



**ICC has welcomed it [the decision to remove Faruque and bring in Bulbul]. The ICC is not unaware of the current situation of Bangladesh cricket. From that point of view, it has also welcomed the new leadership.**

Youth and Sports adviser  
**ASIF MAHMUD**

## Faruque removed 'for performance, not corruption'

SPORTS REPORTER

Youth and Sports Advisor Asif Mahmud has clarified that the removal of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed was driven by performance issues, not allegations of corruption.

Talking to reporters during the prize-giving ceremony of the 35th National (Men's) Handball Championship 2025 yesterday, Asif stated that the International Cricket Council (ICC) welcomed the change in leadership and the move followed due process in line with the BCB constitution and ICC guidelines.

"This is not some sort of punishment," Asif said. "We must judge based on performance, and that performance hasn't been satisfactory. Cricket is our main sport, and unfortunately, we've seen a steady decline. The BPL investigation committee report and the current state of cricket made it clear that a change was needed."

Faruque was replaced by former national captain Aminul Islam Bulbul after the National Sports Council (NSC) revoked Faruque's

directorship following a no-confidence motion by eight out of nine BCB directors. Asif emphasised that the removal was administrative and procedural, not personal.

"We did not remove the president per se. We withdrew his nomination as a director, which in turn vacated his presidency," Asif explained. "It's similar to how a player underperforms and gets dropped."

Addressing concerns about government interference, Asif said, "The government acted within its authority. There was no undue interference. And importantly, we've been in constant communication with the ICC. They've welcomed the new leadership."

Responding to Faruque's claim that he wasn't given a chance to defend himself, Asif noted, "I spoke to him personally. He couldn't answer some of the key questions. We tried to resolve the matter quietly, but when that failed, we had to take action."

Asif concluded by reiterating the goal: "Our focus is to improve cricket. This decision was made with that purpose in mind."

## Bulbul begins BCB tenure with decentralisation drive

SPORTS REPORTER

A day after assuming the role at the helm, newly appointed Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam Bulbul chaired a four-and-a-half-hour-long board of directors meeting at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday.

At the outset of the meeting, Bulbul -- a former official at both the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) -- delivered a presentation himself, marking a first for a BCB president.

In his address, he stressed the urgent need to launch four new development programmes. However, there were no discussions about elections or constitutional reforms.

A major outcome of the meeting was the decision to decentralise cricket operations in Bangladesh. This will begin with two pilot projects in the country's northern and southern parts.

"This is totally a fresh beginning," Iftekhar Rahman Mithu, chairman of BCB's media and communication committee, told reporters after the meeting.

Similar initiatives were introduced during the tenure of former president Nazmul Hassan Papon but never materialised. "Since around 2000-2002, we are hearing about regional cricket. But for the first time, we feel that it will finally come to light," he added.

The meeting also covered plans to develop coaches, umpires, and curators through talent hunts and training initiatives.

"Experienced British turf manager Toby Lumsden will conduct a seven-day training camp to develop the curators. Similar programmes will also be introduced for coaches and umpires."

"The new board president wants educated local curators, groundsmen in all venues in the country so that we don't need to depend on foreign ones," Mithu informed further, noting that restoring the BCB's image -- which has taken a hit in recent months -- was another key talking point.

He also mentioned that the board is still due Tk 20 crore from TV broadcasters, sponsors, and franchises. If the amount is collected, the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) from last year would yield a net profit of Tk 75 lakh.



JUNIOR ATHLETICS

## BKSP blaze track with record-breaking run

SPORTS REPORTER

The 39th Junior (Age-Group) Athletics Championships concluded yesterday at the National Stadium, with Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) once again stamping their authority on the track and field with a dominant performance.

As expected, BKSP emerged champions, clinching 25 gold, 19 silver, and nine bronze medals from the 40 events contested over two days. BKSP athletes alone set 10 of the 13 new records, with the remaining three coming from Noakhali, Ansar & VDP athletes.

Ansar & VDP finished runners-up with seven gold, 10 silver, and three bronze medals, followed by Kurigram DSA in third place with two gold, three silver, and four bronze.

Noakhali also won two gold medals but had to settle for fourth place, having bagged two silver and three bronze medals. Chattogram, Rajshahi Education Board, Gopalganj, and Munshiganj also made the gold tally, each winning one gold medal. Eight more district sports associations made it to the medal table with silver and bronze medals.

On the final day of the competition, new records were set in the boys' 100m hurdles, boys' 4x400m relay, boys' 400m, girls' 400m, girls' 800m, girls' discus throw, and boys' triple jump in the U-18 category. In the U-16 category, the boys' and girls' 400m events also saw new benchmarks set.

## Caught in a perfect storm, Tigers grasping at straws

ASHEFAQ-UL-ALAM

Consecutive defeats on the ground, chaos at the board and regression in the rankings -- all have combined to create a perfect storm for Bangladesh cricket in the last few days, one that has left fans, and the players, grasping at straws to somehow keep their love for the game and the Bangladesh team from fading into oblivion.

The month of May began with the men's team dropping to 10th in the ODI rankings for the first time in nearly two decades in the first week, and it concluded with them falling to 10th position in the T20I rankings as well.

In between, the Tigers suffered a 2-1 series defeat against the UAE, their second bilateral T20I series defeat against an associate team in 13 months, having lost by the same margin against the USA in May 2024.

The wounded Tigers then travelled to Lahore and copped even more blows, conceding comprehensive losses in back-to-back T20Is against Pakistan.

While Litton Das' team was getting outclassed by a Pakistan team that are going through a transition period, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) went through a change in presidency for the second time in nine months.

After weeks of speculation, Faruque Ahmed was removed as the board president following an unprecedented show of no-confidence from the majority of the board directors and the National Sports Council (NSC) rescinding his directorship.

Aminul Islam Bulbul replaced Faruque at the helm and promised to make positive changes, something his predecessor had also done after assuming power, but was ultimately dethroned from the BCB almost as dramatically as he had been crowned.

With dark clouds hovering all around and no silver lining in sight, Bangladesh cricket is going through its worst period in recent memory. The only thing that could lift the gloom, even momentarily, is if the Tigers pull up their socks and achieve a face-saving win over Pakistan



PHOTO: AI GENERATED

in the third and final T20I set to take place today.

The match, which will take place at the Gaddafi Stadium, is a dead rubber, as Pakistan have already taken an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

However, Bangladesh will not only be playing for pride today, they will also

be vying to make history by defeating Pakistan in Pakistan in T20Is for the first time.

But a victory seems far-fetched going by how Bangladesh have fared so far in the series, falling miserably short of chasing a target of 202 in both matches. Bangladesh lost the first match by 37 runs, after losing momentum and wickets in the middle of the chase.

But the visitors did not learn from their mistakes at all, as even after getting off to a flying start, reaching 38-0 after three overs, they lost five wickets in just 23 balls and squandered any hopes of a series-leveling win.

Number nine batter Tanzim Sakib's maiden half-century pushed the total to 144 all out in 19 overs as they lost the game by 57 runs. After such defeats, the chances of a victory seem slim. But another meek surrender could potentially push many Bangladesh fans beyond their breaking point and push Bangladesh cricket deeper into the throes of despair.



## AFEIDA AND CO START STRONG

Bangladesh women held superior Indonesia (ranked 94) as the charges of Peter Butler (ranked 133) played out a goalless draw in a FIFA friendly fixture at the King Abdullah Stadium in Amman, Jordan, yesterday. The girls, led by defender Afeida Khandakar and boosted by the return of five mainstays, next play a stronger side, Jordan (ranked 74), on June 3 in the tri-nation series at the same venue.

PHOTO: BFF

## 'Ours is the strongest side since the 2003 SAFF winners'

Bangladesh and Bashundhara Kings forward **Rakib Hossain** finished as the top local scorer in the recently concluded Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), netting 11 goals in 17 games -- one more than the previous season. Rakib spoke with *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman about his form, domestic football, the national team, and the inclusion of Canada-based Shamit Shome in the Bangladesh squad.

**The Daily Star (DS):** You've become the top local scorer in successive seasons. What was your mindset?

**Rakib Hossain (RH):** When you aim to make your team champions, you have to perform well -- and the goals will come naturally. Being the top local scorer again feels good, especially after having to compete with both foreign and national players. Still, I would feel better if I scored more.

**DS:** Of your 11 goals, nine came against weaker teams like Dhaka Wanderers, Chittagong Abahani, and Fakirpool. Any regrets about not scoring more against bigger teams?

**RH:** I do regret it. I should have scored four or five more. Bashundhara Kings dominated many matches and created lots of chances, but we failed to convert them in key games.

**DS:** What was the difference between this season's Rakib and last season's?

**RH:** I had a chest injury and couldn't play comfortably at the start of the season, during which we played top teams like Mohammedan, Abahani.

I recovered in the second phase and then found goals.

**DS:** What went wrong for Bashundhara Kings, who dropped to third spot for the first time after winning five consecutive titles?

**RH:** First, we didn't get the expected performance from our foreign players. If you look at Mohammedan's scorers, most goals came from foreigners. In contrast, local players scored most of our goals. Also, injuries affected our foreign and local players. We locals couldn't always deliver our best either.

**DS:** How did the season for the players go since changes in the country's political landscape and the withdrawal of Sheikh Jamal DC and Sheikh Russel KC?

**RH:** Players suffered the most. Many quality players didn't get clubs, and some had to accept lower payments. There was competition, but it would have been stronger with teams like Sheikh Jamal, Sheikh Russel, Saif SC.



**DS:** Your goal conversion in international matches is lower than in domestic matches. Why?

**RH:** The difference in international and domestic matches is big. But I always give my best. I've made

mistakes -- if I'd stayed calmer in the box, I could've scored more than the four goals I have for the national team.

**DS:** Tickets for the Singapore match (on June 10) are already sold out. Can the team meet fan expectations?

**RH:** This Bangladesh team is more mature than before. We know Singapore are strong, but we'll try to repay the fans who bought tickets. Our goal is to beat Singapore.

**DS:** What's your take on inclusion of Shamit Shome after Hamza Choudhury in the national team?

**RH:** Honestly, they are great players. We saw Hamza's impact in the match against India. Shamit's inclusion will strengthen us, because playing in the Premier League or other top leagues is no small feat. If he can contribute like Hamza, the match against Singapore will be easier, and our chances of scoring will improve. I believe this is the strongest Bangladesh team since the 2003 SAFF-winning side, especially with expatriates like Jamal Bhuiyan, Tareq Kazi, and now Shamit.



Top seed Jannik Sinner dismissed world number 34 Jiri Lehecka in straight sets on Saturday at Roland Garros as the Italian booked his place in the fourth round. Sinner delivered a dominant display of power-hitting as the first-ranked men's player beat his opponent 6-0, 6-1, 6-2.

PHOTO: REUTERS