



THE WORLD CUP SO FAR

After years of controversies and a lowkey first couple of days, the FIFA World Cup in Qatar suddenly sprang to life when an unfancied Saudi Arabia stunned pretournament favourites Argentina to cause one of the major upsets in the history of the quadrennial event. Japan followed suit by handing four-time champions Germany while Ecuador upended golden boys of Belgium. Some normalcy was restored as some of the other heavyweights such as France, Spain, Brazil and Portugal showed why they are a class apart. Argentina's talisman Lionel Messi stepped up to breathe life into their campaign while Cristiano Ronaldo etched his name in World Cup history books by becoming the first player to score in five different editions. Qatar, the hosts of the showpiece event, made an early exit, much to the frustration of the home fans. Neymar's injury and Germany players' pre-match gesture added to the intrigue of the tournament, which saw its fair share of jaw-dropping skills from the likes of Kylian Mbappe and Richarlison.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

