

INDIA'S TITLE DEFENCE IS ON!

The World Cup is well and truly ON and that can be gauged by the level of conversation both online and offline that the event is soliciting. Offcourse the manner in which we (India) crushed both Pakistan and South Africa was simply outstanding and that has added to the flavor of the World Cup. I will admit that as a fan and follower of Indian cricket, it was simply thrilling to watch such a comprehensive display by our boys – who were all but written off prior to the event even starting.



SOUTH AFRICA
VS INDIA

before the World Cup.

It is such a relief to have the focus of the entire nation on the good aspect of the tournament, on-field action. Ultimately cricket is about what happens on the field. India's performance in the opening two matches have ensured that the entire country is positively looking forward to their next matches. Even far away in London, the enthusiasm of all the Indian fans is something that needs to be seen to be believed.

Obviously the heroes of the campaign thus far have been Shikhar Dhawan and Virat Kohli with the bat, Mohammed Shami and Ashwin with the ball.

Interestingly, all of these boys learnt the art of playing cricket under the arclights and under intense pressure thanks in no small measure to (any guesses) their stints in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Believe it or not

60 days of playing high pressured matches with and against the best in the world is an education in itself. It is a christening like no other and that is the reason we have the best-of-the-best in the world cueing up to ply their trade in the IPL.

Consider this: England's ODI captain Eoin Morgan is giving international cricket a miss for the IPL and the ECB has given him the nod for it. Morgan's unavailability for the ODI against Ireland in Malahide on May 8 speaks a lot about what the English cricketers have missed in preparing for the demands of current limited overs cricket.

Morgan in fact has clearly mentioned the role of IPL in his growth as a cricketer.

"It's really important where I'm at in my career to refocus on my basics of what I've learnt over the last six years I've played for England. One of those processes was playing in the IPL. It does give you great confidence, you learn a lot along the way and it gives you great energy," he said.

The intense competition, the ability to remain calm under pressure, the innovation and competitiveness are all intangible by-products of the IPL and no one can deny that. All the sixes that you see, the creativity with the bat and the skills with the ball, the players have perfected is by playing IPL. Not many will give the

Lalit Modi



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