



LITTLE INDIA IN ADELAIDE: It was a festive occasion for South Asian expatriates in Adelaide yesterday with Indian and Pakistani fans taking part in a friendly banter ahead of the breathtaking contest. As the photo above shows, Adelaide was South 'Asianised' for a day.

PHOTO:
BISHWAJIT ROY

Kohli-wood has them jumping in A-delhi

GREG BAUM

This was the day the city of churches became the city of chachas and achhas. The stately streets suddenly were full of the amiable chatter and chaos of any subcontinental thoroughfare, lacking only rickshaws. The cricket ground was heaving and hollering. The exception that proved the temporary rule was the scoreboard bar.

This was Adelaide Oval in an attitude and atmosphere it had not known before, and may never know again.

The day's first run, Rohit Sharma's squiggy inside edge for one, prompted a screech like Corey Wingard on the burst for Port Adelaide, and for 50 overs it scarcely abated, not in volume, not in pitch. The crescendo peaked when Virat Kohli brought up his century, par for him at this ground and the centrepiece of India's innings. In cricket terms, this was morally flat India versus acutely short-handed Pakistan.

A caveat before we go on. Bro-mopping organisers claimed in advance a global television audience of more than one billion, which is always a nonsense on the Australian Grand Prix corporation scale, a stretch even out of Salman Rushdie's imagination. When these teams last met, in a World Cup semi-final in Delhi in 2011, the Indian television audience was an audited 67 million. The biggest annual sports event is soccer's Champions League final, last year drawing 165million, and the Super Bowl, this year attracting 115million.

Even the four-yearly World Cup final does not verifiably have 1billion watchers. Draw your own conclusions, and if you are a sports administrator, multiply them by 10. Perhaps they allowed for the fact that Indians and Pakistanis were beside themselves about this match, and counted them doubly.

The day and the occasion stood for itself anyway, and brilliantly. On an inbound morning flight, the singing already had begun. In Hindley Street, drums beat, flags flew, horns blasted and chants flew back and forth, fortunately in good humour. On North Terrace, a mob circled the Indian team bus; somehow, they always know where it is and when it is due to leave.

Elsewhere, there were Canadian Indians and Zimbabwean Indians and British, who weren't necessarily Indians, but were in the country anyway and were not going to miss this. Their alternative was to trail woe-be-gone England to Wellington.



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titions, share some logistical support here and would play each other more often if geopolitics let them. When a throw at the stumps caught Kohli flush in the back, causing him to wince, the crowd sent up a pantomime boo, but Shahid Afridi made as if to rub the sore spot for him. In truth, there wasn't even a figurative spot. An undertone of applause ensued; overtones were not possible this day.

All bums clenched when 216-cm pace-man Muhammad Irfan let slip a head-high beamer at Suresh Raina. Preparing for Irfan, the Indians had faced throw-downs delivered from stools. Now it was Raina who needed a stool. But the tacit consensus was that this was accident, not incident, and the match sped on.

Still the most discombobulating sight this reporter has seen at a cricket ground was Chinese archers leaning against the pickets at Lord's at the London Olympics. But the sound most out of time and place must be Adelaide Oval, February 15, 2015. Only when the last ball of the afternoon was bowled did neutrals realise that their eardrums had been vibrating without pause or let for three-and-a-half hours. The hush now was, well, churchy.

Preston slams World Cup cut

AFP, Dunedin

Scotland captain Preston Mommsen has criticised plans to reduce the number of teams at future World Cups, saying it would be a backward move for the global game.

The Scots are one of 14 teams taking part in the ongoing World Cup being co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

But with the sides split into two groups of seven and four qualifying from each pool for the quarter-finals, critics argue that it takes too long to reach what is often a predictable list of teams for the last eight.

The International Cricket Council have indicated that only 10 nations will contest the 2019 World Cup in England, with the top eight teams in the global rankings joined by the two best sides from a qualifying event a year earlier.

That would still give second-tier associate, non-Test, sides such as Scotland the chance to compete on the World Cup stage but Mommsen argued reducing the number of teams would hinder efforts to "grow the game".

"Hopefully people will realise that's not the best decision for world cricket," he said.

"A World Cup is called a World Cup for a reason, because it's a global event," the skipper added. "By excluding nations that are trying to compete and trying to grow the game, it's not very effective."

However, Mommsen said he did not want the issue of qualification for future events to disrupt Scotland's campaign at the 2015 World Cup, arguing that impressing on the field -- starting with Tuesday's match against co-hosts New Zealand -- was the best way to win over their critics.

But he did observe that cricket appeared to be one of the few sports where the showpiece event was being reduced in size rather than witnessing an expansion in the number of teams taking part.

Fun here, fury there

AFP, New Delhi/Islamabad

Jubilant fans spilled out onto India's streets and let off firecrackers after the national team defeated bitter rivals Pakistan in their opening World Cup match in Adelaide on Sunday.

In bars, restaurants and homes nationwide, millions watched Virat Kohli score a majestic 107 before his side cruised to an emphatic 76-run win at the jam-packed Adelaide Oval.

Scores of euphoric university students gathered in the heart of the capital New Delhi as soon as the last Pakistan wicket fell, dancing and waving the saffron and green Indian flag.

"I love you, Virat Kohli, it's the best gift that you could give India," said Shreya Sharma, 21, planting a kiss on a blow-up poster of the Indian vice-captain.

Across the border, the mood was a mirror image.

Millions of Pakistanis nationwide

watched the match either at home or in restaurants with specially installed big screens, but left downhearted.

"I had huge feelings and excitement in watching this match which Pakistan has lost," said Farhat Irfan, 22, who saw the game in an Islamabad restaurant in the company of about 200 others.

India have won all their previous World Cup matches against Pakistan, but Pakistani media and fans were hoping against hope for a first-ever success.

"We had a lot of expectations, that Pakistan might change history... but they did not make it possible," Irfan added.

Irfan said she had a bet with her friends on a Pakistan win which she lost.

"Now I will have to arrange a party for them [her friends]. I am really saddened but, whatever happens, we love our cricket team."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had called his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to wish him luck before the match, took to Twitter to congratulate the team.

"Congrats Team India. Well played. We are all very proud of you," he tweeted.

For legions of supporters in both India and Pakistan, a win over the old enemy is almost as important as winning the tournament.

"The pressure is now off India, now they can relax for the rest of the tournament," S. Shriram, a software professional, told AFP.

"For me, India has won the World Cup today!"

However, some Indian fans were left seething after their Air India flight to Sydney was delayed by eight hours -- meaning they missed the game altogether -- according to local newspaper reports.

'Shakib should lead'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Chanikha Hathurusingha expects his ace allrounder Shakib Al Hasan to take a lead role in the World Cup. Shakib, who took part in the recently concluded Big Bash League, is arguably the most experienced cricketer in the side when it comes to playing in Australia.

The Sri Lankan also said that while he and the players are a bit nervous ahead of the start of the mega event, he is looking forward to it.

"I am expecting him [Shakib] to take a lead role and lead us from the front. I think you [Australian media] have seen him for Melbourne Renegades. He is an explosive batsman when gets in control of the game and is a very clever bowler," Hathurusingha told reporters after practice at the Kippax Oval yesterday.

The pressure is there in the World Cup, especially the first game because

we don't know what to expect. We are a bit nervous, but I think it's good to feel a bit of tension. It does not make a difference [who we play the first game against], be it Afghanistan or any other



CHANIDKA HATHURUSINGHA

team, for us it's important to give our best and win it," he added.

Despite losing the first four matches, Hathurusingha saw a silver-lining.

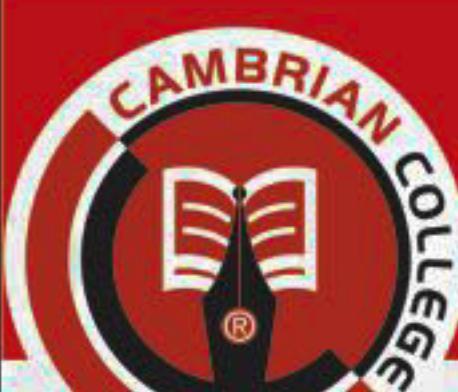
"It's not always ideal to lose. It puts a few doubts on your mind. But

the thing is we were trying a few things, giving a few players a go in these conditions. We had only four games coming here.

"With the combination we pretty much know what we want to do. We are also happy with our preparation and all the facilities we got here," he said, adding that he expected some of his younger players in the side put in a good show in the mega event.

While none of the players were available for media sessions, Shakib through his facebook page informed his fans that the Tigers would give their best effort the World Cup.

"We wear our national colors with pride and hope... We will play with our hearts and full strength knowing your undying love and never ending prayers are with us... May God give us the strength and courage to make our beloved nation proud... Love, Shakib," his facebook post read.



বাংলা ও ইংরেজি ভাষার
প্রথকে দ্বাদশ শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত
অধ্যয়নের সুযোগ

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INFO ZONE

IRELAND

M W L
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M W L
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HEAD TO HEAD IN WORLD CUPS

WEST INDIES

M W L
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IN ALL ODIS

M W L
5 4 0

LAST MEETING : 23rd Feb 2014 at Kingston. West Indies won by 4 wickets (with 80 balls remaining).

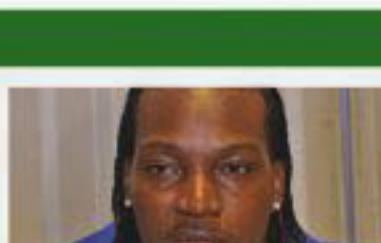
KEY PLAYERS



KEVIN O'BRIEN

33.50
83.32
4.86
10
2
142
2178
68

AVERAGE
STRIKE RATE
ECO RATE
50'S
100'S
HIGHEST SCORE
TOTAL RUNS
TOTAL WICKETS

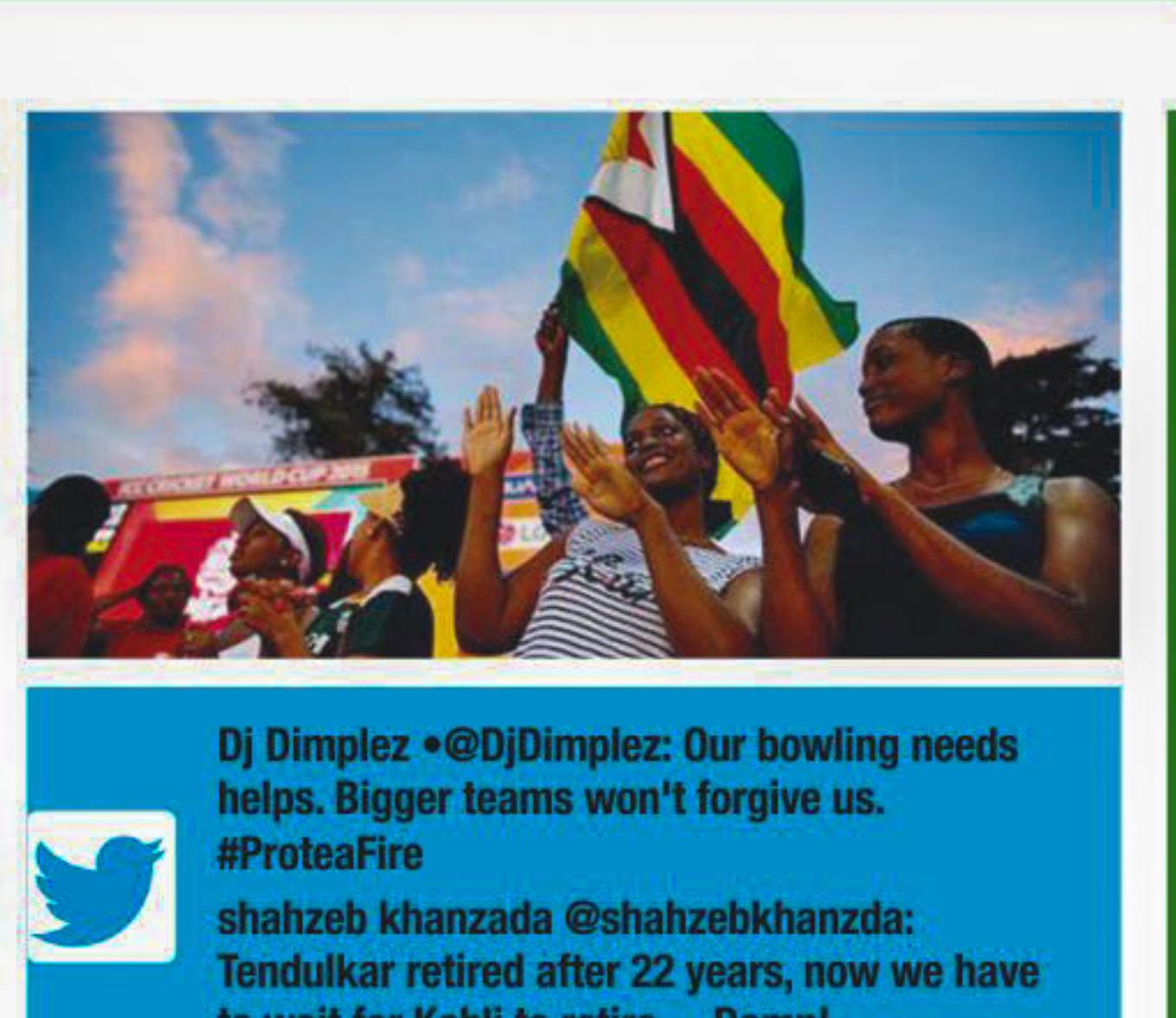


CHRIS GAYLE

36.85
84.22
4.75
46
21
153*
8881
158



(L) Indian fans celebrate their victory while (R) Zimbabwe fans cheer their team.



Dj Dimplez •@DjDimplez: Our bowling needs helps. Bigger teams won't forgive us.
#ProteaFire
shahzeb khanzada @shahzebkhanzada:
Tendulkar retired after 22 years, now we have to wait for Kohli to retire... Damn!

f /clementcleardrink

