



WHAT THEY SAID

It was unbelievable. My players are heroes.

-- Mauricio Pochettino

I support VAR but maybe from one angle Fernando Llorente's goal is handball, maybe from the referee's angle it is not. It is cruel but it is what it is and we have to accept it.

-- Pep Guardiola

I have never seen something like this. It was a very tough game, a very crazy game. It was madness.

-- Son Heung-min

I think I must be one of the luckiest guys on the planet today. With the last one they scored, I thought it was over. Thank God the ref gave offside.

-- Christian Eriksen

Thoughts at this time are with all those that don't like football.

-- Gary Lineker

If you ever tire of football, the Gods send a Messi, an Ajax, a City-Spurs to remind us that this game is simple but covers all the spectrum of emotions. And it is a wonderful way to spend time. Not many will be able to sleep much tonight for one reason or another.

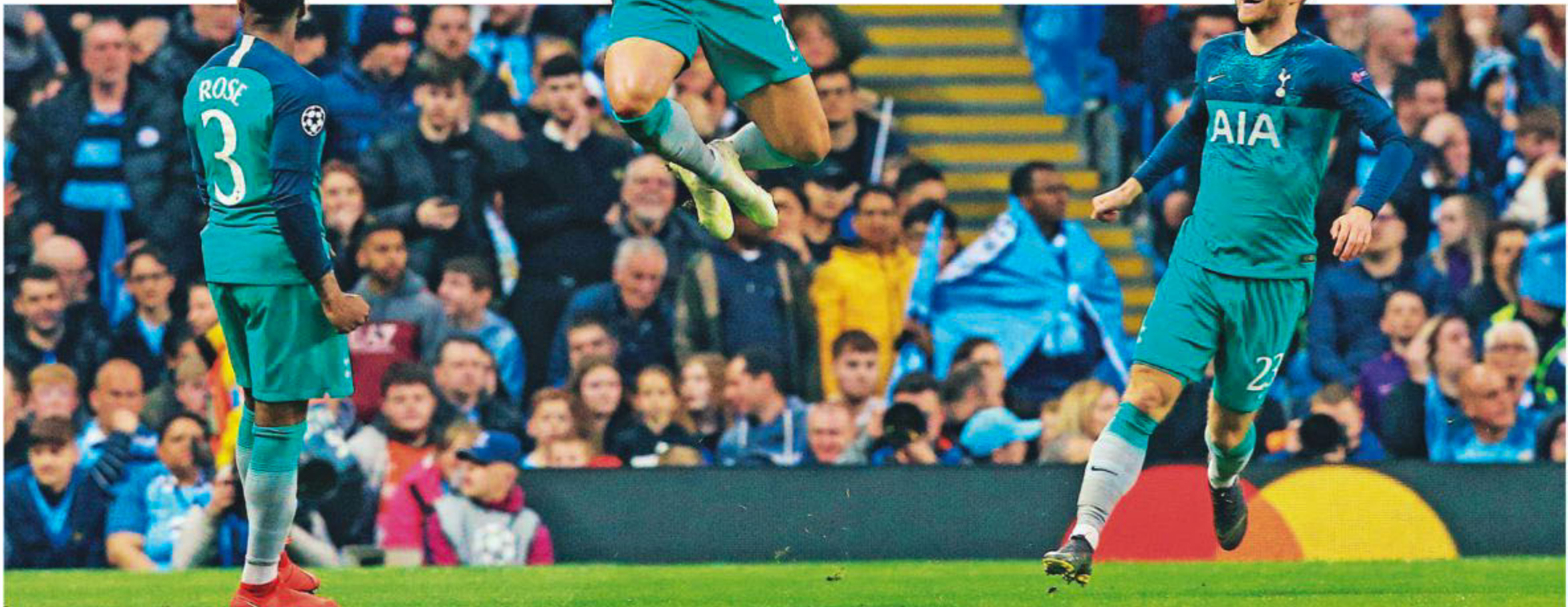
--Guillem Balague

One of those days that you feel genuinely sorry for people who don't like football. That was sensational.

--Richard Osman

That minute - Sterling's goal, the bedlam, the desolation, the pause, the hush, the bedlam, the desolation - is genuinely one of the most remarkable things I've ever seen.

--Rory Smith



Tottenham Hotspur striker Son Heung-Min jumps for joy after scoring his second goal against Manchester City during their enthralling Champions League quarterfinal second leg encounter at the Etihad Stadium on Wednesday. Tottenham set up a mouth-watering semifinal tie against giant-slaying Ajax.

# An all-English epic

AGENCIES, Manchester

In an enthralling night of Champions League football, Manchester City and Tottenham served up a dramatic encounter – the first few minutes enough to render it a classic -- responsible for the most absorbing, exhilarating all-English European meeting in this competition's storied history.

There would be seven goals, five of them coming in a pulsating 17 minutes. The decisive seventh was contentious but given by VAR, and what-would-have-been a stoppage-time winner was ruled out by that same technology.

City had the lead on the night they required after just four minutes, but would squander it after just three more. Aymeric Laporte made the first of two costly errors, intercepting but failing to trap Dele Alli's through pass. The ball rolled into the path of Son, who drove it in.

When Sterling opened the scoring inside four minutes, it seemed as though the 1-0 first-leg deficit could be

quite easily overturned. Two quick-fire goals by Son Heung-Min challenged that but City's response was superb.

First through Bernardo Silva, then Sterling again and finally, in the second half, Sergio Agüero, City recovered from Son's early sucker punch and took control for the first time in this tie.

Tottenham's aggregate advantage was restored and soon doubled by Son, courtesy of another Laporte mistake. The City centre-half's touch was uncharacteristically heavy, allowing Lucas Moura to nip in.

He was tracked well by Ilkay Gundogan and discouraged from shooting himself, but when Christian Eriksen found Son lurking on the brink of the box, his whipped, perfectly-placed attempt found the top right-hand corner.

Like against Liverpool at this stage of the competition last year, and like with Bayern Munich in previous seasons, a Guardiola side had collapsed in one sudden burst. In the past, they have been too shell-shocked to muster a response. Not this time.

Merely a minute after Son's se-



ond, Agüero saw an unmarked Bernardo, careering into the penalty area. His strike was untidy, deflecting off the inside of Danny Rose's leg, but that shift in movement was enough to divert the ball inside the near post.

City's momentum was building to a deafening crescendo. When the goal came in the second half, it was typical Agüero: hit hard, at an acute angle, from a position where only the very best can profit.

Then came one of the defining moments as the ball bounced in off Llorente, hitting somewhere between his thigh and arm. It was not in an unnatural position, but Guardiola

was one of many to spot the potential infringement. Pochettino wagged his finger. Referee Cüneyt Çakır sided with the visiting manager. Llorente's dubious goal stood.

Once again, City needed a goal. Any goal. Sterling thought he had found it in the five minutes of stoppage time, turning the ball home amid a crowded penalty area, finding the one corner of space left unguarded. The Etihad erupted, finally in full voice, but VAR intervened. It would have been Sterling's hat-trick and, coming in the 94th minute, almost certainly the killer blow. It appeared that City had pulled off a remarkable feat. No off-side flag had gone up but VAR had the benefit of replays and it showed that Agüero had strayed marginally offside in the build-up.

In the end, Spurs had VAR on their side but they had also played with great togetherness to make the semifinals.

A simply incredible game had its incredible, if cruel, finish. This was this stadium's first great European night, but not in the way Guardiola had intended.

# Klopp can't wait for Barca

AFP, Porto



Jürgen Klopp admitted he cannot wait to lead Liverpool into a Champions League semifinal against Barcelona after watching his side crush Porto 4-1 in Portugal on Wednesday to complete a 6-1 aggregate victory in their last-eight tie.

On a wet night at the Estadio do Dragão, Liverpool weathered an early storm against Porto before scoring from their first attempt just before the half-hour, Sadio Mané prodding home for a goal given after a lengthy VAR review.

Already in control of this tie after a 2-0 win at Anfield in the first leg, Liverpool had effectively killed off Porto there and then, but Mohamed Salah, substitute Roberto Firmino and Virgil van Dijk added further goals after the break.

Eder Militao scored a consolation for the hosts 21 minutes from time.

Liverpool now march on to a clash with Lionel Messi's Barca, the first meeting of the clubs since a last-16 encounter in 2006/07 that the Reds won on away goals.

"I'm looking forward to it. The news that there is a proper football game between Barcelona and Liverpool is great," said Klopp as his side move a step closer to matching their run to the final a year ago.

"To be in the semifinals for the second year running is a big statement. I am really proud of the boys for what they did."

On the night when Manchester City's quadruple bid died, the dream of a Champions League and Premier League double remains alive for Liverpool and their supporters.



Liverpool star Mohamed Salah (L) celebrates after scoring his team's second goal during their Champions League quarterfinal second leg match against Porto at the Dragao Stadium on Wednesday.



NoFel SC's home turf, the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali, seems to be an insurmountable fortress for the big wigs in Bangladesh football. Having defeated Brothers Union 2-0 and Mohammedan SC 1-0 at the ground, NoFel continued their dominance at home with a goalless draw against Sheikh Jamal DC in a Bangladesh Premier League match yesterday.

# Kings remain undefeated

SPORTS REPORTER



Bashundhara Kings registered an empathic 3-0 win over Chittagong Abahani in a Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari yesterday. With this win, the newcomers remained undefeated throughout the tournament's first phase and are subsequently leading in the title race.

With the full three points, Bashundhara kept their top of the table position intact with 34 points from 12 matches, four points ahead of the second-placed Abahani while Chittagong Abahani stayed glued to eighth position with 14 points from 12 matches.

Independence cup champions Bashundhara had gotten their noses ahead of Chittagong Abahani yesterday easily enough but only after facing a few stiff challenges from the port city side in the first half.

Fresh from a morale boosting 3-0 victory over NoFel SC in the previous match, the visiting Chittagong Abahani looked the more confident side on the pitch, fighting neck to neck against the mighty Bashundhara, who came into the match on the back of five straight wins. However, Chittagong Abahani eventually crumbled in stoppage time of the first half due to some sloppy defending.

Bashundhara fielded a full-strength team with four foreign recruits in their ranks but that made little difference as it was midfielder Emon Babu who toiled away in the midfield to provide some fine defence splitting passes to the forwards.

With the clock ticking down on the second min-

ute of the three-minute added time of the first half, Emon played a long ball towards Daniel Colindres at the far post. The Costa Rican midfielder then controlled the ball well to cut it back for Kyrgyz forward Bakhtiyar Duyshobekov. In turn, Duyshobekov drove an angular shot, which took a deflection off a Chittagong Abahani defender before finding its way into the back of the net.

After resumption, Chittagong Abahani tried to stage a comeback but they could hardly expose Bashundhara's backline. The home side doubled the lead in the 78th minute, courtesy of another blunder by a Chittagong Abahani defender, who deposited the ball in front of Colindres rather than clear a through-pass from Marcos Vinicius. Colindres grabbed the opportunity with both hands and drove a shot past substitute goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton from the top of the box. Vinicius then wrapped things up with a volley off of an Emon Babu cross which found its way into the six-yard box six minutes from time.

Away at Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali, NoFel Sporting Club held three-time champions Sheikh Jamal DC to a goalless draw on their home turf, where they had previously beaten Brothers Union 2-0 and Mohammedan SC 1-0.

With their second draw at home, NoFel raised their points tally to nine from 12 matches with eight of those points coming from the matches played at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium. Meanwhile, with five draws in 12 matches Sheikh Jamal remained at seventh position on 14 points.

# Chandimal left out

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka on Thursday dumped established stars including former captain Dinesh Chandimal from their one-day team in a mass clear-out for the World Cup.

One day after announcing that Test skipper Dimuth Karunaratne would be World Cup captain in place of Lasith Malinga, selectors also axed wicketkeeper-batsman Niroshan Dickwella, off-spinner Akila Dananjaya, and opener Danushka Gunathilaka and Upul Tharanga from the 15-man squad.

Sri Lanka have been rife with personality clashes and disciplinary problems in recent years that have seen their world standing slump.

Batsman Lahiru Thirimanne, leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay and all-rounders Milinda Siriwardana and Jeevan Mendis got places despite not playing an ODI for more than a year.

Opening batsman Avishka Fernando and paceman Nuwan Pradeep were also included in the squad for the tournament which starts in England and Wales on May 30.

Karunaratne and the 35-year-old Mendis last played a 50-over international at the previous World Cup in 2015.

Chief selector Ashantha de Mel said players like Siriwardana, who last played an ODI in 2016, were chosen to provide stability.

"To balance the side, the batsman coming in at number six has to be able to bowl," de Mel said of Siriwardana, a left-handed batsman and bowler.

Squad: Dimuth Karunaratne (capt), Lasith Malinga, Angelo Mathews, Thisara Perera, Kusal Perera, Dhananjaya de Silva, Kusal Mendis, Isuru Udana, Milinda Siriwardana, Avishka Fernando, Jeevan Mendis, Lahiru Thirimanne, Jeffrey Vandersay, Nuwan Pradeep, Suranga Lakmal.



AFP, Johannesburg

Veteran batsman Hashim Amla was on Thursday named in South Africa's squad for the ICC World Cup in England and Wales.

Amla, 36, will be playing in his third World Cup despite a poor run of recent form.

He was selected ahead of opening batsman Reeza Hendricks, who played in 18 consecutive one-day internationals before being dropped for the country's most recent match against Sri Lanka in March.

The 15-man squad was largely as predicted by most pundits, with Amla's form the biggest talking point ahead of the announcement.

In keeping with a recent comment by Cricket South Africa chief executive Thabang Moroe that racial quotas



HASHIM AMLA

# Proteas pick Amla

would not apply for the World Cup, eight white players were selected. CSA has an official target of black players making up 55 percent of teams.

South Africa's campaign in the 2015 World Cup ended in controversy over quotas when official pressure was exerted to pick Vernon Philander for a semi-final against New Zealand despite the team management wanting to stay with the team that won a quarter-final against Sri Lanka, when Philander was injured.

Philander was picked ahead of the in-form Kyle Abbott, who subsequently signed a Kolpak contract with English county Hampshire.

"We are very happy with the squad we have been able to put together and have every confidence in their ability to do our country proud at the World Cup," said selection convener Linda Zondi.

"The final selection is also the result of a very rigorous search we have conducted, leaving no stone unturned, to make sure that we have made the best use of the options available to us.

"We feel that Faf's team is well equipped to handle whatever conditions are presented to them, bearing in mind the weather extremes one can encounter in the British Isles."

Squad: Faf du Plessis (capt), Hashim Amla, Quinton de Kock (wkt), JP Duminy, Imran Tahir, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Dale Steyn, Rassie van der Dussen.

# Amir ignored, Hasnain gets surprise call

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan selectors Thursday left out pace spearhead Mohammad Amir from the preliminary 15-man squad for next month's ICC World Cup to be held in England.

The 27-year-old has been in wretched form since guiding Pakistan to win over India in the Champions Trophy final in June 2017, with just four wickets in 14 matches.

But the left-arm fast bowler, who missed the 2011 and 2015 World Cup due to a five-year ban on match-fixing imposed in 2010, has a lifeline as teams

can be changed until May 23 -- seven days before the ten-team event starts.

Chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq said Amir's form was concerning.

"Amir had not performed as well as was expected of him," said Inzamam, who was part of Pakistan's World Cup winning team in 1992.

Amir is included in the 17-man squad for the five-match one-day series against England.

All-rounder Mohammad Hafeez was included in the World Cup squad subject to fully recovering from a fractured thumb injury.

There was a surprise World Cup call-up for 19-year-old rookie fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain.

"Hasnain is exciting and can be a surprise package of the World Cup," said Inzamam of the paceman, who played three one-day internationals against Australia last month, taking two wickets.

Squad: Sarfaraz Ahmed (c), Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Abid Ali, Babar Azam, Haris Sohail, Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Hafeez (subject to fitness), Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Hasan Ali, Faheem Ashraf, Junaid Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain.