

# Probe report into Bangladesh's World Cup debacle

When Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar formed a two-member inquiry committee on March 19 to unearth the reason(s) behind the country's disastrous World Cup campaign in South Africa, the common fear was that it was going to be yet another eyewash and a formula to create scapegoats. That apprehension intensified when the probe body of Commodore (ret.) Mujibur Rahman and Syed Shamim Ahsan failed to complete their investigation within the three-week deadline. The delay prompted many to believe that it was an all-too familiar stunt on the part of the establishment that begins with a bang but eventually gets lost in the tangle of red tape. After months of anxious, and at times frustrating anticipation, the committee finally submitted its findings to the BCB chief on May 27. And just when everybody was getting excited to know the contents of the report, which might bring to light the reasons behind Bangladesh's sorry story in South Africa, the Board president surprisingly decided to sit on it indefinitely in a clear violation of his earlier promise. Ashgar had gone on record as saying that as soon as he receives the report he would make the findings public through a press briefing, if possible on the same day. However, ten days have elapsed since the submission of the report and the Board president only lately declared that he would be making a statement to the press on June 7 on the topic.

Amidst all this uncertainty, the sports section of The Daily Star rather by chance, got hold of a copy of that top-secret document recently. After going through it, we found the report to be refreshingly bold in its assertions and rational in its recommendations. We feel that the 31-page document should be brought to light, even if not in its entirety, so that our readers can get a proper perspective of WHAT WENT WRONG IN SOUTH AFRICA AND WHO WERE TO BLAME.

Following is the reproduction of the text of the Probe Report without its recommendations.

## INTRODUCTION

In connection with Bangladesh's participation in the World Cup 2003 in South Africa, the Bangladesh Cricket Board with the approval of the Government had set up a Committee comprising of the following 1) Cdre Mujibur Rahman and 2) Syed Shamim Ahsan to look into the debacle as to why Bangladesh had performed so poorly in the World Cup. The Enquiry Committee started its work on the 19th of March and during this period had three meetings with the President of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and also with the full Board minus one member who was out of station. In addition, the Committee interviewed a larger number of people including the Manager, Coach, Assistant Coach, the Captain, the Vice-Captain, some selected members of the team, some good cricketers who were not part of the team as well as some journalists and cricket enthusiasts who have taken great interest in the development of Bangladesh Cricket. In addition, former Presidents of BCB, Mr Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Mr KZ Islam were also interviewed.

The first task of the Enquiry Committee was to try and ascertain the fundamental causes of failure on the part of the team performing in the World Cup. In this connection, we had detailed discussion with the team Manager, the Coach, the Chief Selector and his team as well as the Assistant Coach, the Physiotherapist and the Physical Trainer.

We also had several rounds of meetings with some of the Board members and others who had gone on their own to witness the matches. The discussion that we had with all those people are on record. After detailed conversation in particular with the Manager, Captain and the Coach, we came to the conclusion that the failure of the team to play well is mainly attributable to very poor management skills.

The selection committee was changed as late as October '02 and the new committee did not have sufficient time for the proper assessment of the talent available in the country. The Bangladesh team was touring South Africa at that time and BCB, the Captain and the Manager on return from South Africa asked the Chief Selector not to effect any major changes in the squad that toured South Africa. As a result, some senior players and some of the deserving batsmen such as Javed Omar Belim were left out from the World Cup squad. It also resulted in poor blending of senior and junior players in the team. While the World Cup team was undergoing training at BKSP, the Coach claimed to have mentioned to the BCB about the defective bowling machine as well as the lack of other facilities but reportedly no action was taken by BCB to rectify the situation. Again reportedly when the Coach brought this to the notice of the President, the President mentioned that those were secondary issues. If the Coach's version is correct, and since Bangladesh in the process of preparation knew of the teams that they would have to play, then videos should have been obtained and studied to know their strengths and weaknesses to accordingly prepare the team to face them. If this was not done then it was a major failure on the part of those who were concerned with this.

In short, the management, which accompanied the team, was unable to discharge their responsibilities, as a result of which, it may well be that the players had lost their enthusiasm and initiative to perform well. We will start with the Manager of the team first.

### FINDINGS

#### The Manager: ASM



It seemed to us, that the Manager Mr ASM Faruque, who may individually be a very good person, was not one bit effective in the performance of his tasks. To cite a few examples, the Manager when questioned stated that, not once did he check as to whether the players were back in their rooms by the appointed hour as prescribed in the code of conduct. He confessed that it was brought to his notice that team players in a group of two or three had been having late nights, but no action against the players followed. For example, Pilot's (Khaled Masud) late night outings had indeed set a bad precedent for other members of the team and there were others like Tushar Imran, Sanwar Hossain and Ehsanul Huq who followed the footsteps of the Captain. Again no action was taken.

It is customary that the Manager would bring out a schedule for the next day for the players and all others accompanying the team to abide by. The Manager admitted that no such schedule was ever drafted and distributed among the parties concerned. We were also told that most of the players boarded the bus to go to the field but invariably the Captain, and on occasion the Manager himself were late, while the players waited in the bus.

To give some more examples, the Enquiry Committee found out that the Manager, the Coach, and the Captain were practically not on talking terms. It may be noted that the role of the Manager of the team is very clearly defined. Evidence collected indicates his total failure to abide by his managerial responsibilities, which did cause a lot of frustration, not only among the players, but also among others who were part of the team. Moreover, there is no evidence to prove that the Manager, who was responsible for ensuring that the Coach prepares the game plan, had ever any dialogue with the Coach.

It may well be that there were cursory discussions, but these were not officially recognised. Even worse, while the Manager claims that he had good relationship with almost all the players, his not being on talking terms with the Coach and the Captain displays the cursory manner in which the team was allowed by the management and in particular by the Manager to perform without any commitment.

This lack of dialogue among the three kingpins of the management adversely affected the mood of the team itself. Add to this the fact, that not one single player whom we interviewed stated that the Manager in particular had created opportunities for the team members to have some recreation which is so vital for them to relax when they are not actually playing any matches.

We were told that the Manager only ensured that the players got their daily allowance, but never bothered to see where they were going, what they were eating or when they were returning to the hotel. To us, this looks like a fundamental failure on the part of the Manager.

Another example that we need to sight here is the alleged irregularity in the issuance of complimentary tickets. This was brought to the notice of the Manager and in his mumble jumble reply, he could not properly explain why he could not discharge this responsibility efficiently and with courage. To us it gives an impression that he was more inclined in keeping the players politically happy and failed to discharge his responsibilities as a Manager of the team that was laid out.

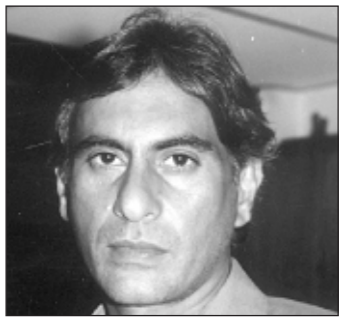
The Captain of the team obtained

about 20 tickets from the Liaison Officer for distribution among his friends and relations. We were also told that the Manager had committed about 50 complimentary tickets to the members of the Bangladesh High Commission. When these issues were brought to the notice of the Manager, that there was a lot of discrimination going on, the Captain threatened and advised all the players to return the tickets to the Manager.

This again resulted in more bitterness between the Manager, Captain and some of the players which to say the least was not at all conducive to the atmosphere. We have not received one single observation from all the people we have interviewed that there was ever any attempt on the part of the Manager to gather the whole team and have meals together and the players were left free to choose their own food arrangement. One needs hardly emphasize that one of the fundamental responsibilities of the Manager was to keep the team together in the same wavelength. While talking to the Physiotherapist and the Physical Trainer, they were of the view that the players were not following the prescribed diet. As a result of which, it may well be that the performances of the boys were not satisfactory in many cases, and in fact affected the game adversely. Finally, a question was posed to the Manager as to whether he had ever checked during his stay with the team if the boys were in their rooms at the prescribed hour. His answer was negative.

The Enquiry Committee feels very strongly that the selection of the Manager was done in an arbitrary manner without taking into account all his capabilities and his abilities to perform as the Manager of the team. The Board may well argue that he was also the Manager on two previous tours with the team to South Africa and Sri Lanka, and there was hardly any complaint against him during the tours. Be that as it may, this Committee's mandate is to confine its enquiry to the debacle of the World Cup and the Committee is trying to do just that. We strongly feel that the selection of Managers should not be an issue of patronage, but that of capability.

#### The Coach: Mohsin Kamal



We interviewed the Coach, Mr Mohsin Kamal. Professionally, we understand that he participated in nine Test matches and 19 ODIs as a member of the Pakistan team. Though he made his name as a good bowler, he had very little training in a coaching capacity from any recognized institution in Pakistan. Even if he did go through some sort of training, we could not verify this information.

One interesting feature that we realize was his total inability to communicate either in English or in his own mother tongue Urdu. We asked him questions in English, but he went into tangents. To facilitate his understanding of our questions, we switched to his mother tongue and repeated the question. His replies were an admixture of English and Urdu without again replying to the point. One gets the impression, that the selection of the Coach to say the least was poor and gives the impression that it was more a political choice rather than a selection of an able and competent hand. But one thing we are sure of, if he was unable to communicate with us, he could not possibly have communicated effectively with the players, who originated from different parts of the country, and would definitely have found it difficult to communicate with the Coach.

Mr Kamal confessed to us that he never had any effective dialogue with the Manager or the Captain for that matter. Reportedly, he was given a video to record the performance of the players and it would be expected that

after the game, he would sit with the players who might have committed technical errors and show them where they had gone wrong, with the help of the video. Add to this the fact that after any match of the day, South African TV used to telecast the highlights of the day's game. Reportedly, the Coach failed to bring in his boys to watch the highlights. This was a major failure on the part of the Coach as this deprived the Bangladesh players an opportunity to analyze their own performance and the performance of the other teams.

Two issues emerged out of this statement:

1. Not one single player was ever called in by the Coach on a one-to-one basis to indicate where the players had faulted, or to discuss their shortcomings, which is a common practice with all the Test-playing countries.

2. And more importantly, he never used the video to record the performance of the players.

It is customary for the ICC (International Cricket Council) to provide 'Play Charts' to the team members as a feedback of their performance. It was noted by the Committee that these 'Play Charts' were never discussed with the players. As a matter of fact, the Coach did not know what to do with the 'Play Charts.' The Coach complained to the Committee that he was not on talking terms with the Captain and he attributed this to the arrogance of the Captain. Even if we accept this part of the statement, the fact remains that it was a duty of the Coach which should have bound him to sit with the players firstly on a one-to-one basis, secondly to discuss the 'Play Charts' and thirdly and finally to discuss the game-plan.

The Committee learnt that once the players returned to the hotel, the Coach returned to his room and hung up the Do-Not-Disturb sign and was out of bounds for his players as well as the management. One more issue needs to be mentioned here. When a team is to play with another team, it is customary to obtain videos of the performance of the rival teams so that the boys know what to expect. The Coach admits never to have undertaken any such exercise on the plea that the BCB is really responsible for obtaining videos well before the team went to South Africa. If the contention of the Coach is right, this is a major failure on the part of BCB's management.

The Coach further added that for reasons best known to the Board, Mr Ali Zia the Assistant Coach who is a specialist batting coach was not made part of the team. Mr Mohsin Kamal therefore felt that the boys could not be guided properly on the batting side, given the absence of Mr Zia.

The Coach pointed out that when it was noticed that the boys were not performing well in batting, the Board decided to send former Coach Gordon Greenidge to cover the batting side without consulting him, while Zia, who is on the payroll of BCB was not called. Mr Mahub Anam when questioned on this however mentioned that the Coach was consulted on this issue. The Coach felt that it was rather unfortunate and that he did not appreciate the presence of Gordon Greenidge.

The Coach mentioned once that whilst practising in the nets, he disagreed about one particular player being thrown out of the nets and on that issue, he and the Captain clashed. On this also, the Coach did not file any written complaint.

While talking about the matches in South Africa, we came back to the question of training the boys, their practice and their diet. We asked the Coach whether there were ever any bowling machines available in Dhaka for practice. He admitted that there was one, which was out of commission and it did not seem to the Committee that he made any serious effort to put the bowling machine in order. In this 21st century, software is available which would replicate the bowling of some of the finest bowlers in the world (fast or spin). Our question was that, apart from telling the higher ups in the BCB about the conditions of the bowling machines, was there any attempt on his part to convince the Board to obtain the software as part of training of these boys. No such attempt on the part of the Coach was ever made at least on record. However, the fact also remains that the Chairman of the Cricket Committee

(Mahub) was aware that the bowling machine was not in order, and assuming that the Coach had brought this to the notice of the Board, no attempt was made by the Board to put the machine in order. Nor is there any evidence to support that software so vitally necessary for the training of the boys were ever attempted to be procured. This also is a major lapse on the part of the BCB.

We interviewed the Assistant Coach Zia and since he had not gone to South Africa our discussion with him was short but to the point. Naturally, with him we talked about the infrastructural facilities available that he might have used as a batting expert coach to train our boys. His reply was that not much facility was available. He had mentioned to the people high up in the Board and reportedly to the President of the Board and also to the Chairman of the Cricket Committee that these facilities were unavailable. The President allegedly replied that these were of secondary importance. When queried as to whether he had protested in writing, his answer was negative. When the Committee questioned him as to why he did not give this in writing there was no reply. The Committee was aware that Zia ought to have been far more assertive if he really meant business of training the boys. In case he felt, that he was not getting adequate support and help from the Board, he should have given the ultimatum to the Board that he either be provided with the facilities or he would quit, because the purpose of hiring him was being defeated and at a very crucial moment when the team was preparing to play in the World Cup.

Having interviewed the two coaches, the Committee concludes that neither of them was really competent, dedicated, sincere or committed enough to perform their duties. The fact is, they were being well paid and they were quite happy.

Prior to hiring of Mohsin Kamal, the Coach was Trevor Chappell. The Committee was told of an instance where the President of the Board called in the players and the views of the players were obtained about the suitability of Chappell. Reportedly the players opined that Chappell was not good enough and subsequently he was removed. We have never heard of a situation of this nature that the Board would hire or fire a Coach on the recommendation of the players and we do not think that any cricket-playing nation should resort to such practice.

Bangladesh desperately needed a good Coach after the exit of Chappell. It was reported to us that a Board member was authorized to open up dialogue with one of the best Coach's available in the market, which was Mr Roy Dias. And that while a Board member was almost finalising the deal, some quarters approached the President of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and also made a request for a coach. We were told the President of the PCB recommended Mr Kamal and while Mr Dias' issue was very much in the offing, Mr Kamal was signed up. Anybody familiar with cricket would have thought that between Kamal and Dias, Dias would be the obvious choice. One wonders if politics played a part in this.

**The Captain :Khaled Masud**  
Khaled Masud Pilot was elected as the Captain for the World Cup. We were told that while he led the Bangladesh team in the past, his perfor-



mance, his behaviour and his management technique were all to the satisfaction of the BCB. However, when he went to South Africa, the Committee was told by many people that he had interviewed, that his behavioural patterns, his dealings with the

boys and above all his dealings with the management had undergone radical changes. There were complaints of his arrogance, his behaviour, and there were complaints of his using foul language with his team-mates as well as the senior management of the team, but above all, there were complaints about his total lack of self-discipline.

He had fought with the Manager on the issue of tickets, and there are instances where he spent nights out of the hotel. In particular, the night before the Kenya match, Pilot was seen outside the hotel at well past midnight, and this obviously contributed to the deterioration of his ability as a player and it is no wonder that he dropped three regulation catches against Kenya the following day. Players have complained about his misbehaviour in the nets, his inability to instill discipline among the players and his failure to keep the team together, resulting in total lack of motivation. Most importantly, his own failure in maintaining self-discipline did result in loss of confidence in his leadership and it is common knowledge that if the leader does not lead by example, the team under him is bound to perform poorly. It was mentioned that there was hardly any communication between the Manager and himself, the Coach and himself and the Vice-Captain and himself and there isn't a single instance where he might have spent evenings with his boys, which could have served as inspiration for his team players.

The Committee interviewed him and did notice his tone of arrogance. This might have resulted out of his belief in his concept of indispensability that he was suffering from. It is a pity that while he is a good player, his sudden change in his personality, behaviour and the other acts might have sealed the fate of Bangladesh's performance. One presumes that he lost sight of the fact that nobody is indispensable. Let us quote an example. It was reported in the newspapers that Pilot, prior to his departure for South Africa threatened to resign from Captaincy on return from the World Cup and the reason cited was that the Board did not meet many of his demands. It is very unfortunate that first of all, the man to lead the Bangladesh team to the World Cup has issued a public statement of this nature and it is equally unfortunate that the BCB did not take cognizance of this threat. When questioned by the Committee, he did not deny the fact that he made this statement to the press. Any effective Cricket Board in the world would have taken note of this threat and removed him from the position of Captain. It is our considered opinion that since the Board did not take any action against him for the public statement, he therefore started harboring the impression of being indispensable to the team. This particular act on the part of Pilot threatening to resign and the Board not taking cognizance of this could well have permeated down the line to the other players of the team.

The Committee does not question the authority of the Captain to determine and finalise the team in consultation with the Manager and the Coach who are both selectors while on tour. However the standard practice is that he should do so after obtaining the opinion of the Physiotherapist and the Trainer to ascertain the physical fitness of the player. Reportedly, this was never done.

It was further reported that when the game plan was discussed, the Vice-Captain was neither called to the meetings, nor was he ever consulted. Examples are there where Pilot changed the batting order and bowlers at whom not taking into account or consideration certain determining factors, which would prompt any good Captain towards the best performance of the team. Pilot's dismal failure as a Captain, his performance against Kenya, his dropping three regulation catches, not bringing his two fast bowler towards the end of the Kenya innings and his misbehaviour with the players in the team while the match was on, can very well raise some eyebrows not only about his arrogance and the concept of indispensability, but also whether it was guided by any ill-motive. All the factors mentioned above makes the Enquiry Committee rather unhappy for the simple reason that failure of the Captain to deliver has given an edge

to Kenya, which had been aspiring for Test status and winning against Bangladesh could have strengthened Kenya's case.

Bangladesh losing to Kenya disappointed cricket lovers in this country. Bangladesh sports reports who were present at the ground squarely blamed Pilot's captaincy for the defeat. The Committee at length interviewed some reporters and senior players of the team and established the following facts:

1. Night before the Kenya match, Pilot was seen outside the hotel well after midnight.

2. Pilot dropped three regulation catches in the match.

3. Pilot did not bring the fast bowlers towards the end of Kenya's innings, which is the universal practice, thus allowing Kenya to pile up more runs than they should have.

4. Kenya had much to gain by beating Bangladesh, as it would strengthen their claim to attain 'Test status'.

From above, it appears that Pilot's conduct and captaincy do raise questions about his motive. BCB may probe further the Kenya match and get to the bottom of this unfortunate defeat.

#### The Players

The Committee feels that some comments on the players themselves are also in order. We have already cited examples in the report about some players guilty of breach of discipline by staying out late at night, not sticking to the dietary restrictions and so on. Also, we must mention that there were some players, who, had they given their heart and soul to the game, could have done much better. It is our impression that there were some who have been included in the team to play Test matches and in the World Cup might have felt that they had reached the top and subsequently good performance was not of any consequence. There are instances when certain players kept on playing the same faulty strokes resulting in loss of wickets despite the fact that it was pointed out to them. The technique that they were well conversant with was not followed in letter and spirit.

Most of the top order batsmen displayed weakness in playing balls that were pitched outside the line of the off stump, trying to drive without



Mahub Anam

any footwork and getting caught in the slips. We understand that the Coach did point it out repeatedly to the batsmen, but they did not rectify their approach to the game. How effectively the Coach did point out these issues to the players still remain a matter of conjecture.

We feel that while inadequate management, lack of leadership and the lack of guidance of a good Coach did contribute to poor performance, yet each one of the players had an obligation to the nation to play well despite heavy odds. After all, they were participating in the World Cup, a fact that each individual player ought to have been conscious about. In brief, the points that we have mentioned above largely contributed to Bangladesh's poor show at the World Cup.

#### The matches against Canada and Kenya

Names of the countries, in the two groups were known at least one and a half years prior to the World Cup.

The BCB knew that Canada and Kenya were in the same group as Bangladesh. BCB should have targeted Canada and Kenya as the likely teams that Bangladesh could defeat. Videos of matches of both the teams should therefore have been obtained to study their strengths and weaknesses and accordingly prepare our strength and our strategy. No effort was made by BCB to obtain the

videos, which is a common practice among Test-playing nations.

When Bangladesh lost to Canada, which in any case was unusual to say the least, the morale of the team was reportedly at its lowest ebb. That was the time perhaps, that the management and the psychiatrist in particular should have done their best to inspire the team and get them out of the defeatist mentality. It is a pity that at that very critical juncture, the psychiatrist had to leave as his contract



Aliul Islam

expired. The Board ought to have foreseen this or ensured that either the gentleman continued or an alternative was found. The presence of a psychiatrist might have been able to contribute toward restoring the moral of the team.

#### The Selection Committee

The Chairman of the Selection Committee (Aliul Islam) argued that he and his team did not get sufficient time to assess the merits and talents available for selection. However, we feel that he should have been more forceful and included Javed Omar Belim on the basis of performance statistics and overruled Pilot's objections. It is unfortunate that about 50 players have been changed between the 1999 and 2003 World Cups, a reflection of patronage peddling.

During our meeting with the Chief Selector, two issues emerged. One, that he was a newcomer and therefore was not fully conversant with the merits and demerits of different players for selecting the national squad. Secondly, he also indicated that inadequate support from quarters that matter in so far as selection process was concerned. Indirectly, he hinted at interference.

The Chief Selector had three rounds of meeting with the Committee and in one of them; two of his partners were also present. When asked why he did not include Javed Omar in the national team (given that Javed Oam's performance as a batsman was already established and the did enjoy a good reputation and his batting average was better than most of those who were selected), his reply was he had a two-hour meeting with the Manager, Coach and the Captain and that all three of them opposed the inclusion of Javed Omar. The President of BCB claimed to have also mentioned to the Committee and stated that he suggested inclusion of Omar in the team. The Chief Selector confessed that he succumbed to pressure of the Manager, Coach and Captain. When asked if the Chief selector had the final authority or whether he was bound by the advice of the Manager the Captain and the Coach, the Chief Selector admitted that the final authority was with him. However, he did not want to enter into a bad relationship with the Manager, Coach and Captain on the Omar issue. The Committee considered this very unfortunate as it displays a) lack of confidence on the part of the Chief Selector and b) than he is susceptible to influence.

#### The Bangladesh Cricket Board

The Committee would also wish to deliberate on the Board itself and what we consider as major lapses, which if avoided, would have allowed our boys to give a better performance. Our frustration with the BCB is not exclusive to this Board, but with the previous Board as well. We were given Test status in June 2000 but had applied for it in 1996. By the mid-90s it had become quite obvious that Test status for Bangladesh was not too far away. However, the BCB completely wasted that time when it could have put a system in place, put a decent first-class league together, invested in infrastructure development and had a talent hunt policy. All these things would have prepared our players for Test cricket.

Yet nothing materialised. Even today, a few years after gaining the Test status, things have not been put in place. The BCB hired Trevor Chappell who reportedly turned out to be a rather useless Coach. His previous coaching experience was confined as a fielding coach of Sri Lanka. Chappell was replaced with Kamal, another poor decision on the BCB's part.

When the Bangladesh team returned victorious from Malaysia after the ICC Trophy, a huge amount of money was given to the players. Over a lakh was given per head, some were also gifted with cars, land was allotted and free life-long healthcare was given by the different ministries of the government. Even the Ministry of Religious Affairs presented the players with prayer mats. A civic reception was organised in which Mr Gordon Gowidge was granted Bangladesh nationality. Ironically, this Mr Greenidge was unceremoniously terminated in a manner such that he had to leave the country shortly thereafter. In addition to the civic reception attended by the Prime Minister, there were other reception hosted by various organisations and other institutes and the Leader of the Opposition at that time did not also lag behind.

In sports, winning or losing is a common phenomenon. In this case, our team had won the ICC Trophy. One could understand and appreciate some recognition of their outstanding performance, yet the kind of reception that they received was without any parallel anywhere in the world. If this money spent could have been used for more productive purposes such as developing the infrastructure, good training



Ali Asghar the BCB boss

facilities etc, we think the money would have been better spent. The Committee is not intending to play a blame game, yet, would fail in its duty if it was not mentioned that an amount of Taka 28 lakh was unnecessarily spent on a simple AGM of the BCB held in Cox's Bazaar. How unfortunate. A negligible part of this Taka 28 lakh could have repaired the bowling machines, perhaps buy a few more and also obtained the software so vitally necessary to prepare the boys to face the world-class bowlers.

The truth remains that there was noticeable inadequacy and complacency on the part of both the Boards. This has been adequately reflected in the quality of our team's performance. The sooner that things are put right, the sooner our cricket will improve. The BCB must ensure that we retain the Test status and fulfill our obligations to play the other countries. If we refuse to do that and perchance our Test status is withdrawn, we may have to wait another 15 or 20 years to get it back. We need to seek help from the ICC in terms of resources and training. We should consider requesting the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) to send a few qualified coaches to train our local ones, which would not involve any monetary commitment.

We are happy to note that Mr Davenell Whatmore has been contracted to be the Coach for Bangladesh for a period of two years, renewable by another two, by mutual consent. We are equally happy that Mr Sarwar Imran has been selected locally as an assistant to Whatmore, because in the ultimate analysis over a period of years, we should have our own well-trained local coaches. Nobody in Bangladesh expects us to win against established Test playing nations. Yet we also believe that given the right guidance and exposure, given proper coaching and other training facilities will equip our boys to do better in future. One requires our boys to be receptive to new and innovative ideas and techniques, develop skills and above all have enough physical and mental stamina to sustain five-day matches.