



[Anticlockwise from top-left] Shakib Al Hasan spoke following a team meeting at a city hotel in a bid to appease members of the press and said as much, but his words held plenty of weight as evidenced by the attention paid to the Test and T20I captain's words. Tamim Iqbal arrives in Mirpur, where players met board officials last night.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Will be happy only after implementation: Shakib

NABID YEASIN

A positive vibe prevailed from the morning yesterday with indications that a resolution regarding the national cricketers' strike that started on Monday would be reached by the end of the day and such was the case -- with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) agreeing to nine of the 11 initial demands but not before 11:00pm. The cricketers had put forth an updated list of demands, adding two more to their previously announced 11 points, when they held a press conference after discussing amongst themselves at a city hotel earlier in the evening.

Although the BCB agreed to meet most demands and discuss new demands in the future, the cricketers came out of the boardroom with gloomy faces. Although none of them spoke to the media officially, the anxiety on their faces was quite visible.

Bangladesh T20I and Test skipper Shakib Al Hasan stated that the players' happiness with the resolution could only be gauged when the changes were implemented.

"Most of our demands were heard by everyone here, including the president, and they agreed to meet them as soon as possible. Only all the players can say whether we are

happy. Once those things are implemented, we can accurately say how happy we are," Shakib said after the meeting.

The all-rounder also mentioned that national players would start camp from October 25 ahead of their India tour next month while the third round of the National Cricket League (NCL) would begin on October 26.

Asked about the number one item on their list of demands, the lack of respect from members of Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) which led to a demand to replace its president,

Naimur Rahman, through elections, Shakib said: "Honestly, we spoke about that. We do not know the names of the rules or regulations even but we asked to hold the elections as soon as possible. We asked that the players have a representative to hear the issues of the players. We will do that when we have time, maybe after the NCL."

When asked about the two new demands, Shakib said the board did not entertain them yet as it did not get a chance to discuss those items internally.

"As the new demands were made today, they did not get a chance to discuss them.

But when we sit again, they will bring those to the table," concluded Shakib.

However, after the meeting with the BCB, Shakib sat with the players again saying afterwards that the players will remain united and may take action again if the demands are not fulfilled.

BCB officials were not able to reach or contact any of the national cricketers since their announcement of the strike after putting forth an 11-point demand on Monday evening.

However, BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury informed yesterday that he had been able to contact Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal on Tuesday evening and that the left-handed opener said he would have to sit with other players before coming to a decision.

Yesterday morning, BCB President Nazmul and CWAB President Naimur met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discuss, and try to put an end to, the strike ahead of the national team's tour of India next month and the third round of the NCL from Thursday.

After Hassan and Naimur returned to the BCB offices in Mirpur from Gono Bhaban, waiting for the players' response, the national players gathered at a hotel in Gulshan to discuss amongst themselves before meeting with board officials.

There is no use adding new demands. First they had an 11-point demand, now they added two more. They may come up with more. We accepted what they first placed.

If you heard their full press conference today... I could not understand what they were actually saying. We have to pay a non-performer! Comparing a foreign coach's salary to local coaches! I cannot understand. I cannot understand whether this lawyer [the cricketers' spokesman Barrister Mustafizur Rahman Khan] knows anything. Our prime minister [Sheikh Hasina] clearly told me today why they stopped playing. They could have come to me or [Naimur Rahman] Durjoy or the prime minister because they have access to everybody. The biggest question is why they stopped playing.

BCB PRESIDENT NAZMUL HASSAN'S REACTION TO NEW DEMANDS

HIGHLIGHTS

- The players put forth an updated 13-point demand list, adding two more to the original list.
- The BCB agreed to nine of the 11 initial demands.
- National team players will start their camp from October 25 ahead of their India tour next month.
- The third round of NCL, which was supposed to start today, will begin from October 26.

Gulshan keeps MIRPUR WAITING

SAKEB SUBHAN

Shakib Al Hasan sat in the fourth row, amid fellow cricketers and journalists. Tamim Iqbal was walking around ensuring that the journalists had enough places to sit.

"Bhai, if you don't find seats up front, ask one of the cricketers and he will gladly give up his," Bangladesh's highest run-scorer was overheard telling a reporter. Shohag Gazi was peering around a pillar close to the stage, which was occupied by senior domestic cricketers like Tushar Imran and Abdur Razzak, while the players' appointed spokesperson, Barrister Mustafizur Rahman Khan, sat in the middle behind the microphone.

It was an occasion unlike any that Bangladesh cricket has witnessed, taking place not at the cricket headquarters of Mirpur but on the first floor of a hotel in Gulshan on the third day of an eventful period that started with players boycotting cricketing activities unless certain demands be met.

That was Monday, and on Tuesday Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hassan fired back with a lengthy press conference of his own, the main thrust of which was that the cricketers' strike had been orchestrated by conspirators who wished to destabilise Bangladesh cricket. He was also not above making thinly-veiled personal attacks on players.

Yesterday, the 11-point demand grew to 13-strong as a revenue sharing model and the inclusion of women cricketers in the reforms were added. The players had already made most of the demands more succinctly than the spokesperson, who displayed a tendency to over-explain every point he was making. Between those, some of the causes for the cricketers' simmering discontent came through.

"On tours, cricketers get a per diem of 50 dollars, while for directors it is 500 dollars," was one such

that seemed like the public should know.

It was learnt that after Hassan's provocative press conference, more cricketers had called the original strikers and wanted to join the cause, and that was in evidence at the press conference teeming with as many cricketers as there were journalists -- certainly a first in Bangladesh cricket.

But if the BCB boss's words had caused injury, that was not in evidence yesterday. After a clamour to hear from a cricketer, Shakib made it to the front and said: "As we said, this movement is not against anyone. We have the same amount of respect we



MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN KHAN

did for the BCB."

Some of the demands will no doubt be seen as ambitious and may be seen as things for the distant future.

But that is why yesterday seemed important; it was a small but significant step towards a future where power is shared more equitably. For a while at least, while Hassan and other board high-ups were waiting in Mirpur since 5:00pm, the power in Bangladesh cricket resided with the players.

New demands mirror Cricket Australia's 2017 gridlock

SPORTS REPORTER

While the national cricketers' sudden strike following the announcement of an 11-point demand on Monday had taken Bangladesh cricket by storm, the cricketers yesterday added two more points to their list of demands, which would see a radical shake-up in the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

During a press conference at a city hotel in Gulshan yesterday, Barrister Mustafizur Rahman Khan spoke on the cricketers' behalf and said that, in addition to the original 11 demands, the cricketers wanted a revenue sharing model similar to what Australian cricketers negotiated through the Australian Cricketers Association (ACA) and also that women cricketers be afforded the same provisions where 'practically and commercially viable'.

"In Australia, cricketers get a share of the revenue from Cricket Australia (CA) alongside their regular salary. The Australian players get a negotiated share of the revenue from the Big Bash League. We want a similar system for our players, which will allow cricketers to get a share from the board's revenue after negotiations each year," said Mustafizur, who was employed as the cricketers' spokesman.

The two newly added demand by the players is given in its entirety here:

12. Going forward, there should be transparency and accountability of income and expenditure and maintenance of accounts in Bangladeshi cricket in the interests of all its stakeholders. Arrangements will have to be made where professional cricketers are given a fair share of the revenue generated by BCB through commercial exploitation of cricket and its

associated interests, which, after all, is made possible through the toil and performance of professional cricketers. A cricketers' welfare, provident and compensation fund and insurance scheme has to be established and administered, which will ensure welfare of cricketers who have fallen on the hard times, provide pensions to retired cricketers and compensation to injured cricketers on fulfilment of objectively defined and administered criteria.

13. To the extent practical and commercially feasible, similar provisions as above will have to be made for female cricketers, with the ultimate objective of

attaining gender parity as early as possible.

There was also an alteration to the demand that the committee of the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) resign immediately. The cricketers now want the formation of a professional cricketers' association similar to those in England and Australia in order to negotiate matters with the board.

The official website of the Australian Cricketers' Association Inc. (ACA), which was established in 1997, states that it is "the collective and representative voice of past and present male and female elite domestic and international cricketers in Australia."

Meanwhile, the Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA), which is the representative body of past and present first-class cricketers in England and Wales, have been working with the development and welfare programme of its member since 1967.

However, revenue sharing has always been a bone of contention and never easy to negotiate. CA had attempted to scrap revenue sharing in 2017 and that led to a prolonged and bitter public dispute between all sides. The fixed percentage of revenue share agreement has existed in Australian cricket since 1998 and it was ultimately retained, but getting it instated is no easy task.

CA also had to deal with the issue of women's payments, with the 2017 pay deal applying to all female players for the first time in Australian cricket and increasing their payments from AUD 7.5 million to 55.2 million.

However, as Bangladesh Cricket Board President Nazmul Hassan said yesterday, he will not be entertaining either of the new demands.

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