



ICC MEN'S T20
WORLD CUP
INDIA & SRI LANKA 2026



EDEN GARDENS
KOLKATA

STORIES OF EDEN GARDENS

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EDITOR: ARITRA CHOWDHURY

ASSISTANT EDITOR: MANOJIT MAULIK

CONCEPT AND DESIGN: BLOOMING OYSTER

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Hosting World Cup at Eden Gardens is special

Sourav Ganguly

President- CAB

The World Cup brings the entire cricketing world together, and hosting a World Cup match at the Eden Gardens is always special. I am proud to have grown up playing cricket at my 'home ground' which has been an incredible experience.

Many great players and stalwarts of the game have scored centuries and even double centuries here, making Eden one of the most iconic venues in world cricket. This ground has witnessed some of the finest moments in World Cup history. During the World Cup, the energy of Eden Gardens reaches another level.

What truly sets Eden apart is its crowd. They don't support just one team — they support cricket. No matter who is playing, the love for the game remains the same, and that passion makes World Cup matches here unforgettable.

I have been fortunate to score runs here. To see this historic stadium host World Cup cricket once again is a matter of immense pride for Indian cricket and for fans across the world.





**FEEL
THE
THRILL!**



Ready to host a wonderful World Cup

Bablu Kolay
CAB Hony Secretary

After months of preparations and work, the Cricket Association of Bengal is ready to host T20 World Cup in a grand fashion. Under the leadership of our President Sourav Ganguly, the iconic stadium is all set to welcome the teams for the tournament.

We have some exciting contests in the group stage matches featuring West Indies and England. Scotland also have done well recently and Italy can also come up with a surprise. In the Super 8, we will be eagerly waiting to host the India team for the mega match, followed by the big semi-finals. So I can say that we are all geared up to host a wonderful World Cup. Fans have always been emotional for Eden Gardens. I would like to see more fans coming to the ground and cheering for the teams as we await some good matches in the coming days.

Exciting games on offer at the World Cup

Sanjay Das
CAB Treasurer

Under the leadership of President Sourav Ganguly, the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) has taken all necessary steps to conduct the mega ICC T20 World Cup in a smooth and exciting manner. We have been working tirelessly on making the stadium ready for the big tournament. We successfully hosted the 2016 T20 World Cup under Sourav and 2023 World Cup under then President Snehasish Ganguly.

So we are well aware of how to conduct such mega events. Apart from the group stage matches, we have a Super 8 and a semi-final match at the Eden Gardens. In a game of cricket, anything can happen on the field, so every team has a chance to upset their opponents. We are ready and looking forward to this World Cup. There are exciting games on offer at the World Cup, so the fans must come, fill up the stadium and get the feel of the excitement of the T20 World Cup at the iconic stadium.





World Cup at Eden reunites CAB and CSJC

Suven Raha
President - CSJC

At a time when rapid urbanisation is eating into cities' greens, we are fortunate to have the Maidan at the heart of City of Joy. This vast stretch of land acts as the lungs of Kolkata and is also the playing field of Bengal sport. A walk through the Maidan area in the morning is always magical and never fails to re-energise people.

This area also houses some iconic sporting institutions like the Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, Mohammedan Sporting, Customs, Rajasthan, Kalighat and many more such club tents. All these clubs have a rich heritage and history engulfed in all their corners. And standing tall among all is the Eden Gardens which is often called the home of Indian cricket. Established way back in 1864, it continues to generate awe among generations of cricket lovers as everyday hundreds of curious onlookers try to steal a glimpse of the iconic venue from the Eden main gate.

As sports journalists we are fortunate to get the opportunity to cover matches at the Eden. The way people outside Bengal speak highly about Eden when we visit those states to cover matches, makes us all so proud. The Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club (CSJC) and the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) share close relations from a long time. Their relationship goes beyond the press box. Over the years, we have grown much like a family. Apart from work, we share pleasantries, good wishes and mutual respect. We even used to have friendly cricket matches between CSJC and CAB at the iconic venue.

As such whenever a mega event like the ICC T20 World Cup comes to town, the CSJC too feels a part of it. The Club has always extended hands of co-operation to CAB and is also honoured to have often been consulted by the state cricket association about conducting such events.

With journalists from different countries expected to be in Kolkata during the World Cup, the CSJC feels it is everybody's responsibility to showcase Kolkata in a proper way and gets ready to work hand-in-hand with CAB. Believe me I have not seen such cordial relations between a journalists' association and its state cricket unit anywhere else in the country.

Let the T20 World Cup be a grand family reunion between players, journalists, cricket lovers and officials.





Expecting exciting contests

Madan Mohan Ghosh
CAB Joint Secretary

Under our chief curator Sujan Mukherjee, the Eden Gardens is known to serve exciting and nail-biting contests. This time it will be no different. The Cricket Association of Bengal is confident that this T20 World Cup will be even more successful. All our office-bearers under our President Sourav Ganguly have worked tirelessly to ensure all departments are ready to host such a mega event.

There are a few exciting teams in the group stages but the Super 8 match which India is scheduled to play will be the one to watch out for. We are also eager to host the high-profile semi-final as well.

Every time Eden Gardens hosts an international match, the fans fill up the stands in large numbers. This time too I would love to see the spectators coming to cheer the teams and enjoy the atmosphere at the iconic ground.

Hope to see a bigger and better T20 World Cup

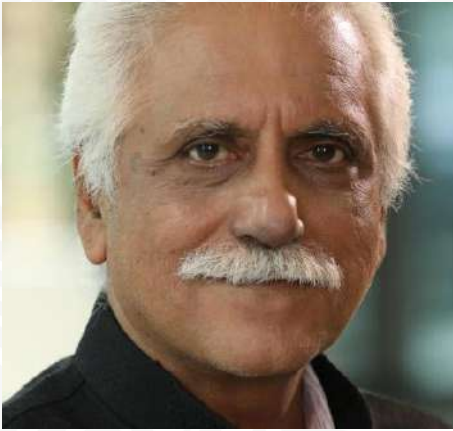
Nitish Ranjan Dutta
CAB Vice-President

The Cricket Association of Bengal is all prepared to host the T20 World Cup once again. Back in 2016, we successfully hosted the tournament, and once again, we have a chance to make history.

Eden Gardens, like always, is an emotion for all, so I would like to see more fans turning up and cheering the teams. The Super 8 match, which we are expecting India to play, will be a big and blockbuster contest. All cricket lovers from Kolkata will love to witness that match, and it will be an exciting one.

I wish all the teams the best for the tournament, and hope to see an even bigger and better T20 World Cup compared to the previous editions.





Eden Gardens: The romanticists' delight

Ayaz Memon

“You can't find another cricket venue like this, the Eden has a flavour all its own. So distinctive, you can never forget it all your life,” the late England captain Tony Greig would tell me every time we met. Greig could never get over the astonishment that 65,000 people turned up to see only a few overs of play on the final day of the Test match played here in 1973. That India were poised to win was subservient to the passion of the Calcuttans. Do stadiums – these massive edifices of cement, steel and

concrete -- have a soul? Do they talk to players and fans of their own and subsequent generations?

I believe so. I think sports venues over a period of time acquire not just a legacy of performances and records, but also a soul and identity. The former comes from the legend and lore of players, matches, controversies et al; the latter is defined by the cultural impact it has on society. Wimbledon, for instance, is known not only for strawberries and cream, but also for the archaic Victorian courtesies it still preserves: like the curtsy to royalty by the women's champion. The same player would never do it at any other Grand Slam venue, but at Wimbledon, it would be churlish to try and be different. Similarly Lord's, with its grand 200-plus years tradition, is where the stiff upper lip still rules. It is only recently that women have been allowed into the Marylebone Cricket Club, and it was not uncommon for the stewards at Grace Gates to still stop stalwart cricketers from entering the haloed portals of the club.

The ambience at Lord's is still stately, the applause structured, but the crustiness has thankfully diminished. The Oval, in South London, is remarkably hip-hop, in contrast. The spectators here appear more raucous, fun-loving, almost Caribbean given the fact that adjoining areas house thousands of people of West Indian descent. London is not unique in this amazing cultural diversity where cricket stadiums are concerned. In Mumbai, the ambience and ethos of the Cricket Club of India, the Wankhede Stadium and the new DY Patil stadium are miles apart. In Indian cricket historically, Mumbai has not only produced the most players to play for India, but has also been in the forefront in keeping Indian cricket well-oiled, giving it muscle. Kolkata, while it has not produced anywhere near the number of international cricketers as Mumbai, has been the romanticists' delight: for the endearing ethos of the city as well as the manic support cricket enjoys there which has been the subject of much wonder and deep study.

The Eden Gardens has been host to several important events, including the 1987 World Cup final for which, astonishingly, more than 85,000 spectators turned up even though India did not feature in the match. But Kolkata always seemed a step behind Mumbai in the pecking order in Indian cricket. Now, it has probably gone a step further. While Mumbai is still the home of cricket in India, Kolkata (read Eden Gardens) is the Mecca without doubt.



Eden Gardens: The Spiritual Home of Indian Cricket

Debasish Datta

If the Lord's, in London, is known as the "Home of Cricket", the Eden Gardens, in Kolkata, is surely the "Spiritual Home of Indian cricket". The lush green outfield, the iconic stands, and the palpable sense of history create an atmosphere that transcends sport. It has hosted a number of high-profile matches across all three formats of the game. From the final of the 1987 World Cup, then known as the Reliance Cup, the finals of the Nehru Cup in 1989 and the Hero Cup under the floodlights in 1993 and the finals of the ICC T20 World Cup in 2016, Eden has embraced them all. Eden Gardens



is also "home" to the Kolkata Knight Riders in the glamorous Indian Premier League. Yet, despite the floodlights, fireworks, and frenzied entertainment of the shortest format, Eden Gardens will always remain synonymous with Test cricket. Its aura, history, and cultural significance are deeply rooted in the longer format. Established in 1864, it is one of the oldest cricket stadiums in the world. Over the years, it has witnessed classic contests in Test-match cricket that has defined the contours of Indian cricket. From India's first-ever Test victory against England in 1952 to the unforgettable 2001 clash against Australia, Eden Gardens has been the perfect stage for defining moments. T20 matches may bring instant thrill, but Test cricket at Eden Gardens carries the weight of legacy. Every boundary, every wicket, and every cheer echoes with the memories of past battles as fans lap up the drama. The second-largest cricket stadium in India has always been a cauldron of emotions where cricket matches are not just sporting events but are akin to cultural festivals. The Test audience at Eden Gardens is discerning. Every well-defended delivery is appreciated along with the nuances of swing and spin as tactical battles slowly unfold on the ground. This unique partnership between the crowd and the sport reinforces Eden Gardens' identity as a Test centre. T20 cricket thrives on spectacle, but Test cricket represents cricket's soul. If one match encapsulates why Eden Gardens is the spiritual home of Test cricket, it is the India vs Australia Test in March 2001. Following-on after a first-innings collapse, India seemed destined for defeat. Then came Laxman's majestic 281 and David's gritty 180, turning despair into triumph. Harbhajan Singh's hat-trick and India's eventual victory remain etched in cricketing folklore.

That match reminded the world that Test cricket is the ultimate examination of skill and character. Hosting IPL matches has brought new energy, revenue, and global attention. The stadium has adapted to changing times, with improved facilities and dazzling night games. Yet, beneath the glitz, its heartbeat remains tied to Test cricket.

The upcoming T20 World Cup will showcase Eden Gardens as a carnival of entertainment, but Test matches showcase it as a cathedral of cricketing excellence. As long as the game exists, Eden Gardens will stand tall as the ultimate sanctuary of Test cricket. Eden Gardens is also "home" to the Kolkata Knight Riders in the glamorous Indian Premier League. Yet, despite the floodlights, fireworks, and frenzied entertainment of the shortest format, Eden Gardens will always remain synonymous with Test cricket. Its aura, history, and cultural significance are deeply rooted in the longer format. Established in 1864, it is one of the oldest cricket stadiums in the world. Over the years, it has witnessed classic contests in Test-match cricket that has defined the contours of Indian cricket. From India's first-ever Test victory against England in 1952 to the unforgettable 2001 clash against Australia, Eden Gardens has been the perfect stage for defining moments. T20 matches may bring instant thrill, but Test cricket at Eden Gardens carries the weight of legacy. Every boundary, every wicket, and every cheer echoes with the memories of past battles as fans lap up the drama. The second-largest cricket stadium in India has always been a cauldron of emotions where cricket matches are not just sporting events but are akin to cultural festivals. The Test audience at Eden Gardens is discerning. Every well-defended delivery is appreciated along with the nuances of swing and spin as tactical battles slowly unfold on the ground.

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ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP STATISTICS

WINNER

2007: INDIA

2009: PAKISTAN

2010: ENGLAND

2012: WEST INDIES

2014: SRI LANKA

2016: WEST INDIES

2021: AUSTRALIA

2022: ENGLAND

2024: INDIA

RUNNER-UP

PAKISTAN

SRI LANKA

AUSTRALIA

SRI LANKA

INDIA

ENGLAND

NEW ZEALAND

PAKISTAN

SOUTH AFRICA

MOST MATCHES WON BY TEAMS

INDIA 35 OUT OF 52

SOUTH AFRICA 32 OUT OF 49

SRI LANKA 32 OUT OF 54

AUSTRALIA 30 OUT OF 47

PAKISTAN 30 OUT OF 51

LIST OF HUNDREDS

Chris Gayle (WI): 117 (57) vs SA in Johannesburg (September 11, 2007)

Suresh Raina (IND): 101 (60) vs SA in Gros Islet (May 2, 2010)

Mahela Jayawardene (SL): 100 (64) vs ZIM in Providence (May 3, 2010)

Brendon McCullum (NZ): 123 (58) vs BAN in Pallekele (September 21, 2012)

Alex Hales (ENG): 116* (64) vs SL in Chattogram (March 27, 2014)

Ahmed Shehzad (PAK): 111* (62) vs BAN in Mirpur (March 30, 2014)

Tamim Iqbal (BAN): 103* (63) vs OMA in Dharamsala (March 13, 2016)

Chris Gayle (WI): 100* (48) vs ENG in Mumbai (March 16, 2016)

Jos Buttler (ENG): 101* (67) vs SL in Sharjah (November 1, 2021)

Rilee Rossouw (SA): 109 (56) vs BAN in Sydney (October 27, 2022)

Glenn Phillips (NZ): 104 (64) vs SL in Sydney (October 29, 2022)



MOST RUNS IN A SINGLE EDITION

Virat Kohli (IND): 319 runs in 6 matches (2014)

Tillakaratne Dilshan (SL): 317 runs in 7 matches (2009)

Babar Azam (PAK): 303 runs in 6 matches (2021)

Mahela Jayawardene (SL): 302 runs in 6 matches (2010)

Virat Kohli (IND): 296 runs in 6 matches (2022)

MATCHES AT EDEN GARDENS

March 16, 2016: Pakistan Beat Bangladesh By 55 Runs

March 17, 2016: Sri Lanka Beat Afghanistan By 6 Wickets

March 19, 2016: India Beat Pakistan By 6 Wickets

March 26, 2016: New Zealand Beat Bangladesh By 75 Runs

April 3, 2016: Final- West Indies Beat England By 4 Wickets

MOST WICKETS IN A SINGLE EDITION

Fazalhaq Farooqi (AFG): 17 (8 matches, 152 balls) in 2024

Arshdeep Singh (IND): 17 (8 matches, 180 balls) in 2024

Wanindu Hasaranga (SL): 16 (8 matches, 180 balls) in 2021

Ajantha Mendis (SL): 15 (6 matches, 144 balls) in 2012

Jasprit Bumrah (IND): 15 (8 matches, 178 balls) in 2024

MOST CATCHES

David Warner (AUS): 25

AB de Villiers (SA): 23

Glenn Maxwell (AUS): 23

Rohit Sharma (IND): 21

MOST MATCHES

Rohit Sharma (IND): 47

Shakib Al Hasan (BAN): 43

David Warner (AUS): 41

MOST MATCHES AS CAPTAIN

MS Dhoni (IND): 33

Kane Williamson (NZ): 21

Daren Sammy (WI): 18

HIGHEST PARTNERSHIP RECORD

Alex Hales & Jos Buttler (ENG) 170* (1st Wicket) vs India in Adelaide in 2022

For India, Rohit Sharma & KL Rahul added 140 runs in the 1st wicket against Afghanistan in Abu Dhabi in 2021.

MOST PLAYER OF THE MATCH AWARDS

Virat Kohli (IND): 8

Chris Gayle (WI): 5

Mahela Jayawardene (SL): 5

Shane Watson (AUS): 5

Adam Zampa (AUS): 5



'Red Ball' Gardens

Gautam Bhattacharya

Of course they heard about each other. But not too sure whether they ever met in person. Yet in terms of philosophy to walk along life there was such a striking similarity that in a way, they were like twin brothers separated at birth -- The two Ds: Dalmiya Jagmohan and Dev Anand. It is a well-established fact that both remained eternal optimists even when engulfed by complete darkness. People who were close to them claimed with reasonable accuracy that hope never betrayed these two -- whether in cricket administration or in Bollywood. Big flops never bothered Dev Saab. Nor did administrative setbacks ever cow down Kolkata Maidan's eternal Jaguda. So when you experienced the same Dalmiya absolutely crestfallen and without his customary swagger you knew something must have gone terribly wrong. And of course the setting was ominous and seemed out of control.

Well, the then CAB secretary was answering my call an hour after the terrible incident had happened. Kapil's 87 World Cup team had just bowed out of the tournament and Dalmiya's well harboured plan of hosting India in the Reliance Cup final was thrown into the Ganges. A day earlier, the much fancied Pakistan that had boosted a number of stars under an enigmatic Imran Khan were shown the door in their own den. Destiny dictated that a dour Australia led by Allan Border and a seemingly colourless England captained by Mike Gatting were to fight for the crown at Eden Gardens

The line-up was hardly inspiring for the chief organizer. It was a Cup final that had lost its local relevance even before the first ball got bowled. Dalmiya, however was gunning for an opportunity to hit back and quickly created one by organising the first-ever invitational Nehru Cup Cricket tournament in India. It had only taken him two years. The pomp and the glamour surrounding the high profile tourney was clearly elevated by the Congress government that was in power. Dalmiya remained steadfast in his revised goal. That was to avenge the earlier setback and ensure India play the final at her iconic cricket ground.

History will have recorded that it backfired yet again as India lost the plot in another Mumbai semi-final. This time the batting debacle presented itself against Viv Richard's West Indies. Dalmiya was sad but continued to remain resilient. Forget giving up. He prepared the necessary grounds for hosting India in a World Cup semi-final in 1996. But the shorter format miseries of the Gardens continued to bite and India bowed out of a controversial and incomplete semi-final that had resulted in police intervention. Of course in between Mohammad Azharuddin's India had won the Hero Cup and the Wills Challenge trophy in back-to-back years. But predictably it never had the same impact.

That Dalmiya did not get to see his dream of India playing a Cup Final at Eden continued to haunt his successors. Even a year after his death the departure from tradition had not taken place — as India lost yet another Wankhede semi-final and crashed out of the T20 World Cup. Even the pundits did not see that coming. The manner in which India had beaten Pakistan in a group league match armed by the brilliance of one Virat Kohli was extremely reassuring. It was a night of superstars at the Eden Gardens with Bachchan, Sachin, Gavaskar and Imran. All subcontinent giants were thrown in at one go and they sparkled under an Eden sky that was replete with glamour and excitement.

Word has it that while Bachchan and Mukesh Ambani were cheering for every run in the chase and seen waving the national flag from a box, two of cricket's all-time great captains huddled together in the adjacent one. For the first time Steve Waugh and Imran Khan were watching a Kohli live from the ground and their combined brains were ticking to find a chink in his armoury. They, apparently couldn't find one. Kohli remained unbeaten with a fighting 37 ball 55. So the legend of VK grew further and so did the magic of Eden Gardens. It was arguably one of the best Indo-Pak T20 matches.

Kohli took his brilliance to another level in the Cup quarter-final at Mohali and from the jaws of defeat unbelievably turned a match against the mighty Australians. Old-timers at the Eden were now counting with glee. They knew finally the much awaited honeymoon was happening that of seeing India in a Cup Final at the Eden. Alas, Mumbai presented yet another serial semi-final defeat for India and the long-lived dream of a Dalmiya faded into oblivion yet again.

Morale of the story: 1) World Cups will come and go, but notwithstanding Rohit Sharma's one day world record, Eden's continued misfortune with the shorter format will not go away in a hurry. Morale of the story: 2) The 162-year-old Eden Gardens has shown enough bias to primarily link herself with the longer format of the game. You can't take away the inaugural pink ball Test from the wealth ratio of the ground that was characterised by complete Indian dominance. You can't disassociate from some of the magical

white ball triumphs recorded here including the Hero Cup semi-final. But her historical bias towards the red ball magic was perhaps palpable.

Just think of the Tests that India had won at this oldest operating cricket venue of the country. Just think of the memories and the pages of history that got accumulated here. A quick look will tell you that there are no parallels. From the very first Test in 1934 when Douglas Jardine had walked out to toss with his Indian counterpart, there was history aplenty. Apparently a few from the eastern stands had shouted Bodyline once the English pacers went liberal with bouncers. The infamous bodyline series wasn't even nine months old and the cricket loving people of Kolkata hardly aborted the memory. Post-war Eden was privy to the brilliance of Everton Weeks, a Mustaq Ali, the unputdownable Rohan Kanhai, fighter pilot cum all-rounder Keith Miller and the ever stylish Gundappa Viswanath. While the Grandmaster of Indian cricket Sunil Gavaskar scored hundreds in two successive innings, an Azhar raised the bar even further.

Kapil Dev was always around to create sensation but Eden remained indebted to three spinners who won India back to back Tests at this venue. That was the golden age of Indian spin. Neither Tony Lewis' MCC nor Clive Lloyd's West Indies had any answer against the guile and brilliance of the Indian spin quartet, particularly a BS Chandrasekhar. Anil Kumble, another resident from Bengaluru became a worthy successor as he continued to rattle the opposition here. Finally it was the firebrand Sardar who took it to another level.

That this ground finally witnessed unarguably the finest Test held in India was possibly the natural consequence of a series of hard fought Tests played out in the past. But Laxman's 281, the partnership with centurion Dravid, a Harbhajan Singh's first hat-trick for India in Test cricket made it immortal. That Steve Waugh's dream run perished along the way was Eden's jelly to the already buttered toast. You can add a Test win against South Africa, one against Pakistan in the memorabilia section. But in Test cricket Eden always came up with her own script that most of the times remained unpredictable. So the T20 World Cup and its allied matches will happen with the necessary fanfare. But then history warns you the real magic will be hard to come by.

I told you, it is primarily a red ball Gardens that has not lost its identity in a white ball infected regime.

Unbelievable! What do you say?



Eden energy is infectious

R Kaushik

The hallowed Eden Gardens might no longer be the biggest cricket stadium in the country in terms of capacity, but the energy and buzz when India are playing is by a distance the most electric. In keeping with its reputation as one of the more iconic grounds in the world, it has played host to several extraordinary contests, not least that epochal Test match of 2001 when Sourav Ganguly's side staged the most heroic of comebacks to pull the rug from the under the feet of Steve Waugh's all-conquering Aussies.



India have had their fair share of heartbreaks too, not least in the semifinal of the 1996 World Cup when they were comprehensively tamed by Sri Lanka before crowd trouble forced a premature closure to the contest. But one of their memorable wins in a World Cup, against Pakistan, also came at the Eden. That was when India staged the T20 World Cup for the first time, in 2016. After their unexpected triumph in the inaugural edition in 2007, India had to wait till 2014 in Bangladesh to reach a second final. Two years on, they were up against it when they arrived in the City of Joy to do battle with their cross-border neighbours. On a turner in Nagpur, India had been tamed in their opening Super 10 encounter by New Zealand, and another defeat would have nearly sent their semifinal aspirations up in smoke. It's against this backdrop that they squared off against Shahid Afridi's Pakistan, who began their campaign with a 55-run drubbing of Bangladesh.

The tournament being played in mid-March, late-season pitches in many parts of the country had become sluggish and helped the spinners enormously. But to one man, neither the surface nor the quality of the opposition bowling which, to be fair, was of the highest standard, made any difference. Long before this encounter on March 19, Virat Kohli had established himself as the premier chaser in limited-overs internationals. It wasn't as if he was a slouch when India batted first, but when he had a target to aim for, Kohli was in a different league. Rain reduced the match to 18 overs a side and Pakistan's innings never found any momentum after they were put in by Mahendra Singh Dhoni. In normal course, 118 for five wouldn't appear a big total but Mohammad Amir and Mohammad Sami combined to leave the hosts gasping at 23 for three in the fifth over. India hadn't lost to Pakistan in any World Cup game, 50- or 20-over, at the time, and Kohli took it upon himself to ensure that status quo was maintained. He batted as if on an entirely different surface leaving more than 61,000 fans at the ground mesmerised and Pakistan shell-shocked. Yuvraj Singh and Dhoni played able supporting roles but this was again Kohli's unbeaten 55 that took India to a comfortable six-wicket victory. Eden celebrated with gusto, of course!



Eden awaits another major white-ball final

Gautam Bhattacharyya

1987; 1989; 1993; 2016...What is common between these years and Eden Gardens? It's only a sitter for the cricket quiz buff as the historic venue had played hosts to marquee finals of limited overs tournaments in these years. It seems just the other day when the Caribbeans had a party at the Eden in 2016 – sealing a 'double' of first the women's crown and then men the same day. The venue may have hosted the highest number of Tests on Indian soil (42), but it had also been privy to several crackers of international white ball contests.



It all started with the Reliance Cup final in 1987 between Australia and England, the first time a World Cup final was being played outside the Lord's cricket ground. The limited overs game was still a work in progress being a 60-overs affair with the red ball, where a total in excess of 250 was considered to be a challenging one.

-The final saw Allan Border's Australia stopping England seven runs short of the target to win what would be the first of their six 50-over World Cup titles. Barely two years later, Eden hosted a memorable final of a multi-nation tournament – the MRF World Series for the Nehru Cup.

A six-nation tournament, hosted by the BCCI on the birth centenary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, which saw Imran Khan-led Pakistan edging out Viv Richards' West Indies by four wickets for the title.

It was the sheer goodwill of Jagmohan Dalmiya, the BCCI strongman, who used his good offices to marshall six powerhouse teams: hosts India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Australia, West Indies and England. One still remembers the sensational finish to the final when Pakistan needed four runs off the last ball and a young Wasim Akram hoisted Richards for a six off the last ball to send their dugout in a tizzy.

However, it was in the 1993 Hero Cup final that the Men in Blue, led by Mohammed Azharuddin recorded a whopping 102-run win over a powerful West Indies. It was a young Anil Kumble, who caught the Caribbeans in a web of spin with a haul of six for 12. The old-timers of course will talk more about Sachin Tendulkar volunteering to bowl the last over in the semi-final with South Africa needing just six runs to go over the line.

India went on to make the final under a newly-floodlit Eden Gardens, then a rarity, and the rest is history. A freeze frame of the 2016 T20 WC final which lingers in memory is that of a crestfallen Ben Stokes in his hunches while Carlos Brathwaite exults – arms stretched – after hitting him for four sixes in the final over to bring victory for Darren Sammy's maroon brigade. The 2026 edition of the T20 World Cup will see Eden hosting seven matches but no final. When will we ever get to host another final of a major ICC event, if at all?



Difficult to erase from memory

Sabyasachi Sarkar

It was my first World Cup semi-final as a cricket journo. I was following the Indian team from the beginning of the 1996 World Cup and reached Kolkata from Bengaluru after the historic quarter-final win against Pakistan. India will be playing the semi-final at the iconic Eden Gardens. The nation was still celebrating that victory in Bengaluru. The Amir Sohail-Venkatesh Prasad showdown, the Jadeja onslaught and the Sidhu



heroics were all fresh and vibrant. The way the team was playing, they were certainly the favourites against Sri Lanka in the semi-final. Little did I know that high-octane match will forever remain a day to forget!

After so many years, it still remains etched in memory for all the wrong reasons. How can one forget March 13, 1996?

Though Eden Gardens hosted a World Cup Final in 1987, it was the first time the Kolkata-based venue was hosting an ODI World Cup semi-final. The anticipation leading up to that clash was palpable. India were competing on home soil, carrying the weight of the entire nation's expectations. Mohammad Azharuddin led the Men in Blue while Arjuna Ranatunga performed the captain's duties for the Sri Lankan squad. A crowd of around one lakh ten thousand gathered at Eden to cheer India into the final. It was a full house when the match started. Azharuddin won the toss and elected to field first. There was a murmur of excitement, which grew into a roar soon when Sri Lanka were reduced to 35/3. Javagal Srinath with his fiery spell, removed Jayasuriya, Kaluwitharana and Gurusinghe quickly. It was the great Aravinda De Silva with the help of Mahanama and Ranatunga restored the innings with a strong display in the middle overs. It helped Sri Lanka put up 251-8 in 50 overs. As it happened, India's chase started with promise in spite of losing Navjot Singh Sidhu early. It was 98 for 1, when all hell broke loose. Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar was stumped while playing a ball going down the legside from Jayasuriya. The ball kissed his pad flaps and went to keeper Kaluwitharana. Sachin went for 65! Azharuddin and Sanjay Manjrekar were dismissed in quick succession. From 98-1, it was soon 101-4. Then the drama began. What was meant to be a thrilling contest between two top cricketing nations, soon turned into a scene of complete chaos. When India started losing wickets, bottles rained into the ground. The situation escalated further as the stands were set on fire. It was the day when a fiery display of spectator unrest prevailed, forcing the contest to be abandoned due to trouble in the stands. The defeat was inevitable with India at 120 for 8 then. The match referee Clive Lloyd had no choice but to declare Sri Lanka as winner.

Vinod Kambli coming out of the ground crying still remains in memory. The collective hope that filled the stadium when Sachin was batting, soon turned into frustration. Definitely a day to forget for the city.





When Laxman and Dravid spoiled our Darjeeling plan

K Shrinivas Rao

memories kept adding up.

I was getting out of college by the time I had heard enough stories around the magic of Eden Gardens. Test match wins over England and the West Indies in 1972 & 74, Mohammad Azharuddin's debut in 1984, the 1987 World Cup final, Kapil Dev's hat-trick in 1991, Hero Cup semi-final in 1993, the heart break in 1996 – the City Of Joy had endless stories to tell. From grainy visuals on Doordarshan until the late 80s, to the advent of cable television in the early 90s,

I had joined a local newspaper in Nagpur as a cub reporter when Steve Waugh's Australia arrived at its 'Final Frontier'. My editor gave me a bountiful sum of 30,000 rupees to cover the three Test matches in Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. His only condition: I was supposed to return home after the second Test if India lost the series by then. What happened in the ensuing days is a memory of a lifetime. India lost the first Test inside three days. Like most others, I thought we would suffer the same fate in Kolkata too. The Australians looked unstoppable. I took the Mumbai-Howrah Mail, hailed a cab upon arrival and left for Park Street, a short distance from Eden. Another journalist, also on his first tour, asked if we could share a hotel room to save money. We soon became friends.

As soon as the Test started, I was ready to give up on the thought of traveling to Chennai. My editor's words kept ringing. Australia won the toss again but chose to bat this time. Slater, Hayden, Langer, Ponting, Gilly and the Waugh's – all in red-hot form. It wasn't just humidity taking a toll. "Let's go to Darjeeling," I told my roommate. "I've never been there. No way we're winning this Test."

He nodded. We were smart, weren't we?

Australia finished Day 1 at 291-8 (eventual total 445). India finished Day 2 at 128-8 (eventually 171). VVS batted at No. 6 & scored 59. The rest were listless. A deficit of 274 runs. Follow-on loomed. We began checking for tickets to Darjeeling.

On the morning of Day Three, we checked out of the hotel room. Why pay for an extra day?

India went past their first 50 runs before the first wicket fell; and a second one before reaching 100. Still a 174-odd run deficit. A short holiday would help us come out of our depression, we told ourselves.

VVS walked out at No. 3, not Dravid. Why? Injured? Unwell? The press box appeared perplexed. India finished Day Three at 254-4, with Dravid coming in at six. Twenty runs short now, we went back to the hotel and checked if our room was still available.

Day Four began. VVS was batting on 109*; Dravid on 7*. We were getting slightly irritated with McGrath, Gillespie, Kasprovicz & Warne. Wasn't this supposed to be simple?

Aussies took the new ball first thing in the morning and India chugged to 300. Something wasn't right. It looked like VVS and Dravid knew about our Darjeeling plans. They just wouldn't budge. India reached 376-4 at lunch. VVS went past 150. Dravid reached 50.

Were we still losing this Test?

A total of 571 minutes of batting saw VVS go past Gavaskar's 236, Dravid got his ninth hundred. Jagmohan Dalmiya was seen jumping around in joy. India finished the day at 550-4 from 645 minutes and 155 overs. They were leading by 276 runs now. We rushed to the scorer. When did anything like this last happen? Once in 1894, once in 1981. Both times, Australia had enforced the follow-on and lost -- the scorer, Rehman, announced.

We went back to the hotel and bought ourselves a beer. Darjeeling could wait. It was time to take the Coromandel Express to Chennai.



Eden Gardens will remain a part of me

Boria Majumdar

I was 11-years-old when the 1987 World Cup final was played at the Eden Gardens. With India and Pakistan losing their respective home semi-finals, it was England playing Australia for the title. Some felt the final would thus be lukewarm. And in those days Eden would host 100000 people. But in reality each seat was packed. Later in the day when Allan Border was doing the victory lap it was impossible to understand if it was

at the MCG or in India at the Eden Gardens. We love our cricket at the Eden and the stadium loves us back. It is a bond that will continue for many more generations.

Not everything in history as illustrious can be rosy. Things are always ups and downs. 1996 was one such. On a difficult wicket with India crumbling against Sri Lanka, the crowd lost patience and forced an abandonment of the game. Vinod Kambli in tears has stayed on as a postcard. We aren't proud of this incident. But we have learnt from it. What happened in 1996 can't be undone. It will remain as much a part of the Eden Gardens story. I remember walking back home that night and thinking to myself how does the stadium redeem itself? With time things heal and Eden has as well. The other game I'd like to recount was the 2016 India vs Pakistan World T20 encounter. Kolkata received some 100 mm of rain in two hours in the afternoon. There was no way we could have a cricket game. And yet we did. Within hours of the rain stopping, the Eden ground staff got it ready for Virat Kohli to take centre stage in front of Sachin Tendulkar and Amitabh Bachchan, who sang the national anthem. Kohli bowling to Sachin after his 50 signalled the passing of the baton – from the master to his protege at the world's greatest cricket venue.

Finally, the game that world cricket will never forget was the final of that same edition's world T20. West Indies was all but done and Ben Stokes had the ball in hand to seal the deal for England. Somehow, completely out of script, a certain Carlos Brathwaite went ballistic hitting four sixes closing out the deal for the Caribbean. Stokes hunched down and the West Indians celebrating added to the aura of this fabled cricket ground. Ian Bishop made it memorable with his "Remember the name, Carlos Brathwaite" commentary. He should have added, "And remember Eden Gardens where players turn gladiators and tales are scripted." We will see a further chapter added during this T20 World Cup. Eden will continue to be enriched in the days to come and in the process will continue to enrich the game and add to its aura.

For me it is home. A stadium where I have watched most of my cricket and have fallen in love with the sport that has since become my career. Having covered sport across the world, I can say this -- there is no other turf as hallowed and as special. Eden Gardens will remain a part of me.



Eden, the tourist destination we miss

Archiman Bhaduri

I will never pardon Sunil Gavaskar for spoiling my first day at the Eden Gardens. As a young boy, my joy knew no bounds when I got to know that India will bat first on winning the toss against West Indies at the Eden Gardens on December 10, 1983. But hardly had I settled down when I saw my childhood hero Gavaskar walking back to the pavilion as West Indian pacer Malcolm Marshall celebrated. That was one of the three occasions when the cricket legend was dismissed on the very first ball of a match in his career. Sadly that happened on my first day visit to Eden.



But that did not make me a jilted lover, rather it marked the beginning of a deep love affair as I walked back home that evening.

As a journalist, I got to see numerous changes – both in the corridors of power at the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and the Eden Gardens stadium, but there's an underline charm of Eden that's perhaps everlasting and continues to make players proud playing here and keep on drawing people to the venue over the years.

But I have often wondered if we have given Eden its due respect. Perhaps not! Eden Gardens is not just another stadium, it is very much a part of Bengal and Indian history.

Sporting venues across the world have been developed as tourist spots with opportunities for visitors to walk the path that their heroes took one day. Everyday people line up to have first-hand experience in top destinations like London's Wembley stadium, Chelsea's Stamford Bridge, Arsenal's Emirates Stadium and Manchester United's Old Trafford.

Cricketer venues don't lie behind also. One can take a walk down the Lord's Cricket Ground, the home of cricket, take a peep at the Melbourne Cricket Ground's Australian Sports Museum, player changing rooms, and walk on the arena. Tours of the Edgbaston Stadium in Birmingham take one to England team's changing rooms while the Kia Oval, known as the birthplace of the Ashes, offers tours of this historic ground.

The rich history of Eden Gardens is recorded in the plaques at the BC Roy Club House lounge. But as the area is not open to all, it remains out of bounds for hundreds of sports lovers.

It's time to throw it open for all and add Eden Gardens on the list of tourist destinations of not only Bengal but of India.





T20

ICC

MEN'S T20

WORLD CUP

INDIA & SRI LANKA 2026

7 FEB 2026 | 3:00 PM



9 FEB 2026 | 11:00 AM



14 FEB 2026 | 3:00 PM



16 FEB 2026 | 3:00 PM



19 FEB 2026 | 11:00 AM



1 MAR 2026 | SUPER 8 | 7:00 PM | 4 MAR 2026 | SEMI FINAL 1 | 7:00 PM



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Dr. B.C. Roy Club House, Eden Gardens, Kolkata,
West Bengal 700021