[**Cricket aggression**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1653351/cricket-aggression)

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TRAMPLING on merit is bad when you cannot laugh at it. Recently, Ramiz Raja [took over](https://www.dawn.com/news/1646154) the Pakistan Cricket Board as its chairman in a process that was a bit odd. Usually, a man from outside the cricket board, almost never from within, is appointed chairman. So if you ever get a lucrative offer for a job at the PCB, remember that no matter how sincere and hardworking you are, it will be hard for you to make it to the top.

In his first press conference, Raja emphasised that our players must focus on “aggressive cricket”. He said, “Pakistan cricket has a fearless and aggressive approach in our DNA.” I am sure he, as someone who is also a former cricketer, has good intentions but I am not sure what he means by ‘aggressive’ cricket.

By ‘aggressive’, does he mean that the batsman should take risks by playing shots that got them out most regardless of the bowler, the wicket, and the situation? And for a bowler does it mean mostly to bowl bouncers or yorkers, or is it about taking wickets, or about containing runs, or about throwing slurs? What bowling or batting average makes someone an aggressive cricketer? Does being aggressive mean to always attack, regardless of the situation, and never to defend?

**Read more:** [*Comment: Ramiz Raja as PCB chairman is yet another example of Pakistan snubbing way of the world*](https://www.dawn.com/news/1643704)

A concept, however easy it may seem, can mean different things to different people, leading to confusion. It is possible the new chairman has useful ideas behind his aggression concept but it will be a great service to our team if he can define it in a clear manner.

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The chairman also implied in the press conference that he has a well-thought-out plan to improve our cricket; I do not doubt it. But where can I read it? I am not able to find it on the PCB’s website. The plan must emerge from the chairman’s mind and it should rest in a written document. Why? First, writing clarifies thinking and reduces ambiguity. Second, writing leads to transparency so anyone, not just the elite few, can read and give feedback. Third, writing provides organisational history and reduces communication losses by bringing people to the same understanding.

A writing culture is vital for effective decision-making at an organisation (many link American e-commerce giant Amazon’s rise to its culture of writing six-pagers for the major decisions it makes). If there is one good service any leader at any organisation (that interests the public at large) in our country can do it is to have a decision-making process in place that does not let the organisation be led purely by emotions, but that allows it to be led by reason too. Some suggest that some of the [recent statements](https://www.dawn.com/news/1650640) of the chairman seemed a bit high on emotion. Emotion is crucial, but not in abundance and not at the outset of every incident. A thinking and a writing culture, not a verbal one, can dilute strong emotion. A thinking and writing culture can bring clarity to what millions in this country care about.

**Read more:** [*Ramiz’s statement on possible ‘collapse’ of Pakistan cricket termed shocking*](https://www.dawn.com/news/1651060/ramizs-statement-on-possible-collapse-of-pakistan-cricket-termed-shocking)

The new chairman has also emphasised transparency and that is a good thing because the very name turns off many at the top in our country. The chairman would do a great service if he asked a third party to conduct a financial audit and make the yearly reports available on the website. One can find such audits on foreign cricket boards’ websites.

Apart from plans, processes and transparency, you ought to ensure people who work with you are aligned in one direction to execute your plan. For that, it is vital to assign people-specific, time-bound and measurable goals. It is not helpful to give people random goals. The chairman outlined in the press conference that one important goal for our cricket captain is to ensure 400 people are lined up for his autograph. Is this a good goal? Winning matches and tournaments is a broader goal from which you should be determining the goals of individuals. If the team is not winning but 400 people have lined up for your autograph, then how is it useful? As an aside, if you win, and do not throw matches away, people may line up for your autograph anyway.

If you have a world-class plan, efficient processes and goals for the individuals, but you do not have capable individuals, then you will not make much progress. When the sports board appoints individuals, the key is to making appointments according to the job description and not according to vague personal desires. You need people who have excelled, not struggled, in similar situations. You need people who have skill and relevant experience. You need people who understand technology and modern methods.

**Read more:** [*PCB chief’s challenge*](https://www.dawn.com/news/1647730)

Without such thinking, plans, and execution our team can occasionally, though not consistently, perform well. But for consistency, we ought to change. Good thinking, good plans and good execution will create a quality institution. And a quality institution can produce great teams whose probability to win consistently is more than the probability of winning a lottery ticket.

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