

# SPORT

## Who is beating around the bush?

AL-AMIN

If we consider Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hasan Papon's words, it is his critics who are beating around the bush regarding the selection system of the national teams. The BCB boss, hot under his collar, said on Monday that he has not changed the selection system that has been in practice ever since he took over the presidency almost four years ago.

"I have only institutionalised a system that has been operating during my tenure," the president said while defending the newly designed 'two-tier' selection system that the board approved on Sunday. The complex selection model, which can be best described as unique, features three selectors headed by a chief. The three-man selection committee will formulate a team before placing it to a six-member committee that includes the coach, manager and BCB's cricket operations committee chairman as convener apart from the three selectors. The six will then burn the midnight candle before agreeing to a final selection for the approval of the board president.

And according to the board president this system actually has been working in almost every selection of the national team for the last four years when Papon had to play a major role.

"Ask him [chief selector Faruque Ahmed] if there was a single instance when the team that he submitted wasn't changed. Ask him of the number of times when I had to sit with them before a series to confirm a team," said Papon acidly while talking to reporters at the BKSP in Savar.

If we take the president's word then the three-man selection committee headed by Faruque Ahmed was not only incapable of delivering what they were paid to do but also functionally flawed and deserved to be dissolved long before. We agree with the president that it's a shame for the functional chief of a cricket board to be involved in the selection of the team, and that too on a regular basis.

But the next statement from the president is perplexing. "We have always been following this process and also we have been getting results. So why should I move away from it? There is absolutely nothing new here," the president added, arguing that the same system would be in place.

This is where we beg to differ. If the three-man selection committee unofficially turned into a seven-member panel (including the president) then it's a flaw that made the whole system an abjuration one.

The president said that the coach is an integral part in the selection of the team and the manager is essential to speak for the captain and vice-captain. He said the function of cricket operations chairman in the selection committee is more like an ex-officio's role than any serious concern.

"The coach will tell the selectors his requirement before a series. He will tell whether he needs more fast bowlers or spinners. How can the coach select the players? He doesn't even know them. He will only provide the strategy. The manager on the other hand will raise the voice of the cricketers. Sujon [Khaled Mahmud, manager of the national team] always came to me and conveyed what the captain wanted. We did not include the captain in the selection panel because we have different captains for different formats," was how Papon described the roles of other members in the new panel.

It is universally acknowledged that the selectors have that minimum understanding of the game and their role. There is no selection committee in world sport that is unaware of what type of players they need for a series or a particular tournament. It is also very much embedded in the selection system that the selectors take the necessary input from the coach and captain before selecting a team. The selectors essentially work in harmony with the coach and captain. Debate or disagreement is the beauty of a most pro-active selection committee.

And we have little doubt about the ability of the Faruque Ahmed-led selection committee. They may have made mistakes along the way but their selections had never been bracketed in nepotism. The latest act, according to many, will substantially curb the independence of the selection committee and will lead to divided loyalty with more men poking their nose. Papon may feel that the new system will at least spare



A delighted Mosaddek Hossain holds the cricket ball and gestures towards the Abahani dressing room after completing his five-wicket haul at the BKSP yesterday. His five wickets and his half-century led Abahani to a crucial win over Legends of Rugganj yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Abahani one win away

SPORTS REPORTER

A brilliant all-round performance from the young Mosaddek Hossain, who scored 73 and took a five-wicket haul, led Abahani to a crucial 60-run victory over the Legends of Rugganj at the BKSP yesterday.

The win has taken them to the top of the league and at the moment it seems as though Abahani already have one hand on the trophy.

Batting first, Abahani finished on 290 for eight. Apart from Mosaddek, Shakib scored a brisk 66 as well. In reply, Rugganj were bundled out for 230 in 44.4 overs.

A brilliant century from former national batsman Rakibul Hasan and an unbeaten 74 from the ever dependable Nasir Hossain led Prime Doleshwar to 333 for five in Fatullah, setting up a 91-run win over Victoria and knocking Mominul Haque and Co out of the championship race.

Victoria, a team that entered the Super League phase on top, with 17 points from 15 games have no chance of winning the championship.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Mushfiqur Rahim's

Mohammedan won a desperately close game against Sabbir Rahman's Prime Bank Cricket Club. Prime Bank were bundled out for 244 in 48.4 overs with Sabbir top-scoring with 77. Mohammedan lost early wickets and looked in trouble at the start.

Ariful Haque, who came in to bat at number six, scored a century that revived them and led them to a last-ball victory. The win however will not affect the table as far as the championship race is concerned since both these teams were out of the running before this round.

The way the tables are stacked at the moment, it has now become a three-way race between Abahani, Prime Doleshwar and Rugganj. Abahani and Rugganj have 20 points each, while Doleshwar have 18. However, while Abahani and Doleshwar have two games in hand, Rugganj have one.

While Abahani will play their final game against Prime Bank, Rugganj will take on Prime Doleshwar. If Abahani and Rugganj both win their last round games, then Abahani will be declared champions.

Even though they will then be tied on 20 points with Rugganj, they will top the table on account of more matches won.

However, if both Abahani and Rugganj lose their respective matches, then it will be a three-way tie between Abahani, Rugganj and Prime Doleshwar. If that is the scenario, then the game between Abahani and Prime Doleshwar, which had to be indefinitely postponed due to the umpires leaving the field, will be crucial.

A decision regarding that game is expected to be announced by tomorrow.

A third possibility is if Abahani loses and Rugganj wins. In that case as well, the postponed game will play a key role for Abahani.



Prime Doleshwar's Rakibul Hasan plays a drive during his century at the Khan Saheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

### SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>ABAHANI LIMITED:</b> 290 for 8 in 50 overs (Mosaddek 73, Shakib 66; Tajjul 3-45)	<b>LEGENDS OF RUGGANJ:</b> 230 all out in 44.4 overs (Asif 70, Mithun 55; Mosaddek 5-43)	<b>PRIME DOLESHWAR:</b> 333 for 5 in 50 overs (Raqibul 100, Nasir 74*, Marzan 2-51)	<b>VICTORIA SPORTING CLUB:</b> 242 all out in 45.2 overs (Mominul 61, Jubair 56, Sunzamul 3-44)	<b>Result:</b> Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club won by 91 runs	<b>PRIME BANK CRICKET CLUB:</b> 244 all out in 48.4
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## Mariners, Usha win big

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Krira Chakra began their Super Six campaign of the Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League with an emphatic 6-0 victory over Dhaka Wanderers Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The triumph helped the defending champions to 34 points from 12 matches, three ahead of second-placed Mariner Youngs Club.

Pakistani defender Aleem Belal slotted a hat-trick by converting penalty corners in the 12th, 23rd and 38th minutes before Hasan Jubayer Niloy, Pushkor Khisha Mimo and Krishno Kumar struck in the 57th, 58th and 66th minutes respectively to complete the rout. Dhaka Wanderers, who had suffered a 2-8 defeat in their first meeting against Usha, failed to make any of their five penalty corners count.

Meanwhile, Mariner Youngs followed up their record 22-1 win over Railway SC with an 11-1 win against Bangladesh SC in the other match of the day.

Archrivals Abahani and Mohammedan SC will lock horns in a crucial encounter of the Super Six stage today. Both the giants are on equal 26 points, but Mohammedan lead Abahani with a better goal-difference.



Team BJMC's Mehdi Hasan Tapu (R) jostles for possession with a Muktiyoddha Sangsad player during their Federation Cup quarterfinal fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Tapu scored deep into stoppage time as Team BJMC booked their place in the semifinals.

PHOTO: STAR

## Team BJMC in semis

SPORTS REPORTER

A stoppage-time header from Mehdi Hasan Tapu took Team BJMC to the Walton Federation Cup semifinals with a single-goal win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC in the last quarterfinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Tapu, who had struck a brace against Mohammedan to confirm BJMC's quarterfinal berth, nodded in a corner from substitute Abdullah Parvez deep into stoppage time to set up the 2011 Federation Cup runners-up Team BJMC a semifinal clash against Arambagh KS on Thursday. Abahani will take on Sheikh Russel on Friday in the second semifinal.

Muktiyoddha Sangsad, the beaten finalists of last two editions, enjoyed better ball possession and saw their wingers Mobarak Hossain and Ahmed Kolo Musa threaten the opposition backline time and again, but somehow failed to breach the Team BJMC defence. In the end it all came down to a battle between the two goalkeepers, both of whom made a number of stunning saves.

BJMC goalkeeper Arifuzzaman denied Mobarak in the 10th minute while Muktiyoddha goalkeeper Mamun Khan thwarted a powerful 25-yarder from Shankar Das five minutes later.

Arifuzzaman then quickly responded to fist away a curling effort from Towhidul Alam before Muktiyoddha Sangsad's Simon Ezeodika squandered a great chance on the hour-mark. Musa had slid the ball onto the path of his compatriot, but Simon failed to make contact from in front of the goal.

Team BJMC almost broke the deadlock in the 82nd minute when Samson Iliasu saw his powerful shot on a Shaikat Mahmud cross parried by Mamun Khan. But moments before the final whistle, veteran campaigners Tapu and Abdullah Parvez salvaged the win when the former turned in the latter's corner into the net.

<b>MUKTIJODDHA SANGSAD</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TEAM BJMC</b>	<b>1</b>

## India level series

REUTERS, Harare

Mandeep Singh blasted a quick-fire unbeaten half-century as India crushed Zimbabwe by 10 wickets to level the Twenty20 series on Monday.

The result sets up a series decider in the third and final game that will also be played at the Harare Sports Club on Wednesday.

Zimbabwe won the toss and elected to bat, but could only muster 99 for

nine in their 20 overs as the Indian bowlers strangled the run-rate.

The tourists made short work of their reply, racing to their victory target off 13.1 overs as Mandeep Singh (52 from 40 balls) and fellow opener Lokesh Rahul (47 from 40 balls) put on a century stand.

All the Zimbabwe batsmen struggled to score quick runs in their innings with none managing more than a run a ball. Peter Moor (31 from 32 balls) was the only one to muster any sort of resistance. Debutant seamer Barinder Sran took

for wickets to lead the Indian charge, while fellow pacesman Jasprit Bumrah picked up three wickets in his four overs.

India also handed a debut to seamer Dhawal Kulkarni, though he was by far the most expensive of the bowlers as his one wicket cost 32 runs.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

<b>ZIMBABWE:</b> 99 for 9 in 20 overs (Chibhabha 10, Masakadza 10, Moor 31, Waller 14; Sran 4-10, Bumrah 3-11)	<b>INDIA:</b> 103 for no loss in 13.1 overs (Rahul 47 not out, Mandeep 52 not out)	<b>Result:</b> India won by 10 wickets.	<b>Player-of-the-match:</b> Barinder Sran.
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## Aus-WI tie washed out

AFP, Bridgetown

The seventh match of the Tri-Nation One-Day International Series between Australia and South Africa has been declared a no-result due to inclement weather, organizers said Sunday.

Heavy, persistent rain left a large damp area on the pitch which prevented any further play with South Africa at eight without loss after one over in the match at the Kensington Oval on Sunday.

Both teams took two points from the contest.

## Eranga banned for illegal action

REUTERS, London

Sri Lanka pacesman Shaminda Eranga has been banned from bowling in international matches due to an illegal action, the International Cricket Council said on Sunday, just hours after he was taken to hospital to undergo tests on his heart.

The 29-year-old reported feeling discomfort while batting during Sri Lanka's ODI win over Ireland on Saturday.

"He was okay and stable and we're awaiting the results," a Sri Lanka Cricket spokesman told British media.