives to curb terrorism and drug dealings in their respective constituencies).

People really do not care about these situations, because they know very well that once the game is over, the king (the so-called party ruler) and the pawn (the terrorists) go to the same box. In these two years of BNP government, the pleasures of the normal people were shallow and their sorrows were as deep as before. Apparently, it's not possible to prevent the terrorists from committing such crimes as long as the link between parties and terrorists are eradicated. Because the roots of terrorists have gone too far. They know how to deceive the fox and they always rise earlier

than them.

Now, how reasonable is the demand of the commissioners that they need adequate security and protection from the law enforcing authorities? People should ask, why they are demanding protection from those people who worked with them during the last general election? I think government initiative to provide extra protection is not a rational one. Most people will support in removal of police protection from ward commissioners, as it is a waste of police resources.

Sayed-Ul-Haque
Manchester, UK

This letter is not to take on the ward commissioners ensemble! Over the ages our politicians have only taught us to take to streets against any government in the name of preserving 'democracy' and destroy just about anything falling in our path, from torching transports to human bloodletting. But these are all aimed at basically to unseat the government and grab power anyway possible, never having in mind the perennially suffering poor people of the country and their welfare.

One staunch supportive element or cohort of our lousy politicians to such anarchic activities had always been these so-called ward commissioners. The whole country knows, a staggering number of these ward commissioners are illiterate, branded criminals. So much so, a ward commissioner credited with murdering scores took oath of office recently hosted by the city Mayor himself! Wonder why we need them at all when these commissioners are rampantly resorting to all such crimes and utterly fail to service the civic amenities of their locality for which we are forced to elect them!

Dear city father/s, it's high time you have either done away with these so-called ward commissioners who are not in most cases our representative and initiate a transparent, effective system to address the woes of the city dwellers who fills your coffers. Or have these services made available from the City Corporation



Seeking protection but from whom?

directly through local clubs, grass root NGOs or respective locality's senior citizens' association etc.

A devastated citizen
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.