

When it's the BNP, you never know



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IF you look at the history of modern democracy, it is not going to be easy to find a match for the BNP. Despite not being in power for one and a half decades, making one serious political mistake after another during that period, and in the process pushing itself further and further away from regaining power, BNP is still one of the two most popular political parties in Bangladesh.

For years, BNP members – local activists and central high-ups alike – have been facing thousands of political cases and stern police actions all over the country. Still, it will be hard to find a place in Bangladesh where the party does not exist. If there is a local unit of the ruling Awami League anywhere, there will most likely be a unit of BNP as well.

Over the last 13 years, the BNP has boycotted a general election and made a last-minute decision to participate in the next one, and came out with almost equally devastating results on both occasions: zero seats in the election they boycotted, and almost zero seats in the one they took part in. The last time the party took part in a general election with their usual preparation was in 2008, and they faced a massive defeat.

Although they won about a fifth of the seats in parliament, they decided to stay out of the House almost throughout the entire tenure of that parliament. All of that meant that the media (both mainstream and social) was the only platform left for them to challenge the government. As a result, they never got to have an official say in the country's policymaking process all these years.

With yet another general election coming up, BNP is trying to warm

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FILE PHOTO: STAR

up its ranks. One would think that the party would struggle to find supporters for its rallies and processions after being away from power for so many years. Surprisingly, that isn't the case: supporter turnouts in their street programmes have been impressive. Historically, major political protests are staged during winter and spring because of the pleasant weather, which allows the parties to keep their supporters out in the streets for long hours. However, this year, BNP is seeing supporter turnout despite the summer heat and the sun beating down hard.

Tactically speaking, the party has never been in a worse situation. Nobody knows when their supreme leader Khaleda Zia, who is in her 70s and has been fighting potentially

fatal ailments, will be able to come back to active politics. Their second-in-command Tarique Rahman, convicted for serious criminal offences, has been in exile in the UK for more than a decade. Many of their seasoned leaders have either died or have become inactive due to old age and other reasons, leaving it to only a handful of leaders at the top to run the show, some of whom do not have proven political prowess and administrative potential. Add to that the political cases hanging over virtually every important BNP member's head, and you can't help but wonder where the party is getting the organisational strength from to amass as many people as they are able to.

There are several factors that are probably helping the BNP build up

the emotional drive for its supporters to come and join the street protests. First is the death of at least three men from gunshots fired allegedly by law enforcement agencies during street protests in recent times. Second is the raging price hike of essentials such as food and fuel. Third is the news of many different kinds of corruption allegedly by ruling party politicians and government officials. And fourth is the eternal anti-incumbency emotion that every party in Bangladesh that has ever been in power has had to deal with.

The protest programmes that the BNP is currently holding are almost exclusively on issues such as price hike and corruption. Through these protests, the party is trying to attempt to correct its previous

failures of not being able to portray itself as a pro-people party. In fact, this failure to address issues that affect people's lives directly is often seen as one of the many serious strategic mistakes the BNP has made in the past. But one thing is clear that so far the party's stance is to not join any election under the current Awami League government. Then again, you never know with the BNP; they might decide to join the elections at the last minute like they did in 2018. They might be as popular and this might be the source of confidence to contest the polls. However, that popularity did not translate into favourable results in the last elections. So just being popular isn't enough; the party needs to make strategic preparations to fire up its grassroots and get them ready to stand firm and compete in the local-level standoffs with their political rivals.

You can never be sure whether the large number of people joining these recent political programmes of BNP comprise general people, who are coming spontaneously out of their frustrations towards the current government, or just party workers coming in return for some form of material gain or expectations of future rewards. Either way, supporter turnout is merely an indicator of the party's popularity, which is just one of many prerequisites for winning an election.

Heading into the next general elections, BNP seems to be lacking a concrete strategy to address the other prerequisites. Even if they do have a plan, it needs to come out just about now; otherwise, a change of fate will keep eluding them.

Our cricket is in shambles, and BCB must answer for it



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BANGLADESH cricket seems to be on life support right now. The administration and management of the sport at the hands of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is unable to not simply provide a holistic platform that can provide concrete results on the pitch, but is clearly and concerningly symptomatic of an unprofessional sport management system which continues to fail in providing long-term solutions for the development of the game. I am no cricket expert, therefore I am not in a place to discuss the specific issues that Bangladesh faces on the pitch. Hence, in this column, I will discuss certain core challenges that the BCB needs to overcome as the premium sporting body in the country – and do so through the lens of administrative policy, governance and best practices.

Let's start with the notion of accountability. The leadership of the BCB – ranging from the president to the directors – are officially voted in via elections. But it would be ignorant to not mention the implicit blessings from the heart of the national political leadership that plays the primary role in deciding who runs the show – the tenure of the current BCB president is



There is a serious lack of professionalism and accountability in BCB leadership, including its president.

SOURCE: BCB

evidence enough to show the serious lack of democracy and professional accountability within the national cricket authority. Add to this the absurd back and forth which the BCB executives have with the media, which is frankly quite embarrassing. From overreaching in discussing personal perspectives on team management to publicly criticising players under contract with the board, one has witnessed enough across the media to recognise the unprofessional conduct by certain

I don't intend to mention any names, nor do I hope to attack anyone personally. But we have all seen instances of how board officials have spoken to the media and created unnecessary controversies regarding the players. This trend must stop. The first item on the agenda to reform cricket should be via an independent audit of the BCB, perhaps by hiring a professional management firm or by appointing a judicial commission. The lack of an efficient and professional

governance system is a key barrier that needs to be immediately overcome in the interest of preserving the integrity of the game and to promote a long-term plan beyond politics and personal reward. An independent audit will provide key findings which can then be addressed to improve the systems and normative structures

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with respect to the administration of the game.

Defining the role of cricket executives via concrete rules and procedures – and holding them to account – is crucial. Differentiating between the roles of the team management in the national setup versus cricket administrators is equally important. Administrators strategise, plan and govern the long-term development of the game; they set the vision and culture by identifying goals. They work towards addressing

systematic barriers with regards to the growth of the sport, and focus on enhancing the infrastructural system that can create the basis for the evolution of a three-tier system for the three formats of cricket. The team management picks the team – it is quite simple, really. Therefore, cricket executives and administrators should play little to no role in sharing their opinions regarding the selection of players.

Broader questions of corruption and politicisation cannot be ignored either. The Transparency International published the Global Corruption Report in 2016, which investigated the governance challenges that sports bodies such as the BCB faced with respect to income generation mechanisms. An array of self-inflicted problems concerning fixing and betting scandals, the corporate structures of teams in BPL and, broadly speaking, the categorical ignorance towards domestic competitions such as the Premier League is indicative of troubling levels of corruption and policy failures within the BCB. So, to put it simply, not only does the richest sporting body in Bangladesh have an outrageously preposterous organisational culture, but at the same time it has become an unfortunate hotbed for controversies beyond the game itself.

Cricket has moved beyond activities on the pitch, so having an all-inclusive approach towards the development of our

players will bode well. Getting assistance from communications, nutrition and well-being experts to train our cricketers with regards to media engagement and promoting an athletic lifestyle is integral to thus end. I believe that the relative success that Bangladesh has had in the ODI format is due to the sheer class and aptitudes of certain core players. The Big 5, as we know them, have entered or are entering the swansong of their careers. And in recent times, the tragedy that has been the handling of a senior pro like Mahmudullah in the past two months reminds us of how abysmal the BCB is in managing its contracted players. But, as was the case with former Captain Mashrafe Mortaza, a lack of clarity and professional communication on the BCB's part is distressing and has given enough reasons to even the senior-most players in the national setup to voice their concerns regarding the state of cricket.

Goal-based sports management has been absent in Bangladesh cricket due to the individualisation of the BCB. Undemocratic and deeply unaccountable leadership structures have been barriers towards the sport's development. At the end of the day, if those responsible for the advancement of cricket are themselves unable to work within a framework that is institutionally accountable, then cricket in Bangladesh will see little to no long-term progress.

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18 Revue acts

22 Mission man

24 Asian capital

25 Clay, later

26 Bear's lair

27 Bamboo muncher

30 Raiment

32 Brat's opposite

33 Charged bit

34 Prevailing weather

patterns

38 Parroted

41 Terrible

42 Nervous

43 "Bus Stop"

44 Conical homes

45 They may clash

DOWN

1 Political alliance

2 Julia of film

3 Pioneering hypnotist

5 Stev

6 Keen

7 enjoyment

7 Denali setting

8 Cambridge sch.

9 Eden name

10 Roulette bet

16 Really impress

19 Starting a paragraph

20 Low digits

21 Confession list

22 Mama's mate

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35 Midmonth day

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SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা

আবশ্যিক

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নধীন "Implementation of Outcome Based Education (OBE) Curriculum and External Accreditation of Undergraduate Program of BUET" শীর্ষক প্রকল্পে জরুরী ভিত্তিতে ০১ জন একাউন্টস অফিসার এক বছরের জন্য সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে নিয়োগ করা হবে। উল্লিখিত পদের জন্য নিম্নলিখিত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের নিকট হতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম	পদের নাম	পদের ন্যূনতম যোগ্যতা	পদ সংখ্যা
১।	Accounts Officer সর্বসাকুল্যে মাসিক বেতন (Consolidated salary) ৳: ৩০,০০০/- টাকা	সকল পর্যায়ে কমপক্ষে ২য় গ্রেডিং/বিভাগসহ কোন অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে বাণিজ্য/ব্যবসায় প্রশাসন-এ স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি+কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে হিসাব সংক্রান্ত কাজে ন্যূনতম ১ (এক) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।	০১টি

প্রার্থীকে সাদা কাগজে নাম, পিতার নাম, মাতার নাম, স্থায়ী ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, জাতীয়তা, জন্ম তারিখ, মোবাইল নম্বর ইত্যাদি উল্লেখপূর্বক, আবেদনপত্র এবং NID-এর কপি, সাদা তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ২ কপি ছবি ও সকল প্রকার সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি এবং নিজ ঠিকানা সম্বলিত ক্ষেত্র খামসহ পরিচালক, IQAC, পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক ভবন, বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০ বরাবর পৌঁছাতে হবে। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষায়/সাক্ষাৎকারে উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্য কোন প্রকার যাতায়াত বা দৈনিক ভাতা প্রদান করা হবে না। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ ব্যতিরেকে এই নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া গ্রহণ/বাতিল/পদ সংখ্যা হ্রাস-বৃদ্ধির ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়ায় কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীগণকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

উল্লিখিত পদের আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখঃ ১০/১০/২০২২

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রেজিস্ট্রার