



The Manuka Oval in Canberra turned into a home of Tigers fans on Wednesday. (Clockwise, from above) The ladies are first and enjoying every bit of it; placards of different sizes and slogans were aplenty; the fans are on their way to the venue; the red-and-green is the dominating colour in the stands and also in the mix is our Everest hero Musa Ibrahim.

PHOTOS: BISHWAJIT ROY AND INTERNET

Manuka Oval is a Little Bangladesh

BISHWAJIT ROY from Canberra

Around seven to eight thousand Bangladeshis live in Canberra, the capital of Australia. But there are many more living in other big cities like Sydney, who made most of the Bangladesh contingent at the Manuka Oval yesterday.

It's only two-and-a-half hour's drive from Sydney to Canberra. A large number of Bangladeshis living in Sydney took the opportunity to watch the Tigers from close quarters during their opening match of this World Cup against Afghanistan. A few also came all the way from Bangladesh, making most of the presence of their relatives living in Australia.

Musa Ibrahim was among those who were at the Manuka Oval yesterday to cheer on the Tigers. The first Bangladeshis to summit the Mount Everest informed he has been living in Australia for the past three months and went to meet the Tigers at the team hotel on the night prior to Wednesday's match.

Many of those present here informed that they had planned watching this match from the venue as soon as the World Cup fixtures were released. "Oh, it's fantastic. We decided to come here once we got the fixtures. Lot of Bangladeshis came from Sydney just for this match," said an elated

Sultana Begum, who came along with her family.

"We came from Sydney with a big contingent, travelling by 35 cars," said Hasan, a student studying in Sydney for a couple of years.

It was fantastic to see Bangladesh's red and green flag on many cars on the streets of Canberra 'Bangladesh, Bangladesh' slogan chanted through the streets from early in the morning. The whole atmosphere was



electric and it felt like the match was being held in any of the venues in Bangladesh. Most of the supporters wore the team jersey and caps. The song 'Purba Digante Surjo Uteche', when played on loud speakers around the stadium, took the emotions to an altogether different level.

Although there was a large contingent of Afghan supporters present as well, they were outnumbered by the Bangladeshis fans, just like their players were outplayed by the Tigers on the field.

'Not the cricket we play'

AFP, Canberra

Afghanistan coach Andy Moles lamented his team didn't give a true reflection of the way they play their cricket after a comprehensive first up World Cup defeat to Bangladesh on Wednesday.

Afghanistan could not overcome the Test-playing nation, who they beat at last year's Asia Cup one-day tournament.

"We genuinely thought this was a game we could win tonight," Moles told reporters. "I still believe that if we had applied ourselves better then we would have given a better account."

"The Bangladesh boys have got far more experience than us."

"We haven't disgraced ourselves, but that wasn't a true reflection on the work we do in preparation and the way we play our cricket."

Moles, who can lay claim to being the holder of possibly the sport's most dangerous job -- coach of war-weary Afghanistan -- said his team had to take the loss on the chin and prepare for their next tough assignment against 1996 champions Sri Lanka in Dunedin on Sunday.

"One of the issues we've had is that we do well with bat and ball for 35 overs and it's that extra 15 overs where we need to work on our concentration levels, our discipline, our execution and it's something we have spoken about regularly," Moles said.

'It was a professional performance'

GAZI ASHRAF HOSSAIN

The best part about the win was that we handled Afghanistan in a professional manner. We were out of form and had some doubts in our minds as to how we would play against them in a neutral venue. But we handled them very coolly and began the World Cup with great authority.



AKRAM KHAN

The mental strength that we got from this win will help our players a lot. We are a better-ranked side than them and the performance that we showed yesterday, in all the three departments proved that. Focusing on the other games now should be easier.



MINHAJUL ABEDIN

Since this match was highlighted by the media so much, it was good to win it. But I think we will come to know how well our boys have adjusted there during the next game against Australia.



HABIBUL BASHAR

I am very happy with the win because it's our first match; not because it's Afghanistan. When a team wins the first match, the pressure becomes less on the rest of the matches. So from that aspect this was an important game.



Sachin date costs \$3000

FIRST POST

If your dream is to dine with Sachin Tendulkar then be ready to shell out big bucks as Sydney's most iconic restaurant is offering an exclusive dinner with the Little Master priced at 1,500 to 3,000 Australian dollars (2350 USD) with just a few seats up for grabs.

The VIP dinner which will be only attended by over 60 people will be held on February 26 after the India-South Africa match on Sunday.

There will be tables of eight people and choice of entries, mains and desserts will be served along with premium wines and spirits.

The cricketer would sign some auction items and also give away his recently released autobiography with his signatures.

The organiser said that the money raised would go towards Sachin's foundation.

Dhaka fail to shine

SPORTS REPORTER



League leaders and reigning champions Dhaka are heading towards their first defeat of the competition as they were bundled out for 202 in their first innings and were asked to follow-on on the third day of the fourth round yesterday. Furthermore, they lost three quick wickets in their second innings and finished the day in Fatullah at 83 for 3.

None of Dhaka's stars managed to perform in this round of the league. The likes of Abdul Majid and Rony Talukdar who scored series of centuries in the last few rounds failed to get their sides good starts. Dhaka will now hope that their middle order can salvage a draw on the final day.

While Dhaka will face a tough time to achieve a draw, the match at the BKSP between Rangpur and Barisal can expect no other result as Barisal revived themselves from 62 for 2 to finish the day on 416 for 4. Young Mosaddek Hossain remained unbeaten on 125 while Al-Amin scored 96. Fazle Rabbi (85) and Shajib (60) also boosted their side with their respective half-centuries.

At ground number 2 at the BKSP Chittagong had recovered well from their overnight score of 98 for 5 to post 274 in

their first innings. Tasamul Haque led their batting with a fine 131. That however did not prevent them from following on. They finished the day on 126 for 3 and if they can show the same spirit on the final day they might just achieve a draw.

A similar scenario was witnessed at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at Mirpur where Khulna after putting up 560 in the first innings, bowled Rajshahi out for 225. Left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman scalped four wickets and was the key destroyer. After following on, Rajshahi finished the day on 61 for 2.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SYLHET: 500 v
DHAKA: 202 all out in 62.5 overs (Abdul 87; Enamul 3-48, Abu 3-54) and 83 for 3 (Rony 41; Rahatul 3-30)
RANGPUR: 518 for 9 dec v
BARISAL: 416 for 4 (Mosaddek 125 not out, Al-Amin 96 not out; Sanjit 2-29)
DHAKA METRO: 496 v
CHITTAGONG: 274 all out in 97 overs (Tasamul 131; Elias 5-80) and 126 for 3 (Yasir 59; Shahid 1-28)
KHULNA: 560 for 6 dec v
RAJSHAH: 225 all out in 89.3 overs (Forhad 55, Tareq 52; Mustafizur 4-41, Ziaur 2-13) and 61 for 2 (Myshukur 23; Ziaur 1-10)

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INFO ZONE

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HEAD TO HEAD IN WORLD CUPS		
M W L		M W L
Never Played Before		Never Played Before
IN ALL ODIS		
M W L		M W L
Never Played Before		Never Played Before
Last Meeting : Never Played Before.		
KEY PLAYERS		
	HAMILTON MASAKADZA	
28.65	AVERAGE	53.37
74.35	STRIKE RATE	83.23
5.25	ECO RATE	5.00
26	50'S	3
3	100'S	1
178*	HIGHEST SCORE	132*
4041	TOTAL RUNS	427
36	TOTAL WICKETS	12

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FAN ZONE



(Above) Back in Afghanistan, the people watch their team's World Cup debut. (R) Excited Bangladesh fans pour into the Maunka Oval.



Shakib Khan: Congrats Bangladesh cricket team for big win. Special congrats to #mushifur_rahim. Syeda Preanka: Good win for the tigers! The venue hardly seemed like Canberra

seeing the number of Green spectators. May this momentum grow! Must mention that Afghanistan put up a good effort. Welcome to ICC World Cup but for now a BIG Congratulations to the Tigers!

