

SPORT

'Will summon coach if needed'

SPORTS REPORTER
The Bangladesh cricket team returned to Dhaka yesterday morning after a dismal tour of South Africa where the Tigers were whitewashed across all three formats.

And the moment the players disembarked, the Bangladesh Cricket Board president, who was deeply hurt by the performances like the rest of the nation, said that he would perform an autopsy and if needed, they would summon head coach Chandoo Athapany from his vacation in Australia to get his opinion of the debacle.

"We need to know the reasons behind the dismal performance, ask the head coach [for answers] and seek his opinion. So, we will contact him even if he is on holiday. If needed, we will call him back to Bangladesh. It's very important for us," Hassan said.

Apart from the first T20 – the only time Bangladesh displayed some sort of fight – the Tigers were thoroughly outplayed in both of the Tests, three ODIs and the two T20Is.

Mihajil Abedin, the chief selector and manager for the South Africa tour, said it was a challenging tour and that the team should be more prepared before going to play in difficult conditions.

"It was a challenging tour. We had the opportunity to draw the first Test but we were unable to do so. I think we should be more prepared next time before going to play in such difficult conditions," Mihajil added reporters upon his arrival at the Hazrat Shahjalal International airport.



Mahmudullah (L) and Rubel Hossain, two of the members of the Bangladesh team, come out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport upon return from their humiliating tour of South Africa yesterday. PHOTO: FROZ AHMED

No board for women

SPORTS REPORTER

"You see, the election was free and fair and our president [BCB president Nazmul Hassan] didn't have any interference," a long-serving board member willingly told two reporters who were congratulating him on retaining his directorship unopposed at the country's richest sports body.

Despite twenty directors out of twenty three being elected unopposed, the contest for those three posts made that veteran official very happy. And there was no shortage of noise inside the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur either as a significant number of supporters of former national skipper and ruling party parliament member Naimur Rahman amplified the atmosphere by chanting slogans.

However, in reality everything was almost done and dusted well before the day of the election to ensure Hassan and his men would run the show for another term, so there could not have been much interest surrounding the cash-rich sports body's elections. But the one thing that went unnoticed and demands attention is the under representation of women in the running of the show, especially when there is a women's wing and a national women's cricket team.

When that particular bearded official's attention was drawn to that issue, he informed that the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) initiative of creating the post of an independent director meant that they could use the opportunity and fill the post by appointing a woman. However one of his colleagues who was standing beside him agreed that they should focus on the issue.

When asked about the under representation of women in the board, the BCB boss Hassan only said: "Okay, we will look into the matter."

There is clear evidence that women's participation and its necessity have hardly got any interest among the board higher-ups, which is why in the whole process only three women got involved as councillors – Soma Alam Rahman from Legends of Ruggani, Zakia Tazin of National Sports Council (NSC) and Engineer Firoza Karim of Bangladesh Mohila Kriya Sangstha. Not a single woman was given the chance to share the honour of being seated at the 23-member executive board.

The Bangladesh government – which has a national medium-term development plan committed to transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 – considers women's engagement in decision making across all spheres of life a cross-cutting issue, with women's empowerment one of the main drivers of its transformation.

Bangladesh has made significant progress in promoting the objectives of ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women and it is believed that empowering women and promoting gender equality is crucial to accelerating sustainable development.

So a very important and popular organisation like the BCB cannot overlook the demands of time.

West Indies take lead

AFP, Baltimore

An unbroken 144-run stand for the eighth wicket between Jason Holder and Shane Dowrich negated the efforts of Sikandar Raza's maiden five-wicket haul as the West Indies came out of day three with a vital first-innings lead over Zimbabwe in the second Test.

Holder and Dowrich came together with the West Indies reeling on 230 for seven, still 96 runs short of Zimbabwe's first-innings total, but turned the game on its head with a counter-attacking partnership.

Dowrich ended the day unbeaten on a career-best 75, while Holder contributed 71 not out to see the West Indies to stumps on 374 for seven, leading by 48 runs.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ZIMBABWE: First innings 326

WEST INDIES: First innings 374 for 7 (Brathwaite 32, Powell 90, Holder 40). Dowrich 75 not out, Holder 71 not out; Raza 5-82

Fan frenzy for tickets in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT from Sylhet

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials declared Monday that United Commercial Bank (UCB) branches would not be selling tickets for the Sylhet leg of the 5th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) just days before the tournament begins on November 4, leaving thousands gathered at different branches of the bank in Sylhet empty-handed.

In a press release on Saturday, the BCB had declared that sales of tickets would start on Tuesday at some booths in Sylhet and through

some online portals via UCB, but at the very last moment it was announced that tickets would instead be sold at four additional booths at the Sylhet District Stadium.

After receiving this information thousands of people began gathering at the Sylhet District Stadium from Monday and the queue was more than a kilometre long by the morning.

Annual Haque Chowdhury regional head of UCB, said that the bank was supposed to sell tickets but the bank headquarters changed the decision and cancelled selling BPL tickets at the last moment.

BCB sources said that the bank was planning

to promote its mobile banking system but as there are very little users of UCBash in Sylhet, Music Super Star, who won the ticket selling rights from the BCB, decided they themselves would handle ticket selling in booths.

BPL governing council member secretary HI Mallick told The Daily Star yesterday: "We sell 80 per cent of our tickets through booths while only 20 per cent are sold online and through bank."

Supriyo Deb, one of the many who had lined up at the Sylhet District Stadium said: "I was passing by the stadium last night [Monday night] and saw many people already gathering for tickets. So, I stopped and stood in line thinking that I may not get one later."

There are 18,000 seats in Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, the venue for the first leg matches, and BCB franchises will sell enough for a sell-out crowd, Farhad Qureshi, BPL's Sylhet venue manager, said.

BCB director Shaiful Alam Nadel told The Daily Star that Sylhet had very passionate sports fans and that they would try to satiate the people's needs accordingly, with the BCB selling 15,000 tickets in the booths.

"We are overwhelmed that thousands of people have gathered in the booths for tickets and we had to restrain the ticket franchisees from selling more than one ticket to a single person," he said.

The Sylhet International Cricket Stadium will mark its debut as a BPL venue with the introduction of local franchisees Sylhet Sixers who take on the defending champions Dhaka Dynamites in the opening match.



Thousands queued up at the Sylhet District Stadium to get their hands on tickets for the Bangladesh Premier League matches yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

LOOKING UP DOWN SOUTH No holds barred

SABEK SUBHAN from Johannesburg

Johannesburg truly lives up to the hype, if you can call it that. We had been warned about the crime in South Africa's biggest city when we came to the country, but we dismissed some of it as tourist talk. It wasn't the locals warned us in more vehement terms. Forget the locals, road signs were enough. 'hijack hotspot' or 'crime hotspot' were not free will zones and not much was left to the imagination when we saw a man sipping beer on the middle of the highway with police eagled on him. Thankfully though, our eyes were set on another destination that held dangers of another kind.

A two-hour drive north-west from the mammoth city will take you to Pilansberg Game Reserve, an incomprehensibly gigantic wildlife reserve, though still smaller than the better known Kruger National Park, requires at least a week to fully appreciate and experience. Unfortunately, a cricket tour does not allow that much time for those covering it. Fortunately, a cricket tour gave us the opportunity in the first place to be in a situation to sample nature's majestic living creations in their natural habitat.

Some of us travelling reporters decided to grab that opportunity and set out for Pilansberg at break of dawn. As luck would have it, time did not permit waiting one and a half hours for the open-top truck ride that everyone thinks of when they think safari, but being Bangladeshis we knew how to make the best of a less-than-ideal situation. Allied with a complicit driver we proceeded to repurpose the Hyundai multipurpose nine-seater, which was granted a permit to go on its own truncated safari, into a passing imitation of an open-top truck by opening the sliding doors to its limits and riding through the expansive landscape on a dirt road flanked by bushes in the foreground and multi-coloured mountains in the background.

distance (thankfully), sleeping and stirring lazily under trees that shaded them from the morning sun, and wildebeest could be seen performing their familiar gallop from one side of the road to the other. Giraffes, in the mind's eye a cartoonish animal because of their overlong necks, revealed their majesty in the flesh as they loped about in a landscape that, for once, seemed too small.

Fear was the primary thrill. Having been to a lion park earlier on the tour, what seemed primal then to seem – with a chain-link fence separating the possible prey from the kings of the jungle – was made to seem contrived by our experience in Pilansberg. Surprisingly, it was not the lions or leopards – we were not fortunate enough to meet with the latter's acquaintance – that inspired the most immediate fear. Our driver came to an abrupt halt when he saw an elephant on the road and we were suddenly very aware of the fact that we could close the sliding doors quickly in case we saw a lion close by, but we would be utterly

helpless if we alarmed the generally docile elephant or if it was suddenly in the mood for a game of football. The same was true later on when two fully grown rhinos approached us but decided to veer off the road when about 30 feet away.

The latent and therefore more insidious fear, however, was occasioned by the unseen lions. With our driver being very accommodating, we would often get down from the vehicle mid-safari and take selfies with zebras, wildebeests and deer in the background. At one stage the driver saw it fit to remind us that our backdrops were also food for the lions, who could well be in the process of stalking amongst the bush. There were not many more excursions out of the vehicle thereafter, and for five minutes the car had gone a little silent. We had come to the unspoken realisation that this could well have been a very different story; certainly not the safe, happy and final entry of a tour diary.



The sight of giraffes and wildebeests at the Pilansberg Game Reserve may put one at ease, but it is hard to relax with lions stalking among the trees. PHOTO: SABEK SUBHAN

Naimur retains post Board will elect president today

SPORTS REPORTER

The atmosphere inside the home of cricket in Mirpur turned festive after the primary results of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) elections were announced yesterday, with Bangladesh's first-ever Test captain Naimur Rahman being re-elected as a BCB director from Dhaka Division in the afternoon.

Naimur and Syed Ashfaq were elected for the two available posts from Dhaka Division.

Although Ashfaq, who is not a known figure in the cricket fraternity, won all the 18 votes, Naimur got 13.

"I had to contest the election last like this time. It feels good to be elected anywhere as it gives you satisfaction after getting the mandate from the voters. I was pretty confident and I kept my faith in the councillors from my division," said Naimur while flanked by a huge number of followers from Manikganj.

"If I did not trust them, I would have asked for a written commitment which I didn't. I have shown my respect to them," he added, perhaps pointing at a popular practice adopted by candidates during elections of sports federations in the country.

While Naimur, one of the two candidates of the Nazmul Hassan panel contesting for three posts, passed with flying colours, MA Awal Bulu suffered a crushing defeat to Alamgir Khan, who received six out of seven votes for the lone post from Barisal Division.

The newly elected directors will now be delegated their responsibilities and duties at the executive committee meeting today where the directors will also elect a board president alongside two vice-presidents.



Former Test captain Naimur Rahman, flanked by a huge number of followers from Manikganj, celebrates after being re-elected as a BCB director from Dhaka Division yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

tee meeting today where we will hand over the authority to the new executive committee. And it will be up to the new executive committee to elect a new president," said incumbent BCB president Hassan after the elections at the BCB headquarters yesterday.

"All the directors have asked me to become the president again and so far it's going to be like that," Hassan informed.