

DHAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8, 2008

In the draft constitution, I think there is a scope to make some amendments. We have talked about combination in the designed constitution where ex-cricketers, good people from marketing and organisers may come together. But you can't guarantee that an ex-cricketer will come in the committee. Even there is no scope of participation for them.

Coming through club is difficult for a cricketer, I am not saying it's impossible, but for example, it's like a club official taking part in a 100m sprint straightaway but for a cricketer, it would be like a hurdles for 100m. We have had a proposal regarding player's quota... if there is a scope for election or casting vote... I think it will work properly.

Most of the time there were selected people who ran the board, then election was held sometime. If we looked at the councillors' list from the clubs, we can see that the numbers increased. It was not ethical when we saw that in the past there was no relegation league which meant one or two councillors came unethically.

Time has come to think about the quality of councillors, we must think that every vote is important because ultimately they decide which kind of people will run the board.



RAFIQUL ALAM

**MAHBUBANAM**  
Election started as a number game... from 1997 a district forum grew in elections and they held 70 votes. So the other organisations also tried to increase the number in different ways for their own existence. The club officials took the board as hostage because they had maximum number of votes and they were united. What they had decided was to sell their votes in unity and to neutralise the situation the club officials tried to increase the number.

**ASHRAF HOSSAIN**  
My second point is, president through election. There are some positive sides in the current system but I think negative sides are much more. True, we need government support to run the show, especially we have to have the government support or president's support for improvement of facilities but I must say if a cricket personality comes to the post through election it would be much better. In course of time I think the NSC will realise it and I think then it would be possible to control the influence of politics.

On decentralisation, it's very good that we are going into this, but it's my observation that it would not be wise to decentralise overnight and I think there should be some sort of control of the BCB for certain period of time. We must understand that this organisation is not accustomed to this kind of management. In my opinion BCB should monitor their activities at least for two years and then give them full authority.

Besides, we have to focus on our own physiotherapists, coaches, etc. It will really be helpful if we could arrange scholarships for our players and our staff.

About player selection procedure, we have two chief selectors here who know things better. My committee has given hundred per cent freedom to the selectors.

We see that a guy is failing and he's being replaced by another guy who doesn't come back with big runs under his belt, because maybe he also failed two months back. So if the players do not create a competitive environment in our domestic cricket, then it becomes hard for the selectors to make a judgement. The selectors hardly find themselves picking between two in-form players. It might happen in the lower levels like in the age-level but in the national level, this hasn't really happened for a long time.

**MAHBUBANAM**  
We have to go to the question-answers but before that I have two issues to touch. Carlton Bernardus (our deputy national game development manager) and I gathered information from each and every school of every district through forms and the work was done by local coaches, not by people from Dhaka. Divisional coaches are employed in each and every division. I heard at the time that they don't work for more than 60 days a year. We found out that there are 1,550 clubs in Bangladesh and this statistics are available in BCB. I found out that when the board changes, the employees don't want

to pass on information and database to the new board members. Reason is that everyone wants to make their presence felt and make themselves important so they keep the information to themselves. I think these information should have been made available to the board so that the work of the review committee could have become easier.

About selection, I would say that continuous chip-and-chop reduces confidence and increases the number. This is my view but the board must put up a guideline of criteria.

**MODERATOR AL-AMIN**  
We must now talk about the CEOs and we see that Macky Dudhia, Mahbubur Rahman and the current/acting CEO (Nizamuddin Sujan) have all performed differently, although their job description was same.

**MAHBUBANAM**  
If you ask me then I would say that they are like doctors. You cannot expect them to perform the same especially when you have them at different times. They will definitely perform differently just like three different batsmen would. As for me, Macky Dudhia was far better than the people we have recruited so far.

As for the corporate structure, I think the BCB pays higher than a lot of corporate houses, let's accept the fact. It is the CEO's responsibility to run his staff, not the board members'.

**ROQUIBUL HASSAN**  
Let the BCB be a pathfinder, even though it gets defeated. How does it become a pathfinder? Make sure that no new government can remove an elected body of the BCB.

Some of my other suggestions would be to increase the quota for former players in the BCB constitution, changing the post of CEO to COO (Chief Operating Officer), creating a high-powered think-tank and giving the selectors the power to pick the captain.

I would also like to inform that the domestic review committee does not exist anymore. I don't know if Moni bhai left after giving a letter so I am in a pickle.

**SYED ALI ASAF**  
I would like to take this opportunity to thank The Daily Star for inviting a field-level worker like me to this roundtable. As someone who is involved in organising, I would like to know why is there representation from associations who have no connection with cricket and for all 64 DSAs to have representation in the board and only 32 of the Dhaka-based clubs getting a part of it?

I think the Dhaka clubs have a lot more contribution to the country's cricket than any of those associations.

I read things that Mahabub bhai says in the papers about professional people but I would like to ask what the role of say, the statistician sitting in BNS? He's never available when needed. Nobody really knows what his job is.

**MAHBUBANAM**  
I do agree that there are political appointments.

**SALIM SHAHED**  
We can talk hours after hours about these issues but it is the five Ws -- who, what, where, when and why -- that need to be sorted out. We can have so many plans but without implementing it, we'll be nowhere. Let's implement one thing at a time to the best of our resources. We should proceed accordingly, thank you.

**UMPIRES, PITCHES & GROUNDS**

**SHAFIQUR RAHMAN**  
As you know gentlemen that grounds and facilities is a very big department. No matter how much I wrap the stadium in gold, if there's not a good pitch or a good ground, it is all basically zero. On that note I



AMINUL ISLAM

would like to state that we have got the lease of the ground in Mirpur for 15 years. Beside that, we have the Krira Palli, where we will begin renovation work. Cricketers from age-group and academy players and coaches can stay there and work in 2-bedroom or 1-bedroom flats in three stories that we plan to extend. It'll be like a five-star hotel. We have a deal with NSC that after renovation, we have to keep some of their people in it. But it'll be under our control.

I would also like to state that we are working on few new grounds for the domestic cricket season. They are BKSP-3, Ansar & VDP and



PHOTO: AFP FILE

It is up to the cricket bigwigs to bring back the smile of millions of supporters who turn up wherever the Tigers play.

the Police Academy grounds. I think we can work on it now and make sure it is ready by 2009 with good pitches. I want to talk about my experience in Australia, where I went a few weeks ago and met different coaches and curators. I saw the Australia A team practising on three types of pitches -- cement, cement with colour coating on top and cement with the synthetic turf on top -- at the Allan Border Centre of Excellence in Brisbane. They reckon it is the best surface of practice they're doing. They kept a turf wicket on the side where the spinners are practicing. I remember that since 1974-75, everyone has been practicing in cement wickets. Now I see that cement wicket has gone off. I know that we need to play in turf wickets, which is very difficult to maintain. We might have human resources but the quality of our curators is sub-standard and there are so few of them.

In Australia, they have 4-5 groundsman but we have more than 20 in our grounds. This is because they have really good machineries. We must replace those outdated machineries that we have right now. I wanted to inform you all of these developments and plans.

**NADIR SHAH**  
I have done Level 1 and 2 but still I'm doing level two now under Cricket Australia so that I can improve my laws. I would say that these courses are excellent.

About local umpiring, I'm sorry to say but our umpiring is very substandard. Whatever anyone says, they're worried about big clubs. The umpires' association is ridden with politics and bad people. They fix up which team will go up and down. They have an umpires' manager and he's got no power.

I see a local umpire faltering when he's trying to talk to our course teachers and he comes out and tells me to help him. I won't do that.

That aside, as an umpire I must say that they delay when paying bills. I showed the CEO that a bill of 2007 is being given in September 2008.

As far as facilities go, I think there's none in Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium but NCL venues are very good.

**MAHBUBANAM**  
Should we begin from the last one or the first one, since the last one is a hot issue?

From the grounds, I think it is our liability that this country doesn't have a single designated, qualified curator. We haven't had it, let's not blame anyone for that.

But we have brought in the overhead process. On the true sense, we have not been able to establish any curators in this country. And if we have six grounds, there must be six curators for the six grounds. In the first-class venues, this is the process, I think, whoever comes, as curator must put in their head.

The board's head of grounds cannot make the grounds. He can ask that this should be made properly. It should be maintained properly. But, there must be a situation and the people to do this. The curators we have, they go and work on the field hands-on. So, we must have an educated, devoted person like that to come into the curatorship. And secondly, what they have said is the training of the staff which is a continuous process. We must train the groundsman as well as the others. Any international venue, where international cricket is held, wickets are mandatory. But, also, the outfield is very important. On any intentional ground, a maximum of 60 to 75 days of cricket is held over the year. Because the more cricket is played, the wicket and outfield grass is deteriorated. The grass is not allowed to grow, the grass dies; this thing must also be considered seriously.

The Australians told me, that after playing on one wicket, they give it 6 weeks rest. And in the test

matches, the give 10 weeks rest. In the outfield, the total days of cricket in a year, if you think about Lord's, they will not have more than 60 days of cricket in a year. But in Dhaka's Mirpur Stadium, we are letting the second division, first division and third division games be held. We are giving the wickets rest but we are not giving the outfield any rest. In the outfield, a lot of insects congregate and so on. It is a technical issue. What I want to say is that this is something we should keep in mind: that a venue should not have more than 60 to 75 days of cricket.

The wicket pitches in Australia



NAIMUR RAHMAN

are all black. You know this made of black clay. I brought the samples with me. All are black clay.

Black clay is more adhesive. If you are to play grassless wicket, then black clay is not good enough. If you think about this in a technical aspect, it will be hard to bat. You will lose sight of the ball.

Basically, the black half of the pitch is required, of which the cohesion is not interrupted. But in this wicket, there must be grass. But when we play international matches, we play with the black clay and take the grass off. In that, the wicket will lose its quality.

A number of experiments have been carried out. We brought in Flix pitch. This is a low maintenance problem. There is too much rain in Bangladesh. A tough wicket cannot be maintained outside, so we have tried AstroTurf, flex pitch, and now we are trying out practice on cement wicket.

Technically, even the ICC development committee ended up using cement wicket in Africa because of its low maintenance. And longevity and costing factor.

This has a design factor. When we make it with one of our specialists, you have to see about the bounce of the ball, etc. As an engineer I can tell you, it will have different bounces that how much of iron you put in, whatever you put in, so this design must be brought in. If you are copying it from Australia, then bring the design: what it the width, what is the mixture of mortar to cement; so that you get the right wicket that you require. And it will be very good because we have seen it in Africa, for the low-income group this is a good choice.

Next issue is match fixing. Umpiring standard is very poor. The way it is handled, umpiring is very poorly handled.

Along with quality deterioration, the match's fate is dictated. I must advise, that at one stage due to ICC anti-corruption unit, it does an independent Verification of every country. And they come without the Board's knowledge. This information is not known to the Board but the ICC knows this. Subsequently, the ICC did not allow any appointment to not of the Bangladesh umpires in any ICC events for quite some time. We were not given under-19 world cup nor even regional tournament, except for ICC in which Ashraf was there which was part of our body, we could send our umpires. But it was shocking that even a Scottish umpire was umpiring not our panel umpires. It took us quite some time with Doug Cowie, a number of presentations that I made to the ICC Board and subsequently they decided to us that we must improve our umpiring and we must get into a position. We had

a grading system on umpiring where we are A-graded umpires who were never monitored or assessed whether he maintains his level of knowledge. Umpiring knowledge must be upgraded on regular intervals, called a refresher's course. Unfortunately, a lot of our senior umpires do not participate in the refresher's courses. The ICC knew these things, and they gave us a sort of prescription, saying to need to improve and make policies and channels. For 2 years, none of our umpires umpired any ICC events, and the first that went was Nadir Shah to ODI tournament in Kenya. And subsequently to under-19 this year. So it took us a lot of pain. It is also a fact that when we have held umpire courses, the senior umpires have not attended and we have not been able to ban them.

We could not help the upcoming umpires progress, including Moni and Nadir Shah, they were B-graded umpires. They were not A-graded because the number of

A-grade umpires were full. There were no exams to upgrade them. We have taken an executive decision to bring 2 cricketers forward to be in the panel umpires room we believe have the capacity even to go to the elite panel. Subsequently, a lot of thing from the agreement with cricket Australia have been given here.

It was a necessity that we form umpires grading policy, an umpires' assessment policy and an umpire's evaluation. So, the levels of umpires, there are three things: there will be level one and level 2, there will be some umpire educators and umpire assessors. The assessors assess the umpire's performance over a year and then informs him which level he belongs to. But we do not have assessors.

I think it is very important for all of us to realize that cricket is a complete package. It is not just the players, it is the players, the wickets, the infrastructure, the crowds, the finances, the supporters, the umpires, and everything falls into this package together. If you having any shortcomings or deficits in any one of them it will affect the overall and the complete end product is going to be affected.

Whoever is assessing must take some bold decisions. If any umpires do not qualify, he should please be restrained from umpiring matches. It is not working yet. We are still using those umpires who do not qualify, but are still graded as the best.

The umpiring association has to be developed. It is in terrible condition.

Decisions must be taken professionally with no other factors affecting the decision.

There should be a distance between Board officials and players. This is a big point. The Board has to be strict and tough on the umpires.

Regarding the world cup facilities, I want to highlight that, this world cup will probably open with a Bangladesh game. We must showcase this game.

English language development. The Bangladesh cricket board had an arrangement with the British Council, and it had been suggested to the Umpires Board to

send the umpires to do some English courses to help develop the English language. This is because one of our umpires had to be



SALIM SHAHED

changed by the recommendation of the ICC because that umpire had difficulty speaking and understanding English. Another issue is floodlights. Due to the politics in Bangladesh, there are floodlights in the wrong places. For example, there are floodlights in Rajshahi, where no games are held which require the need of floodlights. Those floodlights have been brought to Dhaka, and then returned to Rajshahi, for which some expenses were incurred. The same problem is also in Barisal and Sylhet, where floodlights are being erected, without any discussion with the BCB, because all this is being done with the consent of some old minister. But I think that the BCB should be aware of these things and they should sanction it, and avoid these situations. These floodlights should have been erected in the venues in which international games are held.

**FARUQUE AHMED**

The case of the assessors is a very important one. I think it is better that in the case of the individual assessors, that no-one else know who they are assessing, then the risk of a biased decision may be avoided.

**AMINUL ISLAM**

In my personal experience, the form that is given out at the end of every premier league match to assess the umpires, I have seen that none of the captains read it. Also, no comments are written, not even about the condition of the wickets. They just sign the form, and the assessment is never made properly.

With regard to the lack of English speaking skills of our umpires, we have recently signed an MoU with AIUB where English courses are available, and we have passed it on the umpires board as well, that their people can take advantage of this facility. This is all part of the program.

Regarding the grounds, in the past few years we have travelled almost the whole world with the intention of finding a way to make good wickets for our country. In my opinion, if outfield is reasonable and the wickets are top quality then we will be happier. There is no scope of playing at that level.

I think we should just make grass top wickets and let them play.

**LEADERSHIP**

**AMINUL ISLAM**

Compared to other captains, there is always more pressure on the Bangladesh captain.

The practiced eye must select the captain. There must be someone who knows the art and science of a captain. The captain must be someone who can maintain the junior-senior hierarchy but also create a relationship with everyone in the team. And it is a good thing that this has always been present in the Bangladesh team. It is some-



SYED ALI ASAF

thing very important. We should have a team-building situation. As you see, a few domestic cricket teams like the Dhaka University cricket team were very successful because they were always united. They all went to one university, they all hung out in the same place. So you see, if we can put out the same kind team-building environment to our national team, I think it will lead to our team's success. And I'm also very sorry to say that when the team is losing, most of the players of our team are doing something else and not concentrating on the game. I have seen players crying for losing just a simple game. This will only come along, when the personal relationship between players will arise. A captain is the leader and best friend of the team. He should carry the ability to negotiate such matters. There are three parts, one of them is the coaching, and the other is the management which is the cricket board and lastly the players.

Among all these, the captain is the 'bridge'. He should carry the responsibility to take all the problems of the players to the cricket board. His eyes should be levelled to understand everyone's problems, since a young player does not have the relationship with the board officials like the captain does. A manager should be a technical and cricket knowledgeable person, who's role was to help the captain the players overall and sometimes help the coach, and carry out his managerial duties. In recent days we can see that the managers are taken as 'bag boy' or as a 'transport man'. I think, the manager should have a clearly defined role, who also like the captain can be the best friend of a the players who will take their problems to the board, and give out

brief reports about the team to the board while on tour. What we do is, we judge the players, captain, the team's performance all by the end result. In that case, as I added earlier, the captaincy for the Bangladesh team is a very vital position, mainly because majority of the times the Bangladesh team is the losing side for which the Bangladesh captain should be assertive all the time. Like Rohan Kanhai and Micky Stewart said, we should look for captains for a young stage of a player for example from U-19 or U-17. Nowadays we have a captain crisis. If we started



NADIR SHAH

looking for a captain since then, we will not face trouble on finding a captain. And again, a captain should also be someone who should be able to adapt himself into any kind of situation, and I think we need to find a player who carries these characteristics. The last thing I want to ask is 'how long can the team hold onto an under-performing captain?' If we look at the Cricket World Cup '07, we have a very successful cricket team. These players took the team to where it had never gone before. The Bangladesh cricket team had never gone to the 2nd round of the world cup, and that time the biggest news was that Bangladesh had beat India to make place for them in the 2nd round. However, the captain of the successful Bangladesh team was Habibul Bashar. He was not performing very well. I also look at myself during the year 1999; I was also playing very poorly. The problem is, nobody came up to me and said any encouraging things, given me advice. If someone comes and tells you something like 'captain, you're a very good player, but you did not play very well because of such and such reasons. But don't worry, you can practice and come back again' if a player is charged for his weaknesses we're bound to lose him. If we'd rather suggest them and give them time to improve, we will not lose the successful and experienced captain.

**ROQUIBUL HASSAN**

I really do not have much to add, because I see him as a coach of the national team coach in six months time, not Jamie Siddons. Notice how he has presented himself. This is what we required from a captain or a leader in the form of a manager. So, like he said, we have to groom captains. Some leaders are born leaders and some are cultivated leaders, which means you have to prepare them for it from a junior age-group. We have to scout for a captain. However, this will create a problem for our selection committee. So what we need is a junior selection committee, which will work under a chairman who a member of the senior selection committee. So as Aminul as put it, we have a captain's crisis, but to make someone a captain, we have to look into several matters, such as the player's schooling, his background etc. So, we should always think before we do anything. If a captain is sort of regularly underperforming, it has a huge effect on the team. I look at my own qualities as a captain. I was able to take everything and anything that came to me. So we lose a match or two. Everyone has faults but a captain must be assertive, should be fair not partial. Our captain is young, and we expect to much out of him and we don't understand his limits. If Lipu or I was captain, Jamie Siddons would not have dared make a statement against us. Look at the case in the Indian cricket team. MS Dhoni is important to Indian cricket. The Indian coach made a comment on him two months back, and he was asked to apologize to the Dhoni. As like Dhoni, Mohammed Ashraf is also important to Bangladesh cricket, not Jamie Siddons' cricket. My point is, that the captain should be regarded as the 'boss', and he is the one to call the shot, because at the end of the day, he's the one to take all the criticism, so why shouldn't he have the final say? In my opinion, the captain is 95 per cent of the team, and the coach is the rest 5 per cent. A coach will do only as much to assist the captain, help him and motivate him. So lastly, I will say that a captain must be fair, must lead the team from the front. So our duty is to find out players and leadership must be groomed.

**ASHRAF HOSSAIN**  
All the things have already been discussed, there isn't much to add. But what I can say that we understand that the captain is in a very critical situation. But never the less, situations can get even worse,

and he have to have the ability to come out of those. In the case of our captain, I think he is a good captain and he control and direct others. And this is also vital role in captaincy. He should be able to make quick decisions. It is quite difficult to set yourself as a captain, as the leader in a scenario like our national teams', but he has to overcome it with support. For example, Mark Taylor of Australia, who was a great batsman. Around the last few matches of his career, his runs were not very high but he still very well supported by his players and the team selectors. So basically what we need from the players is their good personality, their ability of presenting themselves after the matches, and holding the team together, acknowledge the good performers, and we need our coaches to put out positive and encouraging notes to the players. The club level cricket is getting a lot of facilities from the Cricket Board, so basically the cricket board needs to look into other places where the clubs might need help to play better cricket with good facilities. As for a coach, he should also be given some time to settle himself in, because we've seen them make a wrong decision, like for example, a player like Shakib Al Hasan did not get the chance to play in New Zealand. The coach and captain should always monitor the practice sessions very closely, but we cannot let that authority go into misuse. So lastly, what I want to say is that the captain is supposed to make his own decision, and he's supposed to know what he's doing, and I also think if a captain has to be removed, if he knows he should move away as captain he should withdraw or resign from captaincy himself.

**ATTITUDE**

**FARUQUE AHMED**

I have seen practically that a non-performing captain can have a very good effect on the team also.

Khaled Mahmud Sujan took over the captaincy after 2003 and he did a great job.

We had a very good tour in Pakistan but he was under-performing and sometime people were saying that he is not test calibre but still at least he is doing something for the team.

Captain are not necessarily born leaders. The board picked Junaed as the captain of the A team. Akram never captained before. His first captaincy was the Bangladesh cricket team and he was successful. He later on became a captain of club team.

The best part of Habibul Bashar was he never cracked under pressure. He used to go with the boys every lunch and dinner. That's the way he really maintained.

Talking about Ashraf, Faruque suggested to the board the option of two captains; Habibul for the test team and Ashraf for the one-day team. Ashraf was not properly 'nourished'.

Foreign coaches often tell players that they cannot do something right. It is important for the players to convince the coach that they have played at a level and they have some knowledge.

Ashraf had the opportunity; his captaincy quality is not bad; as he is performing below par day by day he is losing control over the team.

It is easy to always sack a person but one must know how the next captain will perform? How much pressure he can handle?

**RAFIQUL ALAM**  
The selection committee is a constructive engagement within the committee, with the board, with the team management and with the players.

We made two or three changes to build a team as part of a long-

term plan for the 2011 World Cup. There were 20 or 22 players we were considering but unfortunately the ICL matter happened. 7 of our contractual players are not there.

Side by side we are working hard for the test matches also. After we came in we played only four test matches: two in New Zealand and two against South Africa. In New Zealand we didn't do very well but we had a good test match against South Africa in Dhaka, we collapsed in Chittagong.

The senior players don't fit into the one-day side.

In selection we try to be very sincere, honest and fair.

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MOSTOFA KABIR

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