

#PERSPECTIVE

The Football World Cup reunites people in a post pandemic world

The pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 have not been easy for the world. Lockdowns and social distancing meant that we could only stay safe by staying apart. This year however, things have started to look a little better and with the arrival of the FIFA World Cup 2022, we are ready to dive into the universal love for football once again.

People of various ages, races, genders, cultures, and nationalities are often brought together through football, and the World Cup is the perfect example of this. Because it is the sport that is played and watched the most around the world, the World Cup is one of the most eagerly awaited sporting occasions, with the Olympics coming in as a distant second.

Perhaps the biggest example of its unity is the fact that all fans will religiously support teams, even if their national teams drop out early in the race or are not a part of the World Cup.

Take Bangladesh for instance; our national team may not be in the World Cup yet, but that is not going to stop us from buying our favourite team's jersey and hanging its national flags from our balconies. Whether a true football addict or a 'seasonal fan,' we can barely wait to see our favourites battle it out.

Although much celebrated, FIFA has faced criticism for choosing Qatar as the host nation for this year's World Cup. In 2015, FIFA advocated that Qatar hold a more compressed World Cup during the colder months of November and December. This recommendation put the governing body in direct conflict with the top European leagues. Several human rights organisations have also harshly criticized Qatar for its mistreatment of migrant workers, who together with other foreigners, make up the majority of the population.

However, football comes with a history of breaking down barriers, eliminating any distance, and far outweighing the influence of gender, race, culture, and



nationality. With a fan base that is more diverse than any other sport in the world, these obstacles will perhaps not pose big challenges for the tournament.

With fans counting the days to the World Cup, especially after feeling secluded for so long, the emotional stakes are high this time. While some players are ready for their first-ever appearance in the FIFA World Cup, we will also be saying goodbye to some of the biggest legends of our time.

If we are being honest, sometime during the pandemic we did fear that arranging a watch party to enjoy a game of football might have become a thing of the past. Thankfully, that is no longer the case. So mark the dates, set up the watch parties, and prepare the game day snacks. We are ready to kick out the pandemic blues.

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Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
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