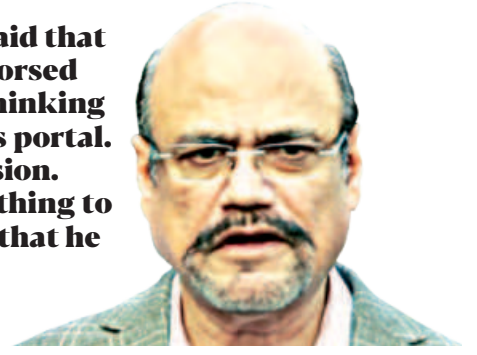


“The board president said that Shakib got himself endorsed with Betwinner News thinking it was some online news portal. It wasn't the right decision. After we explained the thing to Shakib, he understood that he made a mistake.”

BCB's cricket operations chairman
JALAL YUNUS



THE SHAKIB SAGA

October, 2010

During an ODI between Bangladesh and New Zealand, Shakib Al Hasan threatened to hit a member of the ground staff with bat who had moved in front of the sightscreen. He received a warning from the match official but no further action was taken.

March, 2011

After the Bangladesh-West Indies World Cup match, Shakib put his hands behind his back and was seen showing the middle finger to fans at the grandstand of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. After being widely circulated online, the picture of him was printed in several newspapers as well. No actions were taken against him.

February, 2014

When the camera panned towards the Bangladeshi dressing room during an ODI against Sri Lanka in Dhaka, Shakib pointed towards his crotch on live television. He was suspended for three ODIs and fined BDT 300,000 by the BCB.

June, 2014

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Shakib was allegedly accused of assaulting a fan who was apparently harassing the cricketer's wife. The incident occurred during a rain delay in an ODI against India. After the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) held a hearing, Shakib told the media that he wasn't aware that a player can't leave the dressing room area during an international match.

July, 2014

Shakib was summoned to Dhaka by BCB after he texted new coach Chandika Hathurusingha that he would prefer quitting international cricket over joining a training camp.

Few days later, the BCB banned him

for six months due to his "severe misbehaviour". BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon had claimed at the time that "he [Shakib] has a major attitude problem, which is unparalleled in the history of Bangladesh cricket." But in October that year, BCB reduced Shakib's suspension to three and a half months after Bangladesh were whitewashed in ODIs and Tests on their tour of West Indies in August-September without Shakib.

November, 2015

Shakib lost his temper and verbally abused umpire Tanvir Ahmed during a BPL game after the umpire denied an lbw appeal. He received a one-match ban and a BDT 20,000 fine.



March, 2018

When a no-ball for height was not given in the final over of Bangladesh's match against Sri Lanka in the Nidahas Trophy, captain Shakib was furious and urged Mahmudullah to leave the field. The glass door of the Bangladesh dressing room was also broken amid all the drama. Shakib acknowledged that the players, including himself, had possibly let their emotions get the better of them. Later, he expressed regret, but the BCB didn't give any opinion on the incident publicly.

October, 2019

After Shakib admitted to three allegations of violating the ICC Anti-Corruption Code as he failed to report an approach from a bookie, the International Cricket Council (ICC) banned him from all forms of cricket for two years, with one year of that suspended.

June, 2021

Following his on-field outburst during a match between Mohammedan Sporting and Abahani Limited in the Dhaka Premier League, Shakib was given a light sentence of a three-match suspension from the league and a fine of BDT 500,000. While his team Mohammedan won the match easily via DLS method, Shakib lost his cool twice during the game. First, he kicked the stumps after a strong lbw appeal against his Bangladesh teammate Mushfiqur Rahim was denied. After that, the cricketer went on to uproot the stumps after umpires called for covers with just a ball left before completion of the minimum six overs in an innings required for a result in a T20 game.

August, 2022

On August 3, Shakib announced his new collaboration with Betwinner News, a sister concern of betting site Betwinner. The BCB by-laws prohibit cricket players and board employees from having any affiliations with companies related to betting, alcohol, tobacco, etc. He informed the BCB in a letter on August 11 that he would be ending his sponsorship agreement after several days of drama and uncertainty. However, instead of sanctioning Shakib for violating the code of conduct, the board opted to reward him. He was appointed Bangladesh's T20I captain till the upcoming T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in Australia in October-November.

Shakib pampering stems from failure in doing the basics

The reason is very simple. This board agonisingly failed to groom the next generation of cricketers that would be capable of taking the baton from Shakib, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad.

BISHWAJIT ROY

At least for few hours, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was bold enough. It was when the board had stated that there were some fundamental principles that the board must abide by, even when it came to dealing with the latest controversy that Shakib Al Hasan had become embroiled in.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon also reminded reporters that Bangladesh had won many matches with and without Shakib.

But there were not many who expected a result in line with 'fundamental principles'. Past experiences had led to a different story when it came to handling disciplinary issues surrounding country's most celebrated cricketer.

Why would someone believe that the BCB would follow a fundamental principle or take a decision based on any moral ground when the same board had hardly taken a cricketer's ICC suspension for failing to report an approach from a bookie in consideration before appointing him as Test captain? Probably a rare instance, leaving aside many other issues.

So it did not come from out of blue -- only two days after the all-rounder was made to rescind his contract with a sister concern of a betting site -- when the BCB announced Shakib as the skipper of the T20I side till the next T20 World Cup in Australia

Still, many were searching for answers about why this board was so lenient towards Shakib and whether they would reserve the same treatment for any other cricketer for such incidents one after another.

Here the fundamental question is: why are they so lenient?

Why do they appear so helpless when it comes to complying with moral judgements? Why have they allowed Shakib to set one bad example after another for future generations?

We need to scrutinise whether they have dug their own grave due to a lack of options that sees them time and again compromise simple disciplinary action against Shakib.

Putting aside disciplinary issues, why did the BCB assign a cricketer to a leadership role when his availability is uncertain?

The reason is very simple. This board agonisingly failed to groom the next generation of cricketers that would be capable of taking the baton from Shakib, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad.

Papon had taken over the helm of the country's most affluent sports body in October 2012 but unfortunately, after ten years under his leadership, this board is yet to produce a bunch of cricketers who can represent Bangladesh consistently.

They love to say that they have no shortage of cricketers in the pipeline but what kind of reality they are facing was only exposed

during Shakib's latest controversy, which left them crying for a captain to lead the T20 side in case the all-rounder did not comply with their demands.

Despite a faulty domestic structure, Bangladesh cricket produced cricketers like Shakib and Tamim because of some good programmes and selection clarity during the then board.

The most pathetic part is that the current board not only failed to improve the domestic structure but also failed to make any headway for future cricketers with a clear mission and vision.

Apparently, what they love is to celebrate sporadic success, mostly banking on senior cricketers. It is not that there was a dearth of talented cricketers during the current board's tenure, but the problem lies mainly in inconsistency, which has now created such a situation that they hardly find any automatic choice other than Shakib.

Things devolved from bad to worse now and that is why all their thoughts revolve around Shakib, the only rescuer for the BCB in any crisis situation at this moment.

It is not only a moral question for the current BCB higher-ups, but also a question of covering up their fundamental failure of creating a future generation of cricketers when they deal with Shakib's disciplinary issues.

‘What message is Shakib sending to the next generation?’

The latest Shakib Al Hasan saga -- which stemmed from a controversial sponsorship deal with Betwinner News, a sister concern of betting site Betwinner -- eventually ended when the cricketer terminated the deal in the face of an uproar in the cricketing fraternity and a strong stance from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). Interestingly, the BCB rewarded Shakib for that ill-advised deal by handing him the T20I captaincy until the ICC T20 World Cup later this year, which again reflected the helplessness of the board when it comes to tackling the problematic yet vital member of their team. Former Bangladesh captain and match referee Roquibul Hassan spoke to The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin and shared his views on the issue during an exclusive interview. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (DS): You must have followed the entire saga of Shakib Al Hasan's controversial sponsorship deal with Betwinner News.

Roquibul Hassan (RH): We saw the drama between Shakib and the BCB just before announcing the Asia Cup squad, which eventually came to a solution that is good for our cricket. But what I felt is that the BCB took a strong stance with integrity and the law in mind. I think Shakib knew that he would not be allowed to see out that contract but it was a question of big money. Hardly anyone had heard about Betwinner News prior to this incident and I think the company actually benefited from the controversy. For the 10 days after the controversy started, this site got huge exposure and its purpose was served. The entire thing was a negative for us, but it was a positive for Betwinner. I don't believe when Shakib says that he had no idea about the contract and that he was misguided since he has



played international cricket for over a decade now. I think the message from the board was very clear.

DS: Despite the controversy, Shakib was eventually rewarded with the captaincy of the T20I side. Does this

send the wrong message to players who may believe things would be different if they had committed similar transgressions?

RH: Once he realised his mistake, he had a discussion with the BCB president. But at the same time we eventually rewarded Shakib with the T20I captaincy. The board explained that they had previously decided to make him the captain. Since we are going through a tough phase after defeats in the West Indies and Zimbabwe, it was obvious that someone like Shakib would get responsibility in such a crisis given his vast experience. But I also want to say that Shakib did the wrong thing by engaging with a controversial site. When the board hands over the captaincy to Shakib right after such a controversy, whether anyone says so or not, it will have a negative impact on other players. Things would have been different if the player was not Shakib but someone else.

DS: The board said the reason for giving Shakib the T20I captaincy despite the controversy was because he remains the best player on the team. Can we say that the BCB was helpless and should share the blame for not being able to prepare the next lot of cricketers?

RH: Nobody is bigger than the game. Maybe the board felt helpless. Maybe the needed Shakib desperately in order to keep the balance of the team, which is why they gave him a chance. But my question is how long? Shakib has done such things many times in the past but there is no question when it comes to his talent on the field. The question is what message is he sending to the next generation? And I think the youngsters are getting the wrong message from a role model like Shakib. His record is bad as a person, not as a player. We all know that but if we had two or three strong players like Shakib, would the decision be the same?