

Who will be BCB's next president?

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

It still remains a riddle that who is going to be the next president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

On Thursday, whispers snowballed that either AHM Mustafa Kamal, chairman of Abahani's cricket committee and an Awami League lawmaker from Comilla, or Gazi Golam Dastagir, who is also a lawmaker of the ruling party, was going to replace Lt General Sina Ibn Jamali in the hot seat.

The BCB presidency has always been a very sensitive post and the present government is weighing options to find a suitable candidate keeping in mind the 2011 World Cup, in which Bangladesh is not only a co-host but also has been awarded to stage the gala opening ceremony of cricket's showpiece event.

It was learnt that Nazmul Hasan Papon, son of President Zillur Rahman, was initially considered to replace Lt General Jamali, who has been running the show since July 2007. But a polite refusal from Nazmul Hasan, who is also the vice-chairman of Abahani's cricket committee, left Mustafa Kamal, popularly known as Lotus Kamal, as a front-runner for the hot seat. Mustafa Kamal is also the chairman of the

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance.

It seems that he is also the popular choice among the board of directors. Gazi Golam Dastagir, who has been a promoter of cricket for a long time, on the other hand sprang to the limelight after his name was reportedly addressed in the highest office. He has served the board in different capacities previously.

Although there are two likely candidates at the moment, records from the past show that the government has always appointed the strongest possible person to head the most affluent federation of the country.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury was the president of the BCB during Awami League's reign from 1996 to 2001. BNP on the other hand chose Ali Asghar Lobi during their tenure from 2001 to 2006.

It may be mentioned here that only the president of the BCB is appointed by the government while others are elected.

Meanwhile, some very important issues like renovation of the venues for the World Cup are not getting the pace it needed to be due to the delay of the appointment of a new cricket chief.

Sources inside the Youth and Sports Ministry said that they did not get any directive from the minister, who passed a busy time in the parliament on the first day of the week yesterday.

They, however, expected an order might be issued today.

A team's tour schedule revised

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday revealed a revised itinerary for Bangladesh A team's tour of Maharashtra in India that saw the number of matches being reduced.

The Bangladesh A team will now be playing two one-day matches and as many Twenty20 matches though they were scheduled to play three one-dayers and as many Twenty20 matches.

The team, however, will leave on time on September 25 and return home on October 13, three days earlier than the previous schedule.

The visitors, however, will play two three-day matches as per previous schedule before being involved in the shorter version matches.

Tri-series final today

CRICINFO, Colombo

After seeing off New Zealand's timorous challenge, Sri Lanka and India will contest bragging rights in the Compaq Cup final today at the R Premadasa Stadium. Sri Lanka hold the edge in the clash between two sides who generally don't do dull finals.

The winners will go into the Champions Trophy in positive mood, leaving the loser to put save on their injured pride.

While Kumar Sangakkara said a decision on Muttiah Muralidaran's availability would be taken on Sunday evening, the bowler is fit and Sri Lanka should be fielding their strongest side -- Thilan Samaraweera remains a doubt -- and an Indian team missing the experience of three big-match players will have its work cut out to be competitive. Sri Lanka trounced India in the dress rehearsal on Saturday and again proved that once they have a score on the board at the Premadasa, they defend it resolutely.

Sri Lanka have all the weapons they need in two brisk new-ball operators, a vicious slinger, and two spinners with an assortment of tricks. Each of those bowlers is capable, more so under lights, of denying batsmen the space and time to score. The support cast is no less impressive, with the ever-improving Angelo Mathews

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PHOTO: AFP

Defending champion Serena Williams of the United States frantically argues a call by a lineswoman which led to her being penalized and ultimately resulting in her defeat against Kim Clijsters of Belgium in their semifinal clash at the US Open in the Flushing Meadows on Saturday night.

Clijsters thru' by default Meets Wozniacki in final

AP, New York



Serena Williams walked toward the line judge, screaming, cursing and shaking a ball in the official's direction, threatening to "shove it down" her throat.

On match point in the US Open semifinals Saturday night, defending champion Williams was penalized a point for unsportsmanlike conduct -- a bizarre, ugly finish that gave a 6-4, 7-5 upset victory to unseeded Kim Clijsters.

The match featured plenty of powerful groundstrokes and lengthy exchanges. No one will remember a single shot that was struck, though, because of the unusual, dramatic way it ended.

With Williams serving at 5-6, 15-30 in the second set, she faulted on her first serve. On the second serve, a line judge called a foot fault, making it a double-fault -- a call rarely, if ever, seen at that stage of any match, let alone the semifinals of a Grand Slam tournament.

That made the score 15-40, putting Clijsters one point from victory.

Instead of stepping to the baseline to serve again, Williams went over and shouted and cursed at the line judge,

pointing at her and thrusting the ball toward her.

"If I could, I would take this... ball and shove it down your... throat," Williams said. She continued yelling at the line judge, and went back over, shaking her racket in the official's direction.

Asked in her postmatch news conference what she said to the line judge, Williams wouldn't say, replying, "What did I say? You didn't hear?"

"I've never been in a fight in my whole life, so I don't know why she would have felt threatened," Williams said with a smile.

The line judge went over to the chair umpire, and tournament referee Brian Earley joined in the conversation. With the crowd booing -- making part of the dialogue inaudible -- Williams then went over and said to the line judge: "Sorry, but there are a lot of people who've said way worse." Then the line judge said something to the chair umpire, and Williams responded, "I didn't say I would kill you. Are you serious? I didn't say that." The line judge replied by shaking her head and saying, "Yes."

Williams already had been given a code violation warning when she broke her racket after losing the first set. So the chair umpire now awarded a penalty point to Clijsters, ending the match.

"She was called for a foot fault, and a point later, she said something to a line umpire, and it was reported to the chair, and that resulted in a point penalty," Earley explained. "And it just happened that point penalty was match point. It was a code violation for unsportsmanlike conduct."

When the ruling was announced, Williams walked around the net to the other end of the court to shake hands with a stunned Clijsters, who did not appear to understand what had happened.

"I used to have a real temper, and I've gotten a lot better," Williams said later. "So I know you don't believe me, but I used to be worse. Yes, yes, indeed."

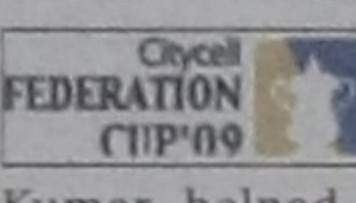
Lost in the theatrics was Clijsters' significant accomplishment: In only her third tournament back after two and a half years in retirement, the 26-year-old Belgian became the first mother to reach a Grand Slam final since Evonne Goolagong Cawley won Wimbledon 1980.

"The normal feelings of winning a match weren't quite there," Clijsters said. "But I think afterwards, when everything kind of sunk in a little bit and got explained to me about what happened, yeah, you kind of have to put it all in place, and then it becomes a little bit easier to

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Abahani's slow start

SPORTS REPORTER



A first-half strike from Pranotosh Kumar helped last year's runners-up Abahani make a winning start in their opening match of the Federation Cup with a lone-goal victory over Bangladesh Police at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

It was expected two-time B. League champions Abahani would put up something different in their season's first appearance than what their archrivals Mohammedan SC did against newcomers Feni Soccer Club in the opening match of the schedule.

But, the Sky Blues' performance was well below per compared to their strength on paper as a youthful Police side gave their mighty opponents some nervous moments throughout the game although they could not find the back of the Abahani net.

With much of the pre-season talk surrounding the losses of star defender Wali Faisal and star striker Zahid Hasan Emily, two vital players of Abahani's last season B. League triumph, all eyes were on the new signing defender Rajani Kanta Barman and striker Enamul Haq, who looked anonymous throughout the game and even missed an open net.

However, winger Mehdi Hasan Ujjal, who returned to the Abahani fold after serving a few months punishment, was a bright spot and some times cracked the Police backline, but the striking duo Enamul

and Ghanaian striker Awudu Ibrahim could not capitalise on those opportunities.

The Abahani striking duo could hardly split the Police backline marshalled by Mominul Hasan, Mahmud Al Shamim, M Noor Al Ahsan and Ruhul Amin while the cops frequently threatened Abahani's strong defence and even once rattled the side post.

Abahani long-severing

coach Amalesh Sen might feel the loss of promising playmaker Mamunul Islam, who also joined Mohammedan this season, as new signing veteran Motiur Munna could hardly make up for that void though he was the provider of the winning goal as Pranotosh headed a Munna freekick home in the 15th minute.

Munna was finally replaced

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PHOTO: STAR

Abahani striker Pranotosh Kumar (L) celebrates his match winning goal against Bangladesh Police during their Federation Cup match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

DRY'S EVENT

Federation Cup Football
Mohammedan v Brothers Union (4:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
BKSP v Feni Soccer Club (4:00pm)
Venue: Army Stadium



TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v India
Tri-Series Final
Live from 4:00pm
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 9:30pm



Shahid Khan Afridi
(Star Pakistan all-rounder)
"If I am not that successful in Champions Trophy, then I may consider quitting the game for good."

Players angry at new ad-hoc committee

Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

The leading chess players of the country yesterday gave their vote of 'no confidence' on the new ad-hoc committee and asked the regulatory body of country's sport the National Sports Council to hold elections of the federation.

The players under the banner of Association of Chess Players (ACP) Bangladesh also observed that new general secretary Mokaddes Ali and his number one joint secretary Masudur Rahman are 'incompetent' to run the federation.

"We believe that no qualifications were considered to form the ad-hoc committee and the appointment of the general secretary and the joint secretary-1 are totally unacceptable. They do not even have the quality to be a member of the federation," said Grand Master Reefat Bin Sattar while reading out a statement as president of ACP Bangladesh.

While explaining their position at the Bangladesh Sports Journalist Association office at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Reefat said that some 20 players including GM Enamul Hossain Rajib, GM Abdullah Al Rakib, FM Sheikh Nasiruddin and FM Khandaker Aminul Islam have expressed their solidarity against the new committee, which was announced on Thursday.

Reefat said that they had earlier met the sports minister and requested him to hold a free and fair election in the greater interest of the chess.

"But we are appalled to see an ad-hoc committee and that too with people who lack leadership qualities," Reefat observed.

Asked how they condemn a committee which is yet to take over, Reefat said: "We know some of the members of the committee, who are holding key posts, for a long time and they have no such quality to lead the chess federation and we can comment early on them."

Reefat however refrained from making any comment on whether they would boycott domestic or international events under the new committee.

He was very critical of Mokaddes Hossain and one stage termed the new general secretary as a 'promoter' of gambling in the federation.

"He (Mokaddes) has a history of having gamble boards inside the federation and as a player we will never accept those gamblers as leaders," Reefat said acidly.

Mokaddes Hossain however denied the allegation and termed it baseless.

He also alleged that Sujauddin Ahmed, a member of the previous committee, is injecting fuel among the players after being left out of the new ad-hoc committee.

He also held Sujauddin Ahmed responsible for promoting players like Rajib, Sumon and Nasir to play cards at his predecessor Jamilur Rahman's office room.

"Actually they are unhappy because their uncle Sujauddin Ahmed was not in the committee," said Mokaddes.

The chess players also attacked Masudur Rahman for his stunning promotion from having a per diem status to being promoted to a leader.

Barrichello wins Italian Grand Prix

INTERNET, undated

Brazilian Rubens Barrichello won the Italian Grand Prix in a Brawn one-two on Sunday to trim teammate Jenson Button's Formula One championship lead to 14 points with four races left.

Button returned to the podium for the first time in six starts with second place, 2.8 seconds behind the veteran, in a race that made the title chase look even more like a private battle between the two.

Finland's Kimi Raikkonen was gifted third place for Ferrari after McLaren's world champion Lewis Hamilton crashed on the last lap.

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Men's belated semis

AFP, New York



A day behind schedule and destined for a second straight Monday finish, the US Open men's singles semifinals once again see Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic poised for glory.

The only change to last year is that Britain's Andy Murray, seeded second this year, fell in the fourth round and Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro, the sixth seed, takes his place up against Nadal.

Federer and Djokovic both reached the last four on Wednesday and have been resting for three days while Del Potro made it through on Thursday before the rain finally hit Flushing Meadows and made a mess of Nadal's match against Fernando Gonzalez of Chile.

What all that will mean for semifinals remains to be seen although Nadal, who finished off Gonzalez in double-quick time 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/2), 6-0 when play resumed nearly 48 hours later on Saturday, insists that he will not be handicapped by the vagaries of the scheduling.

"For me, the match of today wasn't important physically. It doesn't matter to play two days in a row. The condition for me will be the same as for the four (semifinalists)," he said.

"I'm more fresh than last year, 100 per cent sure. Mentally last year I was totally destroyed. Mentally this year I am perfect."

Nadal, seeking to become just the seventh man to complete the career Grand Slam and match Federer who achieved the feat at the French Open in June, has been struggling with an abdominal strain picked up in the buildup tournaments to Flushing Meadows.

He has already withdrawn from Spain's Davis Cup semifinal against Israel and admits he will not be 100 per cent fit for the rest of the tournament, a big handicap at this level, although he was coy over how serious the injury was.

"I have only a little problem in the abdominal. That's it," he said.

Nadal has a 4-2 winning record over Del Potro but the Argentinian, who is bidding to become the first South American to win the US Open since Guillermo Vilas in 1977, has won

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PHOTO: STAR

Cricketers called to the camp for the upcoming home series against Zimbabwe go through a fielding practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.