

A pointless BCB election



AL MUSABBIR SADI

With elections in the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) just round the corner, sports lovers are in a spot of bother rather than being enthusiastic at the prospect of democracy returning to the most demanding sport federation.

They have reasons to feel uncomfortable firstly because of the bitter experiences of the past and more importantly the timing of the elections itself that has led them to believe that it had more to do with political motivation rather than bringing accountability to an otherwise reasonably-run and affluent organisation.

It is the worst kept secret that sports bodies are being run by people loyal to the ruling party even after elected bodies have replaced ad-hoc committees. The most painful example in recent memory

was the fight for power in the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) between an elected body loyal to the Awami League and SA Sultan-led panel backed by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The fight eventually led the sport's governing body FIFA to slap a humiliating ban on the BFF.

Cricket also had its fair share of problems that saw an elected body fighting a legal battle till the final day of its four-year term with a government-nominated BCB president running the show with a set of advisors by his side.

Interestingly, elected bodies in all federations barring a few have been at odds with their respective presidents ever since the BNP came to power after the last general elections, which was held after the polls in sports during Awami League's tenure in office.

To be frank, introduction of elections in sports federations replacing the age-old ad-hoc committee during the rule of Awami

League has done more harm than good. The otherwise serene sports arena manned by dedicated sports organisers have lost the battle against those who are politically motivated. A vested group under the banner of 'District Sports Forum' sprang up overnight and it became so powerful that with a strong vote bank at its disposal the forum dictated every election result.

Besides, real democracy remains a far cry with the all-powerful president remaining a government nominee.

Since the whole election mechanism appears faulty the desire to hold polls in the BCB, which is a body as sensitive as any organ of the government, is nothing but an attempt to make some political gains.

It is rumored that the selected advisors, serving on the Board, are in all probability going to be elected to different posts through elections that can be best described as a farce.

The Board has already got the

ball rolling by naming their favourite councilors.

Now comes the question; is it wise at all to hold elections in the cricket body with general elections just over a year away?

"That has to be a political decision. It must come from the top. I cannot comment on that," said Youth and Sports Secretary Syed Sujauddin Ahmed to The Daily Star on Sunday.

"Everybody wants to be a part of the federation nowadays. It was not same in the 70s when we had to persuade friends and sports lovers to work as organisers just out of love for the game," said Sujauddin, who is also general secretary of the Bangladesh Chess Federation.

"Gradually came glamour, prestige, foreign trips and finally, there was huge involvement of foreign funds in the major federations. It brought more people to the scene and eventually, demands were made to run them democratically.

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BD A bowlers rout Lancs

SPORTS REPORTER

The bowlers set up a perfect platform for the Bangladesh A team to record their first victory on their England tour after wrapping up Lancashire for only 149 in a one-day match at Liverpool yesterday.

In reply, Bangladesh reached 73-1 in 15.2 overs with Nafees Iqbal batting on 21 and Tushar Imran on 38. The only batsman dismissed was Shahriar Nafees, who made seven.

Earlier, fast bowler Shahadat Hossain claimed two wickets while left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak finished Lancashire innings with three wickets after visiting captain Shahriar Nafees decided to field first.

Despite a half-an-hour's play lost due to rain, Bangladesh A enjoyed a good day in the field.

Lancashire lost wickets at regular intervals with Shahadat, who came on as first change bowler, removing both openers on the same score of 42. But it was new-ball bowler Syed Russel who had the most economical spell taking 1-16 in allotted 10 overs.

Another paceman Talha Jubair, however, was expensive giving away 39 runs in eight overs for his lone success while Razzak had the best figures, picking up three for 25 from 7.4 overs. Alok Kapali chipped in with the other wicket for 12 runs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

LANCASHIRE: 149 all out in 45.4 overs (A Crook 23, I Sutcliffe 9, P Horton 46, S Croft 0, K Hogg 14, G Cross 17, S Crook 4, S Marshall 8, S Mahmood 4, O Newby 4 n.o., G Thompson 0, extras 20; Russel 1-16, Talha 1-39, Shahadat 2-22, Razzak 3-25, Kapali 1-12).

Argentine soccer coach due today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national football team's new Argentine coach Diego Andres Cruciani and his compatriot trainer Victor Ariel Colman are expected to reach Dhaka tonight.

The Argentine coaching staff's arrival will put an end to a long two-and-a-half year wait for a national coach since the departure of George Kottan immediately after Bangladesh's SAFF Championship triumph on home soil in January 2003.

Cruciani, who was an associate of legendary Argentine World Cup-winning coach Cesar Luis Menotti, will be the tenth foreign coach.

The first foreign coach appointed by the Bangladesh Football Federation was Germany's Bekel Hopt in 1978.

The other foreigners to coach the senior team are Gerherd Schmid of Germany, Nasser Hejazi (Iran), Oldrich Swab (Switzerland), Man Young Kang (Korea), Otto Pfister (Germany), Samir Shakir (Iraq), Mark Harrison (England) and George Kottan (Australia).

Yousuf clinches BBC snooker crown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Bangladesh Billiards Centre, Chittagong organised a knockout snooker tournament at its premises on Friday.

Sixteen participants fought for the title that eventually went to Taif Bin Yousuf. Faridul Islam Polash became runner-up.

Later, Mir Kashem Chowdhury, the BBC chairman and Ahmedul Kabir Nipu, BBC director distributed prizes among the winners.

The tournament has been organised to promote the game of snooker among youngsters in the port city, general manager of BBC William F Doherty said.

Inzy wants bans on captains to be removed

PTI, Karachi

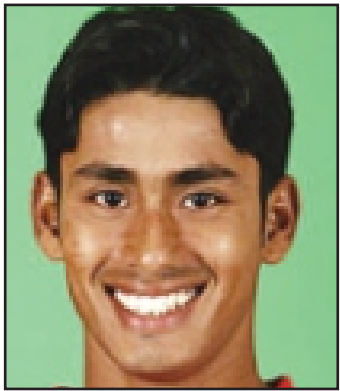
Welcoming the decision to reduce the ban on India's Sourav Ganguly from six to four matches, Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq has stressed that the International Cricket Council (ICC) should scrap suspensions on captains since it put a question mark on their future.

"I am glad that the ICC reduced Sourav's ban and hopefully he will soon regain his lost place. But frankly speaking, I am not a big supporter of match bans because it can put the careers of some captains on the line," Inzamam told this news agency from Lahore.

"Sourav is a perfect example of the ICC ban. You see six-match ban practically means you are out of two series, and when the ban is finished, you are left struggling to reclaim your place, a situation in which the left-hander finds himself," the Pakistan skipper said.

Labrooy (Sri Lanka) were the other members in the panel.

Ashraful in his instant reaction said he was a shade disappointed that more Bangladeshi players were



MOHAMMAD ASHRAFUL

not in the Asian side.

"During today's practice I had congratulated Pilot Bhui (Khaled Mashud) in advance because we all felt that he was going to be called up as he is the best wicket-keeper in Asia. Still I am delighted at seeing my name but it would have been nice if

we had more representation."

Ashraful thought his inclusion was prompted by his showing in the NatWest tri-series in England.

"Many people had told me before the England tour that I was going to be the focus of attention but that became the case only after I had made some runs in the one-day series. I have realised that there is no alternative to scoring runs if you want to be in the spotlight. Nobody cared about me after the Test series but suddenly I was the centre of attention after the NatWest games. If I perform well in the Afro-Asia Cup, the same thing will happen," said Ashraful.

Ashraful scored a match-winning maiden century against world champions Australia and then followed that up with a blistering 94 against England and another swashbuckling 58 against Australia.

The players who will participate in the series will be paid full ODI match fees. The series winning side will earn prize-money worth 100,000 US dollars while the victorious team in each game will get US\$ 25,000. The man of the match will be

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Indian media irks Miandad

PTI, Karachi

Former Pakistan cricket captain Javed Miandad has blamed the Indian media for creating a controversy over his son's wedding with underworld don Dawood Ibrahim's daughter which, he said, prevented his Indian friends from attending the ceremony held in Dubai on July 23.

"I was hurt and disappointed with the way some sections of the Indian media printed or aired baseless stories and lies about the marriage. The campaign to politicise the marriage kept away my Indian cricket and other friends and wellwishers from the ceremony," he was quoted as saying in a Pakistani newspaper.

The wedding drew tremendous interest in the Indian media as Dawood is the prime accused in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts.

"The Indian media tried to politicise this marriage but I am happy with the number of phone calls and messages we got from all over India and from some former cricketers wishing the couple well for the future," the former cricketer said.

"The impression created that the Indian people now hated me is wrong. So many of them residing in Dubai called us up to wish us well," he told 'The News' without naming the Indian celebrities who were invited to the reception.

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What to WATCH

TEN Sports

Sri Lanka Tri-Series
West Indies vs Sri Lanka (D/N)
Third ODI
Live at 2:30 pm



Steve Waugh

(Former Australia cricket captain)

"I only have to look back to my own career where I took 42 innings to make a century and 13 Tests to taste a victory to realise that success is a direct consequence of patience and faith."

DAY'S EVENT

Premier Football League
Muktijoddha vs Sheikh Russel
(5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium.

FORTHCOMING AFRO-ASIA CUP

Ashraful makes Asian XI



SPORTS REPORTER

Batting star Mohammad Ashraful was the only Bangladeshi representative in the Asian XI when the squad was announced on Monday for the forthcoming Afro-Asia Cup to be played in South Africa later this month.

The combined African team was also revealed yesterday.

Ashraful, the exciting 21-year old middle order batsman was the lone Bangladeshi in the team of 15 team but Tigers wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud and ace paceman Mashrafe bin-Mortuza were named in the stand-by list of three.

Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq will lead the Asian XI while Indian Rahul Dravid will act as his deputy in the three-match ODI series against the African XI.

The Asian team was selected by a panel appointed by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) where Shafiqul Haque Hira represented Bangladesh, Majid Khan (Pakistan), Ravi Shastri (India) and Graeme



PHOTO: STAR

ANOTHER VAIN ATTEMPT: Brothers Union's Victor Edwards, who wasted at least three chances, skips to avoid a collision with Arambagh keeper Shakil during their Premier Bank Premier Football League encounter at the BNS on Monday.

Brothers keep it up

BU-2, Arambagh-1

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union kept up the pressure on Mohammedan Sporting Club

in the Premier Football League when they edged Arambagh Krira Sangha 2-1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Veteran central defender Jewel Rana and substitute striker Tapu scored one goal apiece for the defending champions who pushed their collection to 29 points, one less than Mohammedan, after 12 rounds.

Arambagh, who came back briefly with a spectacular strike by Ritu, remain in seventh place with 11 points.

The Oranges, who lost 1-0 to Arambagh in the first-leg, also tasted sweet revenge for their only defeat so far with their ninth victory.

The first chance fell to Brothers when Emily sent a superb cross from the right flank in the very first minute but Russian striker Victor was slow to reach the ball near the goalmouth, allowing Arambagh stopper Ramjan to clear the danger.

Victor, who has scored seven goals so far but never looked confident, wasted a sitter after 18 minutes when he met a square pass by right full-back Siraji. The ball came to the unmarked forward's weak right foot and his effort near the dreaded zone hardly tested to goalkeeper Shakil.

Arambagh, who relied on breaks on the counter, earned a real chance in the 34th minute but Ritu headed the ball over the bar after Nigerian striker Patrick's perfect chip from the left caught the whole Orange backline wrong-footed.

Victor once again failed to convert a 37th minute chance and five minutes later, he was substituted in favour of Tapu who ultimately struck Brothers' match-winner.

The Gopibagh outfit made another tactical change early in the second half and Liton, who came for Abul in the midfield, helped Jewel break the deadlock in the 56th minute.

Taking the ball from a short corner by Parvez Babu, Liton sent a chipped cross at the near post for Jewel who found the net with a glancing header.

Even before Brothers' celebra-

tions were over, Ritu scored the equaliser in the very next minute. Just after the restart, the striker released a scorching drive from 50 yards, giving a napping Tarek no chance at the other end.

Emily and Siraji forced fine saves by Shakil while Tarek had to race out of his box to thwart Arambagh captain Imrul's before Brothers sealed the victory from another setpiece.

In a replay of their first goal, Liton's centre after Parvez Babu's quickly taken corner flew near the goalmouth but this time, it was Tapu who headed the ball past goalkeeper Shakil and Juku, the Arambagh rightback, who made no effort to stop the ball on the line.

TEAMS

BROTHERS: Tarek, Suján, Jewel, Masud Rana, Siraji, Hicham, Pranotosh (Monwar), Abul (Liton), Parvez Babu, Victor (Tapu) and Emily.

ARAMBAGH: Shakil, Juku, Ghansah, Akram, Ramjan (Sohel), Dulal, Imrul, Rintu (Jewel), Ritu, Patrick and Ridon.

Referee: Mansoor Azad.

One and only Hackett



REUTERS, Montreal

Grant Hackett finished the 11th World Championships as he started them by winning another gold medal to enhance his reputation as the greatest long-distance swimmer on the final night of competition on Sunday.

The Australian toyed with his rivals to capture the 1500m freestyle to become the first swimmer to win the same event four times, eight days after he won his first 400m freestyle gold.

The 25-year-old law student also became the first person to win seven career individual world titles, surpassing the previous record of six he shared with Ian Thorpe and Michael Phelps, and finished the week with three golds after he also shattered Thorpe's 800m world record.

Phelps won his fifth gold medal in Montreal without even getting wet on Sunday when the United States took out the men's 4x100m medley relay.

Phelps was not selected in the team but still got a medal because he swam in the heats.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Grant Hackett of Australia shows off his trophy after finishing as the top male swimmer of the World Championships on July 31.

American teenager Katie Hoff struck gold for the third time when she won the 400m individual medley to ensure the US topped the medals

table with 15 golds.

Australia, who dominated the women's events with 10 titles, won three golds on Sunday to finish second with 13 while Zimbabwe, South Africa, France and Poland finished tied for third with two each.

Australia's Jade Edmonstone set the ninth and final world record of the championships to win the 50m breaststroke while her compatriot Libby Lenton won the 50m freestyle to claim her first individual world title after winning two relays.

Laszlo Cseh of Hungary capitalised on Phelps's decision to skip the 400m individual medley to win in a time of four minutes 09.63 seconds, closing the gap on his absent rival. Luca Marin of Italy finished second in 4:11.67 while Oussama Mellouli of Tunisia was third in 4:13.47.

Aristeidis Grigoriadis became the first Greek to win a world title with victory in the 50m backstroke, snatching the gold in 24.95.

Australia's Matt Welsh finished second in 24.99 while Liam Tancock of Britain was third in 25.02.

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Batsmen beware!



AFP, Dambulla

Sri Lankan spin magician Muttiah Muralitharan on Monday vowed to maintain his supremacy over batsmen, saying he planned to take more than 700 wickets in Test cricket.

"My aim is to take 700 Test wickets and I know I can reach there," said Muralitharan, who has already grabbed 549 wickets in 93 Test matches.

Only Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne is currently ahead of Muralitharan, with 589 Test wickets.

"You need just a couple of good seasons and around 35 Test matches to reach the 700-mark," Muralitharan said, adding the secret of his success was to "try hard" and "enjoy playing the game".

The Sri Lankan off-spinner, 33, said he did not believe he was the

only bowler capable of reaching the landmark.

"No, I am not chasing Warne's world record. Nor do I know when I will edge past him," said Muralitharan.

"There are three bowlers -- Warne, Glenn McGrath and Anil Kumble -- who are also capable of taking 700 Test wickets. They are also in the fray."

Australian fast bowler McGrath has already captured 508 Test wickets and Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble 461.

Muralitharan said that fitness problems alone could upset his plans.

"It all depends on how long I play. I missed international cricket last year because of injuries," he said.

Muralitharan returned to Test cricket last month after a shoulder injury, only to prove he had not lost his magic.

He grabbed 17 wickets in two Test matches to play a significant role in his team's 2-0 series victory over the

West Indies.

Asked whether he got bored taking seven-eight wickets in every Test, he said: "No, I never had such a feeling."

"I don't get seven-eight wickets in every match. Perhaps six-seven. My job is to take wickets. That's why I am playing for Sri Lanka. I am not playing to break records, but to contribute to my team's victories," he said.

"Winning is more important. Cricket is a team game and my aim is to try to get as many wickets as possible for my team."

Muralitharan, called a few times for throwing in his controversial career, has a record combined tally of wickets in Tests (549) and one-dayers (372).

He surpassed Pakistani paceman Wasim Akram's total of 916 wickets (414 in Tests and 502 in one-dayers) only in the second and final Test

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