

# FIFA World Cup 2022 and Bangladesh: Shedding light from the sociology of sport

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## ABSTRACT

The FIFA World Cup is the most exalted sporting event in the globe. Although Bangladesh is not historically a great football-playing nation and has never been any close to the final stage of World Cup qualification, the FIFA World Cup matters so much for Bangladesh. This content analysis is an effort to understand the implications of the FIFA World Cup 2022, held in Qatar, in Bangladesh from the standpoint of the sociology of sport. News, events, opinions and activities published in various national and international online English news portals capturing the connection between the FIFA World Cup 2022 and Bangladesh have been analysed. Findings have been categorised and analysed according to the essence of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology: functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism. Three theoretical perspectives in sociology offer meaningful explanations about the interface between the FIFA World Cup 2022 and Bangladesh. According to functionalism, the FIFA World Cup 2022 conveyed several beneficial consequences for Bangladesh. But some incidents of dysfunction were also noted. The ways Bangladeshi expatriate workers involved in World Cup-related construction projects were exploited and suffered has been explained by conflict theory. The whole of Bangladesh was inextricably connected with the FIFA World Cup 2022. This factor is explained by symbolic interactionism.

**Keywords:** FIFA World Cup 2022, Football, Qatar, Bangladesh, Sociology of sport.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sport is integral to social and community life. It entails a key element in 'cultural universal' and represents to be one of the pivotal social institutions (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1974). Sociology critically examines sport as an essential social institution. In particular, the sub-discipline sociology of sport has been involved in academic pursuits to understand and analyse the varied aspects of sports at national and international levels (Giulianotti, 2015). Traditionally, sociology of sport emerged in response to the need for theory development and research on sport considering it as a rational and meaningful social interaction process (Lüschen and Hammerich, 1967). Subsequently, it has comprehended its attempts to scientifically capture the relationship between sport and culture/society. Also, the ways the behaviour of individuals and groups are shaped by sports as well as the rules and regulations associated with them (Delaney and Madigan, 2015). Sociology of sport meaningfully produces knowledge of the social and cultural contexts where sports exist, the experiences of groups and individuals associated with sports and the systems and organisations that govern and manage sports in society (Coakley, 2017).

The early sociological approach to the study of sport is due to German scholar Heinz Risse who published *Soziologie des Sports* (Sociology of Sports) in 1921 where the outlines and functions of sport were discussed (Lüschen and Hammerich, 1967). Risse's contribution was not recognised as an essential work although there was a heightened interest in sport as a phenomenon of mass entertainment during the 1920s. Sport as a social phenomenon was grossly devalued and only received a marginal space as a scientific pursuit (Giulianotti and Thiel, 2023). But it is only with the formation of the *International Sociology of Sport Association (ISSA)* in 1965 and its signature journal *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* which began publications in 1966, the study of sports gained momentum in sociology (Giulianotti, 2015). As of now, the sociology of sport has been widely visible internationally and scholars are showing a great deal of social and collaborative engagements to advance this sub-discipline in diverse ways (Giulianotti and Thiel, 2023). Furthermore, the development of a sociology of sport has boosted by the gradual expansion and rationalisation of sports through the twentieth century (Coakley, 2017).

FIFA (*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*), founded in Paris in 1904, arranges the men's football World Cup tournament every four years (Chankuna, 2022). The first event was kicked off in Uruguay in 1930 and the recent one in Qatar in 2022 from 20 November to 18 December. The FIFA Football World Cup, often simply called World Cup, is unquestionably the world's most popular and spectacular sporting event. Also, it is the world's most valuable, powerful and influential show/brand on the earth (Shultz, Castilhos, Fajardo, Grbac and Chatzidakis, 2015) that attracts a huge international audience, communication and coverage (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006; Frawley and Adair, 2014). Any sports mega event such as the FIFA World Cup can entail significant positioning of the nations to international and global communities. Organising such an event is not only a matter of glory for the host country, but it also brings remarkable positive outcomes in terms of socio-economic returns (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006). Of course, many negative consequences are also associated with this event (Al-Emadi, Sellami and Fadlalla, 2022). The world turns out to be the *Planet Football* during the final days of this event. Billions of people get connected to the event in numerous ways-being present physically in the stadia and/or via all print, electronic and social media and through social and public spaces (Shultz et al., 2015). FIFA's campaign, "*Football Unites the World*" stands as a signature mark to symbolise the power of this mega sporting occasion to bring people together, unite and celebrate together (FIFA, nda.).

Bangladesh, a country located in South Asia, cuts a very poor figure in FIFA rankings in men's football. Currently (August 2023) Bangladesh holds the 189<sup>th</sup> position (FIFA, ndb). This country has never been close

to qualifying for the FIFA World Cup and achieved very limited success at the regional-level tournaments. Winning the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF Championship) in 2003 is the most notable success of Bangladesh's men's football team. It also earned the gold medal in the 2010 South Asian Games (Rasul, 2021). Nonetheless, Bangladesh is a football-loving nation. Football was the most popular sport in the country. But the standard of the game started to decline from the late 1980s and onwards. The Federation and the clubs failed to professionalise the game with long-term plans and efforts. As a consequence, football gradually has lost its glory and old tradition (Bandyopadhyay, 2016). Despite the apparent stagnation of football along with poor international/regional performance, the people of Bangladesh get hyped during the FIFA World Cup. During the time of the tournament, the nation apparently gets divided into showing its immense loyalty either towards Brazil or Argentina. Football fever spreads across every corner of the nation, indicating people's deepest devotion and love towards football, the event and the supporting teams (Bandyopadhyay, 2016).

This article aims to analyse the socio-cultural implications of the FIFA World Cup 2022 on Bangladesh from the standpoint of sociology of sport. While attempting to explore the interconnectedness between the sociology of sport and the FIFA World Cup in the context of Bangladesh, the analysis is theoretically bounded by the three major perspectives of sociology. As the World Cup exerts a great influence on society and human behaviour, it is important to understand the extent of that influence in meaningful sociological ways.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### **Functionalism**

Functionalism is associated with the works of several classical sociologists such as August Comte, Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer and Max Weber (Delaney, 2015). Later on, Talcott Parsons, developed and extended functionalism as a grand theory by synthesising the insights and thoughts of the noted sociologists (Ormerod, 2020). Parsons' functionalism, often called structural functionalism, infers that social system is a network of inter-related parts or subsystems which are arranged by accommodating all actors involved in achieving the goals of the system (Delaney, 2015). Precisely, according to functionalism, society is composed of various interrelated parts or structures working together to bring overall order, cohesion and stability to the social system (Khan, Naz and Khan, 2017). All social institutions (e.g. religion, politics, economics, education, family, sport, media and so on) are not only interlinked but also function in their own ways for maintaining the system (Delaney, 2015). Another influential sociologist, Robert Merton, described two types of functions for any social institution maintaining the social system: manifest/intended and latent/unintended/unplanned functions or by-products of the original intention. He also articulated the likely dysfunctional features of certain aspects of the social system. Dysfunctions disrupt the normalcy of the system (Delaney and Madigan, 2015).

### **Conflict theory**

Conflict theory entails the assumption that power is fundamental to social relations. Competing groups struggle or engage in conflict for control of power. Power ultimately results in inequalities throughout society (Hayward, 2015). Conflict theory provides an important understanding of social structure, social problems and social change (Eitzen, 1988). This theoretical perspective is based on Marxist ideologies concerning class relations in the capitalist society and critically views alienation, injustices and oppression caused due to economic injustices in the society (Crossan, 2012). According to the Marxist thesis, the relations of production in capitalism give rise to conflict between economic classes. Following Marx, sociologists have extended the basic idea of Marxist conflict perspective to understand various group relationships and their sources of tensions. For example, Max Weber's model of social stratification, in addition to economic class, includes two other attributes: social esteem/status and power. While contemporary understandings of conflict

theory encompasses several sources of social inequalities based on race, gender, sexual orientation or inter-organisational competition (Simon, 2016).

### ***Symbolic interactionism***

Unlike functionalism and conflict theory, symbolic interactionism is a micro-sociological perspective that views society as the product of everyday interactions and communications (Khan et al., 2017). George Herbert Mead, the leading proponent of symbolic interactionism, views people develop their own identities through interactions with different apparatus of society. According to Herbert Blumer, social meanings are derived from interpersonal interaction. While, Ervin Goffman, through a dramaturgical approach, states social behaviour can be thought of as a staged performance in which the actors deliberately relay specific impressions to others (Berry, 2010). Through symbolic interactionism, the multiple identities of an individual are shaped through behavioural, cognitive and emotional interfaces with societal symbolic patterns and entities (Sartore and Cunningham, 2007). Interaction is symbolic, people use various symbols such as language, gestures/non-verbal communication to interact one with the other (Delaney and Madigan, 2015). Society is based on human interaction. Society and its subparts are continuously created and recreated as the persons interact with each other. Meaningfully, social reality is a constant flow of events requiring the involvement of multiple persons and actors (Stryker and Vryan, 2006). This approach not only focuses on the social interactions among and between the social actors, but also holds the idea that individuals assign their own perceptions and meanings to situate the external world surrounding them (Benzies, and Allen, 2001).

The theoretical framework of this analysis intends to explain the impact and pervasiveness of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Bangladesh in line with the three major sociological perspectives: functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism. Each perspective uniquely influences society, social forces and human behaviours. Thereby, the impact and connectedness of the greatest show on the earth in the context of Bangladesh may be explained by these theories.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This article is framed on content analysis. News, events and activities related to the FIFA World Cup 2022 and Bangladesh captured in various online English news portals were analysed in line with the essence of the three major sociological perspectives. Since no empirical work has so far been conducted on the FIFA World Cup 2022 Bangladesh, news portals were the only available sources of information. Data that indicated having a clear interface between Bangladesh and the FIFA World Cup 2022 were included only. Available data were then carefully assessed, narrated and included to display the best fitting under a particular theoretical perspective. During analysis, data were finally corroborated by the relevant empirical literature availed through google scholar and Scopus databases. As being a review, no formal ethical approval was needed. It is admissible that a single source can never produce an exhaustive or accomplished set of data to explain a grand social phenomenon like the World Cup.

## **ANALYSIS**

### ***FIFA World Cup, Bangladesh and functionalism***

According to functionalism each component of the society is interrelated and contributes to the smooth operation of the society. The following scripts related to the FIFA World Cup 2022 seem to have a strong functional embodiment in Bangladesh society.

Bangladesh was intrinsically associated with the Qatar World Cup in many important ways. Bangladeshi migrant workers in Qatar made a phenomenal contribution to the construction of mega infrastructural projects required for hosting the tournament. According to a recent estimate, more than 400,000 Bangladeshi migrants work in Qatar (Delwar, 2022). But Qatar specifically recruited approximately 2,80,000 semi-skilled and less-skilled workers during the last few years of the world cup (GoB, *nd*). The number of migrant workers increased due to the rise of construction projects in Qatar. Bangladeshi expatriates brought a positive socio-economic contribution to Bangladesh by sending remittances. Such a contribution helped to minimise the internal labour market pressure and keep the balance of payment at ease. Importantly, remittances sent from Qatar aided to commissioning Bangladesh from a low-income country to the status of a middle-income country (Delwar, 2022).

The apparel sector also opened up some economic opportunities for Bangladesh. This sector produced 600,000 official t-shirts for the World Cup in Qatar. The worth of these garments is roughly around 160 million Taka. Apparels worn at such an esteemed international occasion demonstrate Bangladesh's highest ability in this sector (Mazumder, 2022; Kalerkantho, 2022). It may also stand as a good landmark for future foreign investment/business in this sector.

Football fans in Bangladesh traditionally support two Latin American rival camps: Argentina and Brazil. But this world cup has scenically brought the relationship between Bangladesh and the champion team Argentina to a new level; from deep admiration and love for football to rebuilding of bilateral relationship at the state level. During the world cup, Argentineans became overwhelmed and mesmerised by the way Bangladeshis extended their support to their team. Immediately before the World Cup semi-finals the Argentine foreign minister twitted that Argentina would reopen its diplomatic mission in Bangladesh which has been closed since 1978 (Saim, 2022). After winning the World Cup, Bangladesh's Prime Minister warmly congratulated Argentina and expressed hope to further consolidate the relations by opening embassies in each other's countries (Bhattacharjee, 2022). Argentina reopened its diplomatic mission in Bangladesh in soonest possible time on 27 February 2023. The two countries signed several bilateral agreements including one football cooperation (Sumon, 2023). This new bilateral move of cooperation will immensely benefit Bangladesh in matters of tourism, trade relations, investment, cultural exchange and so on (Saim, 2022). During the financial year 2021-22, Bangladesh exported 9.5 million dollars' worth of goods to Argentina. On the contrary, Argentina exported 791 million dollars' worth of goods to Bangladesh without having any diplomatic relations. The trade relations between the two countries will surely jump up in the coming years (Uddin, 2023).

Meanwhile, the local sports goods market also escalated during the FIFA World Cup. Bangladesh Sports Goods Merchants, Manufacturers and Importers Association had estimated to have a business of Taka 10000 million on this occasion. Local manufacturers in Bangladesh made around 5 million jerseys and 5 million flags of different countries participating in the World Cup. Since the local producers were unable to meet the full demands of the supporters, traders had to import a large number of sports items from abroad. After jerseys, football was the most demanding product. Souvenirs like key rings, wristbands and so on were also sold in ample (Azad, 2022a). Items were sold from street shops to large shopping malls in the country. The World Cup period was a good source of income for many businessmen in Bangladesh.

Despite several positive effects, the country witnessed a few incidents of social dysfunctions during the World Cup such as chaos, fan violence, extreme brutality and hooliganism. Of course, the most rivalries took place between Brazilian and Argentinian fans.

At least seven people were injured in *Khustia* district in a clash between supporters of Argentina and Brazil. Two of them were admitted to the hospital in critical condition and the rest five received primary treatment. Locals gathered to watch the final match on a big screen. Brazil fans were supporting France in the final match. The moment Argentina won the match and its fans started celebrations, the clash began (Sobuj, 2022). In another incident outside the capital city, around three hundred supporters of Argentina and Brazil were involved in a huge clash with rocks and bricks at each other. The clash began on matters of the actual strength of the two teams. Several supporters were injured very badly (Prothom Alo, 2022). Attacks and vandalization of the houses of the supporters of one team by the supporters of another team were also common during the World Cup (The Daily Star, 2022a). More destructively, since the beginning of the World Cup, at least five supporters have been killed in different areas of the country during fan fights between Argentina and Brazil (Sarkar, 2022).

### **FIFA World Cup, Bangladesh and conflict theory**

Conflict theory focuses on how conflict arises in large social structures. The FIFA World Cup provides evidence of Marxist class conflicts and class relations in the context of Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi migrant workers became prey to capitalist class oppression in Qatar. Qatar's World Cup infrastructures were built by migrant workers. There have been ongoing debates, claims and accusations against Qatar regarding migrant workers' rights. A report published by the *Guardian* in 2021 claimed at least 6,751 migrant workers died in Qatar from five South Asian countries such as; Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. At least 1,018 of them were Bangladeshi workers. While Amnesty International alleged that 15,021 migrant workers died in Qatar between 2010 and 2019 during the construction of the FIFA World Cup infrastructures (Walter and Ford, 2022; Dhaka Tribune, 2022a).

On behalf of Nadim Sharaful Alam, an exploited Bangladeshi migrant worker, a lawsuit was filed in 2016 with a Swiss court against FIFA to force Qatar to ensure fundamental human and labour rights of migrant construction workers and to bring in adequate and effective labour reforms including the right to quit a job or leave the country. Two Bangladeshi workers' groups namely, the Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC) and the Bangladesh Building and Wood Workers Federation (BBWWF) joined in this lawsuit against FIFA, alongside the Dutch Trade Union Federation (FNV) (The Guardian, 2016; Arabian Business, 2016). Later on, the court rejected this case against FIFA as it observed that parts of the complaint such as introducing new labour laws and courts in Qatar were too vague or not legal (DW, 2017).

But ground evidence in Qatar portrayed disturbing pictures in terms of workers' rights and privileges. For example, a report published by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre in April 2022 confirmed between 2016 and 2022 at least 24,400 migrant workers, mostly hired from Bangladesh, Nepal and India, were abused in incidents associated with the FIFA World Cup 2022 construction works. Most of these abuses include non-payment of wages, health and safety violations and resultant injuries and deaths, hazardous working conditions, control of freedom of expression and freedom of movement (Ahamad, 2022). Amnesty International, in another report, categorically highlighted the existence of multiple forms of abuses and widespread violations of labour rights. It further called for FIFA's responsibilities and Qatar's obligations under international human rights laws and standards to prevent widespread human and labour rights violations and provide sufficient remedies for victims of abuses (Amnesty International, 2022). To cite a shocking example, less than four weeks before the start of the football tournament Qatar forcibly evicted thousands of foreign workers including Bangladeshis from several buildings located mostly in neighbourhoods where the government rented buildings for the World Cup fan accommodation. Such a '*deliberate ghetto-isolation*' move captured critical international attention regarding Qatar's maltreatment of foreign workers and its social laws.

Ironically, international workers who had built infrastructures to host the World Cup were being alienated ahead of the appropriate time for celebration (Dhaka Tribune, 2022b).

Back home in Bangladesh, mentioning the deaths, injuries and inhuman treatment of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Qatar between 2010 and 2022, a writ petition was lodged in the High Court of Bangladesh in January 2023. The good point is that the Court issued a rule asking the concerned Bangladeshi authorities to prepare a list including the names of migrant workers who were involved in construction works of the FIFA World Cup and to explain why they should not be directed to give adequate compensation to the families of migrant workers (The Daily Star, 2023).

Workers in the ready-made garment factories in Bangladesh also poured much sweat and tears on the eve of the tournament. The garment industry in Bangladesh produced jerseys and T-shirts for FIFA and domestic markets. In return, it broadly helped the capitalist factory owners. The garment sector is notoriously noted for exploitation of the workers in terms of cheap wages, poor and unsafe working conditions (Foyez, 2022).

### ***FIFA World Cup, Bangladesh and symbolic interactionism***

Symbolic interactionism is used to analyse human interactions by focusing on the meanings that individuals assign to things and events surrounding them. The FIFA World Cup 2022 brings many examples from the perspective of symbolic interactionism in Bangladesh.

Although Bangladesh is in no way a great football playing nation, this country is always floated by the World Cup football euphoria. Bangladeshi fans take insane measures to show their love and devotion for their beloved teams. While there are fans of European teams, most Bangladeshis get divided into two South American teams: Brazil and Argentina (Bakul and Siam, 2016). During the World Cup football fever grasps each and every corner of Bangladesh, from the capital city to remote areas. Even a person who has little knowledge about football also gets affected by this fever (Kamal and Jashim, 2022). Looking at the collective hype amongst Bangladeshi, it is hard to explain how a country gets so passionate about football which virtually has any chance in the near future to participate in this grandest tournament (Saikat, 2022). Symbols and other means of communication played an important role in supporting respective teams during the World Cup 2022. Colourful flags, fancy jerseys, mascots, chants, songs and yells all created a high wave across the country. Different TV channels and online platforms telecasted live matches and arranged programmes with experts. Supporters gathered to watch the matches on giant TV screens in several spots of the country. The tournament regularly got the lead space in the newspapers. Musicians released new songs on this occasion. Social media platforms were very active and several fan groups were also formed. Refereeing to the collective emotion of the supporters in Bangladesh, FIFA once tweeted, “*Nothing brings people together like football*” (Daily Bangladesh, 2022a). Argentina team tweeted, “*Thank you Bangladesh, your support was wonderful*” (The Daily Star, 2022b). Bangladesh’s supports and love for football attracted attention of the rest of the world (Ali, 2022).

A few days before kicking off the tournament, football lovers in the hill town of *Rangamati* painted three mountain bridges with the colours of the Argentina and Brazil flags. Two of them were painted in Argentinian colour while the other one in Brazilian colour. Thereafter, a cold war began between the supporters of the two sides centring on the bridges (Dhar, 2022; Hoque, 2022).

Masudur Rahman, a big fan of the Argentinian team who used to live in Qatar for ten years returned to Bangladesh a month before the World Cup. Then he initiated to share the joy of the World Cup with his fellow

villagers in *Faridpur* district by making eight replica stadiums of Qatar World Cup 2022 on a local field. He wanted to give villagers a feeling that they are watching the match sitting inside the stadiums in Qatar. He also arranged to show the matches on a big screen and hoisted the flags of the 32 participating. Accommodations and food were available for the spectators visiting from other areas. He also organised a ceremony on the opening day of the World Cup. For all these actions, he had to spend half a million Bangladeshi Taka (Hasan, 2022; Hoque, 2022).

Abu Kausar Mintu, a resident of *Brahmanbaria* district had a crazy support demonstration for South Korea. He made a gigantic 4 kilometres long South Korean flag, costing him more than half a million Bangladeshi Taka. Besides personal savings, he even had to sell land property to meet the cost of this enormous flag-making (Hoque, 2022). In the same vein, a group of Argentina fans prepared a 3,000-foot-long flag in *Mymensingh* district. The flag was made with 1,500 yards of cloth in six days costing them 50,000 thousand Bangladeshi Taka. In addition to hoisting the flag they also purchased projectors, screens, and DTH to broadcast the football matches for the spectators (Hoque, 2022; Mahmood, 2022).

A supporter of Brazil in *Sirajganj* district painted his entire house with the colours of Brazil's flag and named it Brazil *bari* (home) (The Financial Express, 2022). There were several similar examples from different areas of the country. A vigorous local sports organiser Advocate Mahbul Alam from *Brahmanbaria* district painted one of his buildings in Argentinian colours upon the request of his son. But as his daughters are supporters of Brazil, he was planning to paint his other building modelled after the Brazilian flag (Daily Bangladesh, 2022b). While a group of youths in the *Swamigagh* area of the capital city made a different initiative ahead of the tournament by painting graffiti of renowned football stars on a large wall (bdnews24.com, 2022).

Apart from several activities related to football euphoria as mentioned above, sometimes sad stories were also written during the World Cup. In these cases, individuals' interactions with football were so volatile that they could not keep going with the normal flow of the tournament.

Upen Chandra Mondal, a devoted supporter of Argentina from *Barishal* district died after suffering a heart attack while watching the semi-final match between Argentina and Croatia. He had suffered the attack out of over-excitement immediately after Argentina scored the first goal (Swapan, 2022). Kawser Javed, another Argentinian supporter from *Cumilla* district also died of a heart attack while watching his team conceded a 1-2 defeat against Saudi Arabia (New Age, 2022). Sadly, one report confirmed that at least six teens (aged between 13 and 19) died while hoisting flags of their favourite teams from critical positions. In all cases, they were either fans of Brazil or Argentina. They died due to electrocution and falling from a height (Azad, 2022b).

## DISCUSSION

FIFA World Cup is a glorious global event. Unquestionably, the biggest show on earth. Every four years this fiesta brings in a great impact on people, societies and cultures around the world. Its social, cultural, economic and political implications for the globe are unprecedented. Bangladesh always feels a great tremor by the World Cup. The influence of the World Cup in Bangladesh has not been researched before. Sociology is a pertinent discipline to explore the fabric of interconnectedness between Bangladesh and the World Cup. As evidenced from the above, the three major theoretical perspectives in sociology can shed light on the impact of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Bangladesh in some significant ways.

Functionalism seems to be a very relevant theory to the study of sport (Delaney, 2015). Functionalism takes note of the nature, function, values and moralities of sport as a social institution and the connection sport



maintains with other institutions of a given society (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1974). Sport as a social institution provides both manifest/intended and latent/unintended functions. Even certain aspects of sports may be also dysfunctional or disorderly to some people (Delaney and Madigan, 2015). Billions of people find ways and means to organise their lives around some events of sport. Often it is hard to find which aspects of society are not affected by it (Shultz et al, 2015). The findings under functionalism suggest that the FIFA World Cup 2022 had some beneficial consequences for Bangladesh. Evidently, the tournament was economically beneficial to Bangladesh due to remittances sent by the expatriate workers from Qatar. Bangladesh also earned a lot by exporting sports items to Qatar. Many traders within the country also found the World Cup period as a good source of income. It may be noted that countries in today's world develop bilateral relationships with each other keeping in mind mutual economic benefits. After rejuvenating the bilateral relationship with Argentina, economic opportunities will open up for Bangladesh in manifolds. The economy always plays a pivotal role in stabilising the social system and maintaining its equilibrium. Economic exchange among rational individuals/parties has a potential function for a society by having gains from trade and business (Jackson, 2002). Of course, there were examples of dysfunctions or deviant behaviours such as murder or killing by fans of the opponent team during the World Cup. Despite sport promoting many important and desirable social functions, it also spurs deviant behaviours including some of the worst, aggressive, intimidating and gravest kinds of activities (Dziubinski, 2009; Delaney and Madigan, 2015). In particular, football hooliganism is a global and persistent problem spanning over several decades and football madness leading to violence is steadily increasing (Newson, 2017). Notably, Bangladesh maintains a bad record in football-related dysfunctions. For example, during the glorious period of club football in Bangladesh, fan conflict, hooliganism and damage to property were very rampant and intrusive (Bandyopadhyay, 2016).

Bangladesh's attachment to the World Cup may also be explained by the conflict theory. Conflict theorists/Marxist sociologists view sport as integral to society and a significant element of global capitalist society (McDonald, 2015). Conflict theory is mostly concerned with the implication of power, domination and exploitation in diverse aspects of sport (Delaney and Madigan, 2015). They consider the rise of sport from a materialistic perspective (Delaney and Madigan, 2015). For them, modern sport is seemingly a product of capitalism which emerged in eighteenth-century as part of the growing commercial entertainment industry (Collins, 2013). Sport stands as a critical analytical source within the capitalist class relationships and exploitations (McDonald, 2015). For example, ever since Qatar won the bid to host the 2022 World Cup, the government had poured billions of dollars into infrastructural development. Such development was exclusively contingent upon international migrant workers. Over a period of time, there was constant international scrutiny on Qatar about migrant labour/human rights abuses including dangerous labour conditions, lack of workers' rights, low wages, dilapidated living conditions and so on. In particular, the country's migrant sponsorship system (called *kafala*) was grossly criticised as it grants companies and employers to exploit migrant workers through an oppressive legal bondage system. Often it creates a grievous power imbalance between the employees/sponsors and workers (Babar and Vora, 2022). Not to mention, poor considerations of labour/human rights issues are not new to capitalism and imperialism. Furthermore, evidence suggests that holding mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup have always resulted in economic growth and development in manifolds for the host country (Al-Dosari, 2020; Al-Emadi, 2022). While Qatar gained opportunities to stimulate its capital growth by hosting the World Cup, some concerns will always remain unanswered regarding its labour/human rights interventions and the ways the key contributors (migrant workers of different countries including Bangladesh) were alienated from the key process and product of the means of production, 'the FIFA World Cup'.

Sport is closely shaped by symbolic interaction with its social contacts and communications (Djalal, 2015). The ways fans in Bangladesh showed attachment during the FIFA World Cup 2022 to their respective teams

and favourite players provide unique examples of symbolic interactionism. Their emotional involvement attests to the assumption as if they were members of that particular football team or country. According to Herbert Mead, an individual's personality development is contingent upon his membership in a particular group (Djalal, 2015). At least for the period of this mega tournament, the devoted fans and supporters of the respective teams had distinct personality make-up expressed through language, bodily embodiments and non-verbal communications. Further to state, football always stands as a phenomenal source of social interaction-the essence of symbolic interactionism (Djalal, 2015). Fans and participants maintain close interactions and cohesions with sporting actions and processes (Delaney and Madigan, 2015). Symbolic interactionism highlights the meaning, identity formation, social relationships and subcultures within events of sports (Crossan, 2012). Individuals are sometimes fans or members of sports groups/clubs, sometimes they play particular sporting roles or perform in sports events and sometimes they are spectators of different types (Weiss, 2001). Fans and supporters are emotionally associated with the physical construction of the players. The outfits, achievements, fitness and social power of the players have an alluring impact on the fans to support a particular team (Berry, 2010). Specific to the dramaturgical aspect of symbolic interaction, the FIFA World Cup always stands as a special social stage that evokes a remarkable emotional performance from fans and supporters. Bangladeshi fans and supporters were great actors on the stage and performed according to the script. Dramaturgical metaphors such as "staged," "actors" and "scripted" (Zurcher, 1982) were not artificial, false or irrelevant to Bangladesh. The emotions and performances of Bangladeshis during the World Cup were very realistic and socially adorable.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis captures the sociological significance of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in the context of Bangladesh. The sociological significance of this versatile event is immense. During the World Cup 2022 football fever in Bangladesh was injected into the masses so intensely that it was almost impossible for someone to keep aside from it. The three major sociological perspectives such as functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism offer important insights into the FIFA World Cup 2022. Functionalism illustrates that the World Cup had brought some visible beneficial consequences for Bangladesh although some evidence of violent destructions due to fan factionalism was also noted. According to the conflict perspective, this event had a major impact on Bangladeshi expatriate workers involved in infrastructural projects. The issues related to the breach of labour rights affected the workers in serious ways. Notably, the international spotlight on labour rights issues for a host country was more visible this time than ever before. Finally, symbolic interactionism exerted a strong presence in the everyday behaviour and life pattern of Bangladeshi fans, supporters and general people during the World Cup. The intense association of people in Bangladesh with this event asserts the fact that football has important meanings in their life.

This is the maiden study using the major sociological perspectives to explore the interface between Bangladesh society and the FIFA World Cup 2022. From here, researchers may avail some directions to use sociology to further explain the implications of this mega event. Several emerging perspectives in sociology such as post-structuralism, post-modernism, feminism or critical race theory may be good sources for further analysis. Scholarly interventions using field-based empirical evidence are also strongly suggested.

Considering the impact, involvement, mass-following or even consequences of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Bangladesh, the nation should strive to improve its football-playing status at the international/professional level. In particular, the nature and extent of fan following should be used as a good booster for the development of football in Bangladesh.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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