

BOA committee living on borrowed time

SPORTS REPORTER

The current executive committee of the Bangladesh Olympic Association is bidding to overstay its tenure by violating its constitution, with the excuse that election at this stage may result in a conflict of interest between members of the elected bodies and the ad-hoc ones.

The four-year term of the executive committee expires on April 6, making it imperative to hold the election within the next three days or at least hold an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting for an extension of terms, but no such initiatives are currently visible.

It may be mentioned here that the current executive committee of BOA, led by secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed, has never held any general meetings so far in its four-year tenure. The secretary general though, holds an altogether different explanation of the issue:

"We have legalised our possible extension through the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Committee of Asia so that no one can point a finger at us," said Kutubuddin adding that there is no clear reference to holding elections within the tenure.

Kutubuddin said, "We want elected representatives from national federations in the

BOA executive committee but many of the federations and associations are now being run by the ad-hoc committees.

"We will hold the BOA elections only after the completion of the polls at different federations as we want to avoid conflict of interest between ad-hoc committees and elected committees."

Meanwhile, different ad-hoc committees had earlier requested the BOA to overhaul its executive committee after expelling their previous representatives but the BOA ignored the suggestion which resulted in a stalemate between the federations and the BOA.

"Taking matters into consideration, the IOC has instructed us to hold elections after the Olympic Games (London) as the government needs another three to four months to complete the election procedures at different sports federations," said Kutubuddin.

"It is not mentioned in the constitution whether the members of the BOA will come from either elected bodies or ad-hoc bodies. Furthermore, no federation has lost its international affiliation due to the appointment of ad-hoc committees. So there is no bar on the members of ad-hoc committees to becoming members of BOA executive committee," opined former BOA treasurer Monirul Haque.

Cox's Bazar, Mymensingh post big wins

SPORTS REPORTER

Cox's Bazar crushed Rangamati by 102 runs in the 32nd inter-district cricket championship game at the Noakhali Stadium yesterday.

They rode on an all-round show from Mohammad Yunus, who struck 59 runs before picking up five wickets. Batting first, Cox's Bazar made 242 for nine in 50 overs with Yunus making the highest contribution. Later he took the five-for giving away 17 runs as Rangamati made only 140 runs in 39 overs.

In Barisal, Bhola beat Barguna by four wickets while Bagerhat beat Narail by three wickets in Jessore.

Meherpur defeated Jhenidah by 41 runs in Kushtia while Mymensingh hammered Shariatpur by 159 runs in Madaripur.

Beach football from April 6

SPORTS REPORTER

The 2nd Beach Football Tournament, sponsored by Runner Group and Channel i, will be held in Cox's Bazar on April 6-7, with a bid to making beach football accessible to all.

Six teams, including country's traditional giants Abahani, Mohammedan and Brothers Union, are taking part in the two-day meet. All the participating teams, split into two groups, will play the round-robin phase before the top two teams from each group advances to the semifinals.

All the matches of the tournament will be telecast live on Channel i.

"We, Channel i, are involved with tear and smile of country's people. We have done a lot of activities centring the Cox's Bazar beach and we are going to do it again and this time it is beach football," said the channel's head of news and director Shykh Seraj at a press conference at the Channel i bhaban yesterday.

"The tournament will feature six teams Abahani, Mohammedan, Brothers, Muktijoddha Sangsad, BJMC and Cox's Bazar Beach Club who will most likely field their former stars," said member secretary of the tournament Shafiqul Islam Manik.

Each participating team will get Tk 10,000 as participation money while the champions and runners-up will be awarded Tk one lakh and Tk 50,000 respectively.

Lanka want

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in it for the quicks. The spinners will also come into play, batsmen will get value for their shots and the outfield is quick.

The success of sixth-ranked Sri Lanka over the world's number one team in Galle did not surprise Jayawardene, who hit a match-winning 180 in the game.

Sri Lanka make two changes from the side that won in Galle, bringing in fit-again Angelo Mathews and seamer Dhammika Prasad for batsman Dinesh Chandimal and injured pacesman Chanaka Welegedara.

TEAMS

ENGLAND (from): Andrew Strauss (captain), Alastair Cook, Jonathan Trott, Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Ravi Bopara, Samit Patel, Matt Prior, James Anderson, Tim Bresnan, Steven Finn, Monty Panesar, Graeme Swann.

SRI LANKA: Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Tillakaratne Dilshan, Lahiru Thirimanne, Kumar Sangakkara, Thilan Samaraweera, Angelo Mathews, Prasanna Jayawardene, Suranga Lakmal, Suraj Randiv, Ranga Herath, Dhammika Prasad.



PHOTOS: AFP

Serbian tennis world no 1 Novak Djokovic poses with the winner's trophy after defeating Andy Murray of Great Britain in the final of the Sony Ericsson Open on Sunday.

Novak's Miami treble



AFP, Miami

World number one Novak Djokovic defeated Andy Murray 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) on Sunday to win his second straight ATP Miami Masters title and third overall.

Djokovic, who won here for the first time in 2007, became just the third man to win the title three or more times, along with Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras. For his third straight match, Djokovic cruised through the first set before finding himself in a tense tussle in the second.

However, even though the second set went with serve until the tie-breaker, it was Murray who was under pressure most, fighting off break points in three of his service games.

"I thought I played a great match from start to end," said Djokovic, who didn't drop a set in the tournament.

"There was a couple of service games I had a chance to break him in the second set. He's such a quality player, you never know."

"That's why he's right at the top -- he always comes back, even if you feel you have control of the match," Djokovic said. "I'm really happy to close it out in straight sets."

Djokovic, 24, captured his 30th ATP title, and his second this year after his triumph at the Australian Open. It marked his 11th victory in the ATP's elite Masters 1000 series.

Murray had beaten Djokovic in the semi-finals at Dubai in February, and the Serb was then upset by American John Isner in the semi-finals of the Indian Wells Masters last week.

Djokovic said that made this win, which made him the first man since Roger Federer in 2006 to successfully defend the Miami crown, all the sweeter.

"I had a great tournament after that tough loss in the semi-finals at Indian Wells," said Djokovic, adding he recalled his 2007 triumph in Miami as a springboard to his current success.

Murray, who beat Djokovic in the 2009 Miami final, was playing his first match since Wednesday, when he downed Janko Tipsarevic in the quarter-finals.

He advanced to the title match on a walkover when world number two Rafael Nadal withdrew before their semi-final with a left knee injury.

Oddly, that was Murray's second walkover of the tournament, after Canadian Milos Raonic pulled out of their scheduled third-round clash with an ankle injury.

Whether it was the layoff or not, Murray wasn't at his sharpest, his 39 unforced errors making things easier for Djokovic.

His only break chance in the entire two hour, seven minute encounter came in the fifth game of the first set, but he was unable to convert it and stem Djokovic's momentum.

The Serb had gained the

upper hand in the fourth game of the opening set, which Murray led 40-0 but ended up losing on Djokovic's second break point.

Djokovic eventually closed out the opening set with his first ace of the match, and Murray promptly found himself in a 0-30 hole in the first game of the second -- typical of the pressure he faced throughout the second set.

"Maybe it took a few games to get used to the pace," Murray said, but added he thought the set was closer than the score reflected.

"There were a lot of close games in the first set. He played better on the big points in the first set."

"In the second set, it was very close. If I was sluggish and I was only a couple of points away from winning the set, I'd say that's a very good sign."

Murray said his biggest problem was his return game, normally his strong point.

"If I had returned a bit better I would have been right in the match," he said. "That's the only thing that I'm surprised that I didn't do well, because it's normally the strongest part of my game."

WC memories

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"A big hug to each and every team member including the support staff."

"A special thanks to the BCCI for being sensitive to our needs and providing us whatever we requested," Sehwa wrote on his twitter page.

Johnson signs for Durham

AFP, London

Australia paceman Mitchell Johnson is to play for Durham this season in English cricket's domestic Twenty20 competition, the northeast county announced Monday.

The 30-year-old left-arm fast bowler has joined South Africa batsman Herschelle Gibbs as one of two of Durham's overseas players for the Friends Life t20, which takes place in June and July.

Western Australia quick Johnson said talking to Durham's Paul Collingwood when the former England all-rounder played club cricket in Perth had got him interested in playing for Durham.

"I've heard brilliant things about Durham from Paul Collingwood when he played over in Perth and I'm really excited about joining up with the squad," Johnson told Durham's official website.

Johnson, a veteran of 47 Tests, 107 one-day internationals and 28 Twenty20s for Australia, is also a hard-hitting lower order batsman.

He added: "Delivering match-winning contributions is important to me and that's not just with a focus on my bowling -- all-round performances in t20 are really important and I want to leave at the end of July having secured our place at Finals Day."

Durham chief executive David Harker said: "Mitchell is an excellent addition to our squad and he will certainly be a force to be reckoned with."

"One of our ambitions for 2012 is to get to t20 Finals Day and we have made the investment to bring in players that we feel will enhance our already talented squad to help us achieve that."

Mashrafe

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players," he added.

Unlike most of his colleagues, Mashrafe has continued to train at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium every morning after the Asia Cup in a bid to keep injuries away. "I have the tendency to get injured more than anyone else, as you may know. So I want to keep training and stay fit, not lose focus at all," he said.

Crisis over

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observation. "CCDM has taken a decision which we will not dwell upon, rather we would want the league to go on. In fact all four of us have agreed that we must give our observations about the workings of the CCDM and let the board know what we feel should change or not," he said.

Strauss to fight on

AFP, Colombo

England's Andrew Strauss insisted on Monday that he would fight on as captain and battle through his batting slump as the team look for a series-levelling win in the final Test against Sri Lanka.

Strauss's world number one side face a must-win situation at the P Sara Oval in Colombo on Tuesday after losing the opening game of the two-match series in Galle by 75 runs.

It was England's fourth consecutive defeat in Asia this year following the 3-0 rout by Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates. They must win in Colombo to avoid falling to second spot in the world rankings behind South Africa.

"We desperately want to win this Test match and make amends for what happened in Galle," said Strauss, who himself is struggling to score runs at the top of a fragile batting order.

"I am very sure we have the ability to do it, and that is what we will challenge ourselves to do in the next five days."

"We have not been as consistent as we would like to be, and now we have this final chance and salvage something out of the winter and go into the summer with some momentum."

Pakistan stakes its claim



AFP, Rawalpindi

Pakistan is ready to host international cricket matches once again after a three-year break, authorities said Monday after the successful staging of a domestic Twenty20 event.

International cricket has been suspended in Pakistan since gunmen opened fire on the Sri Lanka team bus on its way to the Lahore Test in March 2009, leaving eight people dead and several players and officials injured.

Tens of thousands of cricket-starved fans thronged the Rawalpindi Stadium during the week-long Super Eight Twenty20 tournament, which ended on Sunday and was marked by tight security.

Former Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik said fans were desperate to see foreign teams come and play -- and the country was ready for it.

"The discipline shown by the fans prove that we deserve international cricket and the successful event with immaculate security proves that we can host international cricket," said Malik, whose Sialkot team won the final on Sunday.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has invited Bangladesh for a limited-overs series later this month, but is still waiting for an answer.

Javed Miandad, Pakistan's all-time leading Test run-scorer and a PCB board member, said the success of the Super Eight showed the appetite for international cricket was enormous.

"This event sends a big message to the world," he said. "We don't have to say anything, 22,000 people on Sunday night

demanding the return of international cricket in Pakistan and we can host that in near future."

Since the Lahore attack Pakistan have had to play all their "home" matches on foreign soil, mostly in the United Arab Emirates, and their share of 2011 World Cup games was moved out of the country for security reasons.

Pakistan also played "home" matches in New Zealand and England in 2009 and 2010.

The PCB and police put stringent security arrangements in place for last week's Twenty20 tournament, hoping they would serve as a model for matches against visiting foreign teams.

"We deployed 1,300 policemen and each and every fan entering the stadium was thoroughly body-searched, and the successful event proves that we can also stage international cricket," senior police officer Malik Matloob said.

Shoaib Malik said that Pakistan badly needed international cricket.

"We have been playing on foreign venues, which not only deprives the fans but also young players who want to improve their skills in the game, they can't do that when they don't see their stars play before them," he said.

The PCB said it was also looking at the option of staging a Pakistan Premier League (PPL) along the lines of the lucrative Indian Twenty20 league, with foreign players involved.

"We are doing our best to bring international cricket back to Pakistan," said PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf. "We are quite positive about that and are also planning to host the PPL so that we can take the first step."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Stitches
- Corn spike
- React in horror
- Handel's "Messiah," e.g.
- Aware of
- Algonquian leader
- Individuals
- "Of course"
- Cancel out
- Poe's bird
- "Beetle Bailey" dog
- On in years
- Luzon language
- Neither mate
- Commandments bearer
- Sheep's comment
- First person to orbit the Earth

- Gear teeth
- Hits head-on
- Cause, as havoc
- Government in power
- Cry of discovery
- "American —"
- "Madame Butterfly" setting
- Lass
- Shook in fear
- Eyelid woe
- Witness
- Longings

- Historic period
- Joker
- Remained
- Cupid's alias
- Melody
- X-ray discoverer
- Giant number
- "— Karenina"
- Undo a dele
- Sit for a picture
- Portent
- Greek vowels
- Skedaddled
- Awestruck
- Miles of Hollywood

- Refuge
- Persecutes
- Reed instrument
- Pop singer Lady —
- Sir's partner
- Request
- Ornamental grating on a car
- "White Christmas" crooner
- "Kapow!"
- Fixes illicitly
- Rewrite, maybe
- Blood-curdling
- Curved molding
- Exist
- Brewery product
- Barbie's companion
- Egos' counterparts

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Q N K D T E K B - U T J C H Q V N O O U :

"PNNDMH RNNDMH PJDHO PNG."
Saturday's Cryptoquip: CUTE LITTLE FOUR-OUNCE SOFT DRINK MARKETED THROUGHOUT DULUTH'S STATE: MINNESOTA MINI-SODA.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals O