

# 5 facts

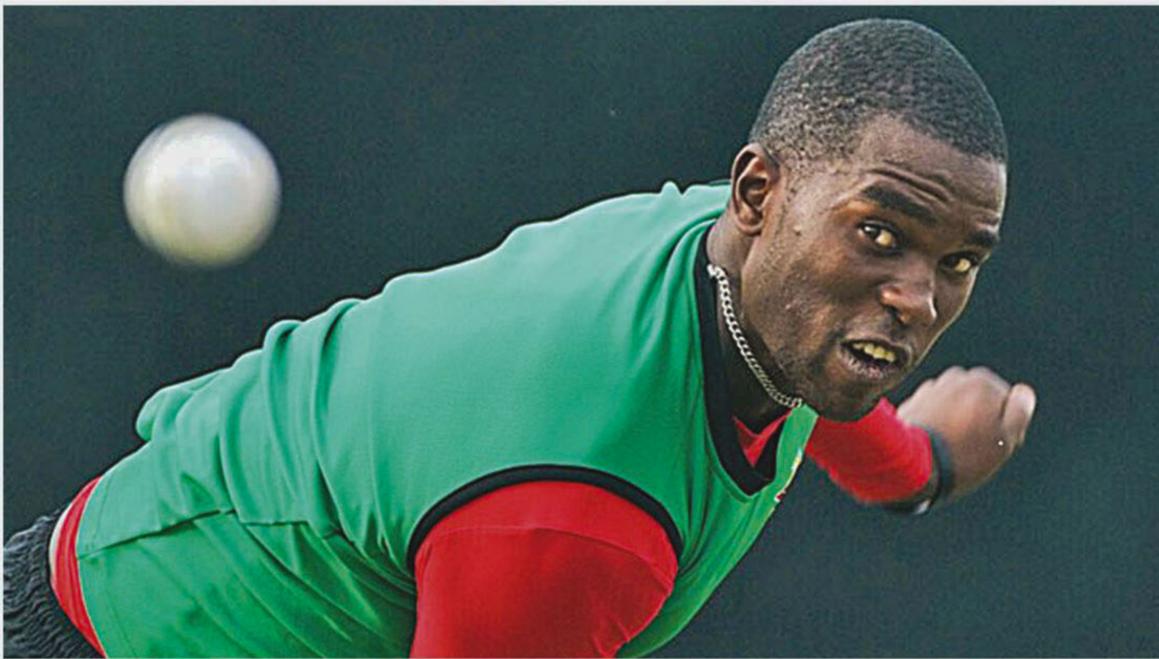
These teams have never before met in one-day internationals. United Arab Emirates have lost all 10 of their previous ODIs against Test-playing nations

UAE's Khurram Khan's ODI average of 53.4 is the fourth highest of anyone playing at least 10 innings

In November 2014, Khurram became the oldest player to hit a one-day international century, at 43 years and 162 days, against Afghanistan at the Dubai ICC Academy

Zimbabwe skipper Elton Chigumbura has taken two wickets in his last 14 ODI innings, at an average of 139.5 and strike rate of 147

Khurram and UAE skipper Mohammed Tauqir are both 43 and the oldest players in the tournament



Zimbabwe captain Elton Chigumbura will have to dig deep if they are to avoid an unlikely threat from the amateurs of UAE during their second World Cup match at Nelson today.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

THE SPIRIT OF CRICKET IS IN THE AIR  
RELIVE THE MOMENT OF THE DAY

# No mercy, says Elton

AFP, Nelson

Zimbabwe have warned they will show no mercy against minnows the United Arab Emirates in their World Cup match in Nelson on Thursday, with captain Elton Chigumbura promising a "ruthless" approach.

The Pool B match statistics are heavily lop-sided in favour of Zimbabwe, seeking a commanding win as they bid to bounce back from their opening loss to South Africa.

"You have to take every game seriously, do the basics right and make sure when you get into a good winning position you are ruthless and win the game," Chigumbura said Wednesday.

Zimbabwe put up a credible showing in parts during their tournament opener against South Africa.

They had their border rivals struggling at 83 for four before century-makers David Miller and JP Duminy mounted a 256-run rescue mission to lift the Proteas to 339.

In reply, Zimbabwe reached 191 for two before they lost their last eight wickets for just 86 runs.

"It was a confidence boost the way we played [in parts] but also disappointing to play the way we did for 90 overs but we didn't manage to finish off," Chigumbura said.

On paper, an established cricket nation such as the 10th-ranked Zimbabwe should be far too powerful for UAE who scrapped into the World Cup as one of the final two qualifiers along with Scotland.

Zimbabwe's aim in the build-up to Thursday's match has been to correct problem areas that surfaced against South Africa.

"We have to make sure that we improve on things that we didn't do well from the first game," Chigumbura said.

# Salman confesses spot-fixing?

FIRST POST

Pakistan's tainted former captain Salman Butt has apparently made his first full confession of guilt to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in the infamous 2010 spot-fixing scandal.

Butt who was banned along with Muhammad Asif and Muhammad Aamir in the aftermath of the spot fixing scandal made the confession during a meeting with PCB chief, Shaharyar Khan in Lahore.

"Apparently Butt during his meeting made a full confession that he knew and was involved in the spot fixing that took place in the fourth test against England at Lords and that he had instructed Aamir and Asif to bowl the no-balls," a source in the board told PTI.

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES V ZIMBABWE

# Opportunity for the Africans

AFP, Nelson

Zimbabwe get the chance to resurrect their World Cup campaign and put their first points on the board Thursday when they meet the United Arab Emirates in Nelson.

Although nerves got the better of Zimbabwe in their World Cup opener against South Africa, that should not be a problem when they play the UAE.

Against South Africa on Sunday Zimbabwe were beaten by 62 runs in what was still a credible showing against one of the tournament favourites and they will be much more settled with that game out of the way.

The pressure of playing one of the top-ranked sides in Pool B eases as they front a UAE side who have been written off in many quarters as rank outsiders.

But how Zimbabwe handle the imbalance will indicate how serious a threat they will be of qualifying for the quarterfinals.

They are in the three-way battle with Ireland and the West Indies for the fourth spot in a pool

where South Africa, India and Pakistan are likely to fill the top three places.

With Ireland having already beaten the West Indies, Zimbabwe know the challenge ahead and how costly an off-day against the UAE could be.

Ahead of the World Cup a seven-wicket win

277 in the 49th over.

"We wanted to be positive. But whether bowling, batting, even in our fielding, overall everyone was afraid," captain Elton Chigumbura admitted.

Hamilton Masakadza cracked 80 against South Africa, Chamu Chibhabha scored 64 and Brendan Taylor made 40 but the confidence was lacking as the last five wickets fell for 41 runs.

But as an experienced World Cup entrant, having played all nine tournaments since debuting in 1983, Zimbabwe should have too much experience of the big occasion than the UAE.

The UAE are making a Cup comeback 19 years after their one and only previous appearance in 1996 where they recorded a solitary win over the Netherlands.

Their road to Nelson has also been less than impressive, including a 14-run loss to Afghanistan last week.

They were on target to overhaul Afghanistan's 308-9 when they reached 234-3 in the 40th over before the innings collapsed.

The Export Leader

CROWN CEMENT FOR SOLID FOUNDATION

over Sri Lanka in a warm up game showed their capabilities and when the tournament started, they had South Africa in trouble at 83-4.

But then David Miller and JP Duminy shared an unbroken stand of 256 and South Africa reached 339-4. Zimbabwe's chances ended on

# Younis test didn't pass

AFP, Christchurch

Pakistan coach Waqar Younis admitted the controversial experiment of using veteran batsman Younis Khan as an opener in the World Cup clash against India had failed.

"The experiment to use Younis wasn't successful," said Waqar on Wednesday.

"It's not too tough to drop a senior player but in a tournament like the World Cup you try to use maximum experience.

Pakistan have opener Nasir Jamshed waiting in the wings and he is likely to replace Younis.

# Mayor forgets Morgan's name

Eoin Morgan's form has deserted him and now so has his name after the England captain was introduced as 'Eoin Rogers' by the mayor of Wellington.

The embarrassing gaffe happened when the England squad arrived in the New Zealand capital ahead of Friday's World Cup match against the co-hosts.

London-born mayor Celia Wade-Brown introduced Morgan as 'Rogers' during a traditional Maori ceremony staged on the city's harbour front late Tuesday.

The incident prompted some light-hearted ribbing from the travelling British press contingent.

"England found themselves with a new captain when the mayor of Wellington inadvertently welcomed a stranger called Eoin Rogers to the city," wrote Richard Hobson in The Times.

Morgan has endured a tough time with the bat in Australia and New Zealand, enduring a fourth duck in five innings during his side's World Cup 111-run mauling at the hands of the Australians in Melbourne on Saturday.

"The mayor's mistake did bring a wry smile to the lips of some of the England players and she looked horrified when informed of her error, but Morgan at least has the chance to leave a lasting impression on Wellington with the bat if he can rediscover his form against New Zealand on Friday."

Morgan, 28, shrugged off the mayor's gaffe on Wednesday.

"I've been called a lot worse. She got the hardest part right," he said.

# WORLD CUP COCKTAIL

South Africa's premier fast bowler Dale Steyn missed training on Wednesday due to flu, but is expected to be fit for the World Cup match against India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"He has a bout of sinusitis but will be back at training tomorrow," the team's media manager Lerato Malekutu told AFP.

Even though Steyn looks certain to take the field in Sunday's key Pool B match against the defending champions, his presence has been underwhelming in the first week of the tournament.

Steyn was said to be suffering from a sore throat and blocked nose during their World Cup opener against Zimbabwe, where he returned with unflattering figures of one for 64 from nine overs against the lowly-ranked opponents.

# US embassy's gaffe

The US embassy in Kabul seemed to get caught up in the excitement of Afghanistan's World Cup debut on Wednesday, congratulating the side on victory just half-way through the Bangladesh innings.

The Afghans made their World Cup bow in Canberra against the Test-status South Asians, completing another step in their fairytale rags-to-riches story.

The war-torn country has taken to cricket with a passion and millions are expected to follow the match via TV, radio and social media.

With the match barely a quarter of the way through, the US embassy's official Twitter account posted a message hailing Afghanistan's "victory".

"Congratulations to #Afghanistan for their win over #Bangladesh in the Cricket World Cup #CWC15 #AFGvsBAN," the message said.

The tweet triggered a flood of sarcastic retorts about Americans in Kabul prematurely declaring victory, as well as an apologetic response from the embassy.

"Premature posting but we are still cheering for team Afghanistan at the #CWC15! #AFGvsBAN," the embassy tweeted.

# Economists challenge robot

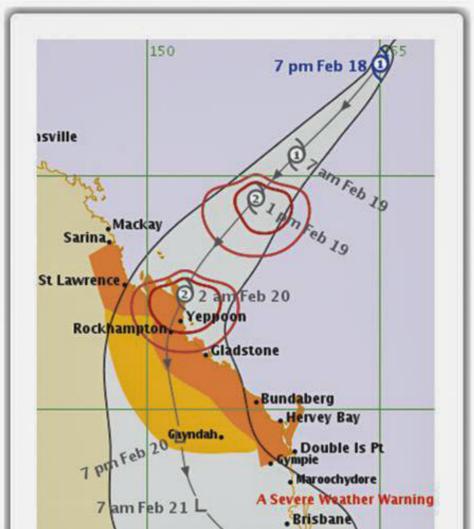
A New Zealand robot may have tipped 1,000/1 outsiders Afghanistan to win the World Cup, but a couple of economists have come to a different conclusion.

The Indian duo of portfolio management guru Surjit Bhalla and investment consultant Ankur Choudhary, having carried out a statistical survey of all one-day internationals, believe Australia will win a fifth World Cup title with co-hosts New Zealand, as well as South Africa, running them close.

Bhalla and Choudhary have analysed past performances of batsmen, bowlers and teams over the years taking into account pitch and weather conditions.

The study claims a 72 percent success rate in World Cups, although that rate falls to 65 percent in all ODIs. Australia has a 24 percent chance to win the tournament, the study says, followed by New Zealand at 22 percent and South Africa at 18 percent.

However, defending champions India are slated to go out in the quarter-finals.



This image, taken from the Australian government's Bureau of Meteorology on Wednesday, showing Tropical Cyclone Marcia's path.

# It may rain at the Gabba for Tigers

Fresh from a massive win against Afghanistan, Bangladesh would now be looking forward to their match against Australia on Saturday at the Gabba in Brisbane. However, their momentum may be hindered by rain as a tropical storm is approaching Brisbane fast. A forecast of 80 per cent chance of rain with thunderstorms is on for Saturday, putting the game at risk of being washed-out. While this may dampen some spirits, it is a good chance for Bangladesh to salvage two valuable points from a devastating Aussie side, without doing any heavy lifting. However, if the game is abandoned, then Michael Clarke, who was scheduled to play in this game, will have to wait till the third game against New Zealand to finally play. The two points would put Tigers at a total of six, and make their qualification into the next phase much more likely. So instead of hoping for a miracle against the Aussies, perhaps the touring players should do a rain-dance in their next training session.

# Ireland inspires UAE

AFP, Nelson

Cricket's part-timers from the United Arab Emirates have drawn inspiration from Ireland as they prepare to confront Zimbabwe in their opening World Cup match in Nelson on Thursday.

Just as Ireland stunned the West Indies with a four-wicket win on the same Saxton Oval wicket on Monday, the lowly-ranked UAE side have dared to dream that they too are capable of an upset.

"It was a great win for Ireland. Most of the associate nations are doing well and we would like to prove a point also," UAE skipper Mohammad Tauqir, an investment banker by profession, said Wednesday.

"Every individual in the team has his own target and goals and collectively we are looking forward to at least getting a couple of wins against Test nations. That's what we're targeting."

But the odds are considerably higher for UAE against Zimbabwe than they were for Ireland against the West Indies.

Zimbabwe showed their credentials by posting 277 in their opening Pool B match against the highly-vaunted South African bowling attack after being set a target of 339.

The UAE weekend amateurs are the least experienced side in the competition where even Ireland, while also not full members of the International Cricket Council, have most of their players hardened by exposure to English county cricket.

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# MR. EFFICIENT



# SHAKIB AL HASAN

That Shikib was going to perform both with the bat and the ball was expected. As a result, his 63 off 51 balls and the two wickets that he scalped wasn't a surprise. What did, in a way, leave many in disbelief was the way he dropped a catch at the third-man region. The reaction just goes on to show how consistent and special the left-hander has been for the Tigers over the years. The century-stand that he shared with Mushfiqur not only revived his side, but catapulted them to a strong position. It was the best possible way to become the first Bangladeshi cricketer to score more than 4000 ODI runs.