

## Hot pursuit of councillors on

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The letter asking for councillor nominations from the clubs, DSAs and other concerned parties have only just gone out but even before answers have been considered the politicking for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) elections have begun.

Sending the letter is one of the first steps for the election process to commence -- the nominations are required by the BCB to be sent in by September 24 -- but rumours have been doing the rounds that shopping for councillors has already begun.

This time there has been a departure from tradition as the board provided specific nomination forms, whereas earlier each nominee would be named under the letterhead of the respective organisation, with a copy of the relevant resolution attached. This prompted former BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, who is himself contesting the elections, to question whether the deviation from standard practice was designed to allow the board to tamper with the selection of councillors.

BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said: "We gave a forwarding letter and a form which they will send back to us with the councillor's name and with the signature of the respective organisation president or convenor. The board felt the new system more appropriate considering the previous bad experience."

Gazi Tank owner Lutfur Rahman Badal was not

troubled by the new format but he alleged that huge monetary transactions have been taking place to decide the nomination of councillors.

"I got the letter from BCB and they basically provided a security paper and I think they made the change as there were instances in the past when the board received two names from one organisation. I'm not sure about the exact motives behind the change but it may be because of previous bitter experiences," said Badal.

"But the main point is that I didn't receive the letter for Victoria Club although I am still the chairman of the governing body. I learnt that a lot of money is changing hands and one councillorship of Victoria has already sold for Tk 30 lakh. But you all know my efforts to bring the (Dhaka Premier League) championship to this club. I'm going to resign as chairman very soon and then I will explain the reason behind my decision," he added.

Whispers abound about the exchange of money. "It's nothing new but this time the amount is too big. It's really tough for a real organiser to get the nomination from an organisation if he is not rich enough," said a club official on condition of anonymity.

71 district and divisional councillors will elect 10 directors, 58 councillors from the clubs will elect 12 directors, one director will be elected by the 45 councillors from category three and the National Sports Council (NSC) will nominate three directors.



**Anamul Haque Bijoy of Victoria Sporting Club throws the ball during the practice session at the BCB Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

### Alfaz named U-12s coach

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Former national striker Alfaz Ahmed has been named the coach of the Under-12 national football team, which will take part in the 2013 Asian Youth Football Festival in Republic of Korea from October 3 to 6.

It is the first time that Alfaz has been given full duty of a national team after the illustrious striker worked as an assistant coach of Mohammedan SC last season.

Alfaz has been chosen from outside of BFF's panel of coaches but the BFF picked Mahbubur Rahman Litu, one of panel coaches, for the Under-10 national football team which will also take part in the Youth Football Festival in Korea.

BFF member and former national goalkeeper Bijon Barua will act as the team leader of both the teams.

### DPL victim of hartal

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The matches of the third round of the Dhaka Premier League have been rescheduled due to the countrywide shutdown on Thursday. The matches will now begin on Friday.

Reigning champions Victoria Sporting Club will take on Brothers Union at Mirpur, Gazi Tank Cricketers will play Kalabagan Krira Chakra at Fatullah and Prime Bank Cricket Club will play against Cricket Coaching School at BKSP-3 in the round.

Mohammedan Sporting Club currently top the DPL table.

### Japan Cup karate begins

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Gopalganj DSA clinched the gold medal in Kata of the boys' team event for 14-16 years age group while Mirpur Karate Do Academy took gold in Kata of the boys' for 8-10 years age group on the opening day of the 4th Japan Cup Karate Tournament at the Mirpur National Indoor Stadium.

Besides, Sajib Hasan of Hope Worldwide Karate Academy won gold medal in Kumi of the boys' singles for 8-10 years age group; Sanjida Siddika Shova of Luxmipur DSA clinched gold medal in Kata of the girls' singles for 8-12 age group.

## Fresh reviews after 80 overs

CRICINFO, Dubai



The number of reviews available for a team in a Test innings will be topped-up to two after 80 overs in an innings. The system will be trialled from October 1, 2013 in all Tests where the Decision Review System (DRS) is available, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Wednesday in Dubai after its chief executives' meeting.

Currently, a team is allowed up to two unsuccessful reviews for the entire duration of the innings. Under the new system, it will have two reviews -- irrespective of how many it has used up -- after the 80th over of the same innings.

The other notable decision taken at the meeting centred around ODI playing conditions. The ICC has retained -- after hearing arguments from both sides -- the rule stipulating two new balls to be used from either end but, for an ODI reduced to 25 overs or less at the start of an innings, only one new ball will be used per innings. This will also come into effect from October 1, 2013.

The CEC has asked the ICC Cricket Committee to look into the development of a ball that can last the full 50 overs of an innings whilst still providing a fair balance between bat and ball.

The existing two-ball rule came into force from October 2011 after the ICC Cricket Committee recommended it. However, all four Asian countries believe such a rule has proved to be deterrent to their slow bowlers, who play an integral part in the team structure. Not just India, a team like Sri Lanka is heavily reliant on its slow bowlers and is opposed to the two-ball rule only because the hard ball does not allow the spinner to grip the seam properly.

The topic of DRS was expected to dominate the discussions during the two-day meeting, after the system came under fire during the recent Ashes series in England. The CEC reviewed the performance of the DRS during the series and received an update on a technology trial that was conducted during the Old Trafford Test. A paper produced by the Australia and England cricket boards was also discussed.

The CEC has proposed that a Working Group be formed to consider how the ICC should best use technology in umpire decision-making in the future, apart from the top-up recommendation. The effectiveness of the Real-time Snickometer, used to detect faint edges, was also discussed and an independent assessment of this technology will also be conducted before it is included in the list of DRS approved technologies.

Regarding over-rates, the CEC approved the umpires' intention to become stricter on poor over-rates and time wasting and to maximise playing time in safe playing conditions.

### U-19s win by four wickets

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Sadman Islam scored a steady 60 and Abu Haider took four wickets to guide Bangladesh under-19 cricket team to a four wicket win over CCDM XI in a practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Batting first, CCDM were bundled out for 136 in 46.5 overs. In reply, the under-19 side reached their target in 37.2 overs.

CCDM XI side was formed by a group of players from the First Division Cricket League.

The practice match was part of the Bangladesh U-19s' preparation for the tour of West Indies. The youngsters will play seven youth ODIs against their West Indies counterparts during the tour. All matches will be played in Guyana.

The under-19 side will reach Guyana on October 2. The first ODI will take place on October 7.

### Women lose practice game

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Bangladesh women went down by eight wickets to South Africa's Emerging Players Women at the Olympia Park at Rustenburg yesterday.

Batting first, the Bangladeshis were bundled out for 129 in 43.2 overs. In reply, the hosts rode on a half-century from skipper N Moodley to reach the target in 32.4 overs.

Bangladesh will face South Africa in the first ODI on September 20.



**The lucky 180 finalists of the nationwide Pepsi IPL campaign, which started on February 20 this year and concluded last week, had enjoyed the exclusive company of country's two exciting cricketers all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal during a Meet & Greet session. Here three of the lucky finalists take photos with the two stars.**

PHOTO: STAR

## Probe body at work

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The fact-finding committee formed by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) quizzed four officials of the national team yesterday as it started to look into the team's failure in the recently concluded SAFF Championship.

The three-member committee found some facts on the first day after quizzing team leader Sheikh Maruf Hasan, fitness trainer Yamali Muhammet, goalkeeping coach Kees Kalk and local coach Syed Golam Gilani.

"After interviewing those officials, we have found some facts which we

can not give out at the moment but one thing we can say is that some players did hide their injuries. The injury and fitness issues will be clearer after we talk to the players," said Badal Roy, the convenor of the fact-finding committee, adding that they would quiz four senior players -- Zahid Hasan Emily, Mamunul Islam, Atiqur Rahman Meshu and Wali Faisal -- today.

"After providing all the facilities, we expected good performance from the team at the SAFF Championship which they failed to deliver. The results are immaterial to us but we, the fact-finding committee, want to find out why the national team failed to put up a good show in the tournament," Badal said. "We will even talk to the

local coaches, organisers and some senior journalists to bring out the right information and prevent such outcomes in future."

When asked whether the players picked up injuries during the two month training camp, Roy said, "We were pondering the same questions too. Whether the players were not physically fit, was the first question that we put to fitness trainer, who explained the matter in his own way. He expectedly claimed that he did not fail in his job, but we have tried to bring out the maximum information from him."

Roy said that they would try to complete their work and submit the report to the federation within a week.

## The exile of the established

SAKEB SUBHAN & NAIMUL KARIM



New Zealand come to Bangladesh at a time when the hosts will be trying to consolidate their recently found competence against all comers on home soil. Beginning with the 4-0 ODI series win in 2010 against the same team they will face in less than three weeks, Bangladesh have won 16 out of 32 ODIs at home as opposed to an overall home record of 43 wins against 78 losses, and also drawn two and won one of their 11 Tests in an otherwise abysmal overall record. The picture of stability however becomes blurred when recent comments from chief selector Akram Khan are considered.

Before the Dhaka Premier League began, he had said that there were a lot of national spots up for grabs. The number of former national players in their mid-20s plying their trade in domestic cricket, taken in concert with Akram's lament about the team not being settled, points to a systemic problem in the country's cricket.

The likes of Imrul Kayes, Shahriar Nafees, Junaed Siddiqui, and Rokibul Hasan -- all part of the historic 4-0 ODI triumph over the Kiwis -- will probably find themselves continuing their national exiles even though, with the exception of Junaed Siddiqui, they were part of the last two A team tours. There are others too, their time as regulars in the national team dating back before the 2010 series, such as Aftab Ahmed, Alok Kapali and Nafis Iqbal. These players stand out because they have all, to differing extents, proven their abilities on the international stage and were once the torch-bearers for the future.

"I think the problem arises once a player is out of the national team. His training is not as vigorous since he depends mostly on the regional facilities and they are not that good. That can be one of the reasons," explained chief selector Akram Khan.

"In general 90 per cent of our players fade out after they turn 23 and when they leave the academy," he added.

Now, players fading away is not a phenomenon unique to Bangladesh. What is more unusual is the fact that there is no obvious example of players moving the other way -- out of the national team, into the wilderness, and back into the national side a hardened cricketer as a result of years in the

wilderness. Only Naeem Islam can be said to have made the journey -- he played 49 ODIs and six Tests till December 2011 before being dropped, and then coming back in November 2012 to score a century against the West Indies.

"It's a sad situation, no doubt. But anybody can lose form and when they do, it creates a vacuum and they need proper counselling for their comeback. There needs to be a system that can let them know their strengths and weaknesses and then work with them accordingly. We need to have a mechanism for that," said former national selector Faruk Ahmed.

For the BCB's head of academy Richard McInnes, it all boils down to the willingness of the individual. "The academy is generally over-booked and there is always some player or the other practising. So in terms of receiving facilities, these players are getting them all the time," said McInnes.

*"In general 90 per cent of our players fade out after they turn 23 and when they leave the academy," Akram Khan*

*"Anybody can lose form and when they do, it creates a vacuum and they need proper counselling for their comeback," Faruk Ahmed*

*"One needs to have the ability to learn and adjust. That's the reason why those who are in the team survive," Richard McInnes*

and Ian Bell. For Bangladesh a comment from Jamie Siddons, one of its recent coaches, saying that players seemed to develop considerably only after entering the national scene, only darkens the picture further.

While reasons there may be many, the above comments from those who are or have been close to the team points to a common inference. The current domestic setup and infrastructure outside Dhaka (probably why the academy is generally overlooked) are not conducive to preparing players for international challenges -- and those out of the team even due to a temporary loss of form can, and have, faded away.

The return of established players point to a domestic system (competitions, infrastructure, et al) effective in keeping players primed for international challenges. Bangladesh's one-way traffic of batsmen however only signifies a string of failed investments, something that a fledgling nation can ill afford.

"There is a combination of factors behind the difficulty of making a comeback. But most importantly, players are exposed in international cricket and their opponent will play to their weaknesses. One needs to have the ability to learn and adjust. That's the reason why those who are in the team survive," he added.

Player burnout has many causes and like McInnes said it may come down to the individual. Not all players have the drive of, say, Mushfiqur Rahim. But it is alarming that no one has really made it back. For India, the likes of Rohit Sharma and Suresh Raina have swum against the tide; for England Eoin Morgan