

FELLAINI LAUGHS OFF RIDICULE

Real Madrid defeated Manchester United in the UEFA Super Cup on Tuesday night, but rather than one of them lifting the trophy, a more iconic picture – on social media at least – was that of Red Devil Marouane Fellaini. He was snapped with immaculate timing, as the ball ricocheted off his face in after a header. Much like a boxer's face after being hit by a Mike Tyson uppercut, Big Fella's face resembled nothing short of a melting candle. The picture gave birth to a new meme, with his face plastered on everything – even replacing the character on Edvard Munch's famous 'The Scream'. The Belgian took it in his stride. "Thank you to everyone who posted & sent me this," he wrote on Twitter, accompanied by a bunch of laughing emojis.



—AGENCIES

Niekerk takes 400m; sets sights on double

AFP, London



Wayde van Niekerk's bid for a first world double since 1995 now turns to the 200m after he stormed to a comfortable victory in the 400m.

After initially struggling with the cold, the 25-year-old ran a solid final bend to blast to victory in 43.98 seconds with a lot to spare, and went straight into recovery ahead of Wednesday's 200m semi-finals, with the final on Thursday.

"It was quite freezing and I struggled to get myself warmed up and ready," said Van Niekerk, who came into the 400m as defending world and Olympic champion.

"I was doubting my momentum. In the last 150 metres I tried putting in an extra gear, but I couldn't catch my stride until my last few metres. I just allowed the race to go through to the finish line."

Thoughts will turn straight to the 200m, and a rare double.

The last athlete to claim the 200/400m double was American Michael Johnson, who achieved the feat the 1995 worlds in Gothenburg, repeating the achievement a year later in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

"It's easier said than done," said Van Niekerk, who smashed Johnson's 400m world record when winning gold in Rio and then his rarely-run 300m record in Ostrava last month. "It's competition, it's very unpredictable."

"My body still feels very good. It took me a while to recover."

"But from endurance I go straight to speed... It's a day-by-day, step-by-step process for us athletes."

Van Niekerk reiterated that every season

threw up new challenges.

"I know it's never going to be a walk in the park," he said. "I'm just so grateful for what I came through with a gold medal."

"Every year has its new challenges, and every year it gets tough. I don't think it ever became easier. Right after Rio I found out I had a back injury, and this entire season I have been struggling to find fitness, but at the same time my times have been getting better, especially in the short sprints."

Van Niekerk, the first athlete to break 10 seconds over 100m, 20sec over 200m and 44sec over 400m, added he was delighted his coach Anna "Tannie Ans" Botha would also receive a medal as part of a championships initiative to reward coaches.

"Everyone knows the superstar coach I have," he said of the 74-year-old great-grandmother who oversees the hottest property in world athletics.

"It's actually a massive honour for me to be able to reach these great heights with her."

"She has had to wait a long time - with the third gold, she gets to take one home with her too. Unfortunately my two previous medals had to go to Mum as she said 'Everything achieved at home has to stay here'. So I am glad to be able to take this one home myself!"

Meanwhile, Pierre-Ambroise Bosse of France won the men's 800 metres world title on Tuesday in sensational style.

The 25-year-old -- fourth in the Olympic final last year -- won in 1min 44.67sec ahead of Adam Kszczot of Poland, who had to settle for silver as he had in the 2015 final.

"I live a dream, I'm in a dream right now, am I dreaming?" gasped Bosse.



South Africa's Wayde van Niekerk eased to a win in the 400m race, successfully defending his title at the IAAF World Championships in London on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP



Real Madrid became the third team in history to win the UEFA Super Cup in consecutive years as they defeated Manchester United 2-1 in Skopje on Tuesday. Meanwhile Zinedine Zidane became the first manager since Arrigo Sacchi to retain the cup.

PHOTO: AFP

Dominant Real add another title

AFP, Skopje



A delightful goal by Isco proved the difference as Real Madrid survived a Manchester United fightback to win 2-1 and lift the UEFA Super Cup in the Macedonian capital Skopje on Tuesday.

Casemiro put the reigning European champions in front on 24 minutes on a steamy summer's night in the Balkans and Isco doubled their lead seven minutes into the second half after a one-two with Gareth Bale.

The gulf in class between Madrid -- for whom Cristiano Ronaldo appeared as a late substitute -- and Europa League winners United that Jose Mourinho had feared was all too evident and it looked like the Spaniards would go on to win by a wider margin.

But Romelu Lukaku pulled one back just past the hour, marking his competitive debut for United with a goal and sparking a big improvement from the Premier League club in the final stages.

It was to no avail, with Zinedine Zidane's side winning this trophy for the second year running and the fourth time overall. It is the eighth time in nine years that a Spanish club has won the Super Cup.

"It is all down to hard work. We know there is a lot of talent in this team and there is so much hunger too, they always want more," said Zidane after lifting more silverware. "Today was an almost perfect match, and the first half was spectacular."

While Ronaldo started on the bench for Madrid having only commenced pre-season training at the weekend, Bale was included in the first XI.

Mourinho however insisted that his side had emerged reinforced despite, saying he had expected his side to struggle against the reigning European champions and that they could have conceded more goals.

"I always say the Champions League is one thing and the Europa League is another, and the Champions League winner obviously has a different potential," said Mourinho.

"So for us to come here and do

the positive things we did, I think we have to keep that positive feeling into the new season, and into the Champions League in September."

"I think this Super Cup was a great experience for us."

Mourinho, who gave away his runners-up medal to a fan, sought solace in the fact that the Old Trafford club will not need to come up against Madrid in the Premier League.

"We have top teams with different qualities. There are no replicas of [Luka] Modric, [Toni] Kroos, Isco or Casemiro," he said.

Despite the presence of £75 million signing Lukaku up front, with Paul Pogba behind, United often gave the impression that they could do with some extra inspiration in the final third.

Having missed much of last season's run-in due to injury, Bale is fit again, but it was Casemiro who emerged as the unlikely main threat going forward for Real in the first half.

The Brazilian midfielder almost opened the scoring in the 16th minute, getting in front of Matteo Darmian to head a Toni Kroos corner against the bar from six yards.

The breakthrough came just past the midway point in the first half as Dani Carvajal was afforded the time to flight a ball over Victor Lindelof for Casemiro to stretch and volley past David de Gea.

De Gea then needed to intervene to save a Karim Benzema snap-shot that followed a driving run into the area by Luka Modric, as Zidane's side were restricted to a one-goal lead at the break.

De Gea repelled a Kroos piledriver but there was nothing he could do to stop Isco making it 2-0 in the 52nd minute.

Surrounded by red shirts just inside the area, Isco escaped by playing a one-two with Bale before coolly finishing past De Gea.

United had a mountain to climb and were not helped when Lukaku blazed over after Keylor Navas pushed a Pogba header into his path.

Lukaku did not make the same mistake twice, converting the rebound when a Nemanja Matic drive was not convincingly dealt with by Navas.

And Real, with Ronaldo on for the closing stages, held out.

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Sethi eyes international tours

Newly elected Pakistan cricket chief Najam Sethi vowed Wednesday to bring international competition back to the terror-hit country after years of isolation.

Hathurisingha knows what makes Australia tick

The Tigers may not be the strongest side in Test cricket but possess a backroom with unique knowledge about the Australia side that will be touring Bangladesh.

Bolt to run in 4x100 metres qualifying

Usain Bolt will run in the 4x100 metres relay heats for Jamaica on Saturday despite being a bit sore after winning bronze in the 100m final at the weekend, he told Reuters on Monday.

'Can't keep overachieving'

AGENCIES, Montreal



Ahead of the Rogers Cup in Montreal, Roger Federer does not think he will be able to keep up what has been an overachieving year so far.

The Swiss ace returned from a six-month layoff earlier this year to win the Australian Open in what was his first Grand Slam victory since 2012. Federer then won titles in Indian Wells, Miami and Halle before winning an unprecedented eighth Wimbledon title after a dominant victory over Marin Cilic last month.

Federer's year has defied belief as the 36-year-old currently boasts five titles and could end 2017 as the world number one for the first time since October 2012.

With the hard-court campaign commencing this week, Federer spoke of his longevity and how playing for a long time was one of his early goals.

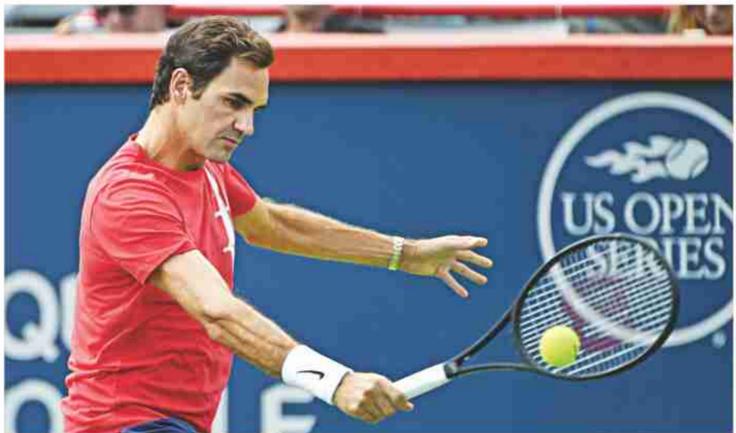
"I always had longevity written all over my career that when I became world number one in 2004, my goal was to hopefully play for

long," Federer said in a pre-tournament interview in Montreal. "I had the chance to play against Agassi who played until 35 or 36 and I really appreciated the fact that he stuck around and I thought if I could do the same, it would make me very happy."

The 19-time Grand Slam winner also compared his two major wins of the year before stating that it was not realistic to think the results so far will continue.

"It's been a magical year and I think because everything happened so quickly, and all the matches were three sets in Wimbledon, it didn't feel like it was the epic battle that I had in Australia so it had a totally different taste," he added. "Maybe even a deeper happiness winning Wimbledon and writing history there, it means so much to me. What a six months it's been! I hope I can keep it up even though I don't think so, we'll see what happens."

"It was just too good. It's just not realistic to think that way but I'll try everything to keep on playing good tennis for the rest of the season. Even though I should be feeling better the second part of the season, the first part will be really hard to top."



Roger Federer was hard at work in practice at the Uniprix Stadium in Montreal, hoping that he could continue his fantastic run this year.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bale's future at Bernabeu

AGENCIES, Skopje

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez said on Thursday night that he would not even entertain the idea of selling Gareth Bale.

The Welshman has been linked to Manchester United in the past few weeks but Perez ended the speculation.

"I'm not even thinking about that. Bale is with Real Madrid, we are very happy with him and he is one of the best players in the world," Perez said after Real's Super Cup win.

"Clearly the club wants him, and he wants the club so game over, before it had even started," Red Devils' manager Jose Mourinho conceded.

Conte wants more players

REUTERS, London

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte believes the club need more signings to cope with the added demands of playing in the Champions League.

Chelsea have signed striker Alvaro Morata, goalkeeper Willy Caballero, midfielder Tiemoue Bakayoko and centre-back Antonio Rudiger so far.

"We solved a lot in this summer, and for this reason it's very important to try to improve our squad because we have one more competition," Conte said. "But we have to play Champions League. It's not easy. It's very important to try to improve the squad before [we] start the season."

'No PSG contact over Sanchez'

AFP, London



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said on Wednesday he has had no contact with Paris Saint-Germain regarding Alexis Sanchez, who will miss the start of the season through injury.

Sanchez, 28, has been linked with a move to PSG. But Wenger said he had not heard from PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi and referred to French media reports suggesting PSG are more interested in signing Monaco's Kylian Mbappe.

"It's a long time I didn't speak to Nasser, because it's certainly very busy to complete the transfer of Neymar," Wenger told a press conference at Arsenal's London Colney base.

Asked if he expected Al-Khelaifi to get in touch, Wenger replied: "No, no. I think if you read the French papers, they are on Mbappe's case to finish their transfer market."

Wenger was coy, though, when he was asked if any bids had been tabled for Sanchez.

"I can't tell you that at the moment," said the Frenchman. "I just think we are not open -- what I said to you many times -- to any offers, anyway."

Sanchez, who has also been linked with Manchester City, has not played for Arsenal in pre-season after being granted extra time off after playing at the Confederations Cup with Chile.

Wenger said the forward had sustained an abdominal injury and was likely to miss both Friday's game against Leicester and the trip to Stoke City on August 19.

"He has a little abdominal strain that he caught on Sunday morning in training, before he came to Wembley [for last Sunday's Community Shield]," Wenger said.



ARSENE WENGER

Hockey team draw this time

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team came from two goals down to hold Gansu Gobis to a 2-2 draw in the third practice match of their China tour in Gansu yesterday.

Bangladesh conceded the lead in the fourth minute, with Sang Zheng converting a penalty corner before Yang Joun doubled the margin in the second quarter.

However, the visitors hit back in the fourth quarter by scoring two goals within eight minutes. Moinal Islam Koushik made it 2-1 in the 51st minute before Naimuddin levelled the margin two minutes from time.

Bangladesh, who had narrowly lost to the same opposition in the first two matches, will play their fourth and final match against the same side tomorrow. Bangladesh will then play four more practice matches against Jiling province side, starting from Saturday.

Bangladesh are touring China as part of preparation for the 10th Men's Asia Cup, which is scheduled to take place in Dhaka in October.

Bangladesh have been handed a tough group, with India, Pakistan and Japan as the other teams in the group.