



**BELGIUM 3 : 2 JAPAN**



**ROSTOV ROLLERCOASTER:** Rostov-on-Don was treated to perhaps the best game of the 2018 World Cup yesterday. Japan were writing a fairytale script and were sending Belgium home having gone 2-0 up after the first half of the round of 16 encounter. But Belgium drew level with 69th and 74th minute strikes from Jan Vertonghen and Marouane Fellaini, before Nacer Chadli (Top) slotted home the winner in literally the last minute of injury time. **INSET:** From having one foot in the quarterfinal after goals from Genki Haraguchi and Takashi Inui (L), they were eventually left to rue a heartbreaking exit. Belgium will now face Brazil in the quarterfinal on July 7.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# A true test of 'Predictable, inoffensive' 'Only the start' character

REUTERS, Rostov-on-Don

Belgium passed their test of character with a display of true fighting spirit, coach Roberto Martinez said after they came from 2-0 behind to beat Japan 3-2 in injury time.

"That's what happens in the World Cup," said the Spaniard, who was hired after a side packed with English Premier League talent collapsed against Wales in the Euro 2016 quarter-final.

"It was a test of character and a test of the team," said Martinez after substitute Nacer Chadli slammed the ball home four minutes into stoppage time, breaking the hearts of Japan fans whose side scored twice early in the second half.

Run ragged at times by the skilful and determined Samurai Blue, ranked 58 places behind them at 61st in FIFA's world rankings, the Red Devils will look hard at their defensive frailties and difficulties in turning pressure into goals before they face Brazil in the quarter-final.

REUTERS, Moscow

Spain's media flayed the team's unimaginative style after their shock World Cup elimination by their lowly ranked hosts Russia but federation president Luis Rubiales escaped the bulk of criticism despite the abrupt sacking of coach Julen Lopetegui.

"Walking all the way home," said the front cover of newspaper Marca after Spain were beaten 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out by Russia.

"The end of a generation," declared the cover of AS after a defeat which denied veteran midfielder Andres Iniesta one last gong before retiring from international football.

"Penalties threw Spain out of a World Cup which, if we're honest, will not miss them. Spain didn't play well,"

added the editorial in AS, lamenting a run of three draws against Portugal, Morocco and Russia and only one win, a narrow 1-0 victory over Iran.

Strangely, only Valencia-based daily Super Deporte, pointed to the decision to sack Lopetegui the day before the tournament started for failing to tell the federation about his impending move to Real Madrid.

Super Deporte laid the blame for Lopetegui's dismissal squarely at Real's president Florentino Perez, picturing the Madrid chief and asking "Are you satisfied?"

Former Sevilla coach Joaquin Caparros was fiercely critical of Spain's play against Russia in a column for newspaper El Mundo.

"Spain's football was slow, predict-

able and inoffensive," he wrote.

"They were way off their usual level. They had a magnificent opportunity to grow after taking the lead and kill the game off but they conformed with the goal and instead of going forward they took a step back."

Broadsheet El Pais pointed to a collective debacle, from the federation down to the players' disappointing displays in Russia.

"Spain built up so much absurdity during this tempestuous World Cup campaign that they ended up condemning themselves," it said.

"Spain frequently looked like they were climbing the Himalayas, no matter how much they raged against criticism and didn't focus on their real enemy: themselves."

AFP, Moscow

Russia coach Stanislav Cherchesov believes the World Cup hosts' shock victory over title contenders Spain on penalties following a 1-1 draw in the last 16 on Sunday "is only the beginning".

Captain Igor Akinfeev saved two penalties as Russia triumphed 4-3 in a dramatic shootout in Moscow to reach a first quarter-final since the Soviet era, in 1970.

"I'm not the man of the match, the man of the match is our team and fans," said Akinfeev, after each converted penalty, and his saves from Koke and Iago Aspas, were greeted with a deafening roar from a crowd of 78,011 at the Luzhniki Stadium.

Russia were largely expected to just make up the numbers at their own tournament after entering with a seven-match winless run and ranked the lowest of the 32 teams.

Cherchesov has masterminded a remarkable upturn in fortunes, with back-to-back wins over Saudi Arabia and Egypt to launch their campaign sparking a wave of national euphoria.

# Anamul, Mithun and Ebadat included in A team

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board selectors have included wicketkeeper-batsmen Anamul Haque and Mohammad Mithun alongside Ebadat Hossain in the Bangladesh A team for the second four-day game of a three-match series against the Sri Lanka A team, which begins today at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

Batsman Mizanur Rahman and leg-spinner Rishad Ahmed, who were not a part of the playing eleven in the first four-day match which ended in a draw, were excluded from the squad for today's fixture.

In the first encounter, pacer Khaled Ahmed grabbed four wickets as Sri Lanka declared their first innings on 449 for 8, with Lahiru Thirimanne top-scoring for the side on 168 runs. Bangladesh, riding on twin centuries from skipper Mosaddek Hossain and Sabbir Rahman, were all out for 414.

The pair added 209 runs for the

**SQUAD**

Sadman Islam, Soumya Sarker, Anamul Haque, Afif Hossain, Shabbir Rahaman, Shoriful Islam, Naeem Hasan, Saif Hasan, Zakir Hossain, Tushar Imran, Nazmul Islam Apu, Abu Haider Rony, Musaddek Hossain Saikat, Md Mithun, Ebadat Hossain

fourth wicket after the home side struggled on 74 for 3. Mosaddek, who struck his second consecutive first class hundred since being left out of the national team's Test match against Sri Lanka earlier this year, was dismissed on 135.

On the other hand, Sabbir registered a career-best first-class knock of 165 runs off 243 balls. During his over seven-hour stay at the crease the right-hander displayed great patience, which is the biggest concern when it comes to him batting for the Bangladesh team.

However, Sri Lanka replied strongly in their second innings with skipper Dimuth Karunaratne striking a hundred to help post 262 for two as the game eventually ended in a draw.



Before the serious business of the Test series against West Indies gets underway tomorrow, Bangladesh Test captain Shakib Al Hasan enjoyed an ocean cruise off the shore of Antigua yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

**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:

**'Hall of Fame' for Dravid, Ponting and Taylor**  
Former captains Rahul Dravid of India and Australia's Ricky Ponting have been inducted in the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame together with England women's wicketkeeper-batter Claire Taylor, the world governing body said.

**Australia's Stanlake tears through Pakistan for easy win**  
Australia fast bowler Billy Stanlake rediscovered his aggressive streak to demolish Pakistan's top order and set up a nine-wicket win for his side in the second match of the T20 tri-series in Zimbabwe.



Seven-time Wimbledon champion Serena Williams celebrates her first-round victory over Holland's Arantxa Rus yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Serena, Federer sail thru' Dimitrov crashes out of first round

AFP, London

Eight-time champion Roger Federer and seven-time winner Serena Williams shrugged off 30-degree heat to breeze into the Wimbledon second round Monday.

Federer, the defending champion and seeking a 21st major, marked the start of his 20th successive Wimbledon with a new look and a comfortable 6-1, 6-3, 6-4 win over Serbia's Dusan Lajovic.

Williams, like Federer, 36-years-old but chasing a 24th Slam title, enjoyed a hard-fought 7-5, 6-3 victory over Holland's Arantxa Rus.

It was the American's first match at the All England Club since lifting the 2016 title. She missed the 2017 edition as she prepared for the birth of her first child.

Federer cruised past world number 57 Lajovic in just 79 minutes. After just 20 minutes to complete the first set, Federer went on to fire 35 winners past Lajovic, breaking serve five times, setting up a second round encounter against either Lukas Lacko of Slovakia or French qualifier Benjamin Bonzi.

Out on Court One, Serena, seeded 25 this year despite a ranking of 181, had too much power for Rus, the world 107 who made the third round in 2012 but failed to get out of qualifying on her last three visits.

Williams, looking to move within one title of Martina Navratilova's Open era

record of nine Wimbledon titles, fired 23 winners past Rus and broke serve four times. She next faces either Bulgarian qualifier Viktoriya Tomova or Czech wild card Tereza Smitkova.

US Open champion and fourth seed Sloane Stephens became the tournament's first big name casualty when she slumped to a 6-1, 6-3 loss to Croatia's world 55 Donna Vekic. A few hours later, sixth seed Grigor Dimitrov crashed out 1-6, 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 to three-time slam champion Stan Wawrinka, currently ranked 225 as he was out of the game because of knee surgery.

Third seed and 2017 runner-up Marin Cilic enjoyed a 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win over Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka.

Cilic, who won the Wimbledon warm-up event at Queen's Club last month, fired 21 aces and 44 winners past his 259th-ranked opponent.

Second seed Caroline Wozniacki built on her Eastbourne title at the weekend with a 59-minute, 6-0, 6-3 win over Varvara Lepchenko.

Venus Williams, a five-time champion and runner-up last year, made the next round with a 6-7 (3/7), 6-2, 6-1 win against Johanna Larsson of Sweden.

Serena's fellow tennis-playing mother, Victoria Azarenka, a former world number one and two-time semi-finalist, defeated Ekaterina Alexandrova of Russia 7-6 (7/4), 6-3.

**What to WATCH**

ALL TIMES BST

**BTV, MAASRANGA & TEN 2**

**FIFA World Cup**

**Round of 16**

Sweden v Switzerland  
**Live from 8:00pm**

Colombia v England  
**Live from 12:00am** (Wednesday)

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**

**Wimbledon**

Men's Round-1  
**Live from 4:30pm**

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**

**Wimbledon**

Women's Round-1  
**Live from 6:00pm**

**SONY SIX**

**T20I Tri-Series**

Zimbabwe v Australia  
**Live from 2:00pm**

**India tour of England**

England v India  
**1st T20I**  
**Live from 10:30pm**