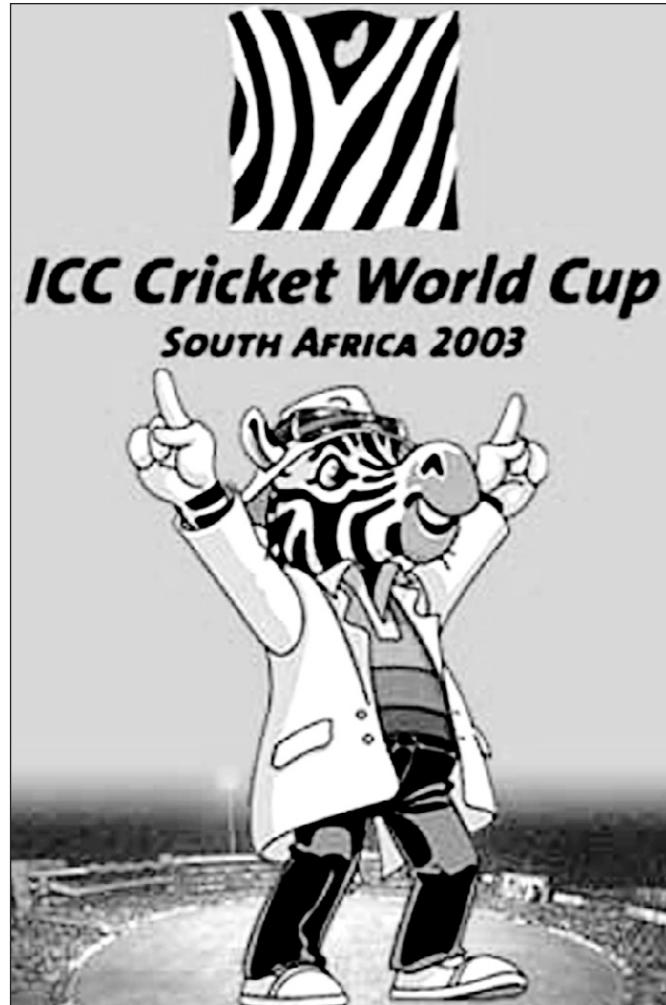


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

World Cup Cricket and Bangladesh



How's that?

It must be said that all the harsh words and the uproar in the country created by Bangladesh's defeat at the hands of Canada was well earned, but not just by the cricketers. The criticism should also be directed towards those who are responsible for managing the cricket in the country, the BCB and the selectors. It is their job to select the best team to send them to the biggest show in world cricket and make the right decision for the country's cricket. There is no doubt that there is a huge hole in the selection process.

First, they pack the top order of batting with young and inexperienced, a major reason behind the top order collapse especially noticeable in the match against Sri Lanka. Then they keep an inform player like Alok Kapali for the middle order. When someone is playing as well as he is in a team that is under-performing itself every game, he should be given as much exposure as possible. I also fail to understand what the use of having all Nirma, Second Division, Third Division cricket competitions when there are no scouts appointed by the BCB to look for talent in these games.

BCB is just investing thousands of dollars in their infrastructure hoping to get immediate returns. Well that is not going to happen in the near future. For now they must start picking up talent wherever and whenever they may appear in the country. The Pakistan team is the perfect example. The PCB spends less than BCB yet their players perform better because they give the players the proper exposure at the proper times.

I really think that BCB should shoulder all the responsibilities for the torrid time that Bangladesh cricket is currently going through.

Mohammad Arbaaz Nayeem

Class 11, Mastermind School, Dhaka

Will people kindly stop requesting our cricket team to surrender its Test status? This mass hysteria has been going on for long enough. Our World Cup campaign started several days ago. It is high time that these depressive people had gotten over the blunders made against Canada and Sri Lanka.

People forget that we have the talent to succeed at this level. Alok Kapali, Tushar Imran, Mashrafe Mortaza, Mohammed Ashraful and Taiha Jubair can play quite competently when they apply themselves. Besides they are all teenagers, which bodes

very well for the future. We need only give them time. Just because things are not clicking now, does not necessarily mean we do not deserve to be where we are.

If these people understand anything about cricket, they will examine very carefully where the origins of our collective failure lie. If anything, it is the deteriorating state of our country's cricketing infrastructure that is to blame.

The BCB is undemocratic (almost nepotistic), and haphazardly run by people without cricketing credentials. Our domestic competitions are now a joke (as they are centred solely around Dhaka), our youth development is losing momentum, new grounds are not being developed, and the row over the Bangabandhu Stadium persists.

The ICC is not entirely free from blame either. If it is serious about the development of cricket in Bangladesh, it will pressure BCB to change its unprofessional attitude towards the game in our country. Once the current incompetence within the BCB is addressed, Bangladesh will slowly make its mark in the Test arena and, before long, will prove to the world why we are playing at this level.

Shubho Rahman Khan, On e-mail

There are a lot of interesting responses to the dismal performances of our boys in the World Cup. There are no excuses for such a showing, and the fact that a lot of people expressed their frustration is a valid indication of the love for the game. But can we concentrate and contemplate what is so terribly wrong with our cricket and what we can do about it... or let's just say give a few humble suggestions for our cricket authorities to ponder on. We are a Test playing nation, and it is counter productive to squabble about whether we deserved it or not, we should make every effort to prove we are worthy of it. The things that can be done are:

1. Reduce our international commitments for the next two to three years, and concentrate to build a solid foundation by improving our 1st class cricket, so that we can be more competitive.
2. Give proper emphasis to our 1st class cricket, which is the National league, and spend time and money to build divisional cricket facilities worthy of holding Test matches, and encourage

developing "Good sporting wickets," and make them available for cricket only.

3. Decentralise the BCB and create six "Divisional cricket bodies" with their own coaching staff and development programme with the active assistance from the central body. Make most if not all local tournaments on a three/four day basis.

4. Make performance on the national league "the major criteria" for the selection of our national team, and not the Dhaka league. Most of the Test playing countries require their national players to participate in their 1st class cricket. This is the only way to give other players exposure to the "Test players" and also to ensure these are still the best players we have.

5. As an incentive let the best two team in the national league participate "as it is," in one 1st class cricket tournament each year for "foreign exposure." These will be low-key tours and will be of enormous benefits for the lesser known members of the team who could otherwise be excluded by the selectors.

Haroon Rasheed, Mirpur Road, Dhaka

This is in response to M. Ayub Khan's letter ("World Cup Cricket: Bangladesh's poor performance", February 19).

Withdrawing Test status of Bangladesh is definitely a wise decision. After all, it is better to stay behind as a cricket-loving nation than to get humiliated all the time. All I can say is that, our cricket team is on a mission to hamper the image of our nation. This cannot happen and before it is too late, it would be better if our country is stripped off from Test status. It is the only solution I guess!

Minhaj Ahmed, Dhaka

Like many other millions of Bangladeshis I am equally frustrated of our Cricket Team's disastrous performance in the World Cup.

But what do you expect when a nation's sports bodies are totally politicised? That's the character of Bangladeshi politics. But the present BNP government has broken all previous records.

You will not find any other nation where sports bodies are changed with the change of the government.

So let's not blame the cricketers only.

Sonia Mirza, Banani, Dhaka

(February 16) that the gas export committee should include lawyers and strategists along with the bureaucrats and economists.

We must take note from what happened in Africa after export of natural resources in response to the advice of oil companies. I cannot understand why our government does not sign agreement with the companies which do not impose these type of condition that Bangladesh must export gas? Export of gas will be suicidal and we do not want to become another Nigeria. We must keep our gas in our own country for our people to use.

Dr. Mahboob Hossain

Imperial US

The US has no friends, it has only interests and impulses. The US does not care about Iraq or its people; it only cares about Iraq's huge source of oil, its superb strategic importance, and about world

Traffic problem

Everyday the daily papers are full of disgraceful accounts of corruption, negligence, lack of foresight by the

path attracts the pedestrians to walk, minimising the need of rickshaws. Today it is virtually impossible for the elderly and others to cross the roads or even move about this chaotic city as there are not enough zebra crossing and pedestrian-friendly footpath.

Rezaur Rahman

Hampden Way, London

"War in Iraq"

What none of the peaceniks seem to realise is that Iraq brought on the troubles on itself. Iraq is the one at fault here. Not the US or Britain. The first Gulf War was in response to Iraqi aggression against a sovereign state. So what if the real reason was to protect oil supplies? The US is under no obligation to perform altruistic tasks for the world.

The US is perfectly justified in stepping in to protect a country, in that case Kuwait, because of moral right and self-interest. I am sure if Rwanda was the world's biggest supplier of oil then the Marines would be there too.

As for me, I liked the letter. Though it doesn't fall under the category of replying on current topics and stuff, it was refreshing. As Ms Shahrin Shahjahan Naomi (February 19) says it is a different type of letter inspiring people to bring out the good in them and to come forward to build a better world.

As the 'Letter Page' is the only page I read regularly, I don't mind coming across such off-track letters from time to time.

Arafat Mujib, Banani, Dhaka

Rashid (Feb. 19th) says in his letter that the first Gulf War didn't solve anything, implying that Saddam survived in spite of US efforts. Far from it, Saddam survived because Bush Sr. allowed him to live due to Saudi pressure and fears of a fundamentalist regime taking his place. It was certainly a mistake not have marched into Baghdad in '91.

Iraq has had twelve years to submit to the UN and hand over its biological and chemical weapons. Yet for over a decade Saddam has played cat and mouse with the UN preferring to starve his own people rather than hand over his illegal weapons. The fact is that Saddam has no intention of handing over his weapons.

Rashid should also declare a tentative time limit of handing over the plots. In the past, there were of instances of delayed handing-over process and this creates a lot of mental pressure on the allottee.

As a matter of fact, any deal of sale and purchase, the seller should declare the price of any commodity. There should not be any confusion or speculation about the price. If a final price cannot be declared now, an approximate price may be declared so that the allottee can make up his mind.

Rashid should also declare a tentative time limit of handing over the plots. In the past, there were of instances of delayed handing-over process and this creates a lot of mental pressure on the allottee.

So, it is our utmost request to Rajuk, please clarify the above-mentioned points and be transparent to the clients.

M. S. Rahman

An allottee writing from Los Angeles, USA

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