



## More empty gestures?

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The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has taken some initiatives in the aftermath of the national team's abysmal performance in the T20 World Cup, where the Tigers' nightmare started with a defeat against Scotland in the first round before ending with defeats in all five Super 12 matches.

The first visible move was the appointment of former national captain and current board director Khaled Mahmud as team director for the upcoming Pakistan series at home while the latest was the formation of a two-member committee, consisting of BCB directors Enayet Husain Siraj and Jalal Yunus, entrusted with assessing why Bangladesh failed to deliver in the ongoing mega-event.

Apart from that, there has only been speculation that the board is planning a major overhaul to the coaching set-up. These sporadic initiatives have raised serious questions about whether the board sincere enough to unearth the real facts behind the debacle and if the board is awaiting another

success from national team to use to sweep all the criticism under the carpet as usual?

It would have been an ideal had the board called an emergency meeting to discuss the issue and formed an independent committee to unearth the reasons for the debacle, similar to the one formed after fiasco at the 2003 World Cup in South Africa.

Only this kind of truly soul-searching effort can help the board fix the problems now like it did then. Bangladesh benefited immensely from the in-depth report from an independent committee after the 2003 disaster.

Instead, the appointment of Mahmud and talk of overhauling the coaching staff appears to be another routine move from the board in search of a quick fix.

It was not only the team's performance in the T20 World Cup, but the overall state of the country's cricket that came under heavy criticism following the forgettable performance. Many opine there are numerous facets that should be addressed in order to break the vicious cycle of debacles with glories few and far between.

From cricket pundits to cricket fans, major issues that came to the fore, other than the players' failure in the field, were: interference

from BCB higher-ups, a lack of foresight and planning for T20 cricket, a poor state of domestic cricket, a failure to think about good team management, an incompetent media contingent who reportedly failed to handle issues in crunch moments.

While the two members of the fact-finding committee are true gentlemen and have been serving the country's cricket in an administrative capacity for a long time, the problem is whether they will be able ask the players, staff and board officials the hard questions given their current positions and produce a comprehensive report for the betterment of the country's cricket?

When the duo, as board members, have to bear responsibility regarding these issues, how can one expect the two-member committee to unearth the truth behind the failure?

When former Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza raised many questions and urged authorities not to scapegoat players for failures but to correct the process without damaging the players, perhaps it deserved special attention.

Unfortunately, the current BCB under the leadership of Nazmul Hassan is seemingly hesitant of paying attention to criticism, instead walking along the same old 'eyewash' path.

## Tamim smashes maiden first-class ton

SPORTS REPORTER



The 2020 ICC Under-19 World Cup-winning members are making a name for themselves in the ongoing 23rd National Cricket League (NCL) as Tanzid Hasan Tamim, playing for Rajshahi Division, smashed his maiden first-class ton against Dhaka Metropolis on the third day of the fourth round of the league at the BKSP 4 yesterday.

Before Tamim, another member of the champion Under-19 squad, Mahmudul Hasan Joy, had smashed his second successive first-class ton for Chattogram Division on the second day of their play against Barishal Division.

Going back to yesterday's action, Tamim struck a 171-ball 145 to help Rajshahi end the day on 241 for four, with a 75-run lead. The left-handed opener starred in a second-wicket 162-run stand with Junaid Siddique, who remained unbeaten on 59.

Unlike Siddique, who had built his 194-ball knock patiently, Tamim played aggressively throughout his innings, smashing as many as 15 boundaries and two maximums during his almost four-hour-long stay at the crease.

However, Tamim's knock came to an end when he fell prey to national team leg-spinner Aminul Islam in the 60th over. While Tamim's ton helped Rajshahi to a commanding position at the end of third day, his U-19 compatriot Joy was

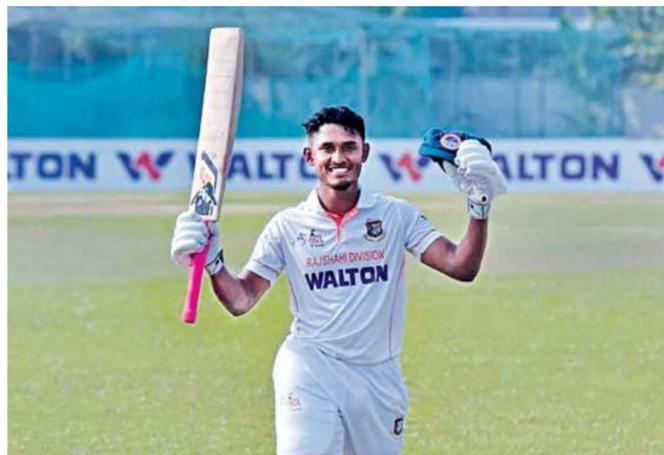
adjudged player-of-the-match after his side Chattogram romped to an innings and 73-run win against Barishal at the BKSP 3 yesterday.

Thanks to Joy's 121-run knock on the second day, Chattogram resumed on 364 for four and with a 128-run lead on the board yesterday. Playing 27.1 overs on the day, Chattogram scored 443 all out, amassing a 207-run lead.

But Barishal, who were bundled out for 236 in their first innings, suffered yet another batting collapse and were restricted to 134 in just 35 overs in their second innings with Chattogram pacer Mehedi Hasan and their national Test team off-spinner Nayeem Hasan sharing seven wickets between them.

Meanwhile, at the Sylhet Academy Ground, Rangpur Division ended the day on 53 for the loss of a solitary wicket, needing 195 more runs to win on the final day against Khulna Division. Khulna, who started the day on 21 for one, scored 212 before being bundled out as overnight batsman Amit Majumder and national Test team all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz struck fifties.

In the other game in Sylhet, Dhaka Division, having resumed on 22 for one, batted the entire day and were at 234 for eight in 103 overs against Sylhet Division before stumps yesterday. Overnight batsman Abdul Mazid (59 off 145) and Raqibul Hasan (54 off 160) struck fifties as Dhaka lead by 92 runs.



## Wedding or Pak tour? Depends on fiancée, says Maxwell

REUTERS, MELBOURNE

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell is uncertain whether he will make Australia's tour of Pakistan in March-April as he and his fiancée plan to have their long-delayed wedding at that time.

Maxwell and pharmacist Vini Raman were engaged in March 2020 but have had to reschedule their wedding several times due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

The 33-year-old would be among the first picked for Australia's limited overs matches against Pakistan between March 29-April 5, which follow a three-test series in the South Asian nation. "I think it's great that we've got a tour to go back there. I think I saw it was 1998 the last time we went there," he told reporters on Tuesday.

"Whether I'm going there or not might probably hinge on my fiancée because my wedding is supposed to be on during that time. So I'm probably not quite the right person to ask that question." Asked whether his fiancée might consider moving the wedding again, Maxwell said: "Not a chance. We've already moved it a couple of times so I think this is it."

Australia meet Pakistan in the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup in Dubai on Thursday as they bid for their first title in the global tournament.

While he had been in top form during the Indian Premier League, Maxwell has not had the kind of destructive innings with the bat in the World Cup that Australian fans have craved. He was, however, starved for chance in the last two matches, finishing unbeaten without scoring in both the wins against Bangladesh and West Indies.

"I'm not sure if you've noticed but I've got two not outs back-to-back which is pretty rare in my career," he said with a laugh. "It means the top order is going really well if I'm not spending that much time out there. I've been in a really good head-space so hopefully (I'm) not required again or hopefully required for another zero not out and just stay at the other end."

## BPL at six venues outside Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER



The Professional Football League Committee (PFLC) yesterday decided to hold the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League in six venues outside Dhaka due to the ongoing renovation work at the country's premier venue Bangabandhu National Stadium.

It was also decided at the meeting to start the season with the Independence Cup on November 27 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium with the participation of 12 BPL teams and four services teams. After the completion of the Independence

Cup, the Federation Cup will get underway at the same venue.

Of the initial 20 venues across the country, the committee trimmed the 20-venue list to 10 before finalising it to Cumilla, Munshiganj, Gopalganj, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Tangail/Mymensingh. The Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi and the newly-built Bashundhara Complex ground were kept on standby for use in emergency cases.

"Considering circumstances and reality, clubs have agreed to play BPL matches outside Dhaka and the venues have been selected with the nod of all clubs. Each venue will have two home

teams, thus 12 professional clubs will play home-and-away matches at six venues across the country," BFF senior vice-president and PFLC chairman Abdus Salam Murshedy said after the meeting at the BFF House yesterday.

Club representatives informed they had come to know the venues to take a final decision on selecting a home venue after discussing the matter with their respective clubs' higher-ups.

However, the representative of Mohammedan SC was not allowed to attend the PFLC meeting citing the name of the representative was not approved yet.



### SRI LANKA'S ROUSING FIGHTBACK

A Sri Lanka forward tries to wriggle past two Maldives defenders during their high-scoring opening match of the Mahinda Rajapaksa Trophy in Colombo yesterday. The hosts stormed back to hold Maldives to a 4-4 draw, thanks to a four-goal haul in the second half from Ahmed Waseem Razeek. In the second match of the tournament today, Bangladesh will take on Seychelles at 4:30pm Bangladesh time, a match which was deferred from Monday due to heavy rain in the Lankan capital.

PHOTO: FFOSL

## 'We are the pioneers'



AFP, Barcelona

When Claudia Riumallo Pineda wakes up, it does not take her long to know where she is.

From her bedroom window she can see the Johan Cruyff Stadium inside Barcelona's Ciutat Esportiva training ground, where she dreams of one day playing for the women's first team.

She is on the right track. The 18-year-old is one of nine trailblazers who this season became the first female players to enrol at La Masia, Barca's famed football academy and proving ground for the likes of Lionel Messi, Andres Iniesta and Xavi Hernandez.

Since its opening in 1979 as an old house next to Camp Nou, La Masia has never had female residents.

But the women's team has been knocking on the door for a long time, with Barcelona Femeni winning the Champions League, Liga Femenina and Copa de la Reina last season.

"This year they have given us La Masia, which is a gift," says Claudia, who for years had to travel an hour by car from her town of Girona just to be able to train with girls.

After playing for local rivals Espanyol, she now represents Barca B and in the afternoons studies chemistry at university. Shaken by financial crisis and the unexpected departure of Messi, most of the good news around the club these days comes from the women's team.

As well as last season's treble, Barca's captain Alexia Putellas was chosen as UEFA's best player of the year and is now also nominated, along with four teammates, for the Women's Ballon d'Or. "It's a huge responsibility because we are the pioneers but it's also nice to know that you are one of the first women to go to La Masia," says Laura Coronado, an 18-year-old goalkeeper.

Coronado's photo, like that of the 105 others at La Masia spread across the club's five professional sports, now hangs in the reception of the more modern complex that took over from the original in 2011.

Gavi, the latest gem of the men's team, arrived when he was eleven years old and continues to live there. The 19-year-old Ansu Fati is also a former resident. "The good thing we have at this club is the mirror is very clear," explains Markel Zubizarreta, sporting director of Barcelona Femeni.