

# Star SPORT

## Mancini in hot water

A judge has requested a three year eight month jail term be imposed on Brazilian footballer Mancini for the alleged sexual assault of a young woman at a party organised by teammate Ronaldinho, the Italian press reported Tuesday. Former Roma, Inter and AC Milan winger Mancini is accused of taking advantage of a drunken Brazilian woman at a party hosted by Ronaldinho in Milan last December. The seven-times capped player is alleged to have offered to escort the model home, before taking her to his



# MUSHFIQ, a captain's dream



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

**HITTING FOR THE MATCH:** (Top) Mushfiqur Rahim whacks the penultimate ball of the innings for a six over mid-wicket to lead Bangladesh to a 3-wicket victory in their lone T20 match against West Indies yesterday. (Above) The elation is palpable on his face as it was his inauguration as captain.

SAKEB SUBHAN

Scarcely had the ball sailed over the thirty-yard circle did Mushfiqur Rahim let out a war cry signalling victory, that too in his first match as captain of the Tigers. It all seemed to be slipping away just as it had in that heartbreaking third ODI against Zimbabwe in Harare in mid-August, when Mushfiq had battled his way to a brilliant hundred, only to find himself on the losing side after bringing the team painfully close to victory in the last over of the chase. Yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National



Stadium, Bangladesh needed 6 to win off the last over with Mushfiq on strike and four wickets in hand. The equation soon turned to 5 required off three deliveries with Nasir Hossain perishing off the third ball. Abdur Razzak came in and handed the strike to Mushfiq with four needed off two. The six he hit to seal the deal could hardly have tasted any sweeter.

But the man himself was the picture of calmness at the post-match press conference, graciously accepting the congratulations but all underpinned by a steel that revealed his character.

"I believed that if Nasir and I stay till the last over, even if we needed 10 or 15 runs, we would win," said the new Bangladesh captain. "Also, we got some runs in the second-last over which was a bonus for us. In the last over, though Nasir got out, I had the confi-

dence that if I got the ball in my zone then I could hit it for a four or six. Fortunately, that is what happened."

When asked how he was feeling about his auspicious debut as captain, Mushfiq beamed and said, "Obviously I am delighted. Everyone wants the first match to be memorable, and I couldn't have asked for more. We won the toss and it was the plan to bowl first because the due might be a factor, and our bowling is spin-reliant. We saved 10-12 runs on the field and there was a concerted effort to restrict them as much as possible.

"Our top order got us off to a good start, and in the middle West Indies bowled well and our batting collapsed a bit, but the lower-middle order made a valuable contribution in the form of Nasir and Naeem (Islam). Overall it was a great team effort."

Mushfiqur also gave the bowlers the lion's share of the credit, saying that 132 on this pitch was not a difficult total.

"I think we bowled fantastically well to restrict West Indies to 132. It was not a difficult total, but you know in T20 you can't always be consistent as a batsman because you have to play so many shots."

Inevitably, the question about the Harare heartbreak came up, but Mushfiqur said that the two situations were different.

"In Harare going into the last over we only had one wicket left, and I knew that even if I took a single at that point we would have lost the match; in other words it was all on me. Here, since we had three wickets left, I knew that even if I mishit the shot and we ran one or two there would still be a chance to win."

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## BCB, PCB to pick ICC VP

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Cricket Council announced yesterday that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to submit their nomination for the ICC vice-presidency for the period between 2012 and 2014.

It was a decision taken "in accordance with the current constitutional requirements of the ICC, the ICC Executive Board", said an ICC media release yesterday. The boards have to put forward their nomination by December 31 this year with the election for the vice-president to be held on June 30 next year.

BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal, who was under fire earlier this year for almost losing the chance to continue the rotation policy, said that the PCB ought to give BCB the chance to pick the vice-president.

"I feel Pakistan should give us the chance," said Kamal. "We have been in constant

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## Smartness in all facets

MOHAMMAD ISAM

In the end, it was a matter of choice.

With his side needing four runs from two balls, Mushfiqur Rahim was presented with a shorter length ball from Ravi Rampaul. He swung from the hips, a sort of swat-pull that landed over the top and bounced into the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium Grandstand. In a similar situation two months ago in dark, cold Harare, Mushfiqur bungled up when he skied a pitched up Chris Mpofu delivery with the Tigers needing six to win from five balls in the crunch third ODI.

On that occasion, the choice of shot was a slog. His attempted hit down the ground went as far as long-on where Vusi Sibanda took a calm catch amid all the tension. This time, the new captain decided to go by his coach Stuart Law's words. He went for the smart choice, though it was more commonsensical than clever to hammer such a poor delivery into the baying crowd at mid-wicket.

Before Mushfiqur's heroics however, the Tigers' collapse from 1-49 to 4-54 wasn't long enough. Imrul Kayes's sweep didn't go long enough, Shakib Al Hasan missed a straight ball and what Alok Kapali tried to do was beyond most spectators' imagination.

Mohammad Ashraful departed for 25 three overs later, making Mushfiqur the lone man capable of pulling off the win. With Naeem Islam, he added 22 before the all-

rounder's risky move away from the stumps was stunted by Darren Sammy. Nasir Hossain, who notoriously fell in those tantalising moments in Harare, gave Mushfiqur comfort through some sensible batting.

The debutant's 18 off 15 balls had a single boundary and that too came when the required run-rate needed a boost, a mark of his street-smartness that has been his specialty in domestic cricket.

Nasir's dismissal off the third ball of the last over had the potential of rocking the boat but Mushfiqur's calm head was the Tigers' biggest asset at that point.

A good decision, even under extreme pressure, is the mark of a cool character, one who doesn't flinch in front of the blowtorch and melt under the public's expectations. That is what Law has asked his new charges, the need to play smart cricket which amounts to taking the right path to perform a task on the field. Given that the former Australian cricketer was just a week into his new job when he landed with the Tigers in Zimbabwe, the West Indies series is billed as his first real test as Bangladesh coach.

Yesterday's Twenty20 was littered with many potential landmarks which could have deprived the Tigers of much-needed momentum ahead of the ODI series that starts tomorrow.

Instead, Shafiqul Islam and Abdur Razzak confidently kept the West Indies openers Lendl Simmons and Adrian Bath in check,

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## Riyad to miss ODIs

SPORTS REPORTER

The debut of Mahmudullah Riyad as vice-captain has been put on hold as he was kept out of the 15-member squad for the three one-day international series against West Indies.

Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday announced the squad for the series keeping Shahriar Nafees, Sohrwardi Shuvo and Shuvogoto Hom Chowdhury from the 18-member squad.

Pacer Shahadat Hossain, spinner Elias Sunny along with ailing Riyad, who also missed the lone Twenty20 due to fever, were not considered for the one-day series that will get underway from October 13 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, which will also host the second match on October 15.

The third match will be played on October 18 in Chittagong. All three matches are day-night affairs.

"Mahmudullah [Riyad] is currently recovering from

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## Youths love it

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshis love cricket, and going by the prevalent mood at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium during the lone T20 against the West Indies yesterday, it is the shortest form of the game that really does the trick for cricket lovers here.

Even without the obvious popularity of the shortest format there was enough subtext to the game to keep fans interested. It was, after all, only the second T20 International to be played in the country, and the first ever in the capital; the last time Bangladeshis saw a T20I was in Khulna in November 2006.

Although there have been no international T20s here in a while, audiences here let their love be known for the format last year during the NCL T20 domestic competition in Dhaka, which garnered a huge fan following.

"T20 is my favourite form of cricket," said Anik, a student who was waiting for the game to start half an hour before the scheduled start of play.

"The last time a T20 took place in Bangladesh, it was in Khulna, so I could not go to watch. But I always watch the IPL or the Champions League T20 whenever I get the chance."

His friend and fellow student Atiq echoed his sentiments regarding the game's newest form.



A jovial Tigers fan goes through the regulation security checking at the entrance of the SBNCs yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

"It is much more exciting than 50-over cricket, and it takes three hours to play, which is very convenient, especially for us students," he opined.

And it was mostly the student population who filled up half the arena even before the match had even started understandable given the possible overlap between the start time of 5:00pm and office closing hours around the city, as well as the attraction T20 matches hold for the younger segment of the audience. The office-goers must have made it to the ground because it was all but halfway through the West Indies innings.

There was another point of interest regarding the match, a point that Bangladeshis will

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