

# A DIFFERENT HOME-COMING FOR THE TIGERS



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(Clockwise from top left) Adoring fans waited for hours in front of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to welcome their heroes. Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, alongside speedster Rubel Hossain, led the team out of the tarmac as Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad make sure everything is in place. A cheerful Taskin Ahmed being received by a relative. The heroes, adorned with garlands, head towards the exit gate.

## Fans throng at Tigers' arrival

From red and green placards reading out congratulatory messages to the tireless slogans that were shouted at the top of their lungs, the ambience of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, at least for a few hours, resonated that of a cricket stadium. The generally jam-free roads within the Airport's complex were filled with close to a thousand spectators eagerly awaiting the arrival of their heroes. Such was the extent of their excitement that the roaring sound of a plane could have easily been dissolved amidst their euphoria. The security staff were initially successful at keeping most of the spectators outside the complex of the airport. However, as the sun set and the Tigers made their landing, many more fans joined in the party and at that point of time they had no option but to form a boundary on the road leading to the VIP arena, where the players were set to depart from. Even that didn't curb their enthusiasm. Every bus that tried to make its

way out of the airport was excitedly blocked for a brief period of time. "Is that the team bus?" most of them shouted as they desperately made attempts to catch a glance of the travellers through the windows. And only when they were convinced that the bus didn't hide their heroes did they let it go. There obviously wasn't any violence; in fact, team bus or not, every big vehicle received a cheery departure from the airport. The scenario was a lot more festive right outside the entrance of the Airport. The circle was blocked with hundreds of youngsters waving their flags and dancing to the tunes of their own slogans. And it didn't just end there. Youngsters stood at both sides of the Airport road desperately hoping to catch a glimpse of their heroes in the bus. It was a line which lasted for almost half a kilometer. The real team bus as expected departed with plenty of security and the fans outside barely got a chance to get a glance at their heroes. But then again that didn't matter because the

party went on even after the players left the airport. Perhaps a reason behind that was that a few members of the security staff tried to bluff the fans early on by telling them that their heroes had already left the airport, when in fact they hadn't. The dedicated fans though, stayed on. The players, who landed at around 7:30 were welcomed by the BCB director Jalal Yunus and their family members. Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was given a bouquet of flowers and he later attended an impromptu press conference which, after a certain point of time had almost turned into a wrestling match with several media men charging in with their questions. Towards the end of the evening the Tigers were escorted by a group of security men who had the initials CRT on their uniforms. Upon query it was revealed that abbreviation stood for Crisis Resistance Team. It was perhaps the most ideal name for the ideal scenario, for there was a mini crisis at the Airport yesterday.

## 'Life won't stop here'

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
Upon Bangladesh's arrival in Dhaka yesterday skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza urged fans to move on from the disappointment caused due to the controversial umpiring decisions during Bangladesh's quarterfinal clash against India. Following the game, effigies of the umpires were burnt at different parts of the country. "People of Bangladesh expected a good match in the quarterfinal and they did not get that and that's why I feel bad. We could not perform the way that we wanted to. You have seen what happened, there's no point explaining that issue [with regards to the no-ball decision]. "Life does not stop here. We will go on. I understand that everyone has been hurt. But what I will tell them is that there's a new series ahead and I hope we can do well there so that everyone can forget this defeat," said Mashrafe. Asked if he believed that Bangladesh could have won the game had the decisions gone his way, Mashrafe said, "If we had gotten wickets at that point of time I am sure we could have won. That is my belief." There were plenty of positives to take from the World Cup for Mashrafe and co. The skipper hopes that they can utilise the momentum gained from the mega event in the upcoming series'. Bangladesh are scheduled to play Pakistan, India, South Africa and Australia this year. "If I had to select a man of the tournament for us then I would have to divide it between Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim. "Riyad was outstanding. He was under a lot of pressure... but the way he delivered was brilliant. I think in this World Cup I would place his name should come up after Kumar Sangakkara," Mashrafe observed. "Mushfiqur has been performing well for the last three years for us and I hope he can continue. Rubel and Taskin gave us crucial breakthroughs. I would also like to talk

about Soumya Sarker... he had played just one ODI before the World Cup but put in a very matured show in the big event," he added. Mashrafe said that the most remarkable change in their side came with regards to their belief. "The first thing that we needed to do was to believe in ourselves. To believe that we can do something in these foreign conditions. That in itself was a big step for the players. "And we also tried to enjoy all our moments, good and bad. We stayed together. When we lost our first four practice matches in Brisbane, there were plenty of things that we had to hear from outside, but we still managed to keep ourselves together. This was completely a team performance," said the 31-year-old. Mashrafe also thanked the fans who turned up in huge numbers in the various grounds of Australia and New Zealand. "Actually no matter how good we play, we will always feel for the people of this country, because it's them who has made cricket so special for us. Each and every performance of ours is for Bangladesh," Mashrafe concluded.

SEMIFINAL LINE-UPS		
New Zealand v South Africa	Match	Australia v India
Tuesday, Mar 24	Date	Thursday, Mar 26
Auckland	venue	Sydney
David Boon	Match referee	Ranjan Madugalle
Ian Gould & Rod Tucker	On-field umpires	Kumar Dharmasena & Richard Kettleborough
Nigel Long	Third umpire	Maraic Fraser

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