

THE FARUQUE SAGA

August 21: Former national skipper and chief selector Faruque Ahmed was appointed president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) following Nazmul Hassan Papon's resignation during a board meeting at the Secretariat. Nazmul Abedeen Fahim also joined the board as a director, nominated by the National Sports Council (NSC) alongside Faruque. They replaced Jalal Yunus, who resigned, and Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby, whose directorship was revoked by the NSC after he refused to step down.

May 28: Amid growing criticism, Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud reportedly asked Faruque to resign during a meeting at the adviser's residence.

May 29: Former skipper Aminul Islam Bulbul, who recently arrived in Dhaka for family reasons, confirmed to The Daily Star his agreement to assume the BCB presidency. Faruque, however, insisted he would not resign. Later that day, eight BCB directors sent a letter of no confidence in Faruque to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, requesting the revocation of his board membership. Only Akrum Khan -- Faruque's brother-in-law -- did not sign. At around 11:00pm, the NSC revoked Faruque's directorship, citing majority board opposition and his failure to maintain normal BCB operations, referencing the BPL fact-finding committee report. His exit came just nine months into his tenure. Late in the night, the NSC nominated Bulbul as its new councillor, replacing Sheikh Hamim Hasan.

May 30: Ahead of an emergency BCB board meeting, Aminul Islam Bulbul received NSC's directorship. Following the meeting, he was elected as the BCB's 17th president.

BISHWAJIT ROY

Faruque Ahmed ascended to the presidency of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) after the July uprising, with the onus of reforming the board from the inside. But his tenure ended in a little over nine months before the reform initiatives could even begin.

Plenty of whispers and theories surround his departure, but what truly led to his premature departure remains a question with no clear answer and the official explanation only deepens the mystery rather than providing clarity.

Nine months into his presidency, managing the board's day-to-day affairs had seemingly become too much for Faruque; let alone delivering on the long-term vision he had promised.

The situation, both on and off the field, was dismal. The national team was struggling, allegations of match-fixing were circulating, and administrative disarray was widespread in domestic cricket -- all reminiscent of the dysfunction Faruque had vowed to fix.

Were these the reasons behind his downfall?

One must put aside the speculation and drama, and turn to the official version.

The National Sports Council (NSC) cited two reasons for cancelling Faruque's directorship:

1. A no-confidence motion submitted by eight current BCB directors.

2. The need to maintain the smooth operation of the BCB following the findings of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) fact-finding committee report.



So, two issues: the no-confidence motion and the BPL controversy.

The no-confidence motion accused Faruque of autocratic leadership, repeated constitutional violations, misuse of power and unilateral decision-making. Furthermore, the directors claimed his conduct created administrative chaos, worsened team performance, and caused serious reputational harm to Bangladesh cricket.

The eight directors who signed the letter sent to the ministry were: Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Fahim Sinha, Saiful Alam Swapan Chowdhury, Iftekhar Rahman Mithu, Mahbub Anam, Kazi Enam Ahmed, Manjur Alam and Mohammad Salahuddin.

The irony? Except for Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, who joined the board with Faruque after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, 2024, the rest were part of the previous BCB regime under long-serving president Nazmul Hassan Papon.

Did any of these individuals ever speak out against Papon's administration the way they now have against Faruque?

Take Mahbub Anam, for instance -- often referred to as "a man for all seasons" -- who has been a fixture in BCB governance under almost every government. Has he ever publicly opposed the wrongdoing of any previous administration?

Some might argue that Faruque accomplished more -- or at least shook the status quo harder -- in nine months than Papon did in over a decade.

It is also worth noting that within Faruque's board, BCB Tender & Purchase Committee Chairman Mahbub and BCB Finance Committee Chairman Sinha were both signatories authorising banking transactions.

This raises a fundamental question: why should only one individual be held solely responsible for alleged misdeeds, especially when others were actively involved in the decision-making process?

Governance -- particularly in a complex organisation like the BCB -- is a collective responsibility. If missteps occurred, surely those who participated in or endorsed key actions must also be held accountable.

Singling out Faruque while exonerating others who were part of the very same system points to selective justice -- and possibly a political maneuver rather than an objective evaluation of performance.

For the first time in BCB history, board directors openly rebelled against their president. And tellingly, those leading the charge were deeply embedded in the previous regime.

The irregularities and unethical practices Faruque was accused of were embedded in the system during the previous regime, of which majority of the current directors were a part of. If Faruque is being held culpable for it, why not them?

Even more ironically, the current authority acted against its own nominated president based on allegations made by directors from the former board.

Then there's the BPL issue. If the controversy surrounding the tournament was serious enough to bring down a president, why was Faruque the only one held accountable? Why was Nazmul Abedeen Fahim -- BPL's member secretary -- not implicated?

Instead, Fahim was promoted to vice-president under new BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul.

Why were two individuals involved in the same matter treated so differently?

The question that continues to loom large is whether Faruque received fair treatment from the higher authorities. Because, despite the seriousness of the charges, no detailed explanation or concrete evidence was ever made public before his dismissal.

PSG's modern flair faces Inter's grit

AFP, Munich

PSG have their sights fixed on finally winning the Champions League but a rugged and battle-hardened Inter side stand in their way in Saturday's final in Munich.

The climax to the European season has thrown up a mouthwatering clash of opposing styles and ideas. It is a contest between one of the continent's old guard and one of the state-owned modern superclubs.

Despite enormous spending, PSG have never won the most glamorous prize in European club football and this is just their second final since the transformative Qatari takeover of the team from the French capital in 2011.

In the absence of star footballers Kylian Mbappe, Neymar, and even Lionel Messi, Luis Enrique has transformed PSG into a thrilling young side (an average age under 24) with the onus on collective displays rather than individual priorities and has taken Europe by storm this season.

When they last came to Munich in November and lost 1-0 to Bayern, they were in danger of being knocked out during the league phase but a brilliant comeback win

I feel great with myself, I feel complete as a manager and as a person. I believe that this team and these players deserve to experience this final. The Paris fans and the club deserve to be Champions League winners.

Luis Enrique,
PSG manager



Winning would be the crowning achievement of a great job that started four years ago. We are desperate to make our fans

really happy. We will give it our all; we will play the final lots of respect [for the opposition], but absolutely no fear.

Simone Inzaghi,
Inter coach

• This is the first ever competitive meeting between PSG and Inter, and is only the second European Cup/Champions League final between a French and Italian side, after Marseille beat Milan 1-0 in 1993.

Incidentally, that final was also held in Munich.

• While PSG are appearing in their second European Cup/Champions League final, while this is Inter's seventh appearance in the showpiece match.

• Inter have scored 26 goals in Europe this season;



their joint most ever in a major European season, also scoring 26 in 2002-03.

• Inter have trailed for just 1.2% of their Champions League matches this season, falling behind in only three games but never for more than 370 seconds in any of them.

• PSG have already won their most games (10) and scored their most goals (33) in a single major European campaign.



Azmi, Anik emerge fastest sprinters

Azmi Khatun and Robiul Hasan Anik, both from Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan, run holding their institution's flag after finishing first in their respective 100m events in the U-18 Girls' and Boys' categories of the 39th Junior Athletics Championships, which began yesterday at the National Stadium. Azmi set a national record with a time of 12.40 seconds, while Anik clocked 11.10 seconds, as both won gold medals. However, their times were recorded as national records under hand timing, as electronic timing was not used due to inclement weather. Meanwhile, a total of five national records were set on the first day of the two-day meet.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Women footballers face Indonesia today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's football team will look to display a better performance as they now have the senior players present for their game against Indonesia in a Tri-Nation Series at King Abdullah II Stadium in Amman, Jordan, today.

The match will kick off at 8:00 pm (Bangladesh Time).

Bangladesh, sans most of the senior players who were part of the SAFF Women's Championship-winning squad, played two FIFA friendlies against the United Arab Emirates in March following a rift between senior players and English coach Peter Butler.

However, now that the crisis is over, the girls are eager to play their natural game against 94th-ranked Indonesia, who played a 1-1 draw against Jordan in the series on Wednesday.

"Bangladesh are now a stronger side than the squad that played against UAE because of a good combination of senior and junior players. So we are hoping to perform better on the back of our hard work in the training camp," said captain Afidea Khandokar.



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