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private university, then joined government service, and then left for a more lucrative overseas job. The old cliché of our cricketers firmly being products of the country could not hold truer.

Another (lame) argument is that ICLers were treated shabbily by BCB and have every right to jump ship. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Let me illustrate by comparing Ganguly and our former captain Habibur Rahman. Both were going through a lean patch, both were former captains and one of the best batsmen on the team and both were slowly being sidelined by their respective boards.

That's pretty much where the similarities end. Ganguly goes back to his game, posts prolific hundreds in the domestic league, gets back into the national team, scores big hundreds and retires right when he is on top of his game. Plus he gets into the rival Indian Premier League (IPL) and is busy boosting his bank balance. And what does our Shumon Bhai do? Wastes every single chance that he gets in the test matches, accuses selectors of "disrespecting" him for not giving him a guaranteed spot even though he hasn't scored a 50 in 14 test innings, laments how unprofessional the state of cricket is in Bangladesh and takes the back door and sulks out of the country. Our erstwhile skipper even has the temerity to complain that BCB doesn't send him free test match tickets anymore! One cricketer realised that performance is the ultimate yardstick while the other has an inflated sense of self-entitlement.

My final point is simple; whether justified or not, every single BD cricketer knew that ICL was not a kosher entity; BCB made it completely clear that whether you agreed with them or not, joining ICL would be saying goodbye to your international career. And our cricketers made a perfectly conscious decision of their own. The point is, there were plenty of cricketers like Mashrafee, Ashraful and Tamim Iqbal who faced even more tempting offers and declined. If you pardon the ICLers, you are basically penalising people like Tamim for putting their country first. You are setting an extremely bad precedence by saying that even if you disobey BCB, you can still have your job; in fact, if you listen to us, you're actually going to cut yourself off from other najayez lucrative offers. This precedence can never be set in place. Cutting off the ICLers completely is the only way we can make a strong statement about the fact that BCB believes in consistency and priorities.

Even after all this, I still hear people saying ok, this is all good, but BD as a talent poor country cannot simply lose such "resources". I say we can and we should. ICLers were never our resources: they were players who, no matter how well they played (and let's face it, aside from a few, they really weren't that great), categorically had a different set of priorities from players who play for their country. BD players, unlike their Indian or Aussie counterparts, don't play for meagre (relatively speaking) sums of money they get by playing international cricket for BD. They play because they love the challenge of pitting their skills against the best in the world, and representing a country like BD which has so little to be cheerful about in the first place.

I say we boot this lot completely and make a strong statement: if you don't have pride, integrity or mental maturity playing for an organisation that put you on the map and made you who you are, please leave. Like our French commoners nearly three centuries ago, we deserve better. ■