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Drogba leaves Delhi charmed

The excitement was palpable at the Thyagraj Stadium in the capital city as popular footballer Drogba came calling

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The mix was heady — Indian cricket superstars, a Bollywood heartthrob, the soccer face of the country for over one and a half decade and to top it all a former Chelsea sharpshooter — and the 5,000 odd fans at Delhi's Thyagraj Stadium lapped it up with glee as Didier Drogba's maiden visit to the country left fans asking for more.

The atmosphere reverberated with the chants of 'Drogba, Drogba' as the 34-year-old made his way into the Indoor stadium and it was in no way less in energy that welcomed the other celebrities' entry on the day. And it was the cricketers who were star struck as M.S. Dhoni, Virat Kohli, Murali Vijay, Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh lined up to get their photographs clicked with the Ivory Coast striker even though four of them had starred with him in a commercial recently. Drogba, who connected with cricket much before the advertisement following India's triumph in the last World Cup, however, is still finding it tough to pronounce the names of Indian cricketers. "The World Cup win made them famous. They did well and I followed their triumph. I know your captain (Dhoni) but it is so difficult to pronounce his name but I think he is a great leader."

Drogba did have to learn some cricketing skills for the ad with the then Chelsea teammates Frank Lampard and Fernando Torres but refused to divulge who of the three was worst with a bat and a ball.

"They are good friends and probably watching this somewhere. I don't

want to name one and face them when I go back," he said with a grin.

The add-ons on the day were also not too less impressive. Well known percussionist Sivamani, a group called Street Soccer Society and cheer girls kept the crowd entertained with their performances in between the main agenda of the day — a T20 football competition played inside a cage less



M.S. Dhoni

than half the size of an actual ground in air conditioned surroundings. The blaring music throughout and a witty comper in Nikhil Chinnapa kept the fans involved and on their toes throughout the five hour long performance.

The theme of the evening 'change the game' may have been well taken by the cricketers as they played a football match against a Delhi side led by Ranbir Kapoor but Drogba may not be seen playing cricket as he thinks it goes on for many days. However, his kids may adopt the game as they are already playing it at the school level. "It took me some time to understand the game. It's far too long and goes on for many days. But when some of my friends explained it to me, I found it interesting. My kids are already into it at school and I don't want to push them into football."



Drogba had the crowd on their feet as he entertained them with more than just football