

What the 'Tigers' did

Hasan Masood

The novelty of sports is that you can lose countless times but then there is always a chance to stage a comeback magnificently.

Bangladesh have played 34 one-day matches and the record of the minnows was quite expectedly 32 against them until they faced Pakistan in their last match of the seventh World Cup.

Crickets world, oblivious of the age old adage of the game's glorious uncertainties, might have granted a Pakistani victory in the clash of David vs Goliath. But then fortune sometimes favours the brave, Aminul's men rose to the occasion to turn the world upside down when they floored Akram's 'fantastic' Pakistan at Northampton last Monday.

No doubt that Pakistan was more favoured to win against the lightweights and if that happened, none would have raised a question. But that did not happen and Bangladesh staged an upset which is the most unique part of the glorious game of uncertainty.

Bangladesh scored 223 for nine after sent into bat by the Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram.

One-down Akram Khan, former national captain who scored only 20 runs in his previous four innings, finally found his feet and scored 42. Opener Shahriar, who was dropped after managing only nine runs in the first two matches against New Zealand and West Indies, also returned with a superb 39. Vice-captain Khaled Mahmud contributed 27.

The Pakistanis looked quite relaxed when they began their chase but as soon as they lost their top five batsmen for only 42 runs, from then on Bangladesh never looked back.

That was an extraordinary day for the boys as they gave their all in the field and made sure three Pakistanis were sent back out.

Khaled Mahmud, who earlier scored 27, also sparked with the leather and finished with three for 31 which earned him the man-of-the-match award.

Earlier, Bangladesh got off to an unexpectedly nervous start against New Zealand at the Essex County Club ground in Chelmsford on May 17. The month-long conditioning in England hardly made a difference.

Aminul and Company lost miserably to the Kiwis by six wickets only to frustrate a few thousand Bangladeshis crowd who turned up braving the biting cold.

The Bangladeshis managed only 116 runs before they were

bundled out in the face of some disciplined bowling by Allott, Cairns and Larsen who evenly shared nine wickets.

Not a single Bangladeshi batsman crossed 20-run mark. Veteran all-rounder Enamul Hoque top scored with 19 followed by another all-rounder Naimur Rahman who managed 18. One-down Akram Khan, from whom the nation expected so much, and lower order Hasibul Hossain, with 16 runs to each name, were the other leading run-getters who helped Bangladesh go past a 100 before being all out in the 38th over. Skipper Aminul Islam also added 15.

In reply, the bowlers did a commendable job under the circumstances claiming four wickets before Fleming's crew cruised home in 33 overs.

Left-arm seamer Monjurul gave Bangladesh an early breakthrough dismissing Asif while his new-ball partner Hasibul Hossain, off-spinner Naimur Rahman and left-arm spinner Enamul Hoque captured the other three wickets.

Bangladesh gave a much-improved performance against the mighty West Indies in their next outing at Dublin, Ireland on May 21.

Opener Mehraj Hossain, the lone Bangladeshi to have scored an ODI century, slammed 64 while middle order Naimur Rahman chipped in with 45 to steer Bangladesh to a re-

spectable total of 182 against the Caribbean. Vice-captain Khaled Mahmud, with 13, was the other batsman to achieve double figures. The most frustrating part of that innings was the batting of Akram and Aminul who scored only 4 and two runs respectively. None of them looked confident against the Windies.

It was our bowlers who shone again as they managed to shackle West Indians' run flow for about 47 overs before they reached their winning target. Bangladesh lost that match by seven wickets.

Then came the dream victory against Scotland which was the main World Cup mission of the Tigers of Bengal. They did it in style defeating the Scots in their capital Edinburgh by 22 runs. Veteran all-rounder Minhazul Abedin who played the innings of his life to take Bangladesh to 185 for 9 in their stipulated 50 overs.

Bangladesh lost their top five batsmen in 9.3 overs with the scoreboard reading only 26 before Minhazul partnered Naimur and added an invaluable 69 runs for the sixth wicket stand. Minhazul eventually remained not out on 68.

Faruque scored 7 while opener Mehraj managed only two runs. Skipper Aminul Islam, his deputy Khaled Mahmud and one down Akram returned with ducks.

The Scots, in their chase,

were all out for 163.

Medium pacers Hasibul Monjurul and Mahmud looked pretty impressive against the Bravehearts took two wickets each while Minhazul and Enamul captured one apiece.

Minhazul inclusion in the official squad was in doubt till the first week of April. The BCB had to sit in an emergency session and included him at the expense of the Sri-led three-member selection committee. He became the first Bangladeshi to be adjudged man-of-the-match.

The most experienced Bangladeshi middle order eventually finished the first round with an average of 70.00 from four innings that placed him sixth among the top ten averaged batsmen in the first round.

Bangladesh were on the receiving end from the Aussies whom they met in their next match at Chester-le-Street on May 27.

Bangladesh were restricted to only 178 for seven in the allotted 50 overs. But they could not restrict Minhazul who came out with an unbeaten 53. Opener Mehraj followed Minhazul with 42 while Aminul and Akram once again failed. Akram scored only nine runs while Aminul was out on 2.

In reply, Australia, in order to achieve a better run rate for their qualification to the Super Six, took Bangladeshi bowlers to the sword and reached 181 in only 12.3 overs with the loss of three wickets.

Then came the historic 62-run win over pre-tournament favourites Pakistan.

Among the Bangladeshi batsmen, three Bangladeshis scored more than hundred runs. Minhazul Abedin scored highest 140 with two fifties while Mehraj scored 120 with a half century against the Windies. Naimur Rahman, in his five innings aggregated 114 runs with an average of 22.80.

The most shocking part in the World Cup was the batting of skipper Aminul Islam who scored only 45 runs in his five innings.

Khaled Mahmud, who clinched the man-of-the-match award against Pakistan, was the most successful Bangladeshi bowler bagging six wickets at an average of 24.16 while Minhazul Abedin captured four wickets in four matches he played. Medium pacers Hasibul, Monjurul and left arm spinner Enamul Hoque captured three wickets each.

Following are the batting and bowling averages of Bangladeshi team in the 1999 World Cup.

-BATTING & BOWLING AVGS							
Player	M	I	NO	BATTING			
				R	HS	50s	Avg
Minhazul	4	4	2	140	68*	2	70.00
Mehraj	5	5	-	120	64	1	24.00
Naimur	5	5	-	114	45	-	22.80
Enamul	4	4	1	59	19	-	19.66
Shahriar	3	3	-	41	39	-	13.66
Akram	5	5	-	62	42	-	12.40
K Mahmud	5	5	1	40	17	-	9.80
M Mahmud	5	5	-	49	27	-	9.00
Aminul	5	5	-	16	9	-	8.00
Faruque	2	2	-	23	16	-	7.66
Hasibul	4	3	-	8	6*	-	-
Monjurul	4	3	3	6	6	-	3.00
Rafique	2	2	0	2	2*	-	-
Shafiquddin	1	1	1	1	1	-	1.00
Neeyamur	1	1	-	1	1	-	-

Player	O	M	R	BOWLING			
				W	BB	Avg	R/O
K Mahmud	36.5	6	145	6	3/31	24.16	391
Minhazul	20	2	107	4	1/12	26.75	535
Monjurul	27	6	94	3	2/33	31.33	348
Hasibul	29	4	111	3	2/26	37.00	382
Enamul	23.2	1	115	3	2/40	38.33	492
Rafique	11	0	50	2	1/22	25.00	454
Naimur	30	2	126	2	1/15	63.00	420
Shafiquddin	8	0	26	1	1/26	26.00	325
Neeyamur	5	0	20	0	-	-	4.00

(* denotes not out)

Dreaming of Test status

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Captain Aminul Islam had goals like any other skipper. Winning the coveted silverware was not one of them, rather he came with a mission to defeat fellow ICC Trophy qualifiers Scotland but even he couldn't have imagined toppling the mighty Pakistanis. Experts such as Sunil Gavaskar, Imran Khan and Michael Holding praised Aminul Islam's crew after their Scottish success.

Akram was so impressed that he was bold enough to state that Test cricket beckons Bangladesh.

Strangely though, this has been the case at previous world championships, with rookie teams triumphing against established sides to ultimately become part of the Test scene.

A classic example is Sri Lanka's 1979 win over India. Although they failed to progress any further, on the competition of the meet the Lankans gained universal admiration for displaying grit and tenacity. We all know what they achieved some years later.

In 1983, debutants Zimbabwe rocked Australia, then had eventual champions India on the ropes at Tunnbridge Wells until Kapil Dev batted them to respectability. Four years later the Africans gave the New Zealanders a scare when the World Cup was staged outside the England for the first time. It was not until that the sensational defeat of England in 1992, did the ICC finally recognise Zimbabwe as the ninth Test-playing nation. Most recently Kenya caused the shock of 1996 by humbling West Indies by 73 runs. They too have been accorded ODI status and during a tournament in India they upset the hosts.

Bangladesh in their debut at the cricket's greatest event have performed extremely well. After a shaky start against New Zealand, where they scored only 116, the newcomers got better and better as they went along pushing heavyweights West Indies and Australia all the way. And then came the magnificent moment when they stunned the tournament's hot favourites in their last league match.

So, the trend says that we too will lift the ultimate prize in near future, instead of just dreaming about it.

Shane scare

LONDON, June 3: Australia received a scare ahead of their key World Cup second round match against India on Friday when star spinner Shane Warne needed treatment for a neck and shoulder strain, reports AFP. Warne was absent for most of Australia's training session on Wednesday, preferring to undergo treatment from team physiotherapist Errol Alcott.

It's not cricket

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the spirit of the occasion. Saber's words seemed to pacify the handful of protesters, who then left the hall.

Outside, a young man, appeared to be intoxicated, was roughed up by some people because he was uttering foul language about the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League. He was severely injured and moved to a local hospital.

The top-most banner behind the meeting's dais read, "Mass reception to the victorious Bangladesh cricket team by overseas Bangladeshis". Below which there was a banner of the UK Awami League and another of the Cricket Forum UK.

The large crowd was getting restless due to the non-arrival of the cricketers. Repeated appeals from the dais called for calm amid slogans of 'Joy Bangla' and 'Pakistan Hai Hai'. There were also a few counter-slogans. The organisers were overwhelmed by the large response. To keep the festive public entertained, performers, who were to sing at the 'actual' reception after the players arrived, began to render songs at around 6.30 PM. The Mayor made her speech in between the songs.

After a delay of about two hours, the organisers decided to commence with the speeches, announcing that perhaps the players were caught in the traffic.

All went well when the High Commissioner made his humorous speech. The trouble started after the UK Awami League general secretary began his speech when one Farid Miah of the Jaitya Party rushed to the dais and shouted 'politics, politics' at the organisers. He was backed by about

ten to fifteen persons, all of whom were led away from the front of the dais. But, abuse and Saber took over to bring the situation under control.

In his speech Saber said, "We have come from Bangladesh to join in as you celebrate the success of the Bangladesh team. This is not a political programme. The present government believes in keeping sports above all politics. We have never mixed politics with sports."

"When the Bangladesh team became ICC champions (in 1997), BNP organised a reception. Khaleda Zia was the chief guest. As an Awami League MP as a believer in the ideology of Bangabandhu, I was present at that reception. We wanted to prove that when there is an issue of national interest, when we talk of any national institution, we do not think of party politics."

"The world has come to know Bangladesh in a new dimension after the Northampton victory. But regrettably there is no pride in what we are seeing today. We want to go forward, forgetting the divisions of the past. We want to face the challenges of the 21st century. But, if there is no unity amongst us, if we make ourselves controversial even when celebrating, there cannot be anything more tragic than that."

"This is not a reception to the Bangladesh cricket team. We are being respectful to the entire Bengali nation."

Drawing the attention of BNP supporters in the audience, Saber said, "You respect your party-leader Ziaur Rahman. As a freedom fighter, I too respect him. For the shake of his memory and of the martyrs,

please maintain the sanctity of this programme."

He congratulated the people of East London for their support to the Bangladesh cricket team during the tournament.

"For the first time in any game, not only in cricket, Bangladesh has participated at the highest level. We have not only beaten Pakistan and Scotland, we have secured the eighth position. We are ahead even of Sri Lanka."

"We are now looking forward to take preparation for the 2003 World Cup in South Africa. If necessary, we have to draw new plans," Saber said.

"The crowd went wild in joy when Saber said, 'We have beaten Pakistan at a neutral venue. Wasim Akram, Shoaib Akhtar, Waqar Younis and Saqlain Mushtaq could not contain our batsmen. They hit the Pakistani bowlers for four, one after the other. Our fielders overtook South Africa in fielding."

"Since independence no institution has developed in Bangladesh as a symbol of national unity. We want to go forward with cricket."

He apologised that the team could not arrive at the reception. Reminding himself and the crowd that the players in the past few weeks have gifted the nation with a unique present, he asked the gathering to forgive the players for their one mistake.

He assured the audience that in future tours, the Bangladesh team would make itself available for such receptions.

It was learnt later that 'miscommunication, change in flight schedule and alteration in the Buckingham Palace programme' yesterday was responsible for the absence of the players.

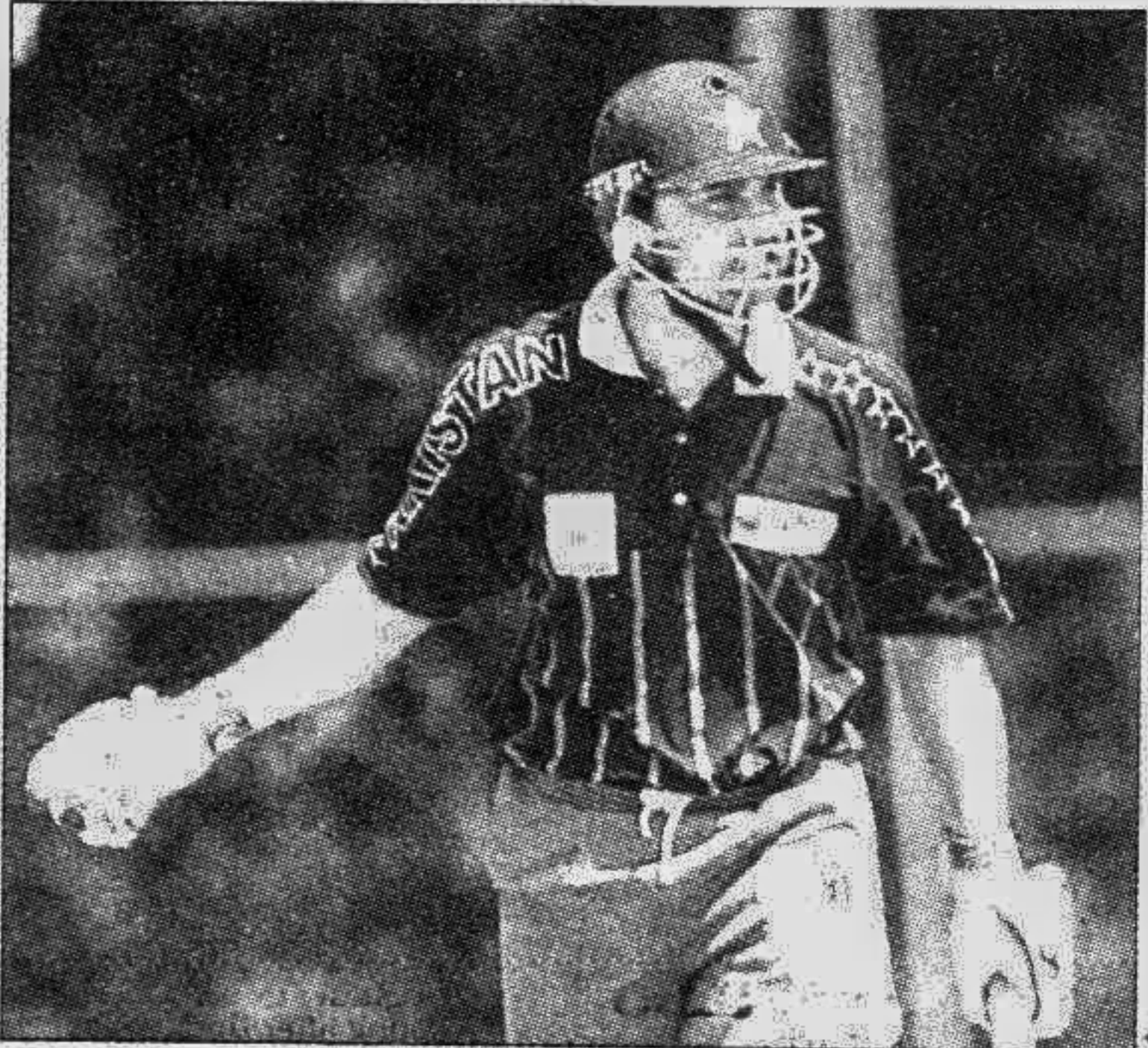
EQUAL AMONGST UNEQUALS

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of duty. Having never been in such a rarefied atmosphere of the game before, Bangladesh understandably took time to find its bearings. Four of the matches saw us losing our way in the woods, just when we thought we had matters under control. It was perhaps destiny, which ensured that the team should peak in its last match. In a no-holds-barred encounter we triumphed, and how!

We struck a blow for all our collective deprivations, the cumulative ignominies suffered over the years. We broke the shackles, at last. Once and for all.

Perhaps the odds against this victory were a million to one. Perhaps, a similar victory may be a long time in coming. But it was possible, and it can be done again. If we did not see, how could we make our dreams come true? These heroes have woken up the world. Accept us now: we are your peers.



Dependable 'Moin' Khan hopes that the ball doesn't fall in the right hands. —Star file photo

Surveying the Super 6

LONDON, June 3 (Reuters): Form guide for the World Cup Super Sixes:

Pakistan — Bookmakers' favourites at 13-8.

Wasim Akram has assumed the aura and authority of Imran Khan and still talks to his old mentor every second day.

He also believe the present Pakistan side is stronger than Imran's 1992 World Cup winners and certainly no other team in the competition could afford to select Waqar Younis and Mushtaq Ahmed and then leave both out for the first four matches.

Pakistan's top order have not fired, a common failing this English spring, but the middle and late order have more than compensated. Inzamamul Haq has struck the ball powerfully and cleanly and wicketkeeper Moin Khan, a master improviser, has the best run rate in the tournament.

Akram, himself, is a dangerous striker and remains a magician with new or old ball while Saqlain Mushtaq is a master of flight in finger spin.

Pakistan's fielding can be

vulnerable and they had an off-day against Bangladesh, who on present indications will be celebrating their group win into the next millennium.

South Africa 15/8 South Africa, with a palpable hunger for success, have brought the same rigorously scientific approach to one-day cricket which proved so successful for generations of Springbok rugby sides.

Coach Bob Woolmer has used the latest sports techniques to elevate the South African fielding to new heights while packing the side with genuine international all-rounders, headed by the splendidly forthright Lance Klusner.

Allan Donald remains a prince among fast bowlers, not as quick as he once was but still a deadly strike bowler at first change.

South Africa's strength — organisation and attention to detail — may also be their weakness with doubts persisting over Hansie Cronje's captaincy when faced with the unexpected.

Australia 6/1 Victory over West Indies in

their final group match saved Australia from elimination but they will still have to win their remaining five matches to regain the Cup.

Their position as third favourites reflects the ability of their leading players Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne, Mark Waugh and Michael Bevan rather than current form.

But they remain formidable competitors, epitomised by their laconic gum-chewing captain Steve Waugh who remains the toughest cricketer in the world.

India 8-1 The Indians evoked memories of the 1996 World Cup run-off while racing to 373 for six against Sri Lanka and there may be more heavy scoring to come from Rahul Dravid, Saurav Ganguly and the peerless Sachin Tendulkar as the weather warms up.

Javagal Srinath and Venkatesh Prasad have delivered with the ball and there has been an unexpected bonus in the form of Debashish Mohanty, who bowls with an inswinger's action but manages to make the ball move sharply away off the pitch.

Anil Kumble's wrist spin will lay a larger part as the pitches get harder and at 8/1 India are a good bet.

New Zealand 8/1 Geoff Allott, the highest wicket-taker in the Cup, has given the New Zealand attack a cutting edge it would otherwise have lacked and the fielding has been well-drilled and polished.

New Zealand, though, had **Honorary citizen**

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with Gordon. He has been with us for the last three years and we have had some wonderful time with him."

If Greenidge's comments on Bangladesh's Test bid hurt the feelings of Board, then Tanveer was found equally guilty of dampening the spirit of the cricketers and loyal supporters. The tour manager, who is also the senior vice-president of the Board, went on record on the eve of team's departure by saying, "Bangladesh will not win a single match in the World Cup."

Soon after his assumption of the job, Greenidge put forward some specific proposals for the development of the game country-wide, but those were put in cold storage, for reasons best known to the Board.

Greenidge, who is still technically BCB's cricket director, will now head home and do what he wanted to do in Bangladesh — that is, revamping school cricket in Barbados. And, we, the 120 million Bangladeshis, will be wishing him the best and hoping against hope for the wisdom that has never dawned on our myopic Board official.

based their hopes on the uncomplicated stroke play of Nathan Astle and Craig McMillan in the top three and their repeated failures have thrust added pressure on the middle-order.

Roger Twose, their one batting success, could be elevated to opener and the technically correct Adam Parore promoted up the order to eradicate a weakness likely to prevent the Black Caps reaching the semifinals.

Zimbabwe 16/1 A win over New Zealand in their opening match would almost certainly ensure a semi-final spot for Zimbabwe who surprised everybody by taking a maximum four points from the opening round.

With a smaller playing base to select from than any of the other Super Six contenders, Zimbabwe's winning performance against South Africa was an inspiring example of unselfish team work.

Further success for Zimbabwe would be an appropriate reward for the Flower brothers Andy and Grant, who have been two of the game's most dedicated servants.

Who should be the next coach?

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teams is a very delicate issue and there is no better person than the coach to evaluate any aspiring players. A foreign coach, given a substantial say in the selection process, can come up with the most unbiased squad chosen only in terms of performance.

We can go on writing about what should be done and what not to be. But the truth is that too many people with a very little or no cricketing background have occupied the top chairs of the BCB, and as long as they are there, we're afraid there is a slim chance that any part of this article should come to the attention of the policy makers — who are prompt enough to take credit from the hard works of the 15 World Cuppers and the discarded Gordon Greenidge.

And after seeing the destiny of Amarnath and Greenidge, any dignified individual will have a serious second thought of coaching Bangladesh. Given the scenario here who could blame him?

Let us hope that better senses prevail among the 32-member BCB committee. They should think beyond their limited wisdom and involve more people with credentials, preferably former national cricketers before making up their mind. We can only keep our fingers crossed.

Congratulations to Bangladesh Cricket Team

EBL'S 7 YEARS AT A GLANCE

	IN MILLION TAKA						
	Dec '92	Dec '93	Dec '94	Dec '95	Dec '96	Dec '97 (unaudited)	Dec '98
Authorized Capital	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Paid up Capital	310	600	600	600	600	600	600
Reserve	213	213	213	213	213	357	357
Retained Earnings	-	-	-	-	-	279	279
Deposits	2,379	2,217	2,967	4,182	7,487	9,480	8,872
Advances	206	632	1,374	2,625	3,829	5,023	5,756
Operating Profit/Loss	(21)	36	53	193	273	356	403
Assets	1,888	1,826	2,729	4,380	7,985	10,188	11,272
Number of Branches	4	5	11	14	16	21	21
Number of Employees	296	331	354	417	453	548	620

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