

Column One SPORTS TALK

Age, a tinge of irony



Does the certificate always bear the real age of its holder? In Bangladesh, barring exceptions, the answer is negative.

In 1990, a juvenile selection of BKSP hogged the headlines by winning two under-16 international football tournaments in Denmark and Gothenburg, Sweden.

And seven years later after that mock celebration, the weird selection syndrome remains the same. On December 22, the selectors at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) set the stage for yet another controversy by picking up seemingly a few overaged players in a under-20 team that is to play the World Youth Cup cricket starting in South Africa from January 11.

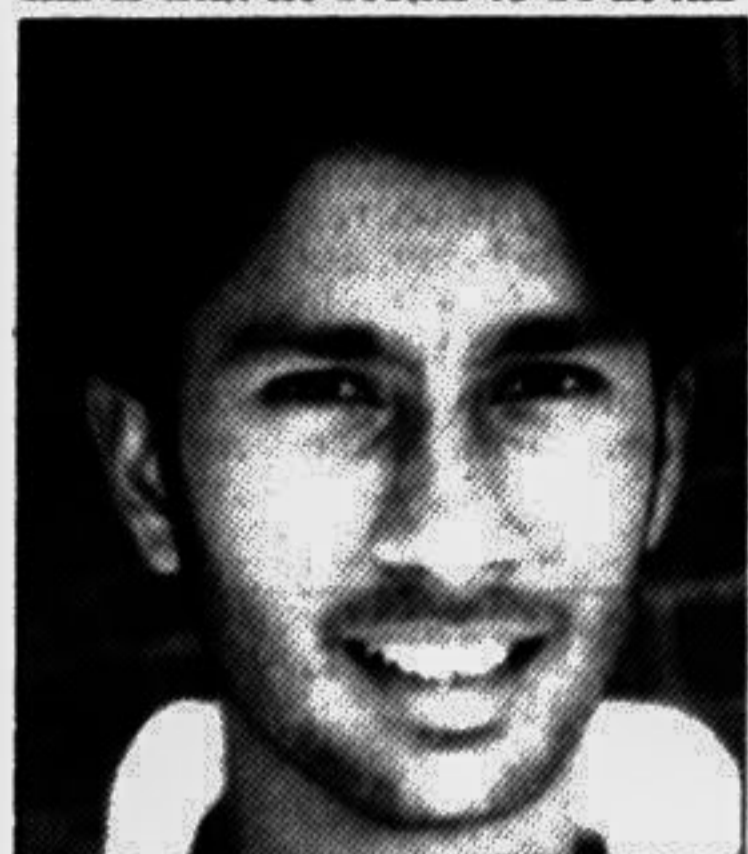
"We did not include any over-20 player in the team. We selected them seeing the dates of birth on their passport," said Asaduzzaman Misha, one of the selectors.

According to the document Misha is right, but in reality things are different. Over the years the selection procedures in various sports federations in Bangladesh have long been accused of furnishing false documents to justify the inclusion of boys who clearly exceed the prescribed age-limit.

The Animadvertiser

are once again on the wrong path of justifying their mistakes instead of rectifying it.

Al-Shahriar Rokon appears to be one of the suspect names who has been in the fourteen-man Bangladesh squad as captain. While his inclusion is controversial in view of the fact he is replacing Sabir Khan, the captain of the victorious team that toured Hong Kong recently, what is even more controversial is that he seems to be in his



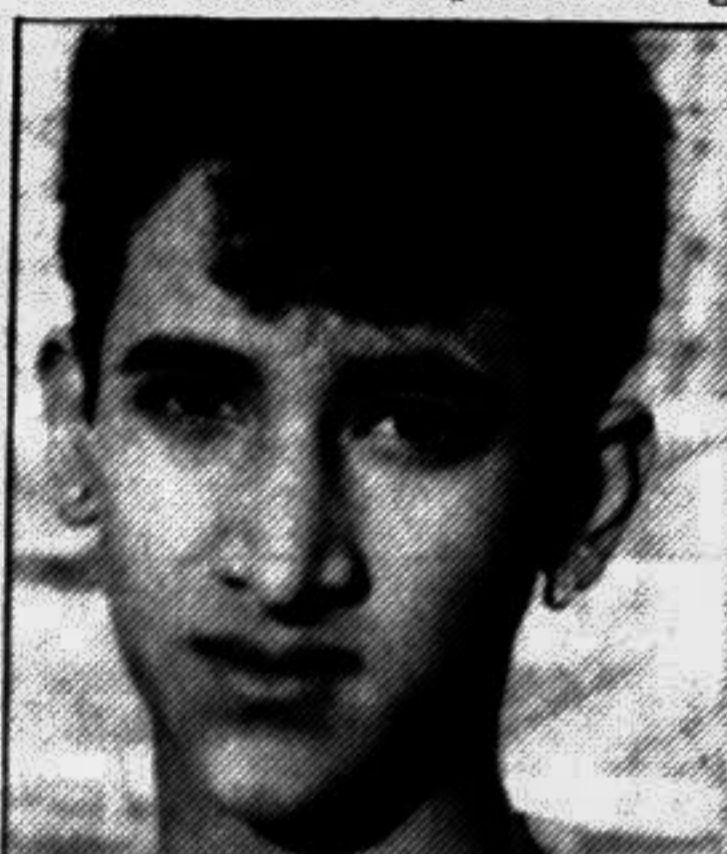
ROKON

early twenties, having included in an under-19 tournament three years ago. Al-Shahriar is a third-year student in the Dhaka University. On the other hand, Sabir is attending second year classes of the Department of History in the Jahangirnagar University. A classmate of Sabir, the another varsity-goer is pacer Shahnewaz Kabir.

brilliant," quipped a keen follower of the game.

Also controversial is the inclusion of Mehrab Hossain Opee, the eternal under-nineteen who is accused of being even older than his captain, Saiful Islam, who was ignored for the Hong Kong tourney for being over-aged, somehow managed the South African ride as a stand-by player.

These games of suspect selection are not only tarnishing



OPEE

the image of Bangladesh internationally but also acting as a hindrance for numerous aspiring young cricketers across the country.

"We have had rigorous training and have attended our skills with much dedication and yet, when an international event comes along, older players are selected from the national team and various other clubs and we are dropped," lamented a young lad preferring anonymity. Selectors axed five players from the Hong Kong squad.

AKC for soccer's resumption

Sports Reporter

Abahani Krira Chakra have asked the Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee to resume the Senior Division football league immediately.

In a press release yesterday, the Dhanmondi-based club said that all 20 teams in the league agreed to play at the Mirpur Stadium following Bangladesh cricket team's success in the ICC Trophy and to allow them to prepare for the 1999 World Cup at the Dhaka Stadium. And now there was no reason to reclaim the Dhaka Stadium and stop the league without any proper cause.

Abahani wants to finish the league according to its schedule, the press release added.

Nat'l youth hockey

Sports Reporter

Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong won their respective first round matches of the Acme 16th national youth hockey championship at the National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

In a morning match, Dhaka whitewashed Dinajpur 10-0. Swapan and Mamun struck four and three goals respectively.

In the afternoon, Rajshahi thrashed Barisal 7-0 while Chittagong registered a 3-1 victory over Jessore.

Age-group tennis

Sports Reporter

Sheefat Nusrat Baishakhi and East Jahan Etti moved into the under-18 girls' singles final of the Elite Paint national age-group tennis circuit winning their respective semifinals played at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

Baishakhi eliminated Tania Farhan 6-1, 6-2 in the first semi-final while Etti ousted Dyuti in the next match 6-3, 6-3.

In the boys' under-18 singles, second seed Fahim Ahsan Khan Romi, Nadeem Kamran Khan, Rahat Kamal Islam and Sheikh Serajul made it to the last four.

In the quarterfinals, Romi beat Muammer Hossain 6-1, 7-5, Nadeem defeated Ashraf Rahman 6-4, 7-6 (7-5). Serajul tamed Taswar 6-1, 6-1 while Rahat came from behind to eliminate Yasin Huda 4-6, 6-3, 6-1.

Besides, Mustafizur Rahman, Babu Lal, Alamgir and Kabir reached the boys' under-14 singles semifinals.

Juvenile kabadi team named

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Kabadi Federation yesterday named a 16-member Bangladesh juvenile kabadi team which will play four exhibition matches in Indian state of West Bengal next month.

The following boys have been asked to report to Golam Faruque, the sports instructor of Shaheed Nabi High School, at 5:30 pm on December 28:

Itteharul Islam of Shaheed Nabi School; Shahidul Islam, K Manjur Kader, Mazharul Islam and Aitaur Rahman of Ansars and VDP School; Abdul Malek, Shaiful Islam and Nazrul Islam of Sharmin Textiles School; Mohammod Tutul, Mahmudul Hasan and Motiar Rahman of Rifles Public School; Iqbal Hossain of Maniknagar Model School; Shahidul Islam of Haidar Ali High School; Abul Hossain and Ahsin Kumar of Dulaipara High School and Ashrafuul Haque of Bhashantek High School.

Taylor said he did not expect problems resuming the captaincy as Waugh had given him an update on the side during New South Wales' Sheffield Shield match against South Australia last weekend.

In 36 Test as captain, Taylor has led Australia to 20 wins and 10 defeats with six draws.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Competition-85

TICK THE CORRECT ANSWERS

Competition closes at 8 pm on Dec 26, 1997

Table with 5 questions and multiple choice options (A, B, C) regarding sports events and records.

NAME

CLASS ROLL NO.

SCHOOL ADDRESS

PHONE (IF ANY)



Zia Smriti cricket

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Dec 24: River Wave Club defeated Surprise Sporting Club by 39 runs in the Shaheed Zia Smriti cricket tournament at the Rajshahi Government College playground today.

Winning the toss, River Wave made 139 for nine in the stipulated 25 overs. In reply Surprise Sporting were all out for 100 in 23.3 overs.

In the second match of the day, Zia Smriti Sangsad battled first and collected 75 in 20 overs. In reply, Malopara Sporting Club scored 77 for eight in 16.2 overs.

A dilemma over McGrath

MELBOURNE, Dec 24:

Australia must decide whether to play a two-thirds fit Glenn McGrath or run with the three pacemen from the last game leading up to Boxing Day's first Test against South Africa here, reports AFP.

McGrath, who has played just two one-day games in the last six weeks because of complications from a hernia operation 18 months ago, had two more workouts today in a bid to convince selectors of his fitness.

The 27-year-old strike bowler said the felt two-thirds fit.

Asked whether he was fit enough to play out the Test, McGrath said: "I'd like to think so. We've got another training session tomorrow so hopefully that will build the fitness up and the rhythm."

"I still wasn't at top pace but it's getting up there." Australian captain Mark Taylor kept his cards close to his chest by saying that McGrath and fellow new-ball quickie Paul Reiffel might both play on Friday.

Reiffel, a sporty a horrendous black eye following a collision at a Victorian training session last Thursday and also missed last weekend's round of Sheffield Shield games.

"Paul would have played the first-class game in Hobart but there's still a good chance they'll both play," Taylor said.

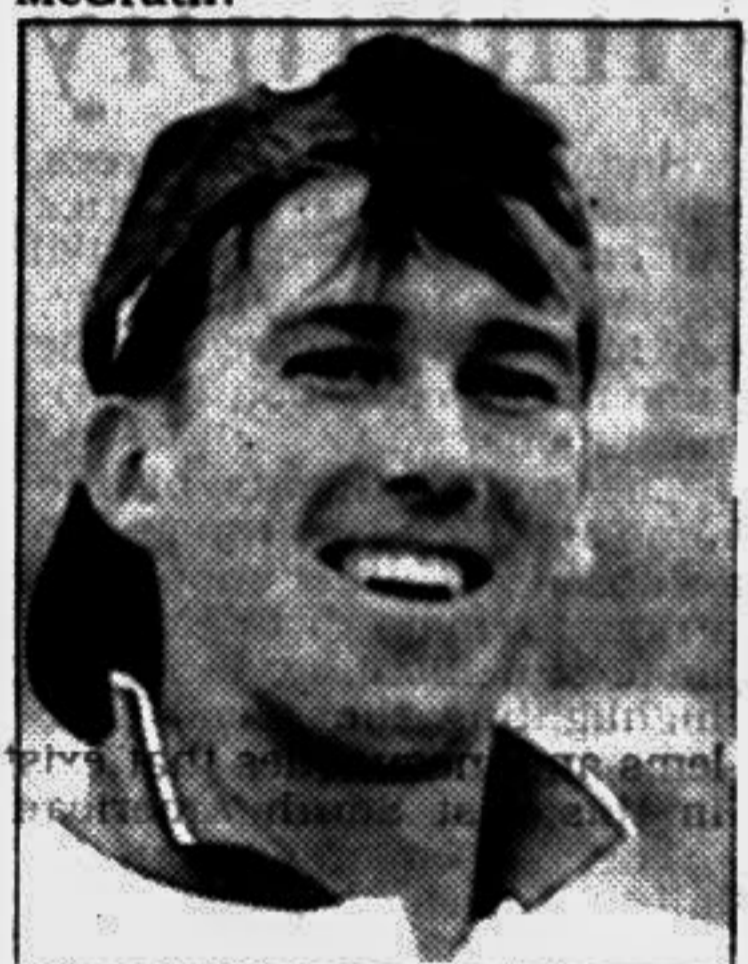
Michael Kasprovicz, Simon Cook and Reiffel played the last two Test against New Zealand and it would be tough to leave one of them out to play an under-19 Test.

Taylor dearly wants to have

McGrath in the team but could only send out mixed messages.

"We've still got the 12 blokes from Hobart as likely starters," he said of the third Test team that drew with New Zealand.

So he resigned to losing McGrath?



GLENN MCGRATH

"No, because I know how keen Glenn will be to play, which is what you want from all your players, particularly your fast bowlers," Taylor said.

With Sydney and Adelaide traditionally favouring spin

Bookies bet on Proteas

MELBOURNE, Dec 24:

South Africa are the bookmakers' favourites to beat Australia in the Boxing Day cricket Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, reports AFP.

Bookmakers have taken bets for Hansie Cronje's Proteas, firming their odds from 9-4 to 6-4. Australia are 13-8 to win the Test.

bowling, the MCG Test looms as the one which South Africa must win to have a chance of adding Australia to the scalp of Pakistan last month.

"We've been successful over the past few years because we haven't relied on Shane Warne even though he has been a magnificent contributor for us," Taylor said.

"We've had the likes of McGrath, Cook, Kasprovicz, Reiffel, Jason Gillespie who have won games for us on fast bowler-friendly wickets as well."

"If the South Africans just rely on Allan Donald to win the series they won't win. If we rely on Warne or McGrath it won't happen."

However, a revitalised Taylor believes an enforced three-week break from national team duties has done him "unimaginable good."

"It's had a lot of positives for me," said Taylor.

"Obviously, I would have loved to have been there for the one-dayers but, from a selfish point of view, I feel really fresh and I'm really looking forward to this game," he said.

Taylor said the only days he did not enjoy during his three weeks out of the national spotlight were the days on which the Australians or New Zealanders were in a one-day tournament.

Steve Waugh will return to his normal role of Test vice-captain.

Taylor said he did not expect problems resuming the captaincy as Waugh had given him an update on the side during New South Wales' Sheffield Shield match against South Australia last weekend.

In 36 Test as captain, Taylor has led Australia to 20 wins and 10 defeats with six draws.

Pakistan's fluctuating fortunes

Faisal M Rahman

Consistency has never been a hallmark of the Pakistan cricket team. The team's fortunes have fluctuated from stupendous victories to catastrophic defeats.

Under Imran Khan, the team showed tenacity, discipline, team spirit, commitment, etc. Even under previous captains like Mushtaq Muhammad, Asif Iqbal, Javed Miandad (also Imran's successor), the team did not possess such qualities although there were talented players like Sadiq Mohammed, Majid Khan, Wasim Bari, Taslim Arif, Sarfraz Nawaz etc. This was exemplified by the team's performance: Series victories in India and England, three Test series drawn consecutively against the West Indies in their heyday (including one series in the West Indies), the 1992 World Cup, innumerable triumphs in one day tournaments in Sharjah and India etc. But for one controversial decision in the third Test at Barbados, 1988 Imran, not Mark Taylor the first captain to beat the West Indies in their own backyard. However it was not to be and the world had to wait for another 7 years before the men from "down under" especially one Hercules, a Merlin and the "Mingle Twins" handed down to the calypso cricketers their first series defeat since the controversy marked New Zealand vs West Indies series in 1980-81. Nevertheless, it was Imran's men who burst the West Indies bubble on a fine, pleasant sunny morning in 1986 at Faisalabad. One could only look with admiration as Salim Malik, his left hand in a plaster, batted grimly against Courtney Walsh, Malcolm Marshall, Anthony Gray and Patrick Patterson in full flow.

It has been five years since Pakistan won the World Cup in Australia in 1992. A lot of water has flown under the bridge and very few teams have experienced such frequent dramatic "twists of fate" as the men with baggy green caps. Perhaps volatility, rushes of blood, unpredictability, etc. is a way of life in Pakistan. Such traits are represented well by the Pakistani cricket team. There is no other explanation to explain the performances of a team which is so highly gifted but unpredictable. Invincible on one day and thoroughly pathetic on another. Matches have been thrown away from winning positions. In the recently concluded third test at Faisalabad, World Cup quarter-final match against India, one day matches in Canada etc one could only look with utter disbelief as games which could have been won easily with a little application were squandered away. It would appear to be that all the players were in a rush to catch an evening plane or train. Even senior players like Malik, Rameez Raja, Saeed Anwar, Aamir Sohail etc played irresponsibly.

The current team is not what it used to be under Imran. It lacks grit, professionalism, commitment, discipline, etc. Since 1992, Akram, Malik, Rameez, Anwar have been sacked from the captaincy. Team performance and morale reached rock bottom when Malik was accused of bribery and betting by the Australian trio of Tim May, Shane Warne and

Mark Waugh. An enquiry commission was formed and investigations were conducted. As no evidence was found and the Australians were unwilling to come to Pakistan and testify, the case against Malik was dropped and he was subsequently reinstated in the team, but the damage had been done. Sohail also accused his teammates of rigging matches. This only aggravated the team's plight. Personality conflicts and bruised egos have also been a bone of contention. Sohail has had conflicts with his captains Basit Ali and Rashid Latif walked away midway from a tour the players revolted against Akram, etc. He and Waqar Younis were accused of "ball-tampering". The accusations were baseless, but Imran, in a rare moment of indiscretion added fuel to the fire, when he admitted to tampering with the ball in county cricket. Given his education, exposure, charisma, etc one would have expected Imran to be more discreet.

The team was even accused of drug trafficking during the 1993 West Indies tour. In the recently concluded Sahara Cup in Canada Inzamamul Haq raised his bat to strike a spectator. Although he is not blamed. One also sees that in recent times player have skipped tours to fulfill their commitments in county cricket. Players may have contractual obligations to their countries, but are these above commitments to the national team, especially as their skills are desperately required. These scandals, personality conflicts, controversies, players revolts, incidents of bad behaviour etc. have demoralised the players and undermined the team's strength, especially the batting strength. As a result, the team's

performance was poor and inconsistent e.g. series loss in the West Indies, Australia, a home series loss to Sri Lanka, poor performances in Sharjah, a disaster in South Africa, etc. In terms of talent the players are arguably much better. Saqlain Mushtaq is the only quality off-spin bowler in international cricket. Mushtaq Ahmed along with Warne, Anil Kumble and Paul Strang have revived a dying art. Wasim and Waqar are second to none. Anwar, Sohail, Ijaz, Inzamam, Malik form a formidable batting lineup which could give nightmares to any opposition bowler of captain. With Muhammad Zahid and Akram (unrelated) the role of an all rounder in the time Groomed well, he could also be another man with the "golden arm." Moin Khan and Latif are wicketkeepers comparable with the best. They are also competent batsmen and give batting depth to the team. Fride is a vice which led to the downfall of many men e.g. King Solomon and King David. If Aaqib Javed can remember this I am sure that even he will be an asset to the team. The sooner Shahid Afridi realises that every ball does not need to be sent out of orbit he will be a much better player. His leg-break bowling could also be useful. Players like Mahmood, Afridi can add depth to the team.

Div I cricket

Sports Reporter

Sadharan Bima Krira Sangha defeated Dhanmondi Club by eight runs in a First Division cricket league encounter at the City Club ground yesterday.

Indian middle order bat Rajinder Singh scored 69 as Bima, electing to bat, collected 117 before they were all out in 43.2 overs. In his 80-ball innings, Rajinder hit eight boundaries. Mintu (30) and Babu (20) were the other notable run getters.

In reply, Dhanmondi could muster 169 in 44.4 overs. Opener Anis found a lone battle with 44 while Aqlam scored 29 runs for Dhanmondi. Ratan was the most successful Bima bowler who finished with three for 29 while Moin and Rajinder equally shared four wickets.

RCC football

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Dec 24: In the Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) inter-departmental football tournament organised by RCC Employees' Union at Rajshahi Government College Hostel playground, Preservation Department blanked Water Supply Department 3-0 today.

In the second match, Public Health Department outplayed Supervisors 3-0.

Weightlifting begins tomorrow

The national weightlifting championships begins at the Mohammad Ali Boxing Stadium in the city tomorrow, reports BSS.

A S M Shahjahan, Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and president of Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation, will inaugurate the championships at 10 am.

Obaidul Guader, State Minister for Youth and Sports will be the chief guest on the concluding day, December 29.



Naseem of Azad Sporting attempts a square cut during yesterday's Janakantha Premier Division league encounter against Agrani Bank at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Agrani, Ajax win easily

Sports Reporter

BRIEF SCORES

AGRANI BANK: 74 all out in 48.1 overs (Shaheen Malik 32, Nahid 31, Sumit 30; Sabir Khan 2/14, Shahab 2/19) AZAD SC: 87 all out in 39.2 overs (Shahab 19, Biplab 14; Sumit 2/15, Dofin 2/22) Result: Agrani Bank won by 87 runs.

VICTORIA SC: 101 all out in 41.5 overs (Asgar 24, Imran 16, Lahu 13; Dola 3/13, Raja 3/25, Vola 2/20) AJAX SC: 87 all out in 15.4 overs (Dola 56 n.o., Rafiqul 42 n.o.) Result: Ajax Sporting Club won by 10 wickets.

Agrani Bank Sports Club and Ajax Sporting Club won their respective Janakantha Premier Division Cricket league matches played at different venues yesterday.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Agrani Bank posted an 87-run victory over Azad Sporting Club.

Electing to bat, the bankers reached 174 before they were all out in 48.1 overs. Pakistani middle-order bat Shaheen Malik top-scored with 32 off 49 balls which included three boundaries while one-down Nahid and lower-order Sumit contributed 31 and 30 runs respectively.

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Azad's medium-pacers Bappli, Shahab and off-spinner Sabir Khan, equally shared six wickets among themselves.

In reply, Azad were bundled out for a meagre 87 in 39.2 overs.

Off-spinner Sumit and medium-pacer Dofin of Agrani Bank captured two wickets each conceding 15 and 22 runs respectively.

Earlier, opting to bat, Victoria were shot out in 41.5 overs in the face of some inspirational bowling by Dola, Pakistani medium-pacer Maksud Raja and Vola who shared eight wickets among themselves.

Dola finished with three for 13 from his 7.5 overs while Raja, who gave the early breakthrough, conceded 25 runs in nine overs for his three wickets. Besides, Vola captured two for 20 runs.

With yesterday's victory, Ajax finished their first round campaign of eleven matches with three wins and eight defeats while Victoria suffered their ninth defeat in ten matches.

For the bankers, it was their fourth win in 10 matches while Azad suffered their ninth defeat against a lone victory so far.

Away at the BKSP ground in Savar, an all-round performance by Dola guided promoters Ajax Sporting Club to an impressive ten-wicket win over Victoria Sporting Club.

Dola captured three wickets in the morning to help his side in booking the Victorians for a paltry 101 and then went on to score an unbeaten 56 as Ajax reached 108 in the 14th over.

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without losing a wicket.

Dola and his partner Rafiqul, who scored a century in the previous match against Agrani Bank on Monday, faced only 94 balls.

In his 48-ball knock, Dola hammered a huge six and eight boundaries while Rafique's run-a-ball 4