

Will Brazil suffer Najib's 'curse'?
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Najib Abdul Razak had named three teams when quizzed on which nation would win the 2014 World Cup.

The Nottingham University-trained prime minister said he was sentimental about England, liked the way Brazil played, but believed that Spain would retain the title.

"It's not my favourite team but Spain will win. My sentimental favourite is England but I don't think they will win.

"To be honest with you, I like Brazil's style of playing but I think the record shows Spain will win," he had predicted.

When news of this broke, his detractors wasted little time in claiming that Najib had cast a curse on Spain and that the team, celebrated for its "tiki-taka" passing pattern, was bound for a disastrous campaign.

It is said that even some of Najib's ministers had joked about this behind closed doors.

Cursed or not, Spain put up an abysmal performance in their opening match against Netherlands, whom they had defeated in the finals of the last World Cup.

The champions from the Iberian peninsula were whipped 5-1, thanks to the wizardry of Dutch strikers Arjen Robben and Robbie Van Persie.

From that point on, Spain seemed destined for doom.

After a defeat in the hands of Chile, the champions failed, to the horror of their fans and football pundits, to clear the Group stage.

Next was England, which also failed to clear the group stages after a lacklustre performance, which spawned a slew of jokes such as this one -The England team went to visit an orphanage in Brazil this morning. "It's good to put a smile on the faces of people with no hope, constantly struggling and facing the impossible," said Emilio Di Costa aged 6

Of the three teams mentioned by Najib, the last one standing is the host nation and five times world champions Brazil, who would be facing a brilliant Colombian side in the quarterfinal at 4am Malaysian time tomorrow.

The match would be a contest between the exceptional skills of Brazil's Neymar Jr and

Colombia's James Rodriguez, both of whom have nine World Cup goals between them.

These two young stars could decide which team crashes out.

Cabecao the turtle, which is thought to predict World Cup outcomes, has picked Brazil, but this could be due to Cabecao not wanting to antagonise the locals.

At his sanctuary in the Brazilian state of Bahia, Cabecao used sardine selection to predict which team would advance to the semi-final, and after much hesitation, chose the host nation.

Turtles and curses aside, it seems that our prime minister can never stop scoring own goals as far as his critics are concerned, no matter how unfair such assumptions might be.

As one observer quipped: "Perhaps, Najib is just not good with sports that involve a ball."

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