

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho was on Tuesday banned for one game with one game suspended by UEFA after two of his players received suspicious red cards in a Champions League game with Ajax. "The Spanish club's coach Jose Mourinho has been suspended from coaching activities for two UEFA club competition matches, of which the second is deferred for a probationary period of three years. He was also fined 40,000 euros," read a statement on the UEFA website. UEFA specified that the punishments were for "improper conduct".

- AFP



SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY DECEMBER 2, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net



ALMOST THERE: Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (R) stretches to get back to the crease during the first match of the five-match one-day series against Zimbabwe at the SBNS yesterday. His innings of 63 was a desperate attempt to take his team home, but it was in vain as he got no support from his teammates.

PHOTO: STAR



ASH ANTICS: Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Ashraful presents half a bat to Zimbabwe spinner Prosper Utseya during the first one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. The result? Bowled for six on his return to the national side.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ZIMBABWE TAKE 1-0 LEAD

Batting fallacy cost Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Four run outs punctuated with a number of ill-conceived shots made Bangladesh pay heavily as the hosts fell to Zimbabwe by nine runs yesterday in the first game of their five-match one-day series.

After the visitors put up a 210-run target on the predominantly batsman-friendly Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium track, the Tigers defied expectations the only way they could -- a batting calamity -- as they folded for 200 runs in 49 overs. Interestingly, it was for the fourth successive occasion Bangladesh have conceded a series opener against Zimbabwe.

The loss will bring the high-flying Tigers back down to earth after a series whitewash over New Zealand had seen them come into this match with a bullish attitude. Yesterday, however, the team was a shadow of their former imperious selves as they self-destructed in critical situations.

The final wicket of Shaiful Islam summed up the mood of the day, the batsmen not even crossing each other when Brendan Taylor's throw came in from short mid-wicket. Christopher Mpfu, man-of-the-match for his three for 25, happily whipped off the bails with the No 11 stranded far away.

Two overs prior to the final wicket, captain Shakib Al Hasan was still holding the Bangladesh innings together with some intelligent batting, even as wickets fell throughout his 65-ball knock. The left-hander made 63 in quick time through eight boundaries using his favourite square-cut and full-blooded sweep to full effect.

He reached his 16th ODI half-century during his seventh wicket stand with Mahmudullah Riyad which had the makings of a match-winning one. But Riyad's attempted loft did not clear long-on and Chamu Chibhabha completed a simple catch, ending the partnership after just 44 runs, and reducing the Tigers to 167-7 in the 43rd over.

Riyad's dismissal was the seventh nail in the coffin but the earlier ones, those of Tamim Iqbal, Junaed Siddiqui, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Ashraful and to some extent Sohrawardi Shuvo, massively helped the Zimbabwean cause.

One can easily call Tamim's leg-before decision a mistake; the Mpfu delivery landing outside leg-stump. The left-hander, who was making a comeback after five months, was just opening up his repertoire before umpire Enamul Haque's raised left-hand ended his knock of 23. After Imrul Kayes holed out to deep mid-wicket off Ray Price, out came Ashraful, immediately picking up a boundary.

But the fading
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Zimbabwe pacer Chris Mpfu celebrates dangerman Shakib Al Hasan's wicket during the first one-day against Bangladesh yesterday. Mpfu was adjudged man-of-the-match for his 3 for 25.

PHOTO: STAR

The Ashraful fantasy

MOHAMMAD ISAM



Mohammad Ashraful still looks odds on to walk out to bat on Friday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium since he is the only name the decision-makers trust and try for all their money's worth.

If news from within the Bangladesh team's think-tank is to be believed, Ashraful has been given a three-match licence to book his place for the World Cup. After his failure against Zimbabwe yesterday, he has certainly struck out in the first attempt; not quite the fearless swing-and-miss of a baseball hitter, but the thoughtless poke of a man too comfortable with his place amongst the Tigers.

So why does Ashraful feel so unafraid to attempt a half-hearted late-cut to an off-spinner who has dismissed him three times in the past? He does it because in the minds of some in the national team's management he

Ashraful has the eleventh highest batting average among Bangladeshi batsmen in one-day cricket and although he has averaged more than 25 in four calendar years (2005 to 2008) he has never yet cracked 30.

remains an unrealised fantasy. "He is just one innings away" is an old favourite of his backers who inevitably stick the "gifted" tag to the man who averages a meagre 23.33 in ODIs for the last ten years.

The last five innings, before Wednesday's debacle, saw him score 31, 20, 9, 14 and 13 and his 2010 ODI averages now stand at 18.33. He was brought back into the national fold for the Zimbabwe series on the back of some big scores

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- TEN Cricket**
Sri Lanka v West Indies
Third Test, Day 2
Live from 10:30am
- TEN Sports**
Europa League
PSG v Sevilla
Live from 11:55pm
- Villarreal v Dinamo Zagreb
Live from 2:00am (Friday)
- TEN Action+**
Europa League
FC Steaua v Liverpool
Live from 11:55pm
- Borissov v Dynamo Kyiv
Live from 2:00am (Friday)

We can't expect more from this team: Shakib

BISHWAJIT ROY



It is shocking for any captain to suffer a nine-run defeat to the bottom-ranked side Zimbabwe, especially after it comes on the foot of a magnificent series whitewash over New Zealand. Such a scenario begets the obvious question that was on everyone's lips; what really went wrong at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday?

There was definitely a number of on-the-field reasons for the home team making such a poor start to the five-match series but this defeat also exposed

a number of the off-field flaws, as exhibited by Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan's thinly-veiled expression of anger over his role as a captain during the post-match briefing.

Taking the words of Shakib at face value one would get the impression that somehow the 'spirit' of the team has been dented due to some bad decisions from the concerned authority.

The poor fielding effort in the first game added more woe to the continuous headache that exists with the middle order, which only suffered more with the inclusion of the hapless Mohammad Ashraful. The lower order batting also remains a cause for concern for coach Jamie Siddons

ahead of next year's World Cup.

But putting aside the on-field issues, the captain's discourse was an even greater cause for concern.

"I was not prepared to take the job (captaincy)," said Shakib at the post-match briefing. "And I am also not satisfied with my role as a captain. The reasons are numerous, and I cannot detail all of them right at the moment," he continued.

Based on what little can be deciphered from the statement, reality seems to be that the authority and the team think-tank have thrust the captaincy on a man who is clearly unhappy with how much freedom the role offers him.

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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

Tiring travelogue

The 1987 Cricket World Cup was the most colourful, and more widely watched than any of its predecessors. It was the first to be staged away from England and the first to be held in the subcontinent. A lot of matches were extremely close affairs; in the first match itself the co-hosts Pakistan were taken to within 15 runs of the brink by Test newcomers Sri Lanka, later England scored 35 off the last three overs to beat the West Indians, Pakistan did the same to the Windies by winning with one wicket left off the last ball.

Even the final went down to the wire, with England falling seven runs short of their arch rival Australia's target. All in all, it was a fantastic advertisement for one-day cricket, and the passionate participation by the cricket-crazy Indian and Pakistani fans made it a tremendous advertisement for cricket in the sub-continent.

There were bound to be problems though, as the Cup was hosted in a culturally diverse, economically underdeveloped and geographically vast region. The logistics of travel and communication was always going to be a tricky affair, especially as

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Jamil refutes Rach's report

SPORTS REPORTER

Khondoker Jamiluddin, the general secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation has refuted coach Gerhard Peter Rach's claim of the federation being an 'Old Town Mafia', adding that the German apparently indulged in this smear campaign in an effort to shirk his responsibility for the Asiatic debacle.

"Someone has to take the blame for the hockey team's failure in the Asian Games. It seems coach wanted to avoid his share of the responsibility. His calling the federation as an 'old town mafia' is baseless and bereft of truth," said Jamil replying to German coach's allegations in his eight-page report on the hockey team in the Asian Games.

"Even before the Asian Games, he blamed the federation and its officials without having any valid ground for such allegations. We had arranged everything he wanted and sent the team to Germany for a two-month training as per his demand," Jamil said.

"He cannot disown the team selection and blame the chief selector solely for it, because the chief selector has always kept communicating

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Bangladesh in Asian Beach Games

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will take part in two disciplines in the second Asian Beach Games to be held in Muscat, Oman from December 8 to 16.

Bangladesh contingent comprising women's Kabaddi team and two body builders are expected to leave for Muscat on December 6. The women's kabaddi team are being sent in light of their success in the recently concluded Asian Games while this will be the first time that a body builders team from Bangladesh will take part in an international event.

The two body builders are William Blazo and Saifulah Khaled while Golam Mahmud

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India's stand-in skipper Gautam Gambhir drives one on way to a match-winning hundred against New Zealand in the second ODI at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gambhir lifts India

Cricket

AFP, Jaipur

India's stand-in captain Gautam Gambhir cracked an unbeaten 138 off 116 balls to lift the hosts to an eight-wicket win over New Zealand in the second one-day international on Wednesday.

The left-hander's eighth one-day century enabled India to surpass New Zealand's challenging 258-8 with seven overs to spare in the day-night match at the Sawai Man Singh stadium in Jaipur.

The emphatic victory gave India a 2-0 lead in the five-match series after the hosts had won the first game in Guwahati on Sunday by 40 runs.

Gambhir put on 87 for the first wicket with Murali Vijay (33) and 116 for the second with Virat Kohli, who followed up his century in Guwahati with a fluent 64.

The skipper hit 18 boundaries in his fluent knock.

Gambhir led India as regular captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni was rested for the

series along with other senior players including Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Zaheer Khan and Harbhajan Singh.

Fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth set up the win by grabbing four wickets after Gambhir won the toss and elected to field in good batting conditions.

Martin Guptill top-scored for the Black Caps with a dour 70, before Scott Styris boosted the total with 59 off 54 balls.

Sreesanth removed Styris and skipper Daniel Vettori (31) off successive balls in the 46th over, after the pair had put on a quickfire 58 for the fifth wicket.

Nathan McCullum prevented a hat-trick as New Zealand recovered from a middle-order slump to smash 88 runs in the last 11 overs.

Guptill, who opened the innings, crawled to his half-century in the 30th over.

The Black Caps opted for the batting powerplay in the 35th over, with the total at 137-3, and took advantage of the field restrictions to hit 33 runs in the next five overs.

Guptill fell in controversial circumstances when Indian umpire Sanjay Hazare declared

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SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think the selectors were too harsh on Shahriar Nafees?

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