

Tamim vows transparency after being elected BCB president

SPORTS REPORTER

A new Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) elections were held just eight months after the previous one and, as widely expected, Tamim Iqbal was elected unopposed as board president by the newly formed panel of directors on Sunday.

In his first press conference after being elected, Tamim pledged to make the board more transparent and less controversial, while acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead during his four-year term.

The former Bangladesh captain placed particular emphasis on respecting cricketers and safeguarding the interests of the game.

"Many difficult paths will come ahead. We will make mistakes, we will learn from mistakes, we will do the right things – that is what we should do, and that is what we will do. But no sacrifice will be made regarding cricket. Players will be given as much respect as they deserve – not only current cricketers, but all ex-cricketers, every stakeholder in Bangladesh cricket will be respected," Tamim said, adding that he cannot fix things alone.

The elections came amid renewed debate over governance within Bangladesh cricket. The previous BCB elections had been overshadowed by allegations of outside interference. This time, questions were raised over the political alignments that shaped the composition of the new board, leading to criticism and labels such as "father's blessing cricket board" ahead of the June 7 polls.

Asked about those criticisms, Tamim responded with a touch of humour.

"Yes, many kinds of tags are being given. That is definitely their personal opinion. Let's see, maybe we can do something beyond 'father's blessing' and actually turn it into 'cricket's blessing' in the future," he said.

The new president stressed that maintaining transparency and avoiding controversy would be among the board's priorities.

"I hope we can be as transparent as possible. Because I am sure I do not want any of my board members to do anything that makes us controversial. From my side and from the whole board's side, we can say we will try to act with full honesty," he said.

Tamim received the highest number of votes in Category 2, securing 73 of 76 votes from Dhaka-based club councillors. Fahim Sinha, who received 66 votes, was nominated as the sole vice-president.

Among the other notable winners, Sayeed Ibrahim Ahmed and Israfil Khasru secured 72 votes each, while Mohammedan councillor Masuduzzaman received 70 votes. Former NSC-nominated director Yasir Mohammad Foysal Ashiq was elected with 68 votes.

Shanian Taneem Navin, Sakib Ahmed Salam, Asif Rabbani, Mirza Yasir Abbas, Md Rafiqul Islam Babu and Prof Dr Sarker Mahbub Ahmed Shamim also secured places on the board through Category 2.

In the divisional elections, Mohammad Shafiqul Alam and Shantanu Islam were elected from Khulna after both secured 10 votes, while Mohammad Mizanur Rahman won the Barishal seat with five of seven votes.

Eight directors had already been elected unopposed before polling.

While controversy has once again accompanied a BCB election, the focus now shifts to whether Tamim's administration can move beyond the noise and deliver on its promises of transparency, accountability and putting cricket first.



Bangladesh speedster Nahid Rana rises high to punch the ball during a volleyball game as part of preparation of the team at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Sunday, ahead of their three-match ODI series against Australia. (Bottom) Australia batter Marnus Labuschagne walks off with his team's coaching staff following their training session.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Pace or spin, onus on batters

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's training session proceeded as usual at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday, with players first undergoing fielding drills on the centre wicket before moving to the academy ground for net practice.

The only notable talking point was the presence of left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who is not part of either the ODI or T20I squad for the upcoming series against Australia.

With the first ODI scheduled for Tuesday, attention has increasingly turned towards the nature of the pitches being prepared for the series. In particular, there is growing curiosity over whether Bangladesh will continue with the sporting surfaces used in the recent home series against New Zealand and Pakistan or revert to more spin-friendly tracks.

Taijul's appearance at training only added to the speculation. However, team management sources insisted it was nothing unusual, describing his involvement as a "regular event". Bangladesh's three frontline spinners – Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Rishad Hossain and Tanvir Islam – also bowled extensively in the nets.

A member of the selection panel suggested Taijul's inclusion may have been at the request of the team management, while another

source speculated that he had been brought in to replicate the challenge posed by Australia's left-arm spinner Matthew Kuhnemann, who enjoyed success against Pakistan earlier this year.

The pitches under preparation currently carry a noticeable tinge of grass, particularly the surface earmarked for the second ODI. Whether that grass remains and how much assistance it offers the seamers remains uncertain, with one team management source indicating that a final assessment would be made closer to match day.

"There is grass on the surface and it is going to be somewhat similar to the New Zealand and Pakistan series," the team management source said.

The wicket designated for the first ODI appears less grassy, potentially bringing the spinners into the contest as the match progresses. Given the curators' approach during the last two home series, when they produced balanced sporting surfaces, team management sources indicated there is little appetite to deviate significantly from that formula.

If that proves to be the case, the spotlight will inevitably fall on Bangladesh's batting unit. For years, Bangladesh have often benefited from slow, turning surfaces at home. A truer wicket against Australia would provide a sterner examination

of the batters' ability to build innings and score consistently.

Liton Das looked in particularly fluent touch during yesterday's net session, striking the ball aggressively and timing it cleanly. Meanwhile, Tawhid Hridoy arrives on the back of an impressive Dhaka Premier League campaign, alongside Mosaddek Hossain, who has returned to the ODI setup after an absence of almost four years.

Should Mosaddek make the starting XI, either Soumya Sarkar or Saif Hassan may have to make way, with the latter appearing the more likely omission.

Mustafizur Rahman also bowled in the nets yesterday, but much of the focus remains on pace sensation Nahid Rana. After the fielding drills, the fast bowler spent time on the centre pitches going through his visualisation routine ahead of what could be a key role in the series.

Meanwhile, sources close to the Australian camp revealed that another member of the touring party was expected to arrive on Sunday. Whether the addition is a batter or a spinner remains unclear. Australia team management could also not confirm whether Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head will join the squad.

"We will have an update in the morning [Monday]," a member of the Australia team management informed.

England thrash NZ in first Test

AFP, London

Gus Atkinson's love-affair with Lord's continued Sunday as England overwhelmed New Zealand by 115 runs to win the first Test.

New Zealand, set 254 to win, were dismissed for 138 before lunch on the fourth day in the 150th Test staged at Lord's – the most at any ground.

Surrey paceman Atkinson took 5-30 – his fourth five-wicket innings haul in three Tests at Lord's – as England went 1-0 up in a three-match series.

But fellow seamer Ollie Robinson was named player-of-the-match after marking his first Test in over two years with seven wickets in the match – including a Test-best haul of 5-39, featuring a rare triple-wicket maiden, in New Zealand's meagre first-innings 113.

"There was a time where I never thought I'd be back on a pitch with England so to get that win for the team is such a special feeling," said Robinson at the presentation ceremony.

This was England's first Test since a 4-1 series loss in Australia completed in January where they were criticised for an overly-attacking style that meant they failed to consolidate strong positions, with many questioning whether Brendon McCullum should remain as coach.

But McCullum told the BBC on Sunday: "Our execution with the ball was outstanding, our plans were great. With the bat, I thought we were brave at times and calculated at other times.

"Bravery can be misunderstood, it's not always running down wicket and banging it into the stands, bravery is about being able to manipulate your stance at the crease, manufacture ones. I thought our boys did a good job with that."

Debutants put India on top in Afghanistan Test

REUTERS

India declared their first innings on 564 for eight before debutant Manav Suthar and Prasidh Krishna took five wickets between them to maintain the hosts' stranglehold on the one-off Test against Afghanistan on Sunday.

Faced with a daunting chase, Afghanistan lost wickets at steady intervals in a feeble reply to finish day two on 113-5 and trailing by 451 runs at the New PCA Stadium in New Chandigarh.

Rahmat Shah was batting on 43 at stumps with Afghanistan needing a special knock from him on Monday.

Suthar claimed the wicket of opener Abdul Malik with just his fourth ball in Test cricket, before going on to dismiss Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Afsar Zazai, while giving away just 21 runs in his 15.5 overs.

"The wicket was offering some help and my strength is getting the ball to turn," the 23-year-old Suthar said.

"So my aim was to extract as much turn as possible because the pitch was assisting. At the same time, I wanted to keep bowling in good areas and hit the ideal length consistently.

"Playing for India is a dream for everyone and I am extremely happy to have received my cap."

Krishna was similarly impressive, breaching Sediqullah Atal's defence with a vicious delivery to claim his first Test wicket in India. He then dismissed Hashmatullah Shahidi, breaking up the Afghanistan captain's dangerous-looking partnership with Shah.

Andreeva already eyeing second Grand Slam title

AFP, Paris

Mirra Andreeva said winning her first Grand Slam title on Saturday at the French Open was "so much better" than she had imagined and that she wants to add to her tally as soon as possible.

The 19-year-old became the youngest women's champion at Roland Garros in 34 years with a dominant 6-3, 6-2 victory over Polish qualifier Maja Chwalinska in the final.

Andreeva, who will climb to sixth in the WTA rankings on Monday, is not planning to rest on her laurels ahead of the grass-court season and Wimbledon, where she lost in the quarter-finals last year.

"These feelings are something extra special," said the triumphant eighth seed.

"And honestly, now I'm already thinking of how I'm going to prepare for the grass season, how I'm going to play grass tournaments. "And I feel like this thing is a little bit addicting. And I really want to do my best to experience all of this for the second time."

The teenager is the first player born after 2005, man or woman, to lift a Grand Slam trophy.

She made her French Open debut as a 16-year-old in 2023, reaching the third round, before making the semifinals in 2024 and last eight 12 months ago.

"I've had a lot of thoughts on how it's going to

happen, if it's going to happen, when it's going to happen, where," Andreeva said of winning her maiden major trophy.

"I would say that the feeling in real life is so much better, obviously, than in your dreams.

"It just feels amazing looking at this trophy and realising that this is actually true and I can call myself a Grand Slam champion."

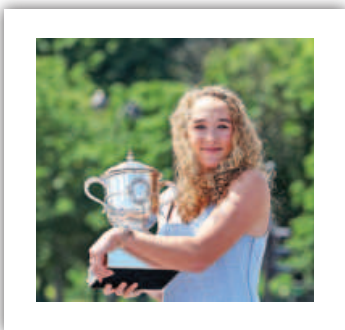
Andreeva thanked her psychologist for helping her prepare with how to deal with the weight of expectation in the latter stages of the tournament.

"I actually talked to my psychologist before the semi-final match and before the final match, because, I thought that it would help me be in the right state of mind before these most important matches of my life," Andreeva added.

"So I wanted to prepare my best. And she gave me a lot of advice and a lot of techniques that I could try and use on the court to help myself to experience all of these things a little bit better and easier."

Andreeva is the first Russian woman to win a major title since Maria Sharapova secured her fifth and final Grand Slam triumph at the 2014 French Open.

"I remember her winning here. Obviously, you know, she played amazing on clay," she said of former world number one Sharapova.



Captains' Carnival sets tone for WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP



Captains of the 12 participating countries pose with the ICC Women's T20 World Cup trophy during the Captains' Carnival at Waterloo Bridge in London yesterday. The showpiece event, featuring 33 matches will get underway on June 12 through the match between England and Sri Lanka in Birmingham.

PHOTO: ICC