



## Fifa World Cup Football

# Chance for all to watch the games



STAR PHOTO

**WAHIDA MITU**  
Football fans across the city hailed Dhaka City Corporation's (DCC) decision in installing large screens in 16 points of the city to watch World Cup matches.

"It is innovative thinking on the part of DCC," said Mahmud Amin, a Dhaka University (DU) student adding that this move "has increased our football enthusiasm."

"My friends and I come over to watch the games on the large

screen. This is much better than being cooped up in a small room at home," said Habibur Rahman.

"The players' movements and strokes are better seen on these big screens, and the company of many makes watching games more fun and exciting," he added.

"This is a very good idea," commented Akhter Hossain, a service holder, waiting for a bus at Farmgate. "I am not in a hurry to rush home to watch the matches as I can watch them while waiting for the bus," he

added. Street children too now have the opportunity of enjoying the matches.

"I do not understand the game well, I know when a goal is shot, and as the ball approaches the goal post, there is a lot of shouting and cheering going on," said Kamal, a six-year-old street child at Farmgate.

"With the present power cuts at different parts of the city, the large screens will help fans to watch their favourite teams without any disturbance," said

**Sponsored by Unilever Bangladesh, DCC has set up the big screens at different spacious points including Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of DU, Mohammadpur Town Hall, Farmgate, Bashabo playground, Gopibagh, Manik Mia Avenue, Bahadur Shah Park, Kalabagan and the Abahani playgrounds**

DCC superintendent engineer Amirul Hoque.

"It is more exciting to watch the game on a big screen with a larger crowd," he added.

He further said that the DCC ward commissioners were maintaining security of the big screens.

While some were excited and happy, others called it a waste of public money that could have been put into better use and sorted some of the city's existing problems.

"It is surely an added facility,

but I hope DCC will pay more attention to the problems that dwellers are undergoing regularly," said a city dweller.

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The month-long World Cup that began on June 9 has already drawn record television audiences across the sport-obsessed country.

In spite of the large screens, people -- passers-by or shopkeepers of nearby outlets -- also gather in front of various electronics showrooms.

"I work at a nearby grocery store and cannot shut my shop down," said Khaled, a sales boy while watching a game at a nearby electronics outlet in Middle Badda. "I cannot resist from enjoying the game, so whenever I get some leisure I peep into the outlet so that I can enjoy the game and look after the shop at the same time," he added.

Day labourers too now chance to watch the games at these outlets.

"I am a day labourer and work till evening. I used to chat and gossip, but now I spend my leisure time watching world cup football," said Badshah, a day labourer.

Not just the DCC, various private organisations have also put up big screens around the city for the fanatic football fans.



STAR PHOTO

The city is witnessing football euphoria. The 'crazy about football' buffs celebrating one of the biggest carnival of sports, out on the city streets with the colourful flags of their favourite teams.

## Doing good business!

IMRUL HASAN

The World Cup Football Championship has given rise to a boost to plenty of the city's business sectors like TV repairing, satellite connections, sports and card shops.

These businesses are crowded with people getting their TV sets repaired to enjoy the tournament, looking for World Cup souvenirs, buying game equipment and getting new satellite connections.

Mominul Hossain, on June 10 evening waited for two hours at an electronic repair shop at Banasree, Rampura to take his TV set back home from the repair shop that needed tuning. It was the day his favourite team, England was playing.

"I brought my TV set to the shop a week back, but they have not completed the work yet," Mominul complained. "The charges too are three times the normal rate," he added.

Habibul Islam of City Electronics in the same area said that they were trying to complete repairs as quickly as possible. "There are so many of them, and it is not possible to work on them all at once," he said.

Rasel Ahmed from Nurjahan Road rushed to a cable-line operator at Bashbari Road in Mohammadpur on Monday, but was disappointed when he found that the connection fee had gone up to Tk 2,400 which is much higher than the usual charge.

"I wanted to watch all 64 matches. BTV is broadcasting only 25 matches, so I thought of getting a new cable connection, but the cost is beyond my reach," he said. "I will have to be content watching only a limited number of matches," he added.

Arnab, a teenager was eagerly looking for his favourite player Ronaldinho's poster at a card gallery in Gulshan 1 yesterday afternoon. After a lot of efforts he managed to get a poster of his favourite player scoring a goal.

"I have been a Ronaldinho fan since I was a child. I am all for Brazil," said Arnab showing off Ronaldinho's poster and some other pictures adding that although the price of the poster was Tk 100, he would enjoy having it.

Like Arnab, many other football fans are crowding the city's card shops.

Traders of these card shops at areas like Gulshan, New Market, Paltan, Gulistan, Nilkhet, Farmgate and Motijheel, said that most of their customers were teenagers.

An official of Ideal Products said, "Both retail and whole sale of these products have been increased. The posters of Ronaldinho and Ronaldo are much in demand. Other posters sold are those of Luis Figo, Crespo, David Beckham, Michael Balak, Zinedane Zidane, Messi, Michael Owen."

Prices of footballs and jerseys have also gone up by 70 percent in the last few days because of the huge demand.

When asked about the price hike, Md. Mohsin, owner of Mohsin Sports at Bangabandhu Avenue said: "The supply of items is not enough to satisfy consumer demands. So, the prices have increased."

Rafiq Hashim, from Malibagh and a student of Wills Little Flower School & College, alleged that because of the World Cup Football Tournament, they (the traders) themselves have created the crisis in the game items.



STAR PHOTO

Ecstatic fans are worshipping a hand painting of their football idol at Gendaria.

## Battle over supporting favourite teams

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

With the beginning of the World Cup 2006, the people of Dhaka have been divided into groups supporting their favourite teams, especially Brazil and Argentina.

Bangladeshi football fans' mania for the two Latin American teams is so strong that the supporters of other participating countries remain almost subdued.

"There is no team in the world which can defeat Brazil. Brazil will definitely win the cup this year," said Rafiqul Islam, a businessman in Bangabazar.

Undoubtedly most Bangladeshis are die-hard fans of Brazil and Argentina, and the support for Argentina comes mainly due to Maradona's huge popularity.

"I'm a fan of Argentina and it's because of Maradona. I love him very much," said Jasim Uddin, a rickshaw-puller, although the football legend hung his boots a decade ago. Even some crazy fans believe Maradona is still in action!

This correspondent talked to a dozen of Argentina supporters, one-third of them know the names hardly two or three players of their favourite

team. The others know only Maradona, not the players now playing for the Latin American team.

"Only Argentina can beat Brazil. So we are looking forward to Argentina doing it again and again," said Tanmoy Hossain Iqbal, student of a private University.

Rabeya Rasul, a housewife who supports Argentina, is however not hopeful about Argentina's prospect this time. "Argentina is a good team and I always pray for it. But this year I'm not that optimistic about my team's triumph," she said.

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## Deserted streets mean match is on

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

As soon as the World Cup matches begin in the evening, the streets of Dhaka look empty with all eyes glued to the television screen to watch the excitement of the world's biggest sports carnival that comes after every four years.

Not only the well off and middle class people, the World Cup attracts the working class too. Rickshaw-pullers, transport worker, hawkers and the workers of roadside restaurants also take a break in the evening to enjoy the World Cup matches.

"Argentina is my favourite team. I don't want to miss any of the matches," Anzarul, a rickshaw-puller of Mirpur,

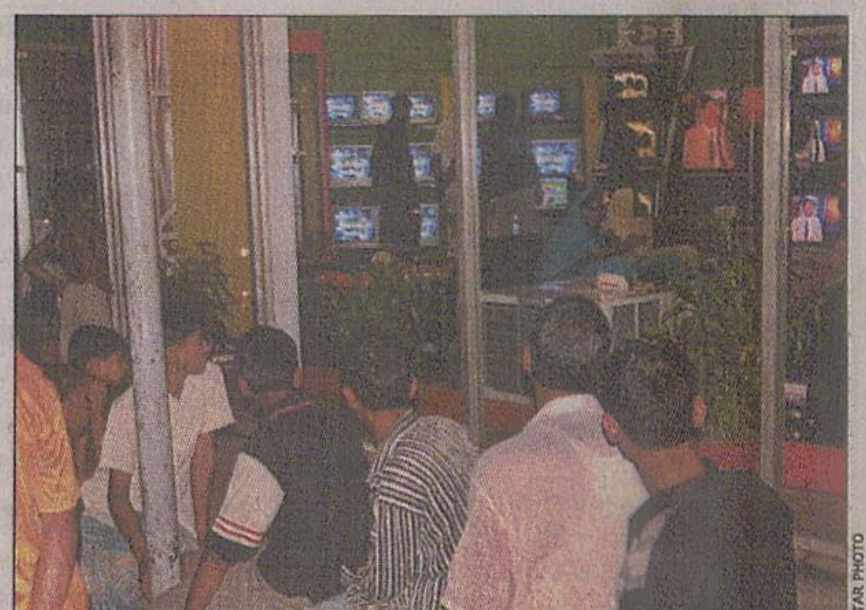
told Star City. Anzarul said he is trying to watch every match despite the fact that he has to stop pulling rickshaw in the evening.

"Sometimes I miss the evening matches as I have to carry passengers. But I never miss the matches starting at 10 at night," Anzarul said.

Abonti Ujjayoni, a lawyer who usually takes a rickshaw for returning home from Farmgate every day, said on Tuesday that she finds very few rickshaws in the streets when the World Cup matches are screened on television.

"I saw the rickshaw-pullers watching football matches at the roadside showrooms of electronic goods. They decline to take a trip in the evening," she said.

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STAR PHOTO

Rickshaw-pullers, day labourers do not want to miss out on the fun either. Taking time off from their work to catch the live matches on TV screens at shops has become a routine thing for them.