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EVER SINCE WE HEARD THE NEWS OF UNCERTAINTY AROUND THE WORLD CUP BROADCAST, WE HAVE BEEN SPENDING SLEEPLESS NIGHTS. BECAUSE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF T SPORTS, WE HAVE HAD A COMMITMENT TO THE VIEWERS OF BANGLADESH. BY BEING ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORLD CUP, I BELIEVE WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO UPHOLD THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THAT VIEWERS HAVE PLACED IN US. T SPORTS WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THE SAME STANDARD IN THE FUTURE

- SAFWAN SOBHAN
CHAIRMAN, T SPORTS





I FEEL THAT T SPORTS WILL BE THE HOME OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP. LOOKING AT THE SUPPORTERS OF BRAZIL, ARGENTINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THIS COUNTRY, EVERYONE IS BOUND TO BELIEVE THIS — THE WORLD CUP IS LIKE A FRENZY. IF THOSE VERY VIEWERS HAD BEEN DEPRIVED OF WATCHING THE WORLD CUP, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A MASSIVE BLOW TO OUR FOOTBALL AND TO THE TRADITION OF SPORTS AS A WHOLE. WE CONSIDER OURSELVES FORTUNATE TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE A SMALL CONTRIBUTION IN THIS REGARD

- ISHTIAQUE SADEQUE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, T SPORTS



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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Greatest Show on Earth is upon us once more — and this time, it carries the weight of finality.

As the world turns its eyes to the grandest stage in football, we find ourselves standing at a crossroads of history. Three names have defined an entire generation of the beautiful game — Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar Jr. Three giants who have dazzled us, divided us, and ultimately united us in sheer awe. And now, for perhaps the very last time, they lace up their boots on football's biggest platform.

This is their final bow.

Messi, the magician from Rosario, carries the golden weight of a nation's dream on his weary but brilliant shoulders. Ronaldo, the relentless warrior forged from sheer will and fire, refuses to let the curtain fall without one last roar. And Neymar, the samba soul whose flicks and flair remind us why we fell in love with football in the first place, dances into what may be his final World Cup chapter.

For decades, we have argued about who is the greatest. We have filled stadiums, living rooms, and social media feeds with passionate debate. But as this tournament unfolds, that debate feels secondary. What matters now is that we witness. We watch. We remember.

Because moments like these do not come back.

In this special World Cup edition of Daily Sun, we celebrate not just the tournament, but an era.

An era of brilliance, rivalry, heartbreak, and triumph that no future generation may ever quite replicate.

Cherish every kick. Savour every goal. Bookmark every moment.

The last dance has begun.

Welcome to the greatest World Cup of our lifetime.

Md Rezaul Karim
Editor

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WORLD CUP 2026 FIXTURES



ONE LAST DANCE

Inside the Final World Cup Chapter of Messi, Ronaldo and Neymar Jr



Tanvir Ahmed Pranto

They have spent two decades defying the limits of human longevity, turning the sport into a personal, dueling canvas of absolute perfection. But as the curtain rises on the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo enter the arena not just fighting the opponents before them—they are racing against time itself.

This is the final chapter of a rivalry that defined a generation.

For Messi, it is a historic title defense to secure complete footballing immortality. For Ronaldo, it is the ultimate, desperate pursuit to capture the one missing piece of silverware.

And for Neymar, handed a dramatic, eleventh-hour lifeline by Carlo Ancelotti, it is the final, unexpected chance to turn a career of unfulfilled national destiny into a glorious crowning achievement.



Lionel MESSI



The King's Sunset Defense

Four years ago in Lusail, Lionel Messi completed football. The image of him lifting onto shoulders, hoisting the golden trophy in a bisht, felt like a definitive series finale. Yet, the pulling power of La Albiceleste proved too intoxicating to walk away from.

Messi arrives at his historic sixth World Cup tournament structurally transformed. He is no longer tasked with carrying the physical volume of Argentina's transition play; instead, he operates as the team's emotional and tactical lighthouse. Backed by a ruthless, high-pressing engine room featuring Alexis Mac Allister, Enzo Fernández, and the emerging genius of Nico Paz, Messi's role is purely surgical.

The stakes are unprecedented. No captain in the modern era has successfully defended a World Cup crown while carrying the heavy mantle of the undisputed Greatest of All Time. Securing a second winners' medal wouldn't just elevate Messi over contemporary rivals—it would permanently end the historical debates, placing him in an unassailable stratosphere entirely his own.

Lionel Messi: World Cup Legacy

World Cup Titles: 1 (2022)

Total World Cup Goals: 13

Total World Cup Assists: 8

Most World Cup Appearances in History: 26 Matches



Neymar JR

THE PRODIGAL ICON'S FINAL LIFELINE

While Messi defends a fairytale and Ronaldo chases an obsession, Neymar Jr is stepping onto the North American stage to rewrite a legacy that felt all but sealed.

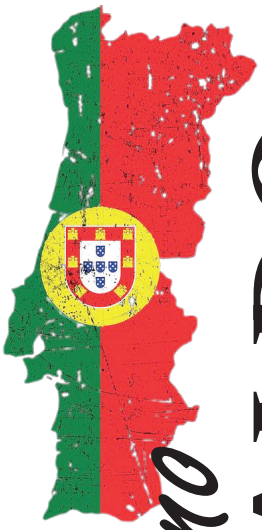
For years, Neymar's relationship with the World Cup was defined by cruel twists of fate—the fractured vertebra in Belo Horizonte, the agonizing penalties in Al Rayyan, and a devastating ACL tear that banished him from the Seleção for nearly three years. Yet, just as the door seemed firmly shut, the football gods cracked it open. Propelled by a late-season resurgence at Santos and a bold show of faith from Carlo Ancelotti, the 34-year-old returns to the grandest stage of all.

Neymar does not carry the burden of being the undisputed centerpiece anymore; that torch has passed to the blistering youth of Vinícius Júnior and Raphinha. Instead, he arrives as the seasoned talisman, Brazil's all-time top scorer looking to anchor a young, hungry locker room with his irreplaceable big-game intuition.

For Neymar, 2026 is not about replicating the mechanical consistency of his eternal peers. It is about a moment of pure, unadulterated samba magic—a final opportunity to bridge the 24-year gap since Yokohama and definitively elevate his name from the category of 'what if' to the pantheon of World Cup champions.

Neymar Jr: World Cup Legacy

- World Cup Titles: 0 (Best Finish: 4th, 2014)
- Total World Cup Goals: 8
- Total World Cup Assists: 4
- All-Time Brazil Top Scorer: 79 Goals (Surpassed Pelé)



Cristiano RONALDO



THE OBSESSION OF A LIFETIME

While Messi seeks to preserve his fairytale, Cristiano Ronaldo is fighting to rewrite his own ending. Ronaldo's relationship with the World Cup has been a grueling saga of heartbreak, individual milestones, and unfulfilled destiny.

For Ronaldo, the 2026 tournament represents the ultimate mountain to climb. He remains the most prolific goalscorer in the history of international football, but the ultimate prize has continually slipped through his fingers. In 2022, he left the pitch in tears after a crushing quarter-final exit against Morocco. In 2026, he returns armed with a golden Portuguese generation—boasting the creative wizardry of Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva, and Rafael Leão—that provides him with the most complete supporting cast of his international career.

Ronaldo's drive has never been about romanticism; it is fueled by pure, unadulterated obsession. His last dance is a quest for closure. He knows that a World Cup triumph would complete the final square on his legendary bingo card, cementing his legacy as the most relentless competitor the sport has ever witnessed.

Cristiano Ronaldo: World Cup Legacy

World Cup Titles: 0 Best Finish: 4th, 2006

Total World Cup Goals: 8

Goals in Consecutive World Cups: 5 Tournaments (Record)

International Goals Record: 130+ Goals

MAPLE, ZAYU, AND CLUTCH

TEAM NORTH AMERICA

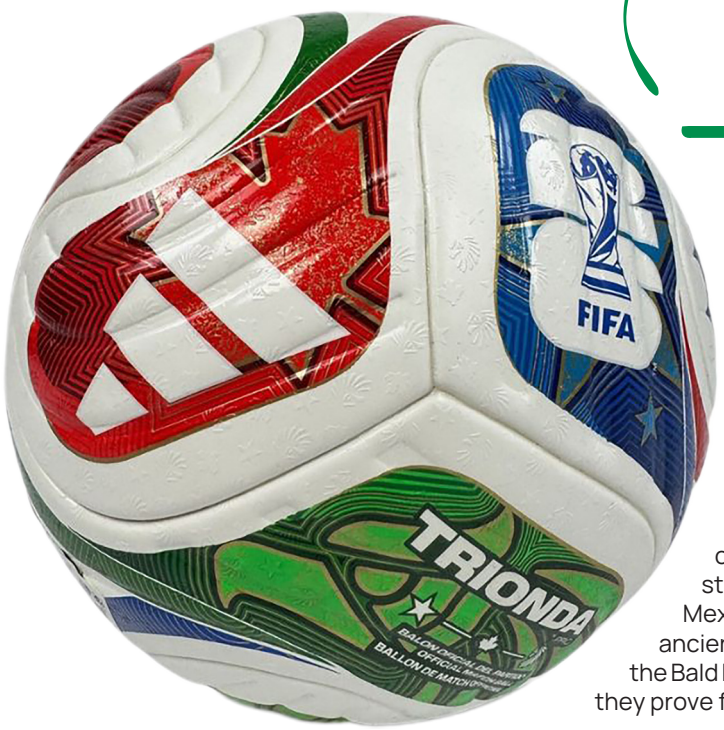


Bringing the vibrant heartbeat of this historic event to life is an extraordinary, charismatic trio of mascots, each uniquely capturing the heritage, energy, and soul of their respective host nations.

Guarding the net is Canada's street-style loving goalkeeper, Maple the Moose. Clad in a bold red kit, Maple uses unmatched creativity and unwavering resilience to welcome fans from all territories with legendary high-fives and an open heart.

Leading the attack up front is Mexico's agile striker, Zayu the Jaguar. Dressed in a vibrant green uniform, Zayu beautifully embodies the ancient strength, fierce ingenuity, and pure joy of southern jungles, effortlessly turning every pre-match moment into a breathtaking cultural celebration.

Orchestrating the fun from the midfield is Clutch the Bald Eagle, the United States' blue-uniformed ambassador of optimism. Driven by an unquenchable thirst for adventure and boundless curiosity, Clutch flies across the continent to rally the massive crowds, lift spirits, and spark friendships wherever his wings carry him.



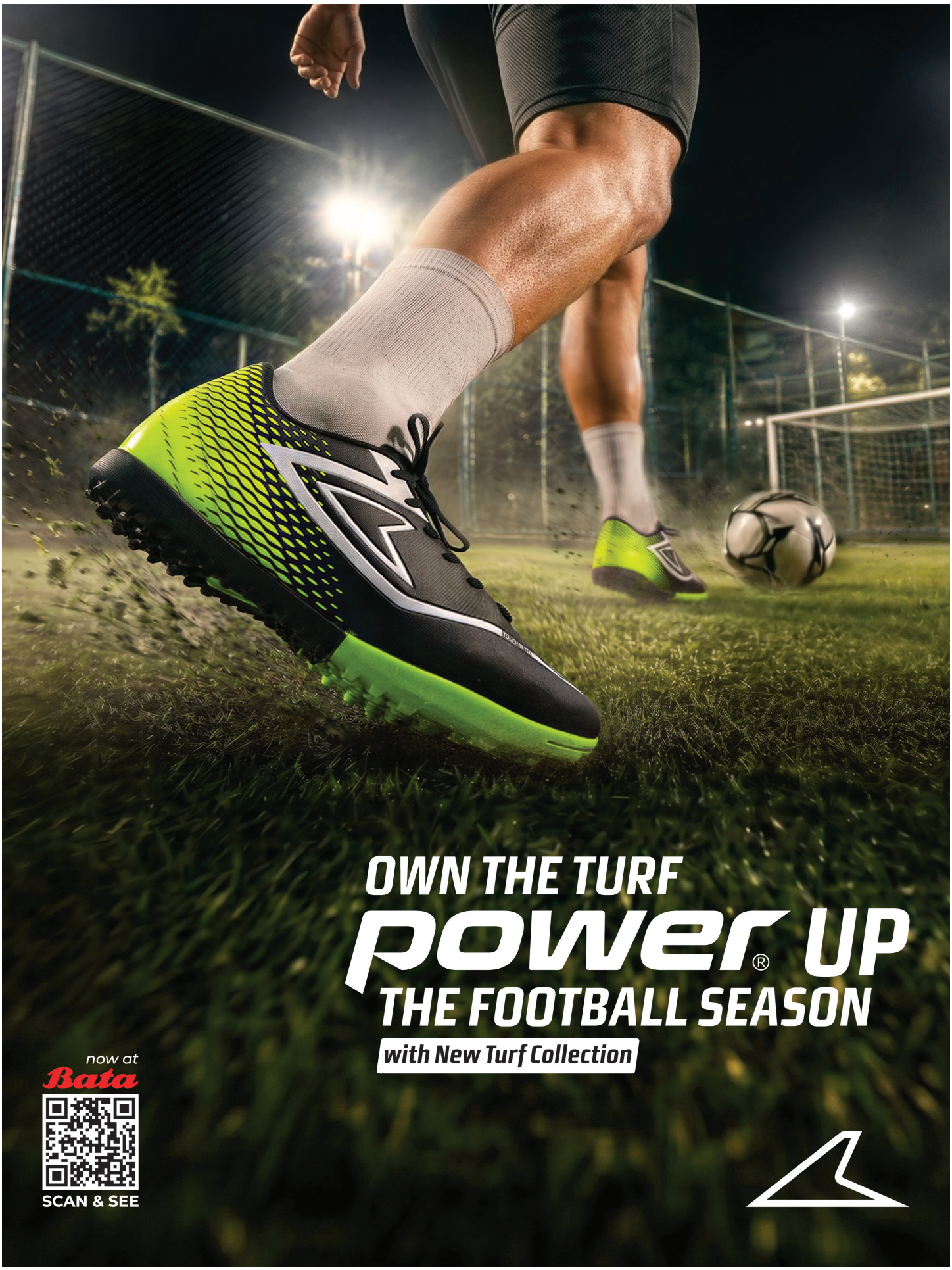
Trionda

INNOVATION MEETS HERITAGE

As the greatest sports spectacle on Earth takes over the continent, the tournament's true identity lives through its physical icons.

At the center of the pitch rests Trionda, the official match ball. Seamlessly blending the English prefix for "three" with the Spanish word onda (wave), its revolutionary four-panel design celebrates the historic partnership of Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Etched with a maple leaf, an eagle, and a star, the ball houses an advanced 500Hz motion sensor within its core, marrying artistic storytelling with elite digital tracking.

Bringing the heartbeat of the tournament to life is a charismatic trio of mascots. Guarding the net is Canada's street-style loving goalkeeper, Maple the Moose. Up front, Mexico's agile striker, Zayu the Jaguar, embodies strength and ancient heritage. Orchestrating the fun from the midfield is Clutch the Bald Eagle, the United States' ambassador of optimism. Together, they prove football speaks a universal language.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THE FOOTBALL SEASON
with New Turf Collection
now at
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SCAN & SEE

STADIUM GUIDE TO USA

2026 FIFA WORLD CUP™





LUMEN FIELD
Location: Seattle, Washington
Capacity: 69,000

GEHA FIELD AT ARROWHEAD STADIUM
Location: Kansas City, Missouri
Capacity: 73,000

LEVI'S STADIUM
Location: Santa Clara, California
Capacity: 71,000

SOFI STADIUM
Location: Inglewood, California
Capacity: 70,000

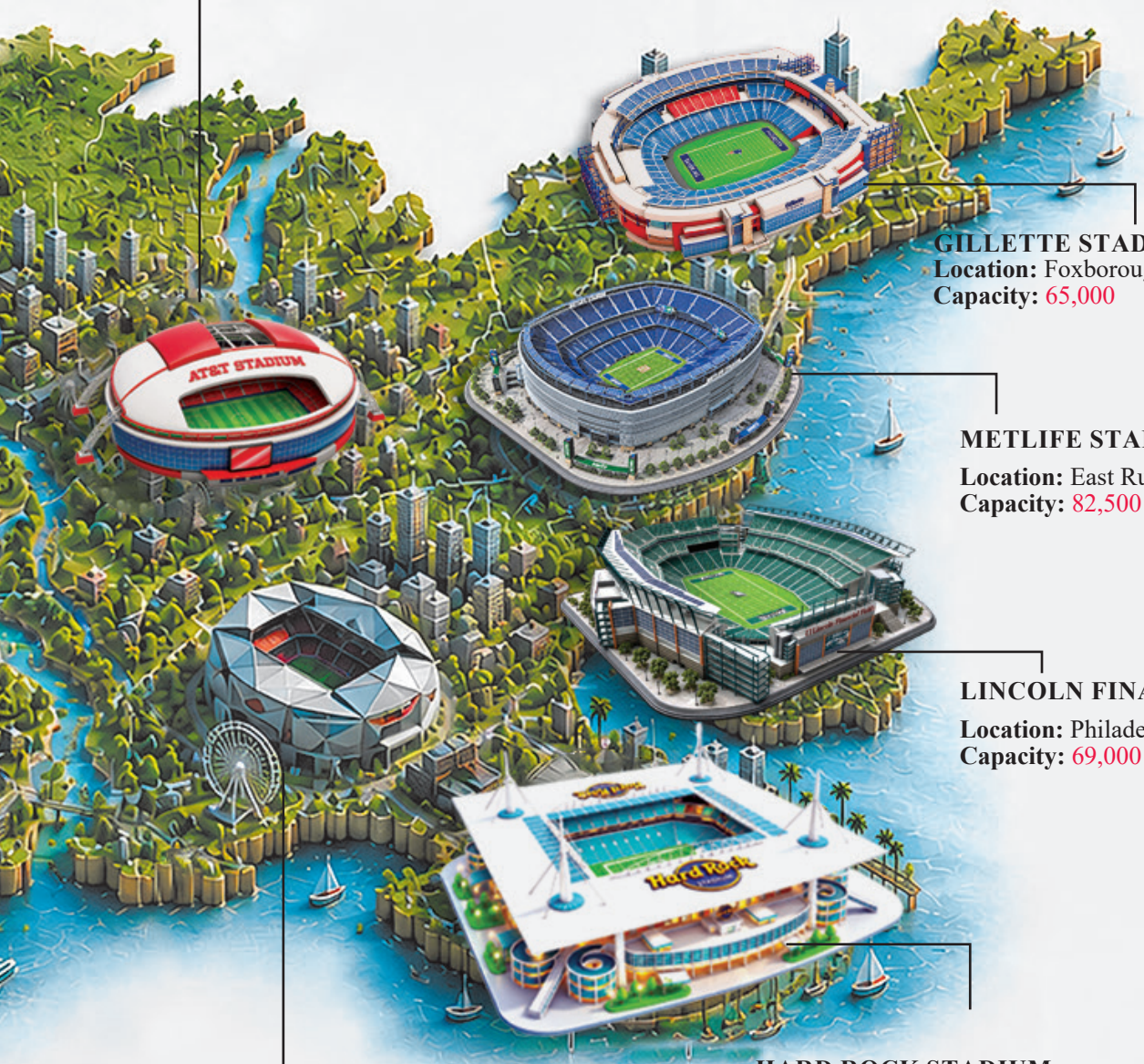
NRG STADIUM
Location: Houston, Texas
Capacity: 72,000



When engineering sporting theatre of an unfathomable scale, the United States remains entirely without peer. Anchoring the FIFA World Cup, the US is unleashing an imposing armada of modern sporting coliseums that redefine the modern game. These are multi-billion-pound amphitheatres, boasting cutting-edge turf technology, colossal capacities, and pioneering structural grandeur. Stretching from the sun-baked Pacific coastline to the towering, floodlit skylines of the East Coast, these eleven monumental arenas are explicitly built for the ultimate footballing spectacle. Here is your definitive guide to the American fortresses preparing to host the world.



AT&T STADIUM (ARLINGTON)
Location: Arlington, Texas
Capacity: 94,000



GILLETTE STADIUM (FOXBOROUGH)
Location: Foxborough, Massachusetts
Capacity: 65,000

METLIFE STADIUM
Location: East Rutherford, New Jersey
Capacity: 82,500

LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD
Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Capacity: 69,000

MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM
Location: Atlanta, Georgia
Capacity: 75,000

HARD ROCK STADIUM
Location: Miami Gardens, Florida
Capacity: 65,000

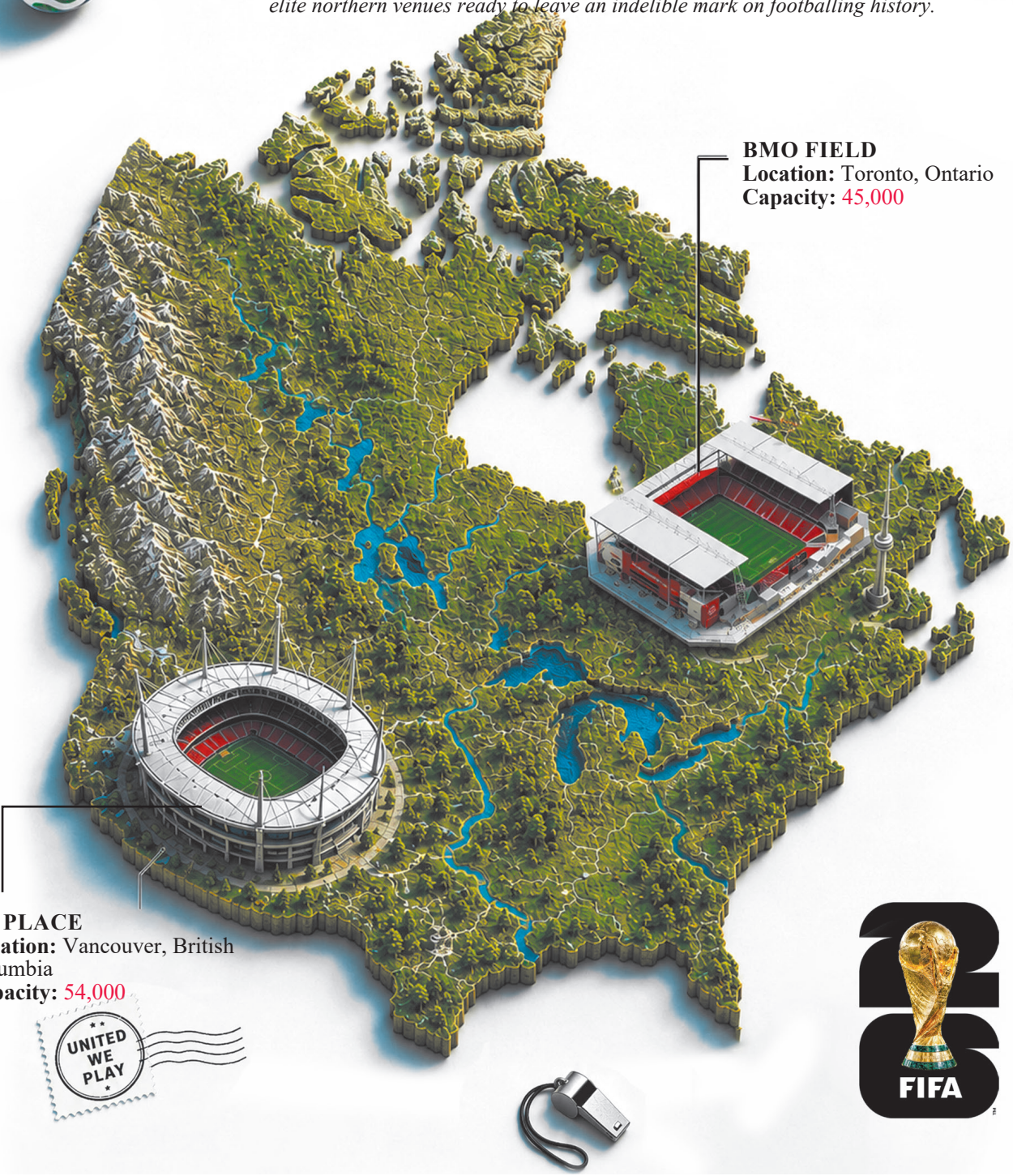


CANADA



The crisp northern air is charged with unprecedented anticipation as Canada steps into the FIFA World Cup co-hosting spotlight for the very first time. For a nation experiencing a profound footballing renaissance, this is a defining chapter. Spanning from the spectacular, mountain-shadowed waterfronts of British Columbia to the relentless, pulsating sporting hub of Ontario, the Canadian offering promises a pristine, world-class stage. Expect immaculately prepared pitches, fervent home support, and an atmosphere crackling with historical significance. Here are the two elite northern venues ready to leave an indelible mark on footballing history.





BMO FIELD
Location: Toronto, Ontario
Capacity: 45,000

BC PLACE
Location: Vancouver, British Columbia
Capacity: 54,000



MEXICO



Pure footballing romance courses through the veins of Mexico as the nation prepares to achieve immortality, becoming the first ever three-time host of the FIFA World Cup. The atmosphere awaiting the world's elite is utterly intoxicating a visceral, deafening celebration of the beautiful game steeped in sporting folklore. Masterfully bridging the gap between futuristic architectural brilliance and hallowed, monumental turf that has previously crowned the sport's ultimate icons, the Mexican stage demands reverence. Prepare for blinding colour and raw passion across these three majestic arenas, the undisputed heartbeat of the 2026 finals.



ESTADIO BBVA
Location: Guadalupe, Nuevo León
Capacity: 53,000

ESTADIO AZTECA
Location: Mexico City
Capacity: 83,000

ESTADIO AKRON
Location: Zapopan, Jalisco
Capacity: 48,000







GROUP A

Group A offers a fascinating blend of host-nation pressure and tactical intrigue. Co-hosts Mexico carry the ultimate advantage with roaring home support at the iconic Estadio Azteca, but the psychological burden of their historic round-of-16 curse looms large. They face a highly disciplined South Korea, spearheaded by the world-class brilliance of Son Heung-min, though an over-reliance on their captain remains a vulnerability. Meanwhile, a resilient Czechia rely on Patrik Schick's clinical finishing to navigate a balanced group. Stubborn underdogs South Africa round out the quartet, aiming to use their compact defensive structure to spoil the party in North America.





MEXICO

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING # 15

COACH: JAVIER AGUIRRE

CAPTAIN: EDSON ALVAREZ

PLAYER TO WATCH: GUILERMO OCHOA

STRENGTHS

Home tournament advantage with passionate support across host cities. Experienced squad featuring Santiago Gimenez and Raul Jimenez up front. Strong CONCACAF pedigree and tactical cohesion under a settled setup.

WEAKNESSES

Mexico have repeatedly stumbled at the round of 16 over recent decades, a recurring psychological hurdle. Midfield creativity can be limited against top-tier pressing sides, and defensive transition remains a concern.

OPPORTUNITIES

Playing at home — including the iconic Estadio Azteca for the opener — provides a unique chance to finally break the 'jinx' and advance deep. A favourable group draw could build real momentum and national unity.

THREATS

Enormous domestic pressure to deliver on home soil. South Korea's pace and tactical discipline is a genuine danger, while Czechia can exploit set-pieces effectively.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Raul Rangel (Guadalajara), Guillermo Ochoa (AEL Limassol), Carlos Acevedo (Santos Laguna).

DEFENDERS
Jorge Sanchez (PAOK), Israel Reyes (Club America), Cesar Montes (Lokomotiv Moscow), Johan Vasquez (Genoa), Jesus Gallardo (Toluca), Mateo Chavez (AZ).

MIDFIELDERS
Erik Lira (Cruz Azul), Orbelin Pineda (AEK Athens), Alvaro Fidalgo (Real Betis), Roberto Alvarado, Brian Gutierrez, Luis Romo (Guadalajara), Edson Alvarez (West Ham), Obed Vargas (Atletico Madrid), Gilberto Mora (Tijuana), Luis Chavez (Dynamo Moscow).

FORWARDS
Cesar Huerta (Anderlecht), Alexis Vega (Toluca), Julian Quinones (Al-Qadsiah), Guillermo Martinez (UNAM), Armando Gonzalez (Guadalajara), Santiago Gimenez (AC Milan), Raul Jimenez (Fulham).

SOUTH KOREA

TAEGEUK JEONSA · FIFA RANKING # 25

COACH: HONG MYUNG-BO

CAPTAIN: SON HEUNG MIN

PLAYER TO WATCH: KIM MIN-JAE



STRENGTHS

Son Heung-min's creativity and leadership remain world-class. Lee Kang-in adds dynamism in midfield, and Kim Min-jae anchors a disciplined defensive structure. Excellent team spirit and work rate throughout the squad..

WEAKNESSES

Over-reliance on Son Heung-min for attacking inspiration. The squad lacks depth in wide areas, and without Son performing, goal-scoring options diminish significantly.

OPPORTUNITIES

A group with Mexico, South Africa and Czechia is navigable. A deep run could spark a generational footballing moment in Korea and accelerate the development of the post-Son era.

THREATS

Fatigue and injuries — Son's age and club-season minutes are a concern. Playing in North American summer heat could also hamper their high-energy pressing style.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Jo Hyeon-woo (Ulsan), Kim Seung-gyu (FC Tokyo), Song Bum-keun (Jeonbuk).

DEFENDERS
Kim Moon-hwan (Daejeon), Kim Min-jae (Bayern Munich), Kim Tae-hyon (Kashima Antlers), Park Jin-seob (Zhejiang), Seol Young-woo (Red Star Belgrade), Jens Castrop (Borussia Monchengladbach), Lee Ki-hyuk (Gangwon), Lee Tae-seok (Austria Wien), Lee Han-beom (Midtjylland), Cho Wi-je (Jeonbuk).

MIDFIELDERS
Kim Jin-gyu (Jeonbuk), Bae Jun-ho (Stoke City), Paik Seung-ho (Birmingham), Yang Hyun-jun (Celtic), Eom Ji-sung (Swansea), Lee Kang-in (Paris St-Germain), Lee Dong-gyeong (Ulsan), Lee Jae-sung (Mainz), Hwang In-beom (Feyenoord), Hwang Hee-chan (Wolves).

FORWARDS
Son Heung-min (LAFC), Oh Hyeon-gyu (Besitkas), Cho Gue-sung (Midtjylland).





SOUTH AFRICA

BAFANA BAFANA · FIFA RANKING # 60

COACH: HUGO BROOS

CAPTAIN: RONWEN WILLIAMS

PLAYER TO WATCH: : LYLE FOSTER

STRENGTHS

Bafana Bafana arrive with rising confidence from African qualifiers. Compact defensive structure and strong team morale make them difficult to break down. The honour of opening the tournament at the Azteca is a significant motivator.

WEAKNESSES

Limited experience at World Cup level — this is only their third appearance. Attacking threat is modest by global standards, and individual quality lags behind the group's other contenders.

OPPORTUNITIES

The opening match buzz and underdog status could inspire a shock result. A point or two from their fixtures could be enough to progress as one of the best third-placed teams given the expanded format.

THREATS

Facing Mexico on their own soil is an enormous early test. Limited access to elite club football for many squad members could expose tactical gaps against sharper sides.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Ronwen Williams (Mamelodi Sundowns), Ricardo Goss (Siwelele), Sipho Chaine (Orlando Pirates).

DEFENDERS
Khuliso Mudau, Aubrey Modiba, Khulumani Ndamane (all Mamelodi Sundowns), Olwethu Makhanya (Philadelphia Union), Bradley Cross (Kaizer Chiefs), Thabang Matuludi (Polokwane City), Nkosinathi Sibisi, Kamogelo Sebelebele (both Orlando Pirates), Ime Okon (Hannover), Samukele Kabini (Molde FK), Mbekezeli Mbokazi (Chicago Fire).

MIDFIELDERS
Teboho Mokoena, Jayden Adams (both Mamelodi Sundowns), Thalente Mbatha (Orlando Pirates), Sphephelo Sithole (Tondela).

FORWARDS
Oswin Appollis, Tshepang Moremi, Evidence Makgopa, Relebohile Mofokeng (all Orlando Pirates), Lyle Foster (Burnley), Iqraam Rayners, Themba Zwane (both Mamelodi Sundowns), Thapelo Maseko (AEL Limassol).



CZECHIA

NÁROĎÁK · FIFA RANKING # 41

COACH: MIROSLAV KOUBEK

CAPTAIN: LADISLAV KREJCI

PLAYER TO WATCH: PATRIK SCHICK



STRENGTHS

Patrik Schick's clinical finishing and Tomas Soucek's midfield engine give Czechia an experienced, technically capable core. European tournament experience from recent Euros campaigns is valuable.

WEAKNESSES

Inconsistency has long been a trait of Czech sides. Goalkeeper depth and full-back quality are below top tournament standards, and the squad lacks a genuine world-class creator.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group A is arguably the most accessible path of the European qualifiers. A disciplined tactical approach could unlock progression, with Schick capable of moments that decide tight games.

THREATS

Mexico's home-game intensity and South Korea's organised press could squeeze Czechia's slower build-up play. Any Schick injury or absence of form would significantly reduce their threat.



WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Lukas Hornicek (Braga), Matej Kovar (PSV Eindhoven), Jindrich Stanek (Slavia Prague)

DEFENDERS
Vladimir Coufal (Hoffenheim), David Doudera (Slavia Prague), Tomas Holes (Slavia Prague), Robin Hranac (Hoffenheim), Stepan Chaloupek (Slavia Prague), David Jurasek (Slavia Prague), Ladislav Krejci (Wolverhampton), Jaroslav Zeleny (Sparta Prague), David Zima (Slavia Prague)

MIDFIELDERS
Lukas Cerv (Viktoria Plzen), Vladimir Darida (Hradec Kralove), Lukas Provod (Slavia Prague), Michal Sadilek (Slavia Prague), Hugo Sochurek (Sparta Prague), Alexandr Sojka (Viktoria Plzen), Tomas Soucek (West Ham), Pavel Sulc (Olympique Lyonnais), Denis Visinsky (Viktoria Plzen)

FORWARDS
Adam Hlozek (Hoffenheim), Tomas Chory (Slavia Prague), Mojmir Chytil (Slavia Prague), Jan Kuchta (Sparta Prague), Patrik Schick (Bayer Leverkusen)



Paper Rhyme / Vitacare

GROUP B

Group B offers a high-stakes clash between host-nation passion and battle-tested European discipline. Switzerland are the favorites to top Group B. Led by Granit Xhaka, their tactical discipline and tournament experience make them incredibly difficult to beat, though a lack of attacking flair remains a limitation. Co-hosts Canada carry massive expectations in Toronto and Vancouver. Driven by Alphonso Davies and Jonathan David, their pace is lethal, but depth issues could test their resolve. Meanwhile, Bosnia and Herzegovina rely on Edin Džeko's veteran presence but struggle with defensive consistency, while Qatar look to Akram Afif to redeem their poor 2022 showing.

PREDICTED FINISH

1. SWITZERLAND
2. CANADA
3. QATAR
4. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



CANADA

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING #30

COACH: JESSE MARSCH

CAPTAIN: ALPHONSO DAVIES

PLAYER TO WATCH: JONATHAN DAVID



STRENGTHS

Host-nation status brings significant home crowd advantages, especially in Toronto and Vancouver. Alphonso Davies provides genuine world-class quality at left back, and Jonathan David is among the tournament's most reliable strikers. A young, energetic squad with tactical discipline.

WEAKNESSES

Canada remain inexperienced at this level — 2026 marks only their second World Cup ever. Questions persist about depth in central midfield and whether the team can cope when pressed into deeper territory.

OPPORTUNITIES

Playing in front of home fans with a favourable group could allow Canada to make a historic run. Davies and David are capable of producing moments that transcend the team's current ranking.

THREATS

Switzerland's defensive quality and Qatar's experience of a home World Cup cycle could catch Canada off guard. The weight of host-nation expectation may affect a relatively young group of players.



WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Dayne St Clair (Inter Miami), Maxime Crepeau (Orlando City), Owen Goodman (Crystal Palace).

DEFENDERS
Alistair Johnston (Celtic), Derek Cornelius (Marseille), Richie Laryea (Toronto), Niko Sigur (Hajduk Split), Joel Waterman (Chicago Fire), Luc de Fougerolles (Fulham), Moise Bombito (Nice), Alphonso Davies (Bayern Munich), Alfie Jones (Middlesbrough).

MIDFIELDERS
Stephen Eustaquio (Porto), Ismael Kone (Sassuolo), Tajon Buchanan (Villarreal), Mathieu Choiniere (Los Angeles FC), Ali Ahmed (Norwich City), Nathan Saliba (Anderlecht), Liam Millar (Hull City), Marcelo Flores (Tigres UANL), Jacob Shaffelburg (Toronto), Jonathan Osorio (Toronto).

FORWARDS
Jonathan David (Juventus), Cyle Larin (Southampton), Tani Oluwaseyi (Villarreal), Promise David (Union SG).

SWITZERLAND

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING #19

COACH: MURAT YAKIN

CAPTAIN: GRANIT XHAKA

PLAYER TO WATCH: XHERDAN SHAQIRI



STRENGTHS

Switzerland are among the most reliable tournament sides in world football — organised, physically imposing and tactically flexible. Granit Xhaka's leadership and experience from Arsenal give them genuine quality in midfield.

WEAKNESSES

Switzerland consistently underperform relative to their defensive solidity, often failing to convert draws into wins in knockout rounds. Attacking flair is limited, and they rarely produce moments of individual brilliance.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group B is manageable. A qualification from the group could see Switzerland face a weaker runner-up in the round of 32, opening a genuine path to the quarterfinals for the first time in over 70 years.

THREATS

Canada's home atmosphere in front of a passionate crowd could be overwhelming. If Switzerland fall behind, their limited counter-attacking threat makes recovering from deficits difficult.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Marvin Keller (Young Boys), Gregor Kobel (Borussia Dortmund), Yvon Mvogo (Lorient).

DEFENDERS
Manuel Akanji (Inter Milan), Aurele Amenda (Eintracht Frankfurt), Eray Comert (Valencia), Nico Elvedi (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Luca Jaquez (VfB Stuttgart), Miro Muheim (Hamburg), Ricardo Rodriguez (Real Betis), Silvan Widmer (Mainz).

MIDFIELDERS
Michel Aebischer (Pisa), Christian Fassnacht (Young Boys), Remo Freuler (Bologna), Ardon Jashari (AC Milan), Johan Manzambi (Freiburg), Fabian Rieder (Augsburg), Djibril Sow, Ruben Vargas (both Sevilla), Granit Xhaka (Sunderland), Denis Zakaria (Monaco).

FORWARDS
Zeki Amdouni (Burnley), Breel Embolo (Stade Rennais), Cedric Itten (Fortuna Dusseldorf), Dan Ndoye (Nottingham Forest), Noah Okafor (Leeds United).



QATAR

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING #55

COACH: JULEN LOPETEGUI

CAPTAIN: HASSAN AL-HAYDOS

PLAYER TO WATCH: AKRAM AFIF



STRENGTHS

Switzerland are among the most reliable tournament sides in world football — organised, physically imposing and tactically flexible. Granit Xhaka's leadership and experience from Arsenal give them genuine quality in midfield.

WEAKNESSES

Switzerland consistently underperform relative to their defensive solidity, often failing to convert draws into wins in knockout rounds. Attacking flair is limited, and they rarely produce moments of individual brilliance.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group B is manageable. A qualification from the group could see Switzerland face a weaker runner-up in the round of 32, opening a genuine path to the quarterfinals for the first time in over 70 years.

THREATS

Canada's home atmosphere in front of a passionate crowd could be overwhelming. If Switzerland fall behind, their limited counter-attacking threat makes recovering from deficits difficult.



WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Salah Zakaria (Al-Duhail), Mahmoud Abunada (Al Rayyan), Meshaal Barsham (Al-Sadd)

DEFENDERS
Hashmi Hussein (Al Arabi), Ayoub Alawi (Al Gharafa), Boualem Khoukhi (Al-Sadd), Pedro Miguel (Al-Sadd), Issa Laaye (Al Arabi), Lucas Mendes (Al-Wakrah), Sultan Al-Brake (Al-Duhail), Homam Al-Amin (Cultural Leonesa)

MIDFIELDERS
Mohammed Al-Manai (Al Shamal), Jassem Jaber (Al Arabi), Karim Boudiaf (Al-Duhail), Ahmed Fathi (Al Arabi), Abdulaziz Hatem (Al Rayyan), Assim Madibo (Al-Wakrah)

FORWARDS
Tahseen Mohammed (Al-Duhail), Edmilson Junior (Al-Duhail), Almoez Ali (Al-Duhail), Akram Afif (Al-Sadd), Mohammed Muntari (Al Gharafa), Youssef Abdulrazzaq (Al-Wakrah), Ahmed Alaa (Al Rayyan), Hassan Al-Haydos (Al-Sadd), Ahmed Al-Janahi (Al Gharafa)

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

ZMAJEVI (DRAGONS) · FIFA RANKING #65

COACH: SERGEJ BARBAREZ

CAPTAIN: EDIN DZEKO

PLAYER TO WATCH: ERMEDIN DEMIROVIC



STRENGTHS

Bosnia return to the World Cup with a generation of technically gifted players across European clubs. Edin Dzeko's experience provides a focal point, while younger talents are emerging throughout the squad.

WEAKNESSES

Inconsistency remains the team's defining characteristic. Defensive organisation has been fragile at times, and the team has historically struggled to maintain concentration over 90 minutes.

OPPORTUNITIES

A first knockout-stage appearance would be historic for Bosnia. The expanded format rewards consistency rather than peak performance, which suits a side capable of competitive but imperfect football.

THREATS

Canada's pace and direct play can be dangerous, and Switzerland's discipline will make life difficult. A loss in the opener could rapidly derail Bosnia's campaign psychologically.



WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Nikola Vasilj (St Pauli), Martin Zlomislic (Rijeka), Osman Hadzikic (Slaven Belupo)

DEFENDERS
Sead Kolasinac (Atalanta), Amar Dedic (Benfica), Nihad Mujakic (Gaziantep), Nikola Katic (Schalke 04), Tarik Muharemovic (Sassuolo), Stjepan Radeljic (Rijeka), Dennis Hadzikadunic (Sampdoria), Nidal Celik (Lens)

MIDFIELDERS
Amir Hadziahmetovic (Hull City), Ivan Sunjic (Pafos), Ivan Basic (Astana), Dzenis Burnic (Karlsruher SC), Ermin Mahmic (Slovan Liberec), Benjamin Tahirovic (Brondby), Amar Memic (Viktoria Plzen), Armin Gigovic (Young Boys), Kerim Alajbegovic (RB Salzburg), Esmir Bajraktarevic (PSV Eindhoven)

FORWARDS
Ermedin Demirovic (VfB Stuttgart), Jovo Lukic (Universitatea Cluj), Samed Bazdar (Jagiellonia Bialystok), Haris Tabakovic (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Edin Dzeko (Schalke 04)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GROUP C

Group C is Brazil's to lose. Armed with the devastating, peak-form trident of Vinícius Jr., Rodrygo, and Endrick, the Seleção possess unparalleled attacking depth to comfortably top the group and launch their hunt to end a 24-year drought. Chasing them closely are 2022 semifinalists Morocco. Anchored by Achraf Hakimi, their elite defensive block will comfortably stymie the rest of the field to secure second. Scotland, fueled by Andy Robertson's leadership and a structured press, will finish third but likely fall short on goals, while debutants Haiti prop up the table after a harsh introduction to elite firepower.

PREDICTED FINISH

1. BRAZIL
2. MOROCCO
3. SCOTLAND
4. HAITI





BRAZIL

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING # 6

COACH: CARLO ANCELOTTI

CAPTAIN: MARQUINHOS

PLAYER TO WATCH: VINICIUS JR

STRENGTHS

Brazil arrive with one of the tournament's most exciting attacking ensembles — Vinicius Jr., Endrick and Raphinha provide relentless creativity and pace. The Selecao's footballing DNA, depth across all positions and continental superiority make them perennial contenders.

WEAKNESSES

The defensive structure has at times appeared fragile, particularly against organised high-press teams. Brazil's relative underperformance in recent World Cups — last winning in 2002 — reflects a pattern of underachieving when it matters most.

OPPORTUNITIES

This could be Vinicius Jr.'s defining tournament moment on the world stage. With a crop of elite young forwards finally at their peak simultaneously, Brazil have a unique window to end a 24-year drought.

THREATS

Morocco are technically excellent and tactically astute — they showed at 2022 exactly how to disrupt South American heavyweights. Scotland's physicality and aerial threat can cause problems at set-pieces..

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Alisson (Liverpool), Ederson (Fenerbahce), Weverton (Gremio).

DEFENDERS
Alex Sandro, Danilo, Leo Pereira (Flamengo), Bremer (Juventus), Ibanez (Al-Ahli), Wesley (Roma), Marquinhos (Paris St-Germain), Gabriel (Arsenal), Douglas Santos (Zenit St. Petersburg).

MIDFIELDERS
Bruno Guimaraes (Newcastle), Casemiro (Manchester United), Danilo Santos (Botafogo), Fabinho (Al-Ittihad), Lucas Paqueta (Flamengo).

FORWARDS
Endrick (Lyon), Gabriel Martinelli (Arsenal), Igor Thiago (Brentford), Matheus Cunha (Manchester United), Raphinha (Barcelona), Vinicius Junior (Real Madrid), Luiz Henrique (Zenit St. Petersburg), Neymar (Santos), Rayan (Bournemouth).



MOROCCO

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING # 8

COACH: WALID REGRAGUI

CAPTAIN: ACHRAF HAKIMI

PLAYER TO WATCH: HAKIM ZIYECH



STRENGTHS

The 2022 semifinalists have experience, tactical sophistication and genuine quality across the pitch. Achraf Hakimi is one of the world's best right-backs, and the defensive block under their settled manager is extremely hard to break down.

WEAKNESSES

Replacing the core of the 2022 squad has been an ongoing challenge. Some star players are aging, and the squad depth required to sustain a deep run may not match that of 2022.

OPPORTUNITIES

Morocco can make history with consecutive deep World Cup runs. A game against Brazil is a high-profile opportunity to announce themselves again to a global audience and build on 2022's legacy.

THREATS

Brazil's attacking firepower — particularly Vinicius Jr. — is genuinely difficult for any team to contain. If Morocco's defensive shape is disrupted early, they lack the individual quality to trade goals freely.



WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS

Yassine Bounou (Al Hilal), Munir Mohamedi (RS Berkane), Ahmed Tagnaouti (Royal Armed Forces)

DEFENDERS

Noussair Mazraoui (Manchester United), Anass Salah-Eddine (PSV Eindhoven), Youssef Belammari (Al Ahly), Nayef Aguerd (Marseille), Chadi Riad (Crystal Palace), Issa Diop (West Ham United), Redouane Halhal (KV Mechelen), Achraf Hakimi (Paris St-Germain), Zakaria El Ouahdi (Genk)

MIDFIELDERS

Samir El Mourabet (Strasbourg), Ayyoub Bouaddi (Lille), Neil El Aynaoui (Roma), Sofyan Amrabat (Real Betis), Azzedine Ounahi (Girona), Bilal El Khannouss (Stuttgart), Ismael Saibari (PSV Eindhoven)

FORWARDS

Abdessamad Ezzalzouli (Real Betis), Chemsdine Talbi (Sunderland), Soufiane Rahimi (Al Ain), Ayoub El Kaabi (Olympiacos), Brahim Diaz (Real Madrid), Yassine Gessime (Strasbourg), Ayoub Amaimouni-Echghouyabe (Eintracht Frankfurt)

SCOTLAND

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING # 43

COACH: STEVE CLARKE

CAPTAIN: ANDY ROBERTSON

PLAYER TO WATCH: SCOTT MCTOMINAY



STRENGTHS

Scotland qualified impressively for their first World Cup since 1998. Andy Robertson leads an experienced European tournament core, and the team has a strong collective spirit and pressing game under a well-organised structure.

WEAKNESSES

Scotland's forward line lacks a world-class finisher who can make the difference against elite opposition. The squad has a tendency to be excellent defensively but toothless in attack, which limits ceiling.

OPPORTUNITIES

A first World Cup in 28 years is already historic. Facing Haiti offers a realistic opening win, and Scotland would relish the chance to upset either Morocco or Brazil in what would be one of the tournament's great shocks.

THREATS

Brazil's individual quality, particularly going forward, is simply on a different level. Any tactical error in the early phase of games could be brutally punished by a Selecao side eager to impose themselves.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Craig Gordon (Hearts), Angus Gunn (Nottingham Forest), Liam Kelly (Rangers).

DEFENDERS
Grant Hanley (Hibernian), Jack Hendry (Al Etiffaq), Aaron Hickey (Brentford), Dom Hyam (Wrexham), Scott McKenna (Dinamo Zagreb), Nathan Patterson (Everton), Anthony Ralston (Celtic), Andy Robertson (Liverpool), John Souttar (Rangers), Kieran Tierney (Celtic).

MIDFIELDERS
Ryan Christie (Bournemouth), Findlay Curtis (Kilmarnock), Lewis Ferguson (Bologna), Ben Gannon-Doak (Bournemouth), Billy Gilmour (Napoli), John McGinn (Aston Villa), Kenny McLean (Norwich), Scott McTominay (Napoli).

FORWARDS
Che Adams (Torino), Lyndon Dykes (Charlton Athletic), George Hirst (Ipswich), Lawrence Shankland (Hearts), Ross Stewart (Southampton).





HAITI

GRENADIERS · FIFA RANKING #83

COACH: SEBASTIEN MIGNE

CAPTAIN: JOHNY PLACIDE

PLAYER TO WATCH: WILSON ISIDOR

STRENGTHS

Haiti's qualification is a source of enormous national pride. They are capable of disciplined, energetic defending and can be inspired by underdog status to produce surprising results in their opening fixtures.

WEAKNESSES

Haiti are among the least experienced sides in the tournament. The squad lacks quality at the level required to compete with Brazil or Morocco, and individual mistakes could be punished severely.

OPPORTUNITIES

The expanded format means even a single good result may see them progress. Playing Scotland — a side without World Cup experience either — represents their most realistic opportunity for points.

THREATS

Brazil's attacking depth is almost incomparable at this level for Haiti. Without significant organisation and defensive resolve, they risk heavy defeats that could affect morale for subsequent games.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Johnny Placide (Bastia), Alexandre Pierre (Sochaux), Josue Duverger (FC Cosmos Koblenz).

DEFENDERS
Carlens Arcus (Angers), Wilguens Pauguain (Zulte Waregem), Duke Lacroix (Colorado Springs), Martin Expérience (Nancy), Jean-Kevin Duverne (KAA Gent), Ricardo Ade (LDU Quito), Hannes Delcroix (Lugano), Keeto Thermoncy (Young Boys Berne).

MIDFIELDERS
Leverton Pierre (Vizela), Carl-Fred Sainthe (El Paso Locomotive), Jean-Jacques Danley (Philadelphia Union), Jean-Ricner Bellegarde (Wolves), Pierre Woodenski (Violette), Dominique Simon (Tatran Presov).

FORWARDS
Louicius Deedson (Dallas), Ruben Providence (Almere City), Josue Casimir (Auxerre), Derrick Etienne (Toronto), Wilson Isidor (Sunderland), Duckens Nazon (Esteghlal), Frantzdy Pierrot (Caykur Rizespor), Yassin Fortune (Vizela), Lenny Joseph (Ferencvaros).





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স্মার্ট – বাংলাদেশে সনি'র অফিসিয়াল ডিস্ট্রিবিউটর

আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা ০১৭০৯৬৭৯৮৪২ | গুলশান ঢাকা ০১৩৩২৮৩৭৪৩৫ | উত্তরা, ঢাকা ০১৭০৯৬৫১১১৫ | শ্যামলী, ঢাকা ০১৩১৩০০২৬২১ | বায়তুল মোকাররম, ঢাকা ০১৭০৯৬৭৯৮৩১ | বনশ্রী, ঢাকা ০১৩৩২৮৩৭৪৩৬ । ধানমন্ডি-২৭, ঢাকা ০১৭০৯৬৭৯৮৪১ | যমুনা ফিউচার পার্ক, ঢাকা ০১৭০৯৬৭৯৮৩২ | মোহাম্মদপুর, ঢাকা ০১৩৩২৫৪৬৬৭৪ | রামপুরা, ঢাকা ০১৩২৪৪১৮০২১ | নারায়ণগঞ্জ ০১৩২৪৪১৮০১৯ | টাঙ্গাইল ০১৩২৪৪১৮০০৯ | নিউ মার্কেট, চট্টগ্রাম ০১৩২৪৪১৮০২৮ | লালখান, চট্টগ্রাম ০১৩২৪৪১৮০১৭ | আগ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম ০১৩২৪৪১৮০১১ | হালিশহর, চট্টগ্রাম ০১৩২৪৪১৮০১৬ | ঘোড়ামারা, রাজশাহী ০১৩২৪৪১৮০০৭ | কে ডি এ, খুলনা ০১৩২৪৪১৮০০৬ | সদর রোড, বরিশাল ০১৩২৪৪১৮০১৩ | ফেনী সদর ০১৩৩২-৮৩৭৪৩১ | টি এ রোড, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়ীয়া ০১৩৩২৫৪৬৬৭১ | বাইপাস, লাকসাম ০১৩২৪৪১৮০২৪ | লক্ষীপুর সদর ০১৩২৪৪১৮০২৫ | ঝাউতলা, কুমিল্লা ০১৩২৪৪১৮০২৩ | মাইজদী কোর্ট, নোয়াখালী ০১৩২৪৪১৮০২৭ | রংপুর -০১৩২৪৪১৮০১২ | উপশহর, সিলেট ০১৭০৯৬৫১০৭৯ | মাদারীপুর সদর ০১৩০৩২৪৬৭৮৯ | সিরাজগঞ্জ-০১৭০৯৬৫১১১২ | বগুড়া সদর ০১৩২২৯১৩২৪৯

GROUP D

Group D is a chaotic, wide-open battleground where host-nation advantage meets tactical unpredictability. The United States, propelled by a partisan home crowd and Christian Pulisic's elite European experience, have the tactical flexibility and intensity to comfortably weather the storm and secure the top spot, setting up a dream path for a deep knockout run. The race for second is a fascinating tactical clash. Türkiye, powered by the masterful Hakan Çalhanoğlu and the sheer creative brilliance of Arda Güler, possess the raw attacking quality to edge out the rest. Australia's tournament grit will keep them competitive in third, while an inconsistent Paraguay will struggle to find goals beyond Miguel Almirón, propping up the table.

PREDICTED FINISH

1. UNITED STATES
2. TURKIYE
3. AUSTRALIA
4. PARAGUAY





USA

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING # 16

COACH: MAURICIO POCHETTINO

CAPTAIN: CHRISTIAN PULISIC

PLAYER TO WATCH: WESTON MCKENNIE

STRENGTHS

The USA are the pre-eminent host nation, drawing on passionate home support across eleven cities. Christian Pulisic leads a new generation of technically developed players operating across Europe's top leagues. Tactical flexibility and physical intensity make them competitive.

WEAKNESSES

The USA still lack a consistent centre-forward and a dominant midfield organiser. Defensive errors under high pressure — particularly against technically superior sides — remain a concern.

OPPORTUNITIES

Host nation status combined with a favourable group draw offers a genuine path to the quarterfinals. A deep run could transform the cultural relationship between America and football.

THREATS

Turkey are unpredictable and technically capable in the attacking third. If the USA start slowly, the home pressure can become suffocating rather than inspiring.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Chris Brady (Chicago Fire), Matt Freese (New York City), Matt Turner (New England Revolution).

DEFENDERS
Max Arfsten (Columbus Crew), Sergino Dest (PSV Eindhoven), Alex Freeman (Villarreal), Mark McKenzie (Toulouse), Tim Ream (Charlotte FC), Chris Richards (Crystal Palace), Antonee Robinson (Fulham), Miles Robinson (Cincinnati), Joe Scally (Borussia Monchengladbach), Auston Trusty (Celtic).

MIDFIELDERS
Tyler Adams (Bournemouth), Sebastian Berhalter (Vancouver Whitecaps), Weston McKennie (Juventus), Cristian Roldan (Seattle Sounders), Brenden Aaronson (Leeds United), Christian Pulisic (AC Milan), Gio Reyna (Borussia Monchengladbach), Malik Tillman (Bayer Leverkusen), Tim Weah (Marseille), Alejandro Zendejas (Club America).

FORWARDS
Folarin Balogun (Monaco), Ricardo Pepi (PSV Eindhoven), Haji Wright (Coventry City).





TURKIYE

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING #21

COACH: VINCENZO MONTELLA

CAPTAIN: ARDA GULER

PLAYER TO WATCH: KENAN YILDIZ

STRENGTHS

Turkey qualified dramatically and arrive with genuine attacking talent. Hakan Calhanoglu controls central midfield with elite composure for Inter Milan, while Arda Guler's creativity promises moments of real brilliance.

WEAKNESSES

Turkey have historically been inconsistent under tournament pressure. Defensive coordination can break down in high-intensity phases, and the team can switch off mentally after conceding.

OPPORTUNITIES

Arda Guler could use this World Cup as a personal breakthrough moment on the global stage. A favourable fixture order — if Turkey win their opener — could build enough confidence to advance.

THREATS

Playing the host USA with a partisan crowd is a difficult curtain-raiser. Paraguay's physical approach and Australia's organisation are precisely the type of opposition Turkey has historically found uncomfortable.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Altay Bayındır (Manchester United), Mert Günok (Fenerbahçe), Uğurcan Çakır (Galatasaray)

DEFENDERS
Abdülkerim Bardakcı, Eren Elmalı, Çağlar Söyüncü, Mert Müldür, Ferdi Kadıoğlu, Merih Demiral, Ozan Kabak, Samet Akaydin, Zeki Çelik

MIDFIELDERS
Hakan Çalhanoğlu, İsmail Yüksek, Kaan Ayhan, Orkun Kökçü, Salih Özcan

FORWARDS
Arda Güler, Kenan Yıldız, Kerem Aktürkoğlu, Barış Alper Yılmaz, Yunus Akgün, Can Uzun, Deniz Gül, İrfan Can Kahveci, Oğuz Aydın



AUSTRALIA

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING #27

COACH: TONY POPOVIC

CAPTAIN: MATHEW RYAN

PLAYER TO WATCH: JACKSON IRVINE



STRENGTHS

The Socceroos come fresh from a memorable 2022 quarterfinal run. Mat Ryan and a well-drilled defensive unit provide solidity, and the squad is filled with players competing regularly in the Premier League and other top leagues.

WEAKNESSES

Australia lack the technical quality to dominate possession against top sides. The attack is more predictable than in 2022, and they can struggle to create chances consistently from open play.

OPPORTUNITIES

The expanded format suits Australia's tournament mentality. They are experienced at navigating group stages and peaking in knockouts — a style that could see them progress from a balanced group.

THREATS

USA's home crowd and depth could be decisive. Turkey's counter-attacking pace is a specific threat that Australia's deeper defensive setup may struggle to contain.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Ryan (Levante), Izzo (Randers), Beach (Melbourne City).

DEFENDERS
Behich (Melbourne City), Bos (Feynoord), Burgess (Swansea City), Circati (Parma), Degenek (APOEL), Geria (Albirex Niigata), Herrington (Colorado Rapids), Italiano (Grazer), Souttar (Leicester City), Trewin (New York City).

MIDFIELDERS
Devlin (Heart of Midlothian), Hrustic (Heracles Almelo), Irvine (St Pauli), Metcalfe (St Pauli), Okon-Englster (Sydney), O'Neill (New York City).

FORWARDS
Irankunda (Watford), Leckie (Melbourne City), Mabil (Castellon), Toure (Norwich City), Velupilly (Melbourne City), Volpato (Sassuolo), Yengi (Livingston/Machida Zelvia).



PARAGUAY

EL TRI · FIFA RANKING #40
COACH: GUSTAVO ALFARO
CAPTAIN: GUSTAVO GOMEZ
PLAYER TO WATCH: MIGUEL ALMIRON



STRENGTHS

Paraguay are historically one of South America's most stubborn defensive sides. Miguel Almiron's energy and creativity from midfield gives them a reliable attacking outlet, and their CONMEBOL tournament experience is substantial.

WEAKNESSES

Paraguay lack elite attacking quality beyond Almiron and struggle to control matches against physically dominant opponents. Qualification was difficult, hinting at inconsistencies across the squad.

OPPORTUNITIES

A draw against the USA in their opener would be a significant statement, and navigating the group could open a round-of-32 tie against a lower-seeded side. Paraguay punch above their weight in knockout football.

THREATS

Australia's aggressive pressing and fitness levels can trouble South American sides in tight spaces. USA's home atmosphere could overwhelm Paraguay if they do not manage the game intelligently from the start.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Roberto Junior Fernandez (Cerro Porteno), Orlando Gill (San Lorenzo), Gaston Olveira (Olimpia).

DEFENDERS
Omar Alderete (Sunderland), Junior Alonso (Atletico Mineiro), Fabian Balbuena (Gremio), Juan Jose Caceres (Dinamo Moscow), Jose Canale (Lanus), Gustavo Gomez (Palmeiras), Alexandro Maidana (Talleres), Gustavo Velazquez (Cerro Porteno).

MIDFIELDERS
Damian Bobadilla (Sao Paulo), Gustavo Caballero (Portsmouth), Andres Cubas (Vancouver Whitecaps), Matias Galarza (Atlanta United), Diego Gomez (Brighton), Mauricio Magalhaes (Palmeiras), Briaian Ojeda (Orlando City), Alejandro Romero (Al Ain).

FORWARDS
Miguel Almiron (Atlanta United), Gabriel Avalos (Independiente), Alex Arce (Independiente Rivadavia), Julio Enciso (Strasbourg), Isidro Pitta (Bragantino), Antonio Sanabria (Cremonese), Ramon Sosa (Palmeiras).



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GROUP E

Germany enters as the heavyweight favorite, fueled by the dazzling creative duo of Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala, though their high defensive line remains vulnerable to pace. That weakness plays right into the hands of Ivory Coast, a dangerous counter-attacking side packed with Premier League talent. Meanwhile, Ecuador brings brutal physical intensity and Moises Caicedo's midfield dominance, making them a fierce threat to progress. Debutants Curaçao face a massive step up in quality, but their immense team spirit means they won't go down without a fight.

PREDICTED FINISH

1. GERMANY
2. ECUADOR
3. IVORY COAST
4. CURAÇAO





GERMANY

DIE MANNSCHAFT · FIFA RANKING #10

COACH: JULIAN NAGELSMANN

CAPTAIN: JOSHUA KIMMICH

PLAYER TO WATCH: FLORIAN WIRTZ

STRENGTHS

Germany head into 2026 with renewed optimism after their deeply impressive Euro 2024 home campaign. Florian Wirtz is one of the world's most exciting players, and Jamal Musiala's creativity adds another dimension. Squad depth and tactical evolution under Julian Nagelsmann are significant strengths.

WEAKNESSES

Germany's defensive line can be exposed by pace in behind, a vulnerability that several 2026 teams will target. The transition from their traditional system to more fluid approaches has at times left them susceptible.

OPPORTUNITIES

Wirtz and Musiala together represent arguably the most exciting creative midfield pairing in the tournament. This could be a golden generation's defining moment — and the group is genuinely navigable.

THREATS

Ecuador are physically powerful and well-drilled. Ivory Coast's pace and individual quality in the final third could surprise a Germany side that can be slow to find their rhythm in opener fixtures.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Oliver Baumann (Hoffenheim), Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich), Alexander Nubel (Stuttgart)

DEFENDERS
Waldemar Anton (Borussia Dortmund), Nathaniel Brown (Eintracht Frankfurt), Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), David Raum (RB Leipzig), Antonio Rudiger (Real Madrid), Nico Schlotterbeck (Borussia Dortmund), Jonathan Tah (Bayern Munich), Malick Thiaw (Newcastle United)

MIDFIELDERS
Nadiem Amiri (Mainz), Leon Goretzka (Bayern Munich), Pascal Gross (Brighton and Hove Albion), Jamie Leweling (Stuttgart), Jamal Musiala (Bayern Munich), Felix Nmecha (Borussia Dortmund), Aleksandar Pavlovic (Bayern Munich), Angelo Stiller (Stuttgart), Florian Wirtz (Liverpool)

FORWARDS
Maximilian Beier (Borussia Dortmund), Kai Havertz (Arsenal), Lennart Karl (Bayern Munich), Leroy Sane (Galatasaray), Deniz Undav (Stuttgart), Nick Woltemade (Newcastle United)



ECUADOR

LA TRI · FIFA RANKING #23

COACH: SEBASTIAN BECCACECE

CAPTAIN: ENNER VALENCIA

PLAYER TO WATCH: MOISES CAICEDO



STRENGTHS

Ecuador arrive with a settled squad, physical intensity and clear tactical identity. Moises Caicedo's ability to dominate in central midfield is among the finest in the tournament, and the team has significant CONMEBOL competitive experience.

WEAKNESSES

Ecuador lack a consistently clinical striker to convert the chances Caicedo's midfield creates. They can be stretched by width and are prone to individual concentration lapses at critical moments.

OPPORTUNITIES

If Caicedo performs to his Chelsea level, Ecuador can control midfield against most sides in this group. A quarterfinal would be the furthest Ecuador have ever progressed and is within realistic reach.

THREATS

Germany's transition speed and Wirtz's ability to find pockets of space behind the midfield line will test Ecuador's defensive structure. Ivory Coast's pace in wide areas also poses a direct danger.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Hernan Galindez (Huracan), Moises Ramirez (Kifisia), Gonzalo Valle (LDU Quito).

DEFENDERS
Piero Hincapie (Arsenal), Willian Pacho (Paris St-Germain), Pervis Estupinan (AC Milan), Felix Torres (Internacional), Joel Ordonez (Club Brugge), Jackson Porozo (Tijuana), Angelo Preciado (Atletico Mineiro).

MIDFIELDERS
Moises Caicedo (Chelsea), Alan Franco (Atletico Mineiro), Kendry Paez (River Plate, on loan from Chelsea), Pedro Vite (UNAM), Jordy Alcivar (Independiente del Valle), Denil Castillo (Midtjylland), Yaimar Medina (Genk).

FORWARDS
Enner Valencia (Pachuca), Kevin Rodriguez (Union Saint-Gilloise), Jordy Caicedo (Huracan), Nilson Angulo (Sunderland), Anthony Valencia (Antwerp), Jeremy Arevalo (Stuttgart).



IVORY COAST

ÉLÉPHANTS · FIFA RANKING #34
COACH: EMERSE FAE
CAPTAIN: FRANCK KESSIE
PLAYER TO WATCH: AMAD DIALLO



STRENGTHS

Ivory Coast have a rich tradition of producing technically gifted attackers. The current generation carries significant Premier League experience, and their frontline can be devastating on the counter-attack with pace and physicality.

WEAKNESSES

Defensive organisation has sometimes been the undoing of Ivory Coast sides. When the defensive shape becomes disorganised against vertical, direct attacking sides, they can concede in clusters.

OPPORTUNITIES

Germany are beatable if Ivory Coast can frustrate in the opening stages and strike on the break. Advancing from this group would rightly announce them as a major force in African and world football.

THREATS

Germany's quality, particularly through Wirtz and Musiala, will test Ivory Coast's midfield discipline severely. Ecuador's physicality also poses a different but equally uncomfortable challenge.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Yahia Fofana (Rizespor), Mohamed Kone (Charleroi), Alban Lafont (Panathinaikos).

DEFENDERS
Emmanuel Agbadou (Wolverhampton Wanderers), Christopher Operi (Istanbul Basaksehir), Ousmane Diomande (Sporting), Guela Doue (Racing Strasbourg), Ghislain Konan (Gil Vicente), Odilon Kossonou (Atalanta), Evan Ndicka (AS Roma), Wilfried Singo (Galatasaray).

MIDFIELDERS
Seko Fofana (Stade Rennais), Parfait Guiagon (Charleroi), Franck Kessie (Al Ahli), Christ Oulai (Trabzonspor), Ibrahim Sangare (Nottingham Forest), Jean-Michael Seri (NK Maribor).

FORWARDS
Simon Adingra (AS Monaco), Ange-Yoan Bonny (Inter Milan), Amad Diallo (Manchester United), Oumar Diakite (Cercle Brugge), Yan Diomande (RB Leipzig), Evann Guessand (Aston Villa), Nicolas Pepe (Villarreal), Bazoumana Toure (Hoffenheim), Elye Wahi (Nice).



CURAÇAO

STRIKERS · FIFA RANKING #82

COACH: DICK ADVOCAAT

CAPTAIN: LEANDRO BACUNA

PLAYER TO WATCH: TAHITH CHONG



STRENGTHS

Curaçao make their World Cup debut — a remarkable achievement for such a small nation. Several squad members have professional European experience, and there is a pride and togetherness that can produce spirited performances.

WEAKNESSES

The quality gap between Curaçao and Germany or Ecuador is significant. Limited experience at this altitude of competition means early defensive errors are likely against more clinical sides.

OPPORTUNITIES

The World Cup is itself the opportunity — maximum exposure, new investment in the domestic game, and a potential memorable moment against an evenly-matched opponent in group play.

THREATS

Germany's firepower is simply at a different level. Any individual mistake will be punished quickly by sides operating at the highest quality in world football.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Tyrick Bodak (SC Telstar), Trevor Doornbusch (VVV-Venlo), Eloy Room (Miami FC).

DEFENDERS
Riechedly Bazoer (Konyaspor), Joshua Brenet (Kayserispor), Roshon Van Eijma (RKC Waalwijk), Sherel Floranus (PEC Zwolle), Deveron Fonville (NEC Nijmegen), Jurien Gaari (Abha Club), Armando Obispo (PSV Eindhoven), Shurandy Sambo (Sparta Rotterdam).

MIDFIELDERS
Juninho Bacuna (FC Volendam), Leandro Bacuna (Igdır), Livano Comenencia (FC Zurich), Kevin Felida (FC Den Bosch), Ar'Jany Martha (Rotherham United), Tyrese Noslin (SC Telstar), Godfried Roemeratoe (RKC Waalwijk).

FORWARDS
Jeremy Antonisse (AE Kifisia), Tahith Chong (Sheffield United), Kenji Gorré (Maccabi Haifa), Sontje Hansen (Middlesbrough), Gervane Kastaneer (Terengganu FC), Brandley Kuwas (FC Volendam), Jurgen Locadia (Miami FC), Jearl Margaritha (SK Beveren).



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GROUP F

Group F is an elite, technically demanding pool where European tactical heritage clashes with hyper-organized global threats. The Netherlands, boasting a robust contingent of elite European club stars and the proven tournament pedigree of Cody Gakpo, have the technical fluidity to survive the chaos, assert control, and claim the top spot. The battle for second is an absolute blockbuster. Japan, fueled by their relentless, high-intensity pressing machine and an entire squad peaking in Europe's top flights, will edge out a dangerous Sweden. Alexander Isak's clinical edge will ensure Sweden pushes them all the way to secure a strong third-place finish, while a stubborn but offensively limited Tunisia props up a highly competitive table.

PREDICTED FINISH

1. NETHERLANDS
2. JAPAN
3. SWEDEN
4. TUNISIA



NETHERLANDS

ORANJE · FIFA RANKING #7

COACH: RONALD KOEMAN

CAPTAIN: VIRGIL VAN DIJK

PLAYER TO WATCH: FRENKIE DE JONG



STRENGTHS

The Dutch arrive with a fine blend of tactical intelligence and attacking flair. Cody Gakpo and Memphis Depay give them experience in attack, while a strong Premier League and European club contingent provides quality across the pitch. Their 2022 quarterfinal demonstrated they can compete deep into tournaments.

WEAKNESSES

The Netherlands can be vulnerable when opponents disrupt their shape with direct play and aerial delivery. Defensive organisation at set-pieces has occasionally been a weakness, and over-reliance on individual performers is a risk.

OPPORTUNITIES

Japan's organised defending will be a stern test, but Sweden and Tunisia offer realistic points. With the expanded format, Netherlands can afford to develop their rhythm before facing a knockout-stage threat.

THREATS

Japan are technically excellent and press with incredible intensity — the sort of side that can cause a slow-starting Netherlands side real problems. Any early defensive slip could prove costly against opponents of this quality.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Bart Verbruggen (Brighton), Mark Flekken (Bayer Leverkusen), Robin Roefs (Sunderland)

DEFENDERS
Nathan Ake (Manchester City), Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool), Denzel Dumfries (Inter Milan), Jorrel Hato (Chelsea), Jan Paul van Hecke (Brighton & Hove Albion), Jurrien Timber (Arsenal), Micky van de Ven (Tottenham Hotspur)

MIDFIELDERS
Ryan Gravenberch (Liverpool), Frenkie de Jong (Barcelona), Teun Koopmeiners (Juventus), Noah Lang (Galatasaray), Tijjani Reijnders (Manchester City), Marten de Roon (Atalanta), Guus Til (PSV), Quinten Timber (Marseille), Mats Wieffer (Brighton & Hove Albion)

FORWARDS
Brian Brobbey (Sunderland), Memphis Depay (Corinthians), Cody Gakpo (Liverpool), Justin Kluivert (Bournemouth), Donyell Malen (AS Roma), Crysencio Summerville (West Ham United), Wout Weghorst (Ajax)



JAPAN

SAMURAI BLUE · FIFA RANKING #18

COACH: HAJIME MORIYASU

CAPTAIN: WATARU ENDO

PLAYER TO WATCH: TAKEFUSA KUBO



STRENGTHS

Japan are one of the most compelling stories in 2026. Their squad is littered with players from the Bundesliga, Ligue 1 and Premier League. They press relentlessly, are tactically disciplined and can cause any team discomfort. The 2022 group-stage wins over Germany and Spain remain reference points.

WEAKNESSES

Japan can struggle to convert their territorial pressure into goals against teams that sit deep and defend in numbers. The squad is also vulnerable to a physical, direct side that bypasses their press.

OPPORTUNITIES

A repeat of their 2022 group-stage heroics — beating a major European nation — could announce Japan as a genuine last-eight contender. Several players are at peak age in 2026.

THREATS

Netherlands have the technical quality to manage Japan's press if they perform to their best. The knock-on pressure of being expected to progress from this group could also create internal tension.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS

Tomoki Hayakawa (Kashima Antlers), Keisuke Osako (Sanfrecce Hiroshima), Aya Suzuka (Parma Calcio).

DEFENDERS

Yuto Nagatomo (FC Tokyo), Shogo Taniguchi (Sint-Truiden), Ko Itakura (Ajax), Tsuyoshi Watanabe (Feyenoord), Takehiro Tomiyasu (Ajax), Hiroki Ito (Bayern Munich), Ayumu Seko (Le Havre AC), Yukinari Sugawara (Werder Bremen), Junosuke Suzuki (FC Copenhagen).

MIDFIELDERS

Wataru Endo (Liverpool), Junya Ito (Genk), Daichi Kamada (Crystal Palace), Koki Ogawa (NEC Nijmegen), Daizen Maeda (Celtic), Ritsu Doan (Eintracht Frankfurt), Ao Tanaka (Leeds United), Kaishu Sano (Mainz 05), Takefusa Kubo (Real Sociedad).

FORWARDS

Ayase Ueda (Feyenoord), Keito Nakamura (Stade de Reims), Ito Suzuki (SC Freiburg), Kento Shiode (Wolfsburg), Keisuke Goto (Sint-Truiden).



SWEDEN

BLÅGULT (BLUE-YELLOWS) · FIFA RANKING #38

COACH: GRAHAM POTTER

CAPTAIN: VICTOR LINDELOF

PLAYER TO WATCH: VIKTOR GYOKERES



STRENGTHS

Sweden qualify for their first World Cup since 2018 with a settled, experienced core. Dejan Kulusevski and Alexander Isak provide genuine Premier League quality in attack, and the team is physically imposing and set-piece dangerous.

WEAKNESSES

Without a talisman of Zlatan Ibrahimovic's stature, Sweden can be overly conservative and have at times struggled to unlock compact defensive blocks.

OPPORTUNITIES

If Isak is in form — having been one of the Premier League's most clinical finishers — Sweden can genuinely threaten any side in this group. A first knockout stage appearance in eight years is well within reach.

THREATS

Japan's pressing style is the type of organised, high-energy play Sweden have found uncomfortable in recent tournaments. Netherlands' technical quality will also make their opener extremely demanding.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Viktor Johansson (Stoke City), Kristoffer Nordfeldt (AIK), Jacob Widell Zetterstrom (Derby County).

DEFENDERS
Hjalmar Ekdal (Burnley), Gabriel Gudmundsson (Leeds United), Isak Hien (Atalanta), Herman Johansson (FC Dallas), Gustaf Lagerbielke (Braga), Victor Lindelof (Aston Villa), Erik Smith (St. Pauli), Carl Starfelt (Celta Vigo), Elliot Stroud (Mjallby), Daniel Svensson (Borussia Dortmund)

MIDFIELDERS
Taha Ali (Malmo), Yasin Ayari (Brighton), Lucas Bergvall (Tottenham), Jesper Karlstrom (Udinese), Ken Sema (Pafos), Mattias Svanberg (Wolfsburg), Besfort Zeneli (Union St-Gilloise).

FORWARDS
Alexander Bernhardsson (Holstein Kiel), Anthony Elanga (Newcastle United), Viktor Gyokeres (Arsenal), Alexander Isak (Liverpool), Gustaf Nilsson (Club Brugge), Benjamin Nygren (Celtic).



TUNISIA

EAGLES OF CARTHAGE · FIFA RANKING #44

COACH: SAMI TRABELSI

CAPTAIN: ELLYES SKHIRI

PLAYER TO WATCH: HANNIBAL MEJBRI



STRENGTHS

Tunisia are one of Africa's most experienced World Cup participants. A disciplined defensive structure and strong team unity have allowed them to compete against superior sides before, including their famous result against France in 2022.

WEAKNESSES

Tunisia lack the individual quality in the final third to turn defensive performances into victories against top opposition. Their overall squad depth is limited compared to Europe's best.

OPPORTUNITIES

The expanded format and a tough but beatable group gives Tunisia a chance to qualify as a best third-placed team. A competitive performance in every fixture could be sufficient to advance.

THREATS

Netherlands' attacking depth is likely too great for Tunisia's defensive block to contain over 90 minutes. Japan's intensity will also test Tunisia's fitness levels significantly.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Sabri Ben Hessen (Etoile Sahel), Abdelmouhib Chamakh (Club Africain), Aymen Dahman (CS Sfaxien).

DEFENDERS
Ali Abdi (Nice), Adem Arous (Kasimpasa), Mohamed Amine Ben Hamida (Esperance), Dylan Bronn (Servette Geneva), Raed Chikhaoui (US Monastir), Moutaz Neffati (Norrkoping), Omar Rekik (NK Maribor), Montassar Talbi (Lorient), Yan Valery (Young Boys Berne).

MIDFIELDERS
Mortadha Ben Ouanes (Kasimpasa), Anis Ben Slimane (Norwich City), Ismael Gharbi (FC Augsburg), Rani Khedira (Union Berlin), Mohamed Hadj Mahmoud (Lugano), Hannibal Mejbri (Burnley), Ellyes Skhiri (Eintracht Frankfurt).

FORWARDS
Elias Achouri (FC Copenhagen), Khalil Ayari (Paris St Germain), Firas Chaouat (Club Africain), Rayan Elloumi (Vancouver Whitecaps), Hazem Mastouri (Dynamo Makhachkala), Elias Saad (Hannover 96), Sebastian Tounekti (Celtic).



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GROUP G

Group G is a fascinating narrative of legendary talismans steering their nations through transitional eras. Belgium, despite a fading “Golden Generation,” still hold the undisputed trump cards. Supported by the blistering pace of Jérémy Doku and Loïs Openda, a fit Kevin De Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku possess far too much elite, top-tier quality for the rest of this field, allowing the Red Devils to safely secure the top spot.

Second place is a straight shootout between two hyper-organized defensive walls. Egypt will edge it out simply because they possess Mohamed Salah—a world-class match-winner capable of breaking any deadlock. Iran’s disciplined, robust structure will keep them highly competitive in third, while a brave but outmatched New Zealand props.

PREDICTED FINISH

1	BELGIUM
2	EGYPT
3	IRAN
4	NEW ZEALAND





BELGIUM

RED DEVILS · FIFA RANKING #9

COACH: RUDI GARCIA

CAPTAIN: YOURI TIELEMANS

PLAYER TO WATCH: KEVIN DE BRUYNE

STRENGTHS

Belgium still boast exceptional individual quality across the pitch. Kevin De Bruyne remains one of the finest midfielders in the world when fit, while Romelu Lukaku brings physical presence and clinical finishing up front. The squad also features younger talents like Lois Openda and Jeremy Doku who add pace and directness on the wings, giving Belgium multiple dimensions in attack.

WEAKNESSES

Belgium's famed "Golden Generation" has visibly aged and declined, with several key figures either retiring or past their peak. The team has struggled for consistency and a clear identity in recent years. Defensive cohesion has been a concern, and the side can be exposed when pressing high lines fail. Reliance on an ageing Lukaku for goals remains a structural vulnerability.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group G is one of the more accessible paths in the tournament, giving Belgium a clear route to the knockout stages. This World Cup offers a genuine opportunity for De Bruyne to claim the one trophy that has eluded him, and for younger players like Doku and Openda to establish themselves as the new faces of Belgian football on the world stage.

THREATS

Injury fragility around key players is a constant concern — a fit De Bruyne transforms Belgium, while his absence leaves a massive creative void. Egypt under Carlos Queiroz could prove a disciplined opponent. The pressure of what may be a final World Cup for many veterans adds psychological weight that could hinder performances when stakes are highest

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Thibaut Courtois (Real Madrid), Senne Lammens (Manchester United), Mike Penders (Racing Strasbourg).

DEFENDERS
Timothy Castagne (Fulham), Zeno Debast (Sporting), Maxim de Cuyper (Brighton), Koni de Winter (AC Milan), Brandon Mechele (Club Brugge), Thomas Meunier (Lille), Nathan Ngoy (Lille), Joaquin Seys (Club Brugge), Arthur Theate (Eintracht Frankfurt).

MIDFIELDERS
Kevin de Bruyne (Napoli), Amadou Onana (Aston Villa), Nicolas Raskin (Rangers), Youri Tielemans (Aston Villa), Hans Vanaken (Club Brugge), Axel Witsel (Girona).

FORWARDS
Charles de Ketelaere (Atalanta), Jeremy Doku (Manchester City), Matias Fernandez-Pardo (Lille), Romelu Lukaku (Napoli), Dodi Lukebakio (Benfica), Diego Moreira (Strasbourg), Alexis Saelemaekers (AC Milan), Leandro Trossard (Arsenal)



EGYPT

THE PHARAOHS · FIFA RANKING #29

COACH: HOSSAM HASSAN

CAPTAIN: MOHAMED SALAH

PLAYER TO WATCH: OMAR MARMOUSH



STRENGTHS

Mohamed Salah remains one of the greatest players of his generation and gives Egypt a world-class match-winner capable of deciding any game. Egypt are tactically disciplined and well-organised, with a compact defensive structure that frustrates opponents. Their AFCON pedigree demonstrates an ability to perform in high-pressure knockout football.

WEAKNESSES

Egypt's reliance on Salah borders on dependency — if he is neutralised, the team's attacking threat diminishes dramatically. Beyond Salah, the squad lacks players with consistent top-level club experience. The midfield can be slow to transition, making them vulnerable to teams with rapid counter-attacks. World Cup tournament experience is limited.

OPPORTUNITIES

This may be Salah's final World Cup at peak powers, creating enormous motivation. A group with Iran and New Zealand offers Egypt a realistic route to the round of 32. The opportunity to be the tournament's African story, rallying continental support, could fuel performances beyond expectations. A deep run could transform Egyptian football's global profile.

THREATS

Belgium's quality presents a significant challenge in the group's marquee fixture. Any injury or suspension to Salah would be catastrophic. Iran, physically robust and tactically structured, could make Egypt's qualification route uncomfortable. The psychological burden of Salah needing to deliver in what could be his final World Cup may disrupt his usual clinical effectiveness.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Mohamed El Shenawy (Al Ahly), Mostafa Shobeir (Al Ahly), El Mahdi Soliman (Zamalek), Mohamed Alaa (El Gouna).

DEFENDERS
Mohamed Hany (Al Ahly), Tarek Alaa (Zed), Hamdy Fathy (Al Wakrah), Rami Rabia (Al Ain), Yasser Ibrahim (Al Ahly), Hossam Abdelmaguid (Zamalek), Mohamed Abdelmonemn (Nice), Ahmed Fatouh (Zamalek), Karim Hafez (Pyramids).

MIDFIELDERS
Marwan Ateya (Al Ahly), Mohanad Lasheen (Pyramids), Nabil Emad (Al Najma), Mahmoud Saber (Zed), Ahmed Zizo (Al Ahly), Emam Ashour (Al Ahly), Mostafa Ziko (Pyramids), Mahmoud Trezeguet (Al Ahly), Ibrahim Adel (Nordsjaelland), Haissem Hassan (Real Ovideo).

FORWARDS
Omar Marmoush (Manchester City), Mohamed Salah (Liverpool), Aqtay Abdallah (Enppi), Hamza Abdelkarim (Barcelona).





IRAN

TEAM MELLI · FIFA RANKING #30

COACH: AMIR GHALENOEI

CAPTAIN: ALIREZA JAHANBAKHSH

PLAYER TO WATCH: MEHDI TAREMI

STRENGTHS

Iran are one of Asia's most experienced World Cup nations, appearing in three consecutive tournaments. They are tactically disciplined, fiercely organised defensively and capable of stifling more technical teams through structured, compact shape. Their squad has several players competing at decent European clubs, and team spirit and national pride typically elevate performances on the biggest stage.

WEAKNESSES

Iran's attacking play lacks sophistication and creative spark at the top level. Their over-reliance on defensive organisation means when a game opens up, they can struggle to control tempo. The overall quality of players in their squad does not match the top tier of nations at this tournament. They have never advanced beyond the group stage at a World Cup.

OPPORTUNITIES

Facing New Zealand presents a genuine chance at three points, and a disciplined performance against Egypt could secure second place. Breaking their historical group-stage ceiling would be a landmark moment for Iranian football. The tournament is an opportunity for their European-based players to showcase their talent on the global stage and potentially attract bigger clubs.

THREATS

Belgium's attacking firepower, particularly De Bruyne and Doku, could be too dynamic for Iran's defensive structure to contain. Salah on his day is capable of single-handedly ending Iran's tournament. The off-field political tensions surrounding the national team have historically created distractions that may undermine squad harmony and focus during preparation.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Alireza Beiranvand, Payam Niazmand, Hossein Hosseini

DEFENDERS
Ehsan Hajsafi, Milad Mohammadi, Ali Nemati, Shojae Khalilzadeh, Hossein Kanaanizadegan, Danial Eiri, Ramin Rezaeian, Saleh Hardani

MIDFIELDERS
Saman Ghoddos (Kalba, UAE), Saeid Ezatolahi (Shahab al-Ahli, UAE), Mohammad Ghorbani (Al-Wahda, UAE), Rouzbeh Cheshmi, Amirmohammad Razzaghinia, Mohammad Mohebi (Rostov, Rus), Mehdi Torabi, Mehdi Ghayedi (Al-Nasr, UAE), Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Aria Yousefi

FORWARDS
Mehdi Taremi (Olympiakos, Gre), Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh, Ali Alipour, Shahriyar Moghanlou (Kalba, UAE), Dennis Eckert (known in Iran as Dennis Dargahi, Standard Liege, Bel)





NEW ZEALAND

ALL WHITES · FIFA RANKING #85

COACH: DARREN BAZELEY

CAPTAIN: CHRIS WOOD

PLAYER TO WATCH: JOE BELL

STRENGTHS

New Zealand have a hard-working, high-energy style built on physicality and relentless pressing. Several players have professional experience in European and Australian leagues, providing a solid base. Their team cohesion and collective spirit are genuine assets — they compete with discipline and rarely give games away without a fight, as demonstrated in recent tournaments.

WEAKNESSES

The quality gap between New Zealand and the top teams in this group is stark. They lack genuine world-class talent and their confederation (OFC) is one of the weakest, meaning limited preparation against elite opposition. Goal-scoring has been a chronic problem, and the team lacks players who can change a game individually at this level.

OPPORTUNITIES

The expanded 48-team format and the possibility of advancing as one of the best third-placed teams gives New Zealand a genuine, if slim, path to the round of 32. Performing admirably against stronger nations could significantly grow football's profile in a country dominated by rugby union. For individual players, strong performances could attract European interest.

THREATS

Belgium and Egypt represent exceptionally demanding opponents who would expose New Zealand's quality deficit. Even Iran, a more physical and tactically structured side, poses a difficult challenge. The risk of heavy defeats damaging morale and the team's broader image is real. Limited preparation time and OFC-level opposition prior to the tournament may leave the squad underprepared for elite-level intensity.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Max Crocombe (Millwall), Alex Paulsen (Lechia Gdansk, on loan from Bournemouth), Michael Woud (Auckland FC).

DEFENDERS
Tim Payne (Wellington Phoenix), Francis de Vries (Auckland FC), Tyler Bindon (Nottingham Forest), Michael Boxall (Minnesota United), Liberato Cacace (Wrexham), Nando Pijnaker (Auckland FC), Finn Surman (Portland Timbers), Callan Elliot (Auckland FC), Tommy Smith (Braintree Town).

MIDFIELDERS
Joe Bell (Viking FK), Matthew Garbett (Peterborough United), Marko Stamenic (Swansea City), Sarpreet Singh (Wellington Phoenix), Alex Rufer (Wellington Phoenix), Ben Old (Saint-Étienne), Callum McCowatt (Silkeborg IF), Lachlan Bayliss (Newcastle Jets), Ryan Thomas (PEC Zwolle).

FORWARDS
Kosta Barbarouses (Western Sydney Wanderers), Eli Just (Motherwell), Jesse Randall (Auckland FC), Ben Waine (Port Vale), Chris Wood (Nottingham Forest).



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GROUP H

Group H is an electrifying section defined by technical elegance, raw South American grit, and ambitious wild cards. The world-ranked number one and reigning European champions, Spain, are the undisputed heavyweights here. Orchestrated by the dazzling, press-resistant wizardry of Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams, La Roja's fluid possession game will comfortably dictate the tempo of the group, securing them the top spot as they launch their bid for global dominance.

Second place belongs to a transitioning but fiercely competitive Uruguay. Powered by Federico Valverde's endless midfield engine and Darwin Núñez's explosive physical presence, La Celeste possess far too much tactical maturity and tournament pedigree for the rest of the field. Saudi Arabia, despite their high-pressing ambition, will see their high defensive line ruthlessly exploited by Spain's pass masters to finish third, while a brave, debutant Cape Verde side props up the table after a historic but demanding introduction to the world stage.

PREDICTED FINISH

1. SPAIN
2. URUGUAY
3. SAUDI ARABIA
4. CAPE VERDE



SPAIN

LA ROJA · FIFA RANKING #2

COACH: LUIS DE LA FUENTE

CAPTAIN: RODRI

PLAYER TO WATCH: LAMINE YAMAL



STRENGTHS

Spain are the world's top-ranked side and defending Euro 2024 champions, arriving in North America on the back of their finest generation since the tiki-taka era. Lamine Yamal, Nico Williams and Pedri represent an extraordinary blend of youth and elite quality. Their possession-based system is fluid, coherent and relentlessly press-resistant. Luis de la Fuente has built a team that is both tactically sophisticated and bursting with individual brilliance.

WEAKNESSES

Despite their brilliance, Spain have historically underperformed at World Cups relative to their talent level. A lack of a true elite number nine has occasionally hampered them in big knockout moments. The very youth of key players like Yamal means the psychological demands of a World Cup final could test their composure under pressure in ways previous tournaments haven't.

OPPORTUNITIES

Spain have a genuine opportunity to become world champions for the first time since 2010, with arguably their most exciting squad since that golden generation. Group H is highly manageable, allowing rotation and squad building. Yamal and Williams could define this tournament and cement Spain as the team of the era. A World Cup triumph would complete a historic dominance of international football.

THREATS

Uruguay's physicality and tactical cynicism represent a real danger — they will not be intimidated by Spain's reputation. The weight of expectation as the top-ranked team may add pressure at critical moments. Injuries to Yamal or Pedri would significantly disrupt Spain's system. In the knockout rounds, physically direct opponents capable of disrupting their rhythm pose the greatest challenge

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Unai Simon (Athletic Bilbao), David Raya (Arsenal), Joan Garcia (Barcelona).

DEFENDERS
Marcos Llorente (Atletico Madrid), Marc Pubill (Atletico Madrid), Pedro Porro (Tottenham), Aymeric Laporte (Athletic Bilbao), Eric Garcia (Barcelona), Pau Cubarsi (Barcelona), Marc Cucurella (Chelsea), Alejandro Grimaldo (Bayer Leverkusen).

MIDFIELDERS
Rodri (Manchester City), Martin Zubimendi (Arsenal), Mikel Merino (Arsenal), Pedri (Barcelona), Gavi (Barcelona), Fabian Ruiz (Paris St-Germain), Alex Baena (Atletico Madrid).

FORWARDS
Yeremy Pino (Crystal Palace), Victor Munoz (Osasuna), Mikel Oyarzabal (Real Sociedad), Ferran Torres (Barcelona), Lamine Yamal (Barcelona), Dani Olmo (Barcelona), Nico Williams (Athletic Bilbao), Borja Iglesias (Celta Vigo).



URUGUAY

LA CELESTE · FIFA RANKING #17

COACH: MARCELO BIELSA

CAPTAIN: FEDERICO VALVERDE

PLAYER TO WATCH: DARWIN NUNEZ



STRENGTHS

Uruguay are tactically astute, physically robust and mentally hardened by decades of competitive international football. Darwin Nunez brings elite Premier League pace and power up front, while Federico Valverde's dynamism from midfield makes them dangerous in transition. The Uruguayan football culture, built on garra charrua — raw fighting spirit — means they never accept defeat gracefully and can drag results from games that appear to be slipping away.

WEAKNESSES

Uruguay's golden generation — Suarez, Cavani, Godin — has retired or declined, and the transition to a new era is still incomplete. Their style can be overly pragmatic, limiting goal-scoring output in games where a breakthrough is needed. Disciplinary issues and a tendency towards aggression can leave them exposed to red cards in crucial knockout moments.

OPPORTUNITIES

Uruguay have a clear path to the knockout rounds ahead of Cape Verde and Saudi Arabia. A positive result against Spain would send a statement to the tournament. For Darwin Nunez, this is an opportunity to establish himself as the clear leader of Uruguayan football's next era. The group presents a genuine chance to reach the round of 16 as group winners if Spain have an off day.

THREATS

Spain represent an enormous quality hurdle — their possession game could neutralise Uruguay's counter-attacking danger while slowly grinding them down. Nunez's inconsistency and occasional wasteful finishing could prove costly in tight games where margins matter. The transitional nature of their squad means chemistry and tactical cohesion may not yet be at the required level for deep tournament football.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Sergio Rochet (Internacional), Fernando Muslera (Galatasaray), Santiago Mele (Junior FC).

DEFENDERS
Guillermo Varela (Flamengo), Ronald Araujo (Barcelona), Jose Maria Gimenez (Atletico Madrid), Santiago Bueno (Wolves), Sebastian Caceres (Club America), Mathias Olivera (Napoli), Joaquin Piquerez (Palmeiras), Matias Vina (Flamengo).

MIDFIELDERS
Manuel Ugarte (Manchester United), Emiliano Martinez (Palmeiras), Rodrigo Bentancur (Tottenham), Federico Valverde (Real Madrid), Agustin Canobbio (Fluminense), Juan Manuel Sanabria (Atletico San Luis), Giorgian de Arrascaeta (Flamengo), Nicolas de la Cruz (Flamengo), Rodrigo Zalazar (SC Braga), Facundo Pellistri (Panathinaikos), Maximiliano Araujo (Sporting CP), Brian Rodriguez (Club America).

FORWARDS
Rodrigo Aguirre (Club America), Federico Vinas (Real Oviedo), Darwin Nunez (Al Hilal).



SAUDI ARABIA

GREEN FALCONS · FIFA RANKING #61
COACH: GIORGIOS DONIS
CAPTAIN: SALEM AL-DAWSARI
PLAYER TO WATCH: FIRAS AL-BURAIKAN



STRENGTHS

Saudi Arabia produced arguably the tournament's biggest shock in 2022 by defeating Argentina in the group stage, demonstrating they can compete with and upset elite opposition. Their high defensive line and aggressive pressing system creates chaos for unprepared opponents. The Saudi Pro League's investment in world-class players has raised the overall standard of domestic football, benefiting the national team through better training environments.

WEAKNESSES

Saudi Arabia's 2022 heroics masked an ultimately disappointing tournament exit in the group stage. Their high defensive line is as much a liability as a strength — against technical teams like Spain, it can be expertly exploited. Individual quality across the squad does not reach the level of their group opponents, and tactical predictability could be targeted by shrewd coaching opponents.

OPPORTUNITIES

Saudi Arabia are bidding to host the 2034 World Cup, making strong performances at 2026 part of a broader national footballing project. A positive result against Cape Verde or Uruguay could again make them the tournament's story. With massive domestic investment continuing, this World Cup offers a chance to validate that the Saudi football project is producing genuine international results.

THREATS

Spain's possession mastery is the perfect antidote to Saudi Arabia's high-line pressing system — La Roja will dissect the gaps with incisive passing. Uruguay are physical, experienced and have nothing to lose against Saudi Arabia. Over-inflated expectations based on the 2022 Argentina result could create pressure that hinders rather than enables performance.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Mohammed Al Owais (Al Ula), Nawaf Al Aqidi (Al Nassr), Ahmed Al Kassar (Al Qadsiah).

DEFENDERS
Abdulelah Al Amri (Al Nassr), Hassan Tambakti (Al Hilal), Jehad Thikri (Al Qadsiah), Ali Lajami (Al Hilal), Hassan Kadesh (Al Ittihad), Saud Abdulhamid (Lens, on loan from Roma), Mohammed Abu Al Shamat (Al Qadsiah), Ali Majrashi (Al Ahli), Moteb Al Harbi (Al Hilal), Nawaf Boushal (Al Nassr), Sultan Al-Ghannam (Al Nassr).

MIDFIELDERS
Mohammed Kanno (Al Hilal), Abdullah Al Khaibari (Al Nassr), Ziyad Al Johani (Al Ahli), Nasser Al Dawsari (Al Hilal), Musab Al Juwayr (Al Qadsiah), Alaa Al Hajji (Neom), Salem Al Dawsari (Al Hilal), Khalid Al Ghannam (Al Ettifaq), Ayman Yahya (Al Nassr).

FORWARDS
Firas Al Buraikan (Al Ahli), Saleh Al Shehri (Al Ittihad), Abdullah Al Hamdan (Al Nassr).





CAPE VERDE

BLUE SHARKS · FIFA RANKING #69
COACH: BUBISTA
CAPTAIN: RYAN MENDES
PLAYER TO WATCH: LOGAN COSTA

STRENGTHS

Cape Verde are one of African football's great over-achievers, consistently qualifying for AFCON tournaments and producing players of genuine quality despite their tiny population. They are well-organised defensively, difficult to break down and punch well above their weight class. Their Portuguese-speaking diaspora provides access to a European talent pool, giving them better quality players than their ranking might suggest.

WEAKNESSES

This is Cape Verde's first-ever World Cup appearance, and the step up in quality from AFCON competition to facing Spain and Uruguay will be enormous. Their squad depth is limited, and they lack players who regularly compete at the elite end of European football. Sustaining intensity across three group games with limited rotation options is a real concern.

OPPORTUNITIES

Simply being at the World Cup is historic, and performing respectably could transform football's profile across the Cape Verde islands. The expanded format means even a defeat could lead to progression as one of the best third-placed teams. Facing Spain could attract attention from European clubs towards their best players. Their debut is an opportunity to establish Cape Verde as a genuine African football nation.

THREATS

Spain are capable of inflicting historic scorelines on weaker opposition, which could damage morale and goal difference. Uruguay's physicality and aggression could overwhelm Cape Verde's more technically minded players. The psychological challenge of being World Cup debutants facing established giants may weigh heavily on the squad's collective confidence before a ball is kicked.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Vozinha (Chaves), Marcio Rosa (Montana), CJ dos Santos (San Diego).

DEFENDERS
Stopira (Torreense), Roberto Lopes (Shamrock Rovers), Joao Paulo (FCSB), Diney (Al Bataeh), Logan Costa (Villarreal), Steven Moreira (Columbus Crew), Wagner Pina (Trabzonspor), Sidny Lopes Cabral (Benfica), Kelvin Pires (SJK).

MIDFIELDERS
Jamiro Monteiro (PEC Zwolle), Kevin Pina (Krasnodar), Deroy Duarte (Ludogorets), Telmo Arcanjo (Vitoria Guimaraes), Laros Duarte (Puskas Akademia), Yannick Semedo (Farense).

FORWARDS
Ryan Mendes (Igdir), Garry Rodrigues (Apollon Limassol), Willy Semedo (Omonia), Jovane Cabral (Estrela Amadora), Gilson Tavares (Akron Tolyatti), Dailon Livramento (Casa Pia), Helio Varela (Maccabi Tel Aviv), Nuno da Costa (Istanbul Basaksehir).



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GROUP I

Group I is a blockbuster section defined by world-class attacking talismans and brutal physical battles. France are the undisputed heavyweights; fueled by Kylian Mbappé's lethal pace and the immense creative depth of players like Ousmane Dembélé and Michael Olise, Les Bleus possess entirely too much top-tier tournament pedigree to slip up here, making them a lock to top the group. The battle for second is an absolute box-office clash. Norway, breaking their 24-year major tournament drought, will lean heavily on Erling Haaland—the world's most clinical finisher—to punch their ticket to the knockouts. Haaland's unguardable presence will narrowly edge out a physically imposing, seasoned Senegal squad led by Sadio Mané. Meanwhile, a passionate Iraq side will focus on defensive damage control but ultimately anchor a highly demanding table.

PREDICTED FINISH

1	FRANCE
2	NORWAY
3	SENEGAL
4	IRAQ



FRANCE

LES BLEUS · FIFA RANKING: #1
COACH: DIDIER DESCHAMPS
CAPTAIN: KYLIAN MBAPPE
PLAYER TO WATCH: MICHAEL OLISE



STRENGTHS

France possess arguably the most explosive attack at the 2026 World Cup. Led by Kylian Mbappe, Les Bleus combine pace, creativity and ruthless finishing with remarkable squad depth. Players such as Ousmane Dembele, Michael Olise and William Saliba give Didier Deschamps elite options across every area of the pitch. Their blend of youth and tournament experience makes them one of the most balanced squads in the competition. Appearances in the last two World Cup finals underline their ability to deliver under pressure.

WEAKNESSES

France's midfield lacks the dominance of previous generations. Injuries to key figures could leave the side vulnerable in controlling games. Defensive concentration has also been inconsistent at times, especially against quick transitions and counterattacks. Internal squad harmony has occasionally been disrupted by off-field tensions that distract from on-pitch preparation.

OPPORTUNITIES

This tournament offers France the chance to cement a new era around Mbappe as the undisputed leader of world football. Emerging talents like Desire Doue could turn the World Cup into their global breakthrough moment, while Deschamps has an opportunity to conclude his long reign with another title. Group I presents an accessible path to the knockout rounds.

THREATS

The biggest threat may be pressure itself — France arrive with enormous expectations, and anything less than the trophy could be considered failure. Rivals will target their occasional defensive lapses and midfield imbalance during high-pressure knockout matches. Senegal's physical intensity and African Cup pedigree makes them a dangerous group-stage opponent capable of causing an upset.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Mike Maignan (AC Milan), Robin Risser (Lens), Brice Samba (Rennes).

DEFENDERS
Lucas Digne (Aston Villa), Malo Gusto (Chelsea), Lucas Hernandez (Paris St-Germain), Theo Hernandez (Al Hilal), Ibrahima Konate (Liverpool), Maxence Lacroix (Crystal Palace), Jules Kounde (Barcelona), William Saliba (Arsenal), Dayot Upamenaco (Bayern Munich).

MIDFIELDERS
N'Golo Kante (Fenerbache), Manu Kone (Roma), Adrien Rabiot (AC Milan), Aurelien Tchouameni (Real Madrid), Warren Zaire-Emery (Paris St-Germain).

FORWARDS
Maghnes Akliouche (Monaco), Bradley Barcola (Paris St-Germain), Rayan Cherki (Man City), Ousmane Dembele (Paris St-Germain), Desire Doue (Paris St-Germain), Michael Olise (Bayern Munich), Kylian Mbappe (Real Madrid), Jean-Phillipe Mateta (Crystal Palace), Marcus Thuram (Inter Milan).



NORWAY

LES BLEUS · FIFA RANKING: #31

COACH: STALE SOLBAKKEN

CAPTAIN: MARTIN ODEGAARD

PLAYER TO WATCH: ERLING HAALAND



STRENGTHS

Erling Haaland is the most clinical finisher in world football and gives Norway a devastating weapon that can change any game in an instant. With Manchester City intelligence and Champions League experience, Haaland understands how to perform at the highest level of the game. Norway's physicality and direct style — built around feeding their superstar — makes them unpredictable and dangerous for any defence in the world.

WEAKNESSES

Beyond Haaland, Norway's squad quality drops significantly. The team's dependence on feeding him means that if he is neutralised or isolated, their creative options diminish rapidly. Norway have historically been mediocre qualifiers who have rarely competed at major tournaments, meaning this squad has limited big-tournament experience and cohesion under genuine elite pressure.

OPPORTUNITIES

Norway's first World Cup in 24 years is already historic, and Haaland's presence gives them a legitimate shot at second place. A tournament platform allows Haaland to add international glory to his club achievements and potentially win the Golden Boot. If the system clicks, Norway are capable of beating Senegal or Iraq, meaning a knockout round appearance is a realistic ambition.

THREATS

France are capable of overwhelming Norway's defensive system — containing Mbappe while also attending to defensive duties presents an almost impossible dual task. Senegal's physical defensive approach could effectively neutralise Haaland as a threat in their meeting. If Norway's supply lines to Haaland are cut, the team has limited alternatives and could struggle to create any meaningful chances at all.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Orjan Haskjold Nyland, Egil Selvik (Watford), Sander Tangvik.

DEFENDERS
Julian Ryerson, Marcus Holmgren Pedersen, David Moller Wolfe, Fredrik Bjorkan, Kristoffer Ajer, Torbjorn Heggem, Leo Skiri Ostigard, Sondre Langas, Henrik Falchener.

MIDFIELDERS
Martin Odegaard, Sander Berge, Fredrik Aursnes, Patrick Berg, Kristian Thorstvedt, Morten Thorsby, Thelo Aasgaard.

FORWARDS
Erling Haaland, Alexander Sorloth, Jorgen Strand Larsen, Antonio Nusa, Oscar Bobb, Andreas Schjelderup, Jens Petter Hauge.



SENEGAL

LIONS OF TERANGA · FIFA RANKING #14
COACH: PAPE THIAW
CAPTAIN: KALIDOU KOULIBALY
PLAYER TO WATCH: SADIO MANE



STRENGTHS

Senegal are African champions and one of the continent's most powerful footballing nations. Sadio Mane, though beyond his absolute peak, brings world-class experience and leadership, while Ismaila Sarr and Boulaye Dia provide dangerous attacking outlets. They are physically imposing, technically accomplished and possess genuine tournament pedigree. Their AFCON triumph demonstrated an ability to win major tournaments under pressure.

WEAKNESSES

Mane's declining sharpness since leaving Liverpool at peak level is a concern for a side built partly around his creativity. Senegal can be tactically rigid against opponents who press high and disrupt their defensive shape. Midfield transition can slow when pressed, limiting counter-attacking opportunities. Their World Cup performances, while respectable, have not yet matched continental success.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group I offers Senegal a realistic path to second place and the knockout rounds ahead of Norway and Iraq. A strong performance against France — even in defeat — could validate their continental standing on the world stage. This tournament could be the platform for emerging talents in the squad to establish themselves globally and achieve what no Senegalese side has done: a deep World Cup run.

THREATS

France's attacking quality represents the most ferocious challenge Senegal will face — containing Mbappe is one of international football's hardest assignments. Norway, despite being less glamorous, are physical and direct and could make Senegal's path to second place uncomfortable. Any injury to key players in such a condensed tournament schedule could significantly weaken their prospects.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Edouard Mendy (Al-Ahli), Yehvann Diouf (Nice), Mory Diaw (Le Havre).

DEFENDERS
Krepin Diatta (Monaco), Antoine Mendy (Nice), Abdoulaye Seck (Maccabi Haifa), Kalidou Koulibaly (Al-Hilal), Moussa Niakhate (Lyon), Mamadou Sarr (Chelsea), El-Hadji Malick Diouf (West Ham United), Ismail Jakobs (Galatasaray).

MIDFIELDERS
Idrissa Gueye (Everton), Habib Diarra (Sunderland), Pape Matar Sarr (Tottenham), Pape Gueye (Villarreal), Lamine Camara (Monaco), Pathe Ciss (Rayo Vallecano), Bara Ndiaye (Bayern Munich).

FORWARDS
Sadio Mane (Al-Nassr), Bamba Dieng (Lorient), Iliman Ndiaye (Everton), Nicolas Jackson (Bayern Munich), Assane Diao (Como), Ibrahim Mbaye (Paris St-Germain), Cherif Ndiaye (Samsunspor), Ismaila Sarr (Crystal Palace).



IRAQ

LIONS OF MESOPOTAMIA · FIFA RANKING #57

COACH: GRAHAM ARNOLD

CAPTAIN: JALAL HASSAN

PLAYER TO WATCH: ZIDANE IQBAL



STRENGTHS

Iraq qualified impressively through the tough AFC process and bring passionate team spirit with strong continental experience. Their squad includes players who compete across European and Asian leagues, giving them a reasonable base of professional quality. Defensively disciplined and capable of playing on the counter, they can make themselves difficult opponents even against significantly stronger nations.

WEAKNESSES

Iraq's player quality does not approach the level of France or Senegal. They lack proven performers at top European clubs and limited World Cup experience means they are stepping into unfamiliar territory. Tactical limitations can be exposed against teams with high technical quality and positional discipline. Conceding goals in high volumes to elite sides is a significant risk.

OPPORTUNITIES

Returning to the World Cup after an extended absence is an achievement in itself, and performances here could galvanise football's growing popularity in Iraq. A victory against Norway could realistically be achieved. The expanded format means a positive goal difference scenario might open a path as one of the best third-placed teams, representing a remarkable achievement for Iraqi football.

THREATS

France could hand Iraq a heavy defeat that damages team morale and goal difference from the very first game. Senegal's physicality and direct play present a formidable second challenge. Norway's Erling Haaland represents a match-up nightmare for any defence. Political and administrative instability in Iraqi football has historically created preparation challenges that disrupt the national team's cohesion.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Fahad Talib, Jalal Hassan, Ahmed Basil

DEFENDERS
Hussein Ali, Manaf Younis, Zaid Tahseen, Rebin Sulaka, Akam Hashem, Merchas Doski, Ahmed Yahya, Zaid Ismail, Frans Putros, Mustafa Saadoon

MIDFIELDERS
Amir Al Ammari, Kevin Yakob, Zidane Iqbal, Aimar Sher, Ibrahim Bayesh, Ahmed Qasim, Youssef Amyn, Marko Farji

FORWARDS
Ali Jassim, Ali Al Hamadi, Ali Yousef, Aymen Hussein, Mohanad Ali



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- অস্টিওআর্থ্রাইটিস/রিউমাটয়েড আর্থ্রাইটিস-এর চিকিৎসার ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- যে কোন প্রকারের ক্রীড়াজনিত সমস্যা (**Sports injury**)- এর চিকিৎসার ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- অপারেশনের পর হাত পা শুকিয়ে গেলে এর চিকিৎসার ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- দুর্ঘটনার (**Accident**) কারণে হাত-পায়ের স্নায়ু ও মাংসপেশিতে সমস্যা হলে এর চিকিৎসার ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- ৩ মাসে ৫-১২ কেজি ওজন কমানোর ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- বিশেষজ্ঞ ডাক্তার দ্বারা পরিচালিত বর্হিবিভাগ-এর ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- এ্যাম্বুলেন্স সার্ভিস এর ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- ২৪ ঘন্টা জেনারেটর সুবিধা আছে।
- ফিজিওথেরাপির হোম সার্ভিস এর ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- মহিলা রোগীর জন্য মহিলা ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট আছে।





টেলিভিশনের স্বাস্থ্য বিষয়ক অনুষ্ঠানে **ডা. এস চক্রবর্তী**



এস. পি হাসপাতাল এন্ড অর্থ্রাইটিস রিসার্চ সেন্টার লি.

৩২-৩৫ প্রবাল হাউজিং, রিং রোড, আদাবর, শ্যামলী, ঢাকা।
ফোনঃ ৮১৪২১৮৪, ৮১৪২১৮৩, মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১১-৬৮২৭৭১, ০১৭১২-২৮৩৪৮৪
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GROUP J

Group J belongs to the defending champions. Argentina, fueled by the ultimate romantic pursuit of a back-to-back coronation for Lionel Messi in his final act, arrive with unparalleled collective belief. Supported by the relentless, peak-form engines of Julián Álvarez and Lautaro Martínez, La Albiceleste possess far too much tactical maturity and attacking depth to do anything but comfortably top the group.

Second place will be a fascinating tactical war of attrition. Austria, executing Ralf Rangnick's trademark, hyper-intense Gegenpressing system, have the structural cohesion to choke out opponents and secure the runner-up spot. Algeria's physical, AFCON-hardened resilience will keep them fighting hard in third, while a brave, debutant Jordan side anchors a highly demanding table after a historic first taste of the world stage.

PREDICTED FINISH

1. ARGENTINA
2. AUSTRIA
3. ALGERIA
4. JORDAN



ARGENTINA

LA ALBICELESTE · FIFA RANKING: #3

COACH: LIONEL SCALONI

CAPTAIN: LIONEL MESSI

PLAYER TO WATCH: JULIAN ALVAREZ



STRENGTHS

Argentina are the defending World Cup champions and FIFA's second-ranked team, arriving in North America as one of the tournament's two supreme favourites. Lionel Messi, even in the twilight of his career, remains the world's most decorated player and a source of inspiration that elevates the entire squad. Julian Alvarez and Lautaro Martinez provide lethal depth in attack, and the team has the collective belief and winning mentality of champions who know how to close out a tournament.

WEAKNESSES

Messi is four years older than when he lifted the trophy in Qatar, and his physical output across an entire tournament at this stage of his career is uncertain. Argentina's right-back position has been a structural vulnerability, and the team can become overly reliant on individual brilliance rather than collective system when games get tight. Managing Messi's minutes carefully could limit flexibility in certain matches.

OPPORTUNITIES

Retaining the World Cup and allowing Messi to bow out as a back-to-back champion would be one of sport's greatest ever conclusions. Group J is highly accessible, giving Argentina the chance to ease into the tournament with full fitness. For Alvarez and Martinez, establishing themselves as the next generation of Argentine football greatness begins with a second consecutive title.

THREATS

The physical decline of Messi over a six-week tournament is a genuine and growing risk. Argentina have made enemies across football and opponents will approach them with extreme physicality and tactical cynicism designed to frustrate their creators. Algeria, built on physical intensity and African Cup hardening, could make a group game more uncomfortable than expected. The mental weight of expectation as champions is enormous.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Juan Musso (Atletico Madrid), Geronimo Rulli (Marseille), Emiliano Martinez (Aston Villa).

DEFENDERS
Leonardo Balerdi (Marseille), Nicolas Tagliafico (Lyon), Gonzalo Montiel (River Plate), Lisandro Martinez (Manchester United), Cristian Romero (Tottenham), Nicolas Otamendi (Benfica), Facundo Medina (Marseille), Nahuel Molina (Atletico Madrid).

MIDFIELDERS
Leandro Paredes (River Plate), Rodrigo de Paul (Inter Miami), Valentin Barco (Strasbourg), Giovani lo Celso (Real Betis), Ezequiel Palacios (Bayer Leverkusen), Alexis Mac Allister (Liverpool), Enzo Fernandez (Chelsea).

FORWARDS
Julian Alvarez (Atletico Madrid), Lionel Messi (Inter Miami), Nicolas Gonzalez (Atletico Madrid), Thiago Almada (Atletico Madrid), Giuliano Simeone (Atletico Madrid), Nico Paz (Como), Jose Manuel Lopez (Palmeiras), Lautaro Martinez (Inter Milan).



AUSTRIA

DAS TEAM · FIFA RANKING #24

COACH: RALF RANGNICK

CAPTAIN: DAVID ALABA

PLAYER TO WATCH: MARCEL SABITZER



STRENGTHS

Austria under Ralf Rangnick have been transformed into one of Europe's most exciting national teams. Their high-pressing, high-intensity system has produced consistent results, and they reached the Euro 2024 quarter-finals. Players like Marcel Sabitzer, Christoph Baumgartner and David Alaba (fitness permitting) give them a genuine technical core. The system is well-drilled, collective and hard to play against for any side.

WEAKNESSES

Austria lack a world-class striker who can consistently convert in high-pressure moments, which has cost them in several big games. Rangnick's high-pressing system demands extraordinary physical output, and when teams disrupt the press through quick direct play, Austria can look disjointed. Limited World Cup pedigree means the mental experience of playing at the tournament's very highest stakes is untested.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group J offers Austria a genuine opportunity to qualify for the knockout rounds for the first time in decades, with Algeria and Jordan both potentially beatable. Rangnick's project represents Austrian football's most exciting moment in a generation, and a strong World Cup campaign could attract major clubs to their players and raise the domestic game's profile significantly. A result against Argentina would be historic.

THREATS

Argentina's individual quality — particularly Messi's vision — is the perfect counter to Rangnick's pressing system, which relies on the opposition playing out from the back. Algeria's physicality could disrupt Austria's technical approach in a tight, competitive second group fixture. Injury to David Alaba, whose World Cup participation remains uncertain after lengthy injury issues, would remove a crucial defensive and creative anchor.

GOALKEEPERS
Patrick Pentz (Brondby), Alexander Schlager (RB Salzburg), Florian Wiegele (Viktoria Pilsen)

DEFENDERS
David Affengruber (Elche), David Alaba (Real Madrid), Kevin Danso (Tottenham), Marco Friedl (Werder Bremen), Philipp Lienhart (Freiburg), Phillipp Mwene (Mainz), Stefan Posch (Mainz), Alexander Prass (Hoffenheim), Michael Svoboda (Venezia)

MIDFIELDERS
Christoph Baumgartner (RB Leipzig), Carney Chukwuemeka (Borussia Dortmund), Florian Grillitsch (Braga), Konrad Laimer (Bayern Munich), Marcel Sabitzer (Borussia Dortmund), Xaver Schlager (RB Leipzig), Romano Schmid (Werder Bremen), Alessandro Schopf (RZ Pellets WAC), Nicolas Seiwald (RB Leipzig), Paul Wanner (PSV Eindhoven), Patrick Wimmer (Wolfsburg)

FORWARDS
Marko Arnautovic (Red Star Belgrade), Michael Gregoritsch (Augsburg), Sasa Kalajdzic (LASK)



ALGERIA

LES FENNECS · FIFA RANKING #28

COACH: VLADIMIR PETKOVIC

CAPTAIN: RIYAD MAHREZ

PLAYER TO WATCH: ISLAM SLIMANI



STRENGTHS

Algeria are AFCON champions and one of Africa's most respected footballing nations. They possess players of genuine quality throughout the squad, with several competing in Ligue 1 and other European leagues. Physically powerful and tactically disciplined, they are capable of frustrating technically superior opponents. Their continental tournament experience means they understand how to manage pressure in knockout-format football.

WEAKNESSES

Algeria's failure to qualify for the 2022 World Cup despite their AFCON success highlighted consistency issues. The gap between AFCON-level competition and a World Cup against Argentina and Austria is significant. Their attack can be over-reliant on a small cluster of key players, and if those individuals are well-marked or suspended, creative options are limited. World Cup performance history has been modest.

OPPORTUNITIES

Algeria have the quality to challenge Austria for second place in the group. A positive result against a weaker opponent provides a platform for a historic knockout run. This World Cup is an opportunity to prove that their AFCON success translates to the global stage and to establish Algeria among the world's genuine contenders. A surprise performance against Argentina would be a statement watched across the continent.

THREATS

Argentina's quality is simply on a different level — their attack is capable of dismantling the most organised defences in the world. Austria, currently in fine form under Ralf Rangnick's high-pressing system, could prove a fiercely competitive challenge for the second qualification spot. Any internal squad disagreements or off-field distractions — which have troubled Algerian football in recent years — could derail preparation.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS

Oussama Benbot (USM Alger), Melvin Masstil (Stade Nyonnaise), Luca Zidane (Granada)

DEFENDERS

Achraf Abada (USM Alger), Rayan Ait-Nouri (Manchester City), Zinedine Belaid (JS Kabylie), Rafik Belghali (Verona), Ramy Bensebaini (Borussia Dortmund), Samir Chergui (Paris FC), Jaouen Hadjam (Young Boys Bern), Aissa Mandi (Lille), Mohamed Amine Tougai (Esperance)

MIDFIELDERS

Houssem Aouar (Al-Ittihad), Nabil Bentaleb (Lille), Hicham Boudaoui (Nice), Fares Chaibi (Eintracht Frankfurt), Ibrahim Maza (Bayer Leverkusen), Yassine (Charleroi), Ramiz Zerrouki (Twente)

FORWARDS

Mohamed Amine Amoura (Wolfsburg), Nadir Benbouali (Gyori ETO), Adil Boulbina (Al-Duhail), Fares Ghedjemis (Frosinone), Amine Gouiri (Marseille), Riyad Mahrez (Al-Ahli), Anis Hadj Moussa (Feyenoord)



JORDAN

AL-NASHAMA · FIFA RANKING #63

COACH: JAMAL SELLAMI

CAPTAIN: IHSAN HADDAD

PLAYER TO WATCH: MUSA AL-TAMARI



STRENGTHS

Jordan reached the AFC Asian Cup final in 2024, their best-ever continental result, demonstrating genuine progress and competitive quality within Asian football. Their organised, disciplined defensive structure makes them hard to beat, and the confidence gained from their Asian Cup run gives the squad a belief in their ability to compete against better-ranked opponents. Their World Cup qualification itself is an enormous achievement.

WEAKNESSES

The quality chasm between Jordan and Argentina, Austria or Algeria is significant. This is Jordan's first-ever World Cup appearance, meaning they arrive with no experience of the tournament's unique psychological and physical demands. Their squad lacks players who regularly compete at the top end of European football, limiting their ability to impose themselves on technically superior opponents.

OPPORTUNITIES

Simply participating in a World Cup is a historic milestone for Jordanian football. Performing respectably on the global stage can catalyse the sport's growth in the country and region. The expanded format means even a third-place finish could theoretically offer progression. This tournament gives Jordan's best players the platform to attract international attention and potentially secure moves to better clubs and leagues.

THREATS

Argentina represent an almost unprecedented challenge for a World Cup debutant, with the real risk of a damaging heavy defeat in the opening game. Austria's pressing system could overwhelm Jordan's technical quality. Algeria's physical approach could prove as difficult as the more renowned opponents. The risk of consecutive large defeats damaging squad morale for the remainder of the tournament is a genuine concern management must address.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Yazeed Abulaila (Al-Hussein), Abdullah Al-Fakhouri (Al-Wehdat), Noor Bani Attiah (Al-Faisaly).

DEFENDERS
Abdallah Nasib (Al-Zawraa), Ehsan Haddad, Saed Al-Rosan, Saleem Obaid (Al-Hussein), Yazan Al-Arab (FC Seoul), Mohammad Abualnadi (Selangor), Husam Abu Dahab, Anas Banawi (Al-Faisaly), Mohannad Abu Taha (Al-Quwa Al-Jawiya), Mohammad Abu Hasheesh (Al-Karma).

MIDFIELDERS
Noor Al-Rawabdeh (Selangor), Nizar Al-Rashdan (Qatar), Ibrahim Saadeh (Al-Karma), Rajaei Ayed, Mahmoud Al-Mardi (Al-Hussein), Amer Jamous (Al-Zawraa), Mohammad Al-Dawoud (Al-Wehdat).

FORWARDS
Mousa Al-Tamari (Rennes), Odeh Al-Fakhouri (Pyramids), Mohammad Abu Zrayq (Raja Casablanca), Ali Azaizeh (Al-Shabab), Ibrahim Sabra (Lokomotiva Zagreb), Ali Olwan (Al-Sailiya).



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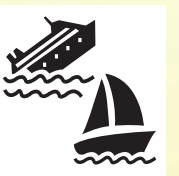


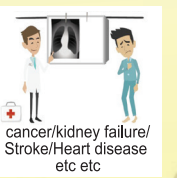
Marine



Personal Accident



Travel



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GROUP K

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Second place will be a fascinating tactical war of attrition. Austria, executing Ralf Rangnick's trademark, hyper-intense Gegenpressing system, have the structural cohesion to choke out opponents and secure the runner-up spot. Algeria's physical, AFCON-hardened resilience will keep them fighting hard in third, while a brave, debutant Jordan side anchors a highly demanding table after a historic first taste of the world stage.

PREDICTED FINISH

1	PORTUGAL
2	COLOMBIA
3	CONGO DR
4	UZBEKISTAN



PORTUGAL

A SELECAO · FIFA RANKING: #5
COACH: ROBERTO MARTINEZ
CAPTAIN: CRISTIANO RONALDO
PLAYER TO WATCH: BRUNO FERNANDES



STRENGTHS

Portugal possess extraordinary attacking depth and individual quality. Rafael Leao, Bernardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes and Pedro Neto form one of international football's most exciting attacking collectives. Ruben Dias leads a composed, experienced defensive unit. The post-Ronaldo era has liberated the team tactically, allowing a more fluid, collective system that is arguably more difficult to defend against than Portugal sides of recent years.

WEAKNESSES

Cristiano Ronaldo's twilight-years presence at the Saudi Pro League limits his impact at the highest level, yet his omission or reduced role could create a psychological distraction. Portugal have an unfortunate history of underperforming at World Cups relative to squad quality, with a tendency to tighten up in elimination rounds. The central striker position remains less convincing than the creative roles behind it.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group K is arguably the most accessible group available to a top-ranked nation, presenting Portugal with a near-perfect platform to build momentum. A first-ever World Cup title would vindicate years of exceptional player development through the Portuguese academy system. This is the moment for Bernardo Silva and Bruno Fernandes to lead Portugal to the glory that the Ronaldo era promised but never delivered at this tournament.

THREATS

Colombia are a significantly more dangerous opponent than their ranking might suggest, with genuine South American quality. Complacency in an accessible group is a real psychological risk that must be managed carefully. Any public debate around Ronaldo's role, inclusion or influence could fragment focus and dominate media coverage at the expense of actual preparation. History shows Portugal rarely deliver when the expectation is highest.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Diogo Costa (Porto), Jose Sa (Wolves), Rui Silva (Sporting), Ricardo Velho (Genclerbirligi).

DEFENDERS
Diogo Dalot (Manchester United), Matheus Nunes (Manchester City), Ruben Dias (Manchester City), Nelson Semedo (Fenerbahce), Joao Cancelo (Barcelona), Nuno Mendes (Paris St-Germain), Goncalo Inacio (Sporting), Renato eiga (Villarreal), Tomas raujo (Benfica).

MIDFIELDERS
Ruben Neves (Al-Hilal), Samu Costa (Mallorca), Joao Neves (Paris St-Germain), Vitinha (Paris St-Germain), Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United), Bernardo Silva (Manchester City).

FORWARDS
Cristiano Ronaldo (Al-Nassr), Joao Felix (Al-Nassr), Francisco Trincao (Sporting), Francisco Conceicao (Juventus), Pedro Neto (Chelsea), Rafael Leao (AC Milan), Goncalo Guedes (Real Sociedad), Goncalo Ramos (Paris St-Germain).



COLOMBIA

LOS CAFETEROS · FIFA RANKING: #13
COACH: NESTOR LORENZO
CAPTAIN: JAMES RODRIGUEZ
PLAYER TO WATCH: LUIS DIAZ



STRENGTHS

Colombia reached the Copa America 2024 final in stunning fashion, going unbeaten throughout the tournament before losing only in the final. James Rodriguez — at his best one of the most technically gifted players of his generation — remains the creative heartbeat of the team. Luis Diaz provides explosive, direct pace on the wing that can trouble any defence in the world on his day. Colombia have proven tournament mentality and South American competitive hardening.

WEAKNESSES

James Rodriguez's career has been defined by inconsistency and recurring physical problems that have prevented him from fulfilling his extraordinary talent. Over-dependence on individual moments of brilliance can leave Colombia lacking structure when those moments don't arrive. Defensively they can be porous in transition, and their World Cup knockout record does not match their talent level.

OPPORTUNITIES

Group K offers Colombia a realistic route to second place that could set up a deep tournament run. For James Rodriguez, this is potentially his final World Cup and a chance to finally deliver at the tournament where he announced himself to the world in 2014. Luis Diaz could emerge as one of the tournament's defining players, and a strong performance by Colombia would validate their Copa America renaissance as more than a one-off.

THREATS

Portugal's attacking depth is a severe challenge even for Colombia's considerable defensive resources. If James Rodriguez is not at his physical and creative best, Colombia's attacking options become significantly more limited. A shock result against Congo DR or Uzbekistan could complicate qualification. The expectation following the Copa America run creates pressure that Colombian football has not always handled gracefully at previous World Cups.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Camilo Vargas (Atlas), Alvaro Montero (Velez Sarsfield), David Ospina (Atletico Nacional)

DEFENDERS
Davinson Sanchez (Galatasaray), Jhon Lucumi (Bologna), Yerry Mina (Cagliari), Willer Ditta (Cruz Azul), Daniel Munoz (Crystal Palace), Santiago Arias (Independiente), Johan Mojica (Mallorca), Deiver Machado (Nantes)

MIDFIELDERS
Richard Rios (Benfica), Jefferson Lerma (Crystal Palace), Kevin Castano (River Plate), Juan Camilo Portilla (Athletico Paranaense), Gustavo Puerta (Racing de Santander), Jhon Arias (Palmeiras), Jorge Carrascal (Flamengo), Juan Fernando Quintero (River Plate), James Rodriguez (Minnesota United), Jaminton Campaz (Rosario Central)

FORWARDS
Juan Camilo Hernandez (Real Betis), Luis Diaz (Bayern Munich), Luis Suarez (Sporting), Carlos Andres Gomez (Vasco da Gama), Jhon Cordoba (Krasnodar)



CONGO DR

LEOPARDS · FIFA RANKING: #46
COACH: SEBASTIEN DESABRE
CAPTAIN: CHANCEL MBEMBA
PLAYER TO WATCH: YOANE WISSA



STRENGTHS

Congo DR are a sleeping giant of African football, a nation of extraordinary size and population that has historically punched below its weight globally but shown AFCON competitiveness. Their squad includes players who compete across Belgium, France and other European leagues. Physically imposing and technically capable in certain positions, they can make games uncomfortable for more technically polished opponents.

WEAKNESSES

Structural and administrative instability in Congolese football has long undermined the national team's potential. Player development pipelines are inconsistent, and the squad lacks the cohesion and tactical sophistication of the top tier of African nations. Limited World Cup experience means they are entering genuinely unfamiliar territory, and the psychological challenge of facing Portugal may prove overwhelming for parts of the squad.

OPPORTUNITIES

Congo DR's World Cup appearance can serve as a catalyst for the enormous latent football potential of one of Africa's largest nations. A competitive performance against Colombia or Uzbekistan could provide the foundation for points. For their best players, this platform offers a chance to attract European clubs of higher standing. This moment could be the beginning of Congo DR becoming a genuine force in world football.

THREATS

Portugal's attacking quality is a severe mismatch — the variety of threats they possess makes defending against them an almost impossible task for a side of Congo DR's level. Colombia's South American nous and quality presents a formidable barrier for second place. Any continuing administrative turmoil or payment disputes — which have previously disrupted Congolese national team preparations — could sabotage the tournament before it begins.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Matthieu Epolo (Standard Liege), Timothy Fayulu (Noah), Lionel Mpasi (Le Havre).

DEFENDERS
Dylan Batubinsika (Larisa), Gedoon Kalulu (Aris Limassol), Steve Kapuadi (Widzew Lodz), Joris Kayembe (Racing Genk), Arthur Masuaku (Racing Lens), Chancel Mbemba (Lille), Axel Tuanzebe (Burnley), Aaron Wan-Bissaka (West Ham United).

MIDFIELDERS
Theo Bongonda (Spartak Moscow), Brian Cipenga (Castellon), Meshack Elia (Alanyaspor), Gael Kakuta (Larisa), Edo Kayembe (Watford), Nathanael Mbuku (Montpellier), Samuel Moutoussamy (Atromitos), Ngal'ayel Mukau (Lille), Charles Pickel (Espanyol), Noah Sadiki (Sunderland), Aaron Tshibola (Kilmarnock).

FORWARDS
Cedric Bakambu (Real Betis), Simon Banza (Al Jazira), Fiston Mayele (Pyramids), Yoane Wissa (Newcastle United).



UZBEKISTAN

WHITE WOLVES · FIFA RANKING: #50
COACH: FABIO CANNAVARO
CAPTAIN: ELDOR SHOMURODOV
PLAYER TO WATCH: ABDULKODIR KHUSANOV



STRENGTHS

Uzbekistan qualified impressively through the tough AFC process, demonstrating genuine improvement in Central Asian football over recent years. They have a young, hungry squad with increasing numbers of players competing in South Korean, Russian and select European leagues. Team unity and collective work ethic are genuine strengths for a nation that has developed its football infrastructure significantly over the past decade.

WEAKNESSES

Uzbekistan are making their World Cup debut and have no experience of the unique demands of the tournament. The squad's quality does not approach that of Portugal or Colombia, and the entire group represents step-ups from the level of opposition they have faced in qualifying. Their domestic league is not of the standard required to prepare players for elite international football without significant additional competitive experience.

OPPORTUNITIES

This is the greatest moment in Uzbekistan football history, and performing well can inspire an entire generation of Central Asian players and fans. A result against Congo DR could provide a foundation for a historic points tally. For their best players, this global platform offers an opportunity to attract interest from better-resourced clubs and leagues, accelerating the nation's football development significantly.

THREATS

Portugal's attacking depth is a severe challenge even for Colombia's considerable defensive resources. If James Rodriguez is not at his physical and creative best, Colombia's attacking options become significantly more limited. A shock result against Congo DR or Uzbekistan could complicate qualification. The expectation following the Copa America run creates pressure that Colombian football has not always handled gracefully at previous World Cups.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Utkir Yusupov, Abduvohid Nematov, Botirali Ergashev.

DEFENDERS
Rustam Ashurmatov, Farrukh Sayfiev, Khojiakbar Alijonov, Sherzod Nasrullaev, Umar Eshmurodov, Abdukodir Khusanov, Abdulla Abdullaev, Bekhruz Karimov, Jakhongir Urozov, Avazbek Ulmasaliev.

MIDFIELDERS
Otabek Shukurov, Jaloliddin Masharipov, Odiljon Hamrobekov, Oston Urunov, Jamshid Iskanderov, Dostonbek Khamdamov, Abbosbek Fayzullaev, Akmal Mozgovoy, Azizjon Ganiev, Sherzod Esanov (Bukhara).

FORWARDS
Eldor Shomurodov, Igor Sergeev, Azizbek Amonov.



দেশের অত্যাবশ্যকীয় আমদানি-রপ্তানি পণ্য পরিবহনে এবং আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্যে বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন সমুদ্রগামী জাহাজ বহর নিয়ে জাতীয় উন্নয়ন কর্মকাণ্ডে সক্রিয় রয়েছে।

নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চয়তার মাধ্যমে আপনার পণ্য পরিবহনের জন্য জাতীয় পতাকাবাহী সংস্থা বিএসসি'র সেবা গ্রহণ করুন।

বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন

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GROUP L

Group L features a compelling mix of historical tournament heavyweights, aging veterans, and dangerous, mercurial dark horses. England arrive boasting their most complete, star-studded squad in a generation. Driven by Jude Bellingham's box-to-box dynamism and Harry Kane's clinical brilliance, the Three Lions possess the tactical variety and depth to easily handle the group phase and claim the top spot. Second place belongs to a transitioning but resilient Croatia. Guided by the timeless leadership of Luka Modrić, their world-class tournament experience and calm collective intelligence will prove vital in navigating tight spaces to secure the runner-up spot. A highly unpredictable Ghana, fueled by Mohammed Kudus's creative spark, will threaten on the counter to finish a close third, while a robust Panama side anchors the table.

FREDICTED FINISH

1. ENGLAND
2. CROATIA
3. GHANA
4. PANAMA



ENGLAND

THREE LIONS · FIFA RANKING # 4

COACH: THOMAS TUCHEL

CAPTAIN: HARRY KANE

PLAYER TO WATCH: JUDE BELLINGHAM



STRENGTHS

England arrive with exceptional depth and quality across every area of the pitch, arguably their most complete squad since the 1966 generation. Harry Kane's goalscoring record is historic and he remains one of international football's most reliable finishers. Jude Bellingham provides dynamic, box-to-box quality that ranks among the best in world football. Phil Foden's creativity adds another dimension, and the Premier League's intensity means the squad arrive battle-hardened and physically prepared.

WEAKNESSES

England's major tournament record is defined by painful near-misses — runners-up at Euro 2020 and Euro 2024 — and an inability to cross the line in the biggest moments. The psychological fragility that afflicts English football at crucial junctures remains an unresolved issue. Their left-back position has been a persistent structural weakness, and the team can become over-cautious and direct when under pressure, abandoning the technical football they are capable of.

OPPORTUNITIES

England have the squad quality to win the World Cup for the first time since 1966, and Group L represents a generous path to the knockout rounds. For Bellingham and the next generation, this is the moment to step out of the shadows of near-misses and claim a historic title. A World Cup triumph would transform English football and validate the extraordinary Premier League investment in player development over the past two decades.

THREATS

England's history of tournament underachievement is its own psychological threat — the burden of 60 years of hurt weighs on every squad. Croatia, despite ageing, have beaten England in the most painful of moments and will target their mental vulnerability. Any Kane injury or loss of form removes the most reliable goal-scoring mechanism. The pressure of being fourth-ranked favourites in front of an expectant nation amplifies every negative moment.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS

Dean Henderson (Crystal Palace), Jordan Pickford (Everton), James Trafford (Manchester City)

DEFENDERS

Dan Burn (Newcastle United), Marc Guehi (Manchester City), Reece James (Chelsea), Ezri Konsa (Aston Villa), Tino Livramento (Newcastle), Nico O'Reilly (Manchester City), Jarell Quansah (Bayer Leverkusen), Djed Spence (Tottenham), John Stones (Manchester City)

MIDFIELDERS

Elliot Anderson (Nottingham Forest), Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid), Eberechi Eze (Arsenal), Jordan Henderson (Brentford), Kobbie Mainoo (Manchester United), Declan Rice (Arsenal), Morgan Rogers (Aston Villa)

FORWARDS

Anthony Gordon (Newcastle United), Harry Kane (Bayern Munich), Noni Madueke (Arsenal), Marcus Rashford (Barcelona on loan from Manchester United), Bukayo Saka (Arsenal), Ivan Toney (Al-Ahli), Ollie Watkins (Aston Villa)



CROATIA

THREE LIONS · FIFA RANKING #11

COACH: ZLATKO DALIC

CAPTAIN: LUKA MODRIC

PLAYER TO WATCH: MATEO KOVACIC



STRENGTHS

England arrive with exceptional depth and quality across every area of the pitch, arguably their most complete squad since the 1966 generation. Harry Kane's goalscoring record is historic and he remains one of international football's most reliable finishers. Jude Bellingham provides dynamic, box-to-box quality that ranks among the best in world football. Phil Foden's creativity adds another dimension, and the Premier League's intensity means the squad arrive battle-hardened and physically prepared.

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WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Dominik Livakovic (Dinamo Zagreb), Dominik Kotarski (Copenhagen), Ivor Pandur (Hull City).

DEFENDERS
Josko Gvardiol (Manchester City), Duje Caleta-Car (Real Sociedad), Josip Sutalo (Ajax Amsterdam), Josip Stanisic (Bayern Munich), Marin Pongracic (Fiorentina), Martin Erlic (Midtjylland), Luka Vuskovic (Hamburg).

MIDFIELDERS
Luka Modric (AC Milan), Mateo Kovacic (Manchester City), Mario Pasalic (Atalanta), Nikola Vlasic (Torino), Luka Sucic (Real Sociedad), Martin Baturina (Como), Kristijan Jakic (Augsburg), Petar Sucic (Inter Milan), Nikola Moro (Bologna), Toni Fruk (Rijeka).

FORWARDS
Ivan Perisic (PSV Eindhoven), Andrej Kramaric (Hoffenheim), Ante Budimir (Osasuna), Marco Pasalic (Orlando City), Petar Musa (Dallas), Igor Matanovic (Freiburg).



GHANA

THREE LIONS · FIFA RANKING #74

COACH: TBC

CAPTAIN: JORDAN AYEW

PLAYER TO WATCH: ANTOINE SEMENYO



STRENGTHS

Panama are a CONCACAF success story, qualifying for their second World Cup and demonstrating that Central American football is developing rapidly. They are physically robust, collectively organised and capable of making life extremely difficult for technically superior opponents through disciplined defensive structure. Home confederation support and familiarity with North American playing conditions is a genuine benefit for a tournament held across the USA, Canada and Mexico.

WEAKNESSES

Panama's 2018 World Cup experience was unforgiving — they lost all three games, conceding 11 goals including a 6-1 defeat to England. Individual quality significantly below the level of their opponents makes it difficult to threaten in attack, and their tendency to concede from set pieces is a weakness that well-organised teams will ruthlessly exploit. Creating chances against disciplined defences remains a fundamental limitation.

OPPORTUNITIES

Playing in front of a passionate home-region crowd in the USA offers Panama a unique advantage unavailable to most nations at a World Cup. A competitive performance against Croatia or Ghana would represent significant progress from their 2018 experience. This tournament can inspire a generation of young Panamanian footballers and demonstrates that their CONCACAF qualification was not an anomaly but the beginning of something sustained.

THREATS

England's attacking power — featuring Kane, Bellingham and Foden — could repeat or exceed the 6-1 from 2018 and cause severe psychological damage from the opening game. Croatia's experience will make them difficult opponents even if they are an ageing team. Ghana's pace on the counter could repeatedly expose Panama's defensive transition. The risk of shipping multiple heavy defeats and exiting with a significantly negative goal difference is very real.

WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Benjamin Asare (Accra Hearts of Oak SC), Lawrence Ati-Zigi (St Gallen), Joseph Anang (St Patrick's Athletic).

DEFENDERS
Baba Abdul Rahman (PAOK), Gideon Mensah (Auxerre), Marvin Senaya (Auxerre), Alidu Seidu (Rennes), Abdul Mumin (Rayo Vallecano), Jerome Opoku (Istanbul Basaksehir), Jonas Adjetey (Wolfsburg), Kojo Oppong Peprah (Nice), Elisha Owusu (Auxerre), Derrick Luckassen (Pafos).

MIDFIELDERS
Thomas Partey (Villarreal), Kwasi Sibo (Real Oviedo), Augustine Boakye (Saint-Etienne), Caleb Yirenkyi (Nordsjaelland), Abdul Fatawu Issahaku (Leicester City).

FORWARDS
Kamaldeen Sulemana (Atalanta), Christopher Bonsu Baah (Al Qadsiah), Ernest Nuamah (Lyon), Antoine Semenyo (Manchester City), Brandon Thomas-Asante (Coventry City), Prince Kwabena Adu (Viktoria Plzen), Inaki Williams (Athletic Bilbao), Jordan Ayew (Leicester City)



PANAMA

THREE LIONS · FIFA RANKING #33

COACH: THOMAS CHRISTIANSEN

CAPTAIN: ANIBAL GODOY

PLAYER TO WATCH: ADALBERTO CARRASQUILLA



STRENGTHS

England arrive with exceptional depth and quality across every area of the pitch, arguably their most complete squad since the 1966 generation. Harry Kane's goalscoring record is historic and he remains one of international football's most reliable finishers. Jude Bellingham provides dynamic, box-to-box quality that ranks among the best in world football. Phil Foden's creativity adds another dimension, and the Premier League's intensity means the squad arrive battle-hardened and physically prepared.

WEAKNESSES

England's major tournament record is defined by painful near-misses — runners-up at Euro 2020 and Euro 2024 — and an inability to cross the line in the biggest moments. The psychological fragility that afflicts English football at crucial junctures remains an unresolved issue. Their left-back position has been a persistent structural weakness, and the team can become over-cautious and direct when under pressure, abandoning the technical football they are capable of.

OPPORTUNITIES

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THREATS

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WORLD CUP SQUAD 2026

GOALKEEPERS
Orlando Mosquera, Luis Mejia, Cesar Samudio.

DEFENDERS
Cesar Blackman, Jorge Gutierrez, Amir Murillo, Fidel Escobar, Andres Andrade, Edgardo Farina, Jose Cordoba, Eric Davis, Jiovany Ramos, Roderick Miller.

MIDFIELDERS
Anibal Godoy, Adalberto Carrasquilla, Carlos Harvey, Cristian Martinez, Jose Luis Rodriguez, Cesar Yanis, Yoel Barcenas, Alberto Quintero, Azarias Londono.

FORWARDS
Ismael Diaz, Cecilio Waterman, Jose Fajardo, Tomas Rodriguez.



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#1 FIFA WORLD CUP DESTINATION



Sabbib Bin Sattear

While bidding for the FIFA World Cup broadcasting rights T Sports walked in with a plan. Not just a budget. Not just a brand name. A real plan that shows exactly what is going to happen every single day of the tournament.

It starts with Live the Game. The signature show. The one that will air before every single match and set the whole thing on fire. By the time the first whistle blows, every viewer watching will already be fully alive.



When the match ends, Round-up will be there. Every goal. Every moment. Every story from the day, told properly.

Every evening, World Cup Syndrome will bring familiar celebrity faces to the screen, sharing their own World Cup memories and making the whole country feel like one big living room.

Bisshocup Pothe Pothe will take the cameras out of the studio and onto the streets of Dhaka. Real people. Real reactions. Real Bangladesh.

WC Vlog will travel to the host cities and find the Bangladeshi communities living the tournament from American soil, connecting the diaspora back home.

And in every gap, in every break, in every quiet moment between the big shows, the fillers will do their job. Magical Moments. Magnificent Goals. Moments of the World Cup. Pure football. No setup needed. Just emotion on a screen.

This plan is a full world. Morning to midnight. Match days and off days. Young fans and old ones. Studio and street. All catered in one.

The board saw all of this, and this showed them one thing clearly that T Sports wasn't just asking for the World Cup rights. They were already ready for them.

shakira

Queen Of The World Cup



Tanvir Ahmed Pranto

Managers orchestrate tactics and icons chase immortality, but a FIFA World Cup simply does not begin until Shakira says it does. For two decades, FIFA has rotated through pop stars, but the tournament's sonic identity remains a total monarchy. With the release of "Dai Dai," her explosive 2026 collaboration with Burna Boy, the Colombian icon has permanently woven herself into the structural DNA of the sport.

Here is the definitive chronicle of how one voice conquered the beautiful game.

2006: The Berlin Blueprint ("Hips Don't Lie")

The reign began under the summer skies of Germany. Stepping onto the turf before the Berlin final, Shakira unleashed a custom-engineered version of her global smash. It was a sonic warning shot—a proof of concept that Latin pop rhythms possessed the exact, stadium-shaking frequency required to match the emotional volume of a World Cup finale.

2010: The Cultural Coronation ("Waka Waka — This Time for Africa")

The 2010 tournament belongs to the archives for Spain's tiki-taka masterclass, but culturally, it belongs entirely to Shakira. By blending traditional African melodies with a euphoric pop chorus, she created a multi-billion-streamed juggernaut. It outlived the tournament to earn a Guinness World Record as the most-streamed World Cup song in history, establishing a standard against which all future anthems are brutally judged.

2014: Hijacking the Samba Narrative ("La La La — Brazil 2014")

When FIFA's official anthems failed to cut through the noise in Brazil, Shakira hijacked the tournament's identity. Her pulsating, club-ready hit eclipsed the official track, culminating in a spectacular, unifying performance at the historic Maracanã closing ceremony that cemented her status as football's true musical talisman.

2026: The Global Resurrection ("Dai Dai")

After a twelve-year hiatus from official tournament duty, Her Majesty returns for the massive 48-team expansion. Teaming up with Afrobeats titan Burna Boy, "Dai Dai" bridges Latin pop with heavy African percussion—a borderless anthem perfectly mirrored for an interconnected tournament. Dropping a teaser from the Maracanã with four footballs representing her tournament legacy, she proved she is ready to headline the first-ever Super Bowl-style World Cup Final halftime show at MetLife Stadium.



মানসম্মত জ্বালানি তেল ও বিশ্বমানের টোটাল এবং লুক অয়েল ব্র্যান্ডের লুব্রিকেন্টস বিপণন করে
দেশ ও জাতির উন্নয়ন অগ্রযাত্রায় সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণে অঙ্গীকারাবদ্ধ

"পদ্মা অয়েল পিএলসি"



❖ দেশের সর্বত্র নিরবচ্ছিন্নভাবে সরকার নির্ধারিত মূল্যে মানসম্মত পেট্রোলিয়াম পণ্য সরবরাহের মাধ্যমে দেশের জ্বালানি নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিতকরণ।



❖ যানবাহন ও শিল্প কারখানায় প্রয়োগযোগ্য উন্নত মানসম্পন্ন লুব্রিকেন্টস



❖ দেশীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক উড়োজাহাজে সুনামের সাথে জেট এ-১ জ্বালানি তেল সরবরাহকরণ।

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- এজেন্সি এবং এল পি জি ডিলার।
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- এগ্রো-কেমিক্যালস্ পরিবেশক।

পদ্মা অয়েল পিএলসি

(বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন এর একটি অঙ্গ প্রতিষ্ঠান)

প্রধান কার্যালয় : পদ্মা ভবন,
ষ্ট্র্যান্ড রোড, চট্টগ্রাম।

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শিক্ষা আর সঞ্চয় করবো মোরা বিশ্বজয়

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- প্রাথমিক জমা মাত্র ১০০ টাকা এবং কোন অ্যাকাউন্ট মেইনটেন্যান্স চার্জ নেই
- ফ্রি ডেবিট কার্ড এবং কোন বাৎসরিক চার্জ নেই

বিস্তারিত জানতে
স্ক্যান করুন

A NATION STITCHED IN WORLD CUP colours



Kamran Ahmed



PHOTOS: TANVIN TAMIM

As the world counts down its final days to the FIFA World Cup 2026, the hype has reached fever pitch across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. But nowhere does that anticipation manifest quite like it does in Bangladesh. Step into Gulistan or New Market in Dhaka this week and you'll find scenes that rival any host city — waves of blue-and-white, yellow-and-green, and every colour in between, as though the World Cup has already kicked off here.

Surging tides of Argentina's stripes and Brazil's golden yellow sweep through the crowds, giving the uncanny impression that the Estadio Azteca or New Jersey's MetLife Stadium has somehow relocated to Bangladesh. Long before the opening whistle, fans have already staged their own "Jersey Cup". And alongside the jersey fever comes an intense, neighbourhood-to-neighbourhood contest: who can hoist the biggest, boldest flag?

For the first time, the World Cup has expanded to 48 teams, delivering an unprecedented 104 matches across 16 host cities. Despite the enlarged field — and the many new nations stepping onto the global stage — Bangladesh is, as ever, absent from the official line-up. Yet for millions of devoted Bangladeshi supporters, that hardly matters. Spend even an hour amid this red-and-green nation's fervour and you would struggle to detect that they are not actually competing. Year after year, Bangladesh's unrivalled passion captures global attention; even footballing giants Brazil and Argentina have publicly acknowledged it.

The frenzy off the pitch is no less dramatic. Ahead of this World Cup, the global football-apparel market has surged into an USD8.7 billion industry — and a significant wave of that boom has washed directly into Bangladesh's markets. Here, football isn't merely watched; it is felt, lived, and displayed. And it is displayed most vividly through the polyester crests draped proudly over shoulders and hung from balconies.

An elderly jersey vendor in Gulistan, watching the chaos unfold with a wry smile, puts it simply: "The fighting between the public over Argentina and Brazil, that starts in our shop before it starts on the pitch." He is not exaggerating. As always, Lionel Messi's reigning world champions and the evergreen glamour of Brazil dominate demand.

Yet this expanded tournament has also reshaped tastes. With more teams, more stars, and more stories, young fans are exploring beyond the traditional favourites.



The elegant cuts of France, the iconic design of Portugal, and the enduring appeal of Germany are flying off the shelves. The market now sits neatly divided in two. One group is the casual fan — students, office-goers, or late-night watch-party regulars — who pick up the affordable Fan Edition. The other is the purist: the self-described "jersey geeks" hunting the Player Edition, crafted from premium imported fabric and engineered to match the exact specifications worn on the pitch. The flawless weave, advanced sweat-wicking technology, and gleaming 3D crests have sent demand for the Player Edition soaring.

New teams and new narratives are further reshaping buying habits. Nations returning after long absences or making historic debuts have captured the imagination of collectors and football-curious youth. It is no longer just about the giants; this World Cup's broad canvas has given fans an expanded universe of colours to wear — and identities to embrace.

But perhaps the most striking image lies not in a single jersey or flag, but in the collective spectacle. In every alleyway, rooftop, and market stall, Bangladesh showcases a devotion that transcends borders. Here, football culture is not defined by qualification or proximity. It is stitched, quite literally, into the fabric of daily life.

In the final days before the World Cup begins in North America, the colours of Bangladesh tell their own story. A story of loyalty without conditions, passion without proximity, and a nation that celebrates football with the intensity of those who truly believe the game belongs to everyone.

And as the first whistle approaches, one thing is beyond doubt: while 48 countries prepare to compete on the biggest stage of all, Bangladesh has already won something else entirely — the right to call itself the most colourfully committed fan nation on earth.



পপুলার লাইফের গৌরবময় ২৫ বছর পূর্তি উৎসব



পপুলার লাইফের গৌরবময় ২৫ বছর পূর্তি উৎসব ইনস্টিটিউশন অব ডিপ্লোমা ইঞ্জিনীয়ার্স বাংলাদেশ (আইডিইবি) ভবন এর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা মিলনায়তন ঢাকায় অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন বাংলাদেশ জাতীয়তাবাদী দল (বিএনপি) এর জাতীয় স্থায়ী কমিটির সদস্য ও বর্তমানে গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের অর্থ ও পরিকল্পনা মন্ত্রণালয়ের মাননীয় মন্ত্রী এবং পপুলার লাইফ ইনস্যুরেন্স এর স্বপ্নদ্রষ্টা আমির খসরু মাহমুদ চৌধুরী। কোম্পানীর চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ জহিরুল ইসলাম চৌধুরী এর সভাপতিত্বে উক্ত অনুষ্ঠানে বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন কোম্পানীর সাবেক চেয়ারম্যান ও পরিচালক আমির হুমায়ূন মাহমুদ চৌধুরী ও মোঃ মোতাহার হোসেন, স্বতন্ত্র পরিচালক ড. মোঃ আব্দুল মান্নান ভূঁইয়া ও ড. মোনালিসা মনোয়ার। উক্ত অনুষ্ঠানে স্বাগত বক্তব্য রাখেন কোম্পানীর ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক ও সিইও এবং বাংলাদেশ ইনস্যুরেন্স ফোরামের প্রেসিডেন্ট বি এম ইউসুফ আলী। অনুষ্ঠানে ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করেন কোম্পানীর অতিরিক্ত ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক বি এম শওকত আলী। এছাড়াও অনুষ্ঠানে কোম্পানীর উর্ধ্বতন কর্মকর্তা সহ বিভিন্ন পর্যায়ে কর্মরত কর্মকর্তাবৃন্দ উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

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Tanvir Ahmed Pranto

LAMINE YAMAL



At just 18, Lamine Yamal arrives at his first World Cup not to introduce himself, but to be crowned. Having already orchestrated Spain's European triumphs with playground nonchalance, the Barcelona prodigy brings a frighteningly mature football IQ to the grandest stage. On the right wing, Yamal operates like a master illusionist—slowing tempo, freezing defenders with a dropped shoulder, and carving open low blocks with surgical precision. He is no longer just the future of La Roja; he is their definitive tactical cheat code.

The Global Coronation

DÉSIRÉ DOUÉ



In a French squad elite in athleticism, Désiré Doué still looks like a laboratory creation. The 20-year-old Paris Saint-Germain powerhouse blends explosive, ball-carrying violence with the silky touch of a pure playmaker. Doué doesn't just bypass defenders; he overpowers them, using a low center of gravity to shield the ball at breakneck speeds. For Didier Deschamps, he is the ultimate multi-tool—a tactical wrecking ball capable of shattering cagey knockout stalemates off the bench.

The Wrecking Ball



ARDA GÜLER

There is a cold, calculated arrogance to Arda Güler. Having sharpened his tools under the crushing pressure of Real Madrid, the 21-year-old maestro enters the summer as Türkiye's undisputed talisman. Armed with a majestic left foot and an astonishing passing range, Güler is the conductor of a chaotic Turkish orchestra. If they are to launch a historic, deep bracket run, it will be because their young savior is orchestrating the entire symphony from midfield.

The Anatolian Architect

ALEKSANDAR PAVLOVIĆ



While tournaments celebrate goalscorers, championships are won in the engine room. Aleksandar Pavlović is the quiet revolution at the heart of Germany's midfield. The 22-year-old Bayern Munich anchor plays with a veteran composure that defies his age, mastering the "invisible work." He snuffs out transition counter-attacks and recycles possession cleanly. In Julian Nagelsmann's high-octane system, Pavlović provides the steel-plated insurance policy that allows Germany's attackers to fly forward without fear.

The Ice-Cold Anchor

NICO PAZ

Every great Argentina side needs an artist who finds oxygen where none exists. Enter Nico Paz. Following a brilliant Serie A campaign under Cesc Fàbregas at Como, the 21-year-old playmaker has forced his way into Lionel Scaloni's plans. Paz possesses the rare ability to receive the ball in claustrophobic spaces and emerge completely unbothered. With Lionel Messi's minutes managed carefully, Paz is the designated heir apparent, ready to thread the needles.

The Left-Footed Illusionist



Honourable mention:
Nico O'Reilly (England)
Endrick (Brazil)
Gilberto Mora (Mexico)
Antonio Nusa(Norway)

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Darkhorses to watch out for



Rashad Banna

Over the course of its almost 100-year history, the FIFA World Cup has had its share of underdog stories in the form of darkhorses who punched above their weight and made deep runs in the tournament. We run the rule over the probable surprise packages in the greatest show on earth which might make the world sit up and take notice.

JAPAN

Despite his brief stint at Nagoya Grampus in the early 1990s, celebrated former English striker Gary Lineker believed the inception of the professional J League gradually changed Japan's standing in international football. The assertion certainly has its point as the Samurai Blue produced energetic performances in the last couple of decades, culminating in four Round Of 16 finishes in the past six editions. Besides winning love off the pitch for both the players and fans' cleanliness, Japan won hearts on the field as well in Qatar 2022 when they topped a group after shocking heavyweights Spain and Germany. South Korea's fourth place in 2002 remains Asia's best ever display, can their Eastern neighbours replicate it in North America?





SENEGAL

There has never been an African champion at the World Cup, can the Lions of Teranga finally change that narrative in North America? All in their mid-30s, Senegal's golden generation of Sadio Mane, Kalidou Koulibaly and Edouard Mendy will perhaps get one last realistic parting shot, if not to win the cup then at least repeat their best ever run from 2002 when their predecessors El Hadji Diouf and Papa Bouba Diop et al reached the quarter-finals. Under the charismatic French manager Bruno Metsu, Senegal had stunned France 24 years ago and progressed past a competitive group also comprising Uruguay and Denmark, and this time too they have been drawn together with Les Bleus, along with Erling Haaland's Norway and Iraq.

AUSTRIA

The land of beauty and music, Austria emerged fourth and third in 1934 and 1954 respectively, but there's nothing much to write home about since then. It can all change though in 2026 under their revolutionary coach Ralf Rangnick whose high-intensity, counter-pressing tactic Gegenpressing has since been adopted by Jurgen Klopp, Thomas Tuchel and Julian Nagelsmann. Appearing in their first finals since 1998, the squad is teeming with talent including David Alaba, Konrad Laimer, Marcel Sabitzer and Mark Arnautovic, among others.





CANADA

The Canadians, once represented by Bangladesh midfielder Shamit Shome, have never advanced beyond the group stage, will they end the barren run in 2026 as one of the three co-hosts? Formerly a tactician of Leeds United and the Red Bull school (New York, Salzburg and Leipzig) new head coach Jesse Marsch will bring a fresh set of ideas, hoping to do better than last time around four years ago. Eventual semi-finalists Morocco and Croatia had qualified from Canada's pool but there were some near misses for the Maple Nation, who have their work cut out on this occasion against the likes of Switzerland and Bosnia.

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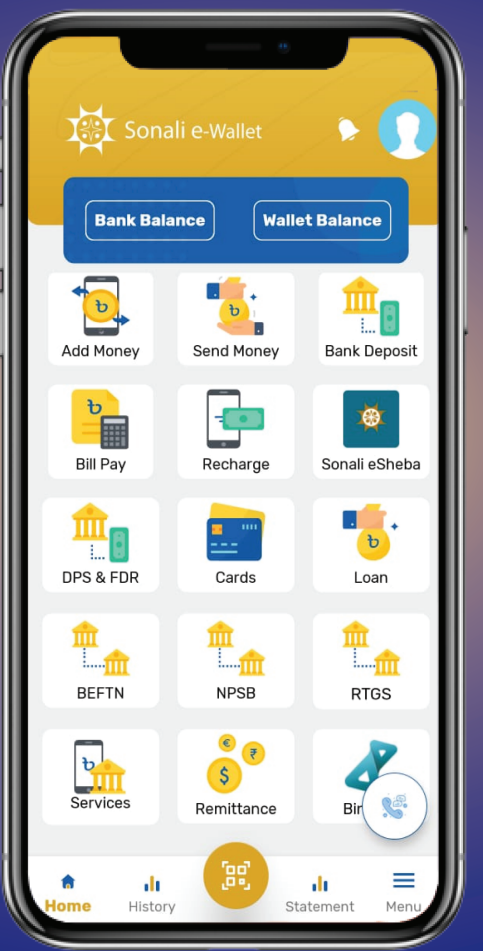

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The Ball Keeps Rolling, on Borrowed Time



Sabbib Bin Sattear

Somewhere in Los Angeles — a city built on someone else's land, policed by someone else's rules — Iranian men will step onto a floodlit pitch and face the world. The same country that has spent the last three months dropping bombs on their homes will hand them a tournament schedule and call it sport. The same government that sanctioned their economy into ruin, that armed and greenlit the strikes that killed their leader, that watched hundreds of civilians die in the opening days of a war it chose to start, will sell tickets to watch them play and call it hospitality.

This is what American power looks like with a friendly face on.





Football in Iran has never been innocent of history — but then, neither has American foreign policy. From the CIA coup that toppled Mossadegh in 1953, to the arming of Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War, to the "maximum pressure" sanctions that drove inflation past 60% and left one in five young Iranians unemployed, the United States has spent seven decades making ordinary Iranian life smaller, harder, and more precarious. The 2026 war — launched under the banner of nuclear prevention, cheered by oil markets — is merely the latest chapter.

Jafar Panahi saw all of this coming. His 2006 film Offside follows young Iranian women who dress as men to sneak into Tehran's Azadi Stadium — Azadi meaning freedom, in one of history's more savage ironies — to watch a World Cup qualifier. The regime bans them. Conscript soldiers hold them in a pen outside the ground. The film was immediately banned in Iran. Panahi has been imprisoned, sentenced, and persecuted ever since — most recently convicted in absentia in 2025. The West praised him. The West also kept selling weapons to the region.

At Qatar 2022, Iran's players stood silent through their national anthem — all eleven of them, still as stone — in solidarity with the women being beaten in the streets for refusing the hijab. The captain said: "We are with them." Iranian state TV cut away. The protests were eventually drowned in blood. The world moved on.

Now the league is suspended. The players haven't played a competitive match in months. The domestic football season was cancelled the day the bombs started falling. These men have been training in Türkiye — a neutral country, because neutrality is a luxury the United States took from Iran — trying to find their legs for a tournament held in the nation currently blockading their coastline.

Iran asked FIFA to move their games to Mexico. FIFA, an organisation that awarded this tournament to the United States for $11 billion in projected revenue, said no.

Of course it did.

That they are going anyway — battered, exhausted, half-match-fit, flying into the country that bombed them — is not a triumph of sport over politics. It is what survival looks like when the alternative is erasure. The White Scarf Girls who held banners reading We don't want to be Offside knew this. Mahsa Amini's name, chanted in a Qatari stadium while her killers were still in power, knew this. A people who have been squeezed by sanctions, bombed by allies, and silenced by their own government have learned that you keep moving forward not because the path is clear, but because stopping means disappearing.

And the ball — indifferent, stubborn, irreducibly human — keeps rolling.





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ET TU, CALCIO?

The long funeral of Italian Football Continues



Sabbib Bin Sattear

There is a particular kind of grief that comes from watching something you love slowly fall apart — not the clean pain of sudden loss, but the slow, nauseating ache of a decline you can see coming and cannot stop. That is what Italian football has become: a long, lingering funeral for a nation that once ruled the world's most beautiful game, attended by millions who still cannot believe what they are witnessing.

Italy. Gli Azzurri. Four-time world champions. The land of Maldini, Baggio, Totti, Pirlo, Del Piero — a country where football was worshipped, argued over at breakfast and shouted

through piazzas at midnight. And now, astonishingly, the only World Cup-winning nation to fail to qualify for three consecutive tournaments: 2018, 2022, 2026.

No war, no politics, no boycott — just failure.

How did it begin?

The first crack appeared in 2018. Italy failed to score across two legs against Sweden, losing 1–0 on aggregate and missing the World Cup for the first time in 60 years. Gianluigi Buffon, the greatest goalkeeper of his generation, wept on the pitch. A nation wept with him. Many dismissed it as a one-off. They were wrong.

Then came 2022. Italy produced 32 shot attempts against North Macedonia yet failed to score, conceding a 92nd-minute winner to a side ranked 66th in the world. The silence across the country that night was deafening. Even then, some clung to Euro 2021 as proof that talent still existed.

It did not. And it did not bloom.

The final blow landed in March 2026. A 1–1 draw with Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by defeat on penalties, sealed Italy's third straight World Cup absence. The collapse triggered mass resignations: federation president Gabriele Gravina, general manager Buffon, and coach Gennaro Gattuso all stepped down. Newspapers called it la terza apocalisse — the third apocalypse — and there was no exaggeration in the phrasing.

The rot beneath the results

The curse runs deeper than three disastrous nights. Italy's decline mirrors the decay of its domestic football: Serie A's dwindling influence in Europe, the exodus of elite players, financial instability, chaotic ownership, and a youth-development system stuck years behind modern standards. The infrastructure that once produced icons has eroded into an ecosystem where mediocrity thrives unchecked.

La maledizione degli Azzurri. The curse of the blue shirts. It is real. And it was made entirely by human hands.



THE GREATEST WORLD CUP UPSETS EVER



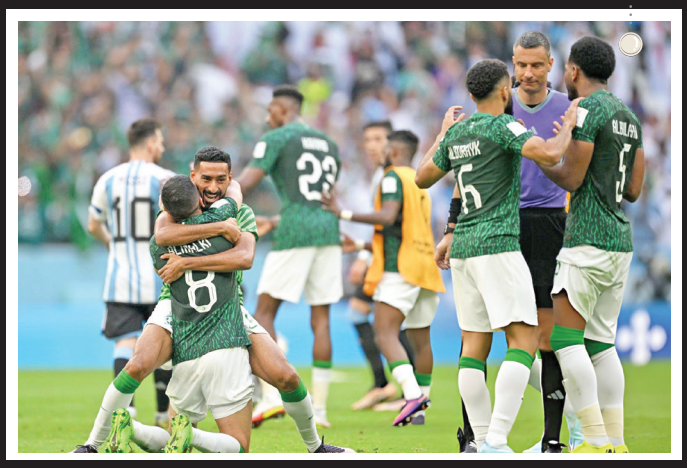
Samara Islam Naisa

The FIFA World Cup has produced some of the most unforgettable moments in sporting history, but nothing captures the imagination quite like the major upsets. From underdogs defeating world champions to debutants shocking football giants, these matches proved that anything can happen on football's biggest stage. With the 2026 FIFA World Cup set to be hosted across the United States, Canada, and Mexico and expanded to 48 teams for the first time, fans will be hoping for even more drama, surprises, and historic giant-killings.

SAUDI ARABIA 2–1 ARGENTINA (2022)



Quite possibly the greatest shock in modern World Cup history. Argentina entered the tournament on a 36-match unbeaten streak and were favourites to lift the trophy. Saudi Arabia stunned them with two second-half goals, including Salem Al-Dawsari's iconic curling strike. Ironically, Argentina still went on to win the World Cup.





SENEGAL 1–0 FRANCE (2002)





World champions France were packed with star players and expected to cruise through the tournament. Instead, World Cup debutants Senegal stunned them thanks to Papa Bouba Diop's winning goal, before going on to reach the quarter-finals.



SOUTH KOREA 2–1 ITALY (2002)

Co-hosts South Korea eliminated Italy thanks to Ahn Jung-hwan's golden goal in extra time. The match remains one of the most controversial, dramatic, and memorable in World Cup history, as South Korea progressed to the semi-finals.









CAMEROON 1–0 ARGENTINA (1990)

Defending champions Argentina, led by Diego Maradona, were shocked in the opening match of the tournament by a fearless Cameroon side that ended the game with nine men. François Omam-Biyik's looping header went on to become one of the most iconic goals in World Cup history.

ALGERIA 2–1 WEST GERMANY (1982)

Algeria stunned West Germany 2–1 at the 1982 World Cup in one of the tournament's greatest upsets. Goals from Rabah Madjer and Lakhdar Belloumi secured a famous win for the debutants, widely regarded as the first major World Cup victory by an African nation over European opposition.









NORTH KOREA 1–0 ITALY (1966)

North Korea shocked two-time champions Italy 1–0 at the 1966 World Cup thanks to Pak Doo-ik's historic winner. The stunning upset knocked Italy out in the group stage and remains one of the biggest surprises in World Cup history.



UNITED STATES 1–0 ENGLAND (1950)

England were considered one of the world's strongest sides, but the United States shocked them 1–0 at the 1950 World Cup through Joe Gaetjens' famous winner, producing one of football's greatest ever upsets.

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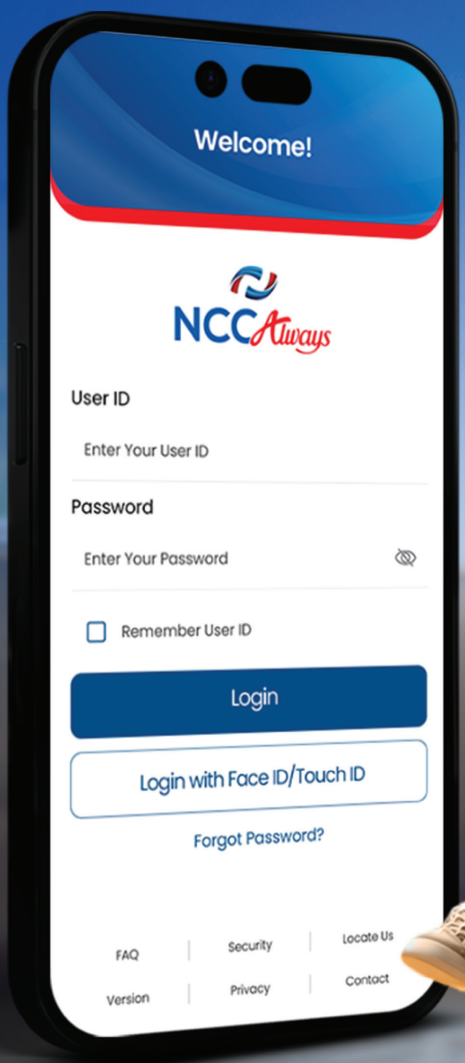



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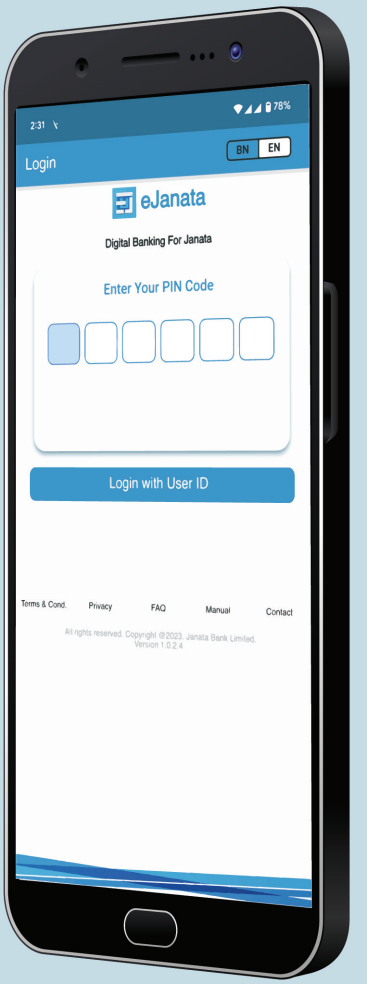

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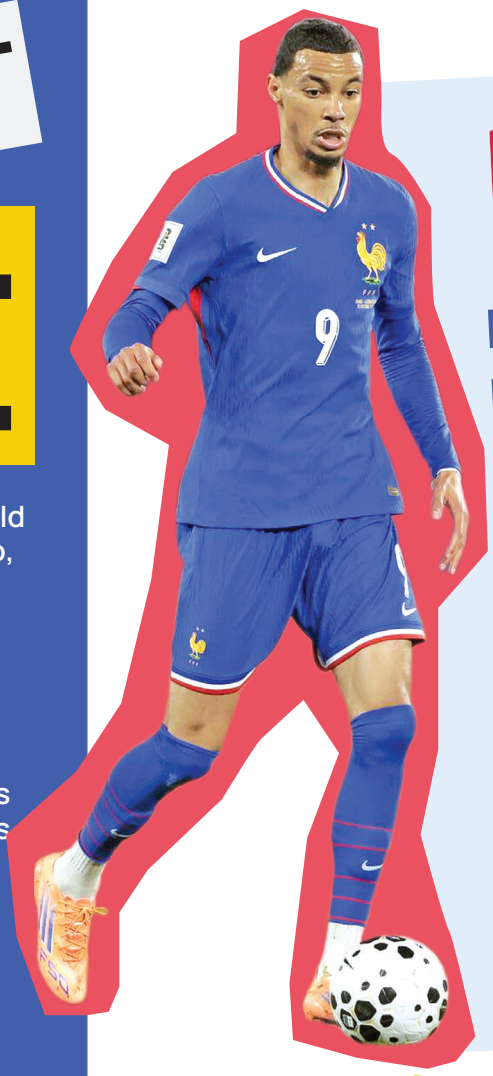
STARS THAT WON'T SHINE

A host of stars will light up the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico, but spare a thought or two for those who will sit out due to injury. Following a breathless domestic and continental season, injuries have clearly taken its toll on some as the players brace themselves for one and a half months more of gruelling action amid the intense North American summer heat. Here is a look at the unlucky footballers who will miss the greatest show on earth.



Rashad Banna



HUGO EKITIKE (FRANCE)

The Liverpool forward will be cursing his luck after an impressive debut campaign for the Reds following his move from Eintracht Frankfurt for a fee little south of USD100m. An Achilles tendon injury put paid to his season prematurely, but Les Bleus' attacking front is unlikely to be affected as it is well-stocked with a vast array of attacking riches.



KAORU MITOMA (JAPAN)

The gravity of Mitoma's absence from the Samurai Blue's roster was especially felt during the squad announcement when head coach Hajime Moriyasu became emotional and almost teary-eyed while revealing the list. The Brighton winger failed to recover from a hamstring injury in time and will also be joined in front of the Television set by teammate Takumi Minamino who is recuperating from an ACL injury in his left knee.



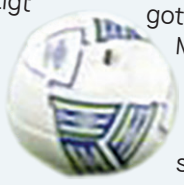
RODRYGO GOES (BRAZIL)

Real Madrid's season may have petered out in acrimonious fashion but it promised much at the beginning with attacker Rodrygo providing goals and assists aplenty. The footballers' worst injury nightmare - ACL - though proved to be his undoing in March as subsequent surgery later robbed him of the chance to don the famous Selecao jersey in North America.



MATTHIJS DE LIGT (NETHERLANDS)

The inventors of Total Football, the Dutch received a set-back as they bid to finally improve on their three runner-up finishes after centre-back De Ligt got ruled out following back surgery in May. Sans the Manchester United defender, Oranje captain Virgil Van Dijk will have to take on added responsibility with one of Stefan de Vrij, Nathan Ake or Jan Paul van Hecke slotting in to fill De Ligt's giant shoes.

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HOW A **THREE-HOST** WORLD CUP REWROTE FOOTBALL



Tanvir Ahmed Pranto

In the summer of 2026, football abandoned the traditional borders of the past and scaled an entire continent. The 48-team mega-tournament hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico was initially dismissed by purists as a cynical, corporate logistical nightmare. Instead, it delivered a definitive masterclass in geopolitical harmony and sporting spectacle, fundamentally transforming the cultural fabric of three distinct superpowers.

Logistically, the tournament shattered fears of continental burnout. By replacing chaotic, cross-border commutes with a hyper-efficient "cluster" system, FIFA allowed regional identities to thrive while maintaining a fluid tournament pace.

Fans and teams moved seamlessly through optimized transit hubs, proving that a multi-country ecosystem could operate with total clockwork precision without losing its local soul.

Politically, the tournament acted as a vital soft-power bridge during an era of global friction. The United 2026 vehicle forced unprecedented diplomatic collaboration—streamlining cross-border visa policies, security intelligence, and trade agreements.

On the civic stage, leaders like New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani capitalised on this momentum, bypassing elite corporate structures to launch grassroots initiatives like "Soccer Streets"—reclaiming public asphalt outside 50 public schools to ensure the tournament's legacy belonged to working-class, multicultural neighborhoods rather than just luxury stadium suites. It offered Mexico a grand stage to assert its historic footballing royalty, granted Canada a validation of its booming sporting infrastructure, and handed the United States the ultimate launchpad to permanently integrate soccer into its mainstream cultural elite.

Yet, the true triumph of 2026 lay within the stands and city plazas. This wasn't merely a tournament hosted by three nations; it was a living mirror of them. The cultural tapestry was electric and deeply intertwined—vibrant, horn-blaring street parties in Monterrey bled into the dense, multicultural fan hubs of Toronto and the Hollywood-scale stadium spectacles of Los Angeles.

It celebrated the reality of the modern Americas: diverse, passionate, and inextricably linked.

By the time the final confetti fell, the 2026 World Cup had permanently broken the old template of single-nation hosting. It proved that the beautiful game has grown too massive for a single kingdom to contain.

In doing so, it left behind a revolutionary, interconnected blueprint that will define the future of global sports entertainment for decades to come.

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যোগাযোগ করুন।

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সার্বিক তত্ত্বাবধান ও বাস্তবায়নে:
'এস রহমান প্রোপার্টিজ'
মাশাআল্লাহ ট্রেড সেন্টার (লেভেল-৫)
ব্লক নং-আই, (ওয়ালটন হেড অফিসের কাছে)
রোড নং-১৭, বসুন্ধরা আ/এ, ঢাকা।

HOT LINE:
01318160655, 01339388090