

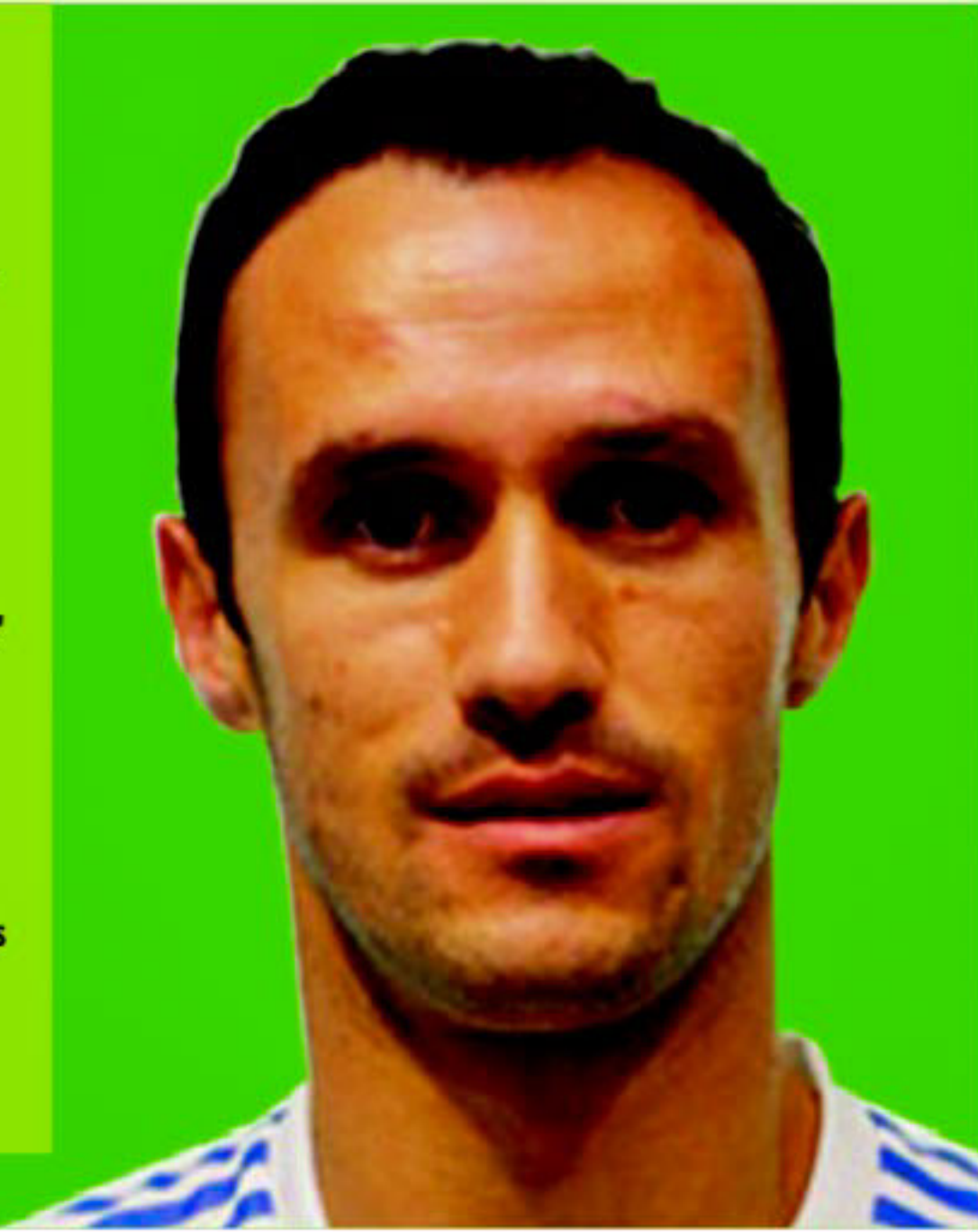
# Star SPORT

## Carvalho walks out on Portugal

Real Madrid centre-back Ricardo Carvalho announced on Wednesday that he was turning his back on the Portuguese national team after walking out of their training camp.

"I didn't intend to end my journey like this," explained Carvalho in a statement, where he complained of a "lack of respect" and said his "dignity had been hurt" but did not offer any further explanation.

"I'm just an athlete among my colleagues. However, like the others I also deserve consideration and respect," he added, in a



THE STAR OF THE SHOW: Argentina captain Lionel Messi (R) is chased by a host of Venezuela players during their international friendly match in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Pistorious left out, but leaves with silver

AFP, Daegu

Oscar Pistorious' history-making participation at the World Championships ended with a silver medal after his teammates guided South Africa to second in the 4x400m relay on Friday.

The controversial 'Blade Runner', who runs with carbon fibre prosthetic running blades and was the first amputee to compete at the worlds, finished last in his semi-final heat in the individual 400m.

He was omitted from the relay team for the final, having run the first leg in qualifiers on Thursday, when South Africa finished third quickest.

"Haven't been included in the final for the SA men's 4x400m. Pretty Gutted," Pistorious said earlier on his Twitter account.

"That's me for the World Champs! Gods blessed me! Semifinals in the 400m and a National Record in the 4x400m semi! Thank u all!"

As a relay squad member, however, Pistorious will mark a memorable championships by returning home with a world silver medal in his pocket after his teammates battled off Jamaica for second behind a strong US quartet.

Pistorious said after the individual 400m that competing at the worlds had been "a dream absolutely come true", and that he would use the experience gained to improve as he targets next year's London Olympics.

The issue of whether his blades give Pistorious, cleared three years ago to run against able-bodied athletes, an advantage is back in the spotlight following his qualification for the worlds.

But he again rejected suggestions that he has an advantage, saying that the technology behind his prosthetic blades had not changed for many years.

## Messi-merizing win for Argentina at Kolkata

### Football

AGENCIES, Kolkata

Lionel Messi marked his first game as Argentina captain with a 1-0 win over Venezuela in a friendly encounter played before thousands of delirious fans in the Indian city of Kolkata on Friday.

The 24-year-old Barcelona striker enthralled the crowd at the 120,000-capacity Salt Lake Stadium with his dribbles and his magical left foot and the crowd came to life every time he touched the ball.

It was from a Messi corner that full-back Nicolas Otamendi headed in the game's only goal on the 67th minute.

Argentina coach Alejandro Sabella rushed out from the dug-out to hug his team and savour the win in his first match in charge of the two-time World Cup winners.

Messi came close to scoring twice in an entertaining first-half, while Angel Di Maria failed to convert a Messi assist

in the ninth minute despite having only Venezuela goalkeeper Rafael Romo to beat.

Venezuela provided more of a threat after the break, with Sergio Romero forced into action to deny Cesar Gonzalez.

The introduction of Javier Pastore and Sergio Aguero also inserted much needed dynamism in the Argentina attack and Sabella's men nearly doubled their lead in the 80th minute when Messi had a volley from the edge of the box saved by Rafael Romo. Argentina continued to attack in the remaining time, but were ultimately unable to score a second goal.

The win helped ease the anxiety of Sabella, who was looking to get off to a good start after replacing Sergio Batista as coach in the wake of Argentina's disappointing performance at the Copa America on home soil in July.

The 14-time Copa winners were knocked out on penalties in the quarter-finals by Uruguay, triggering a wave of criticism from home fans desperate to see

their team break an 18-year title drought.

Friday's game marked a new start for Argentina as they seek to rebuild ahead of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, and if they ever needed any extra motivation for winning this game, it came from the fans in Kolkata who waved Argentina flags and brought the house down with their constant cheering of Messi's men.

Less fancied Venezuela were fresh from reaching the semi-finals of the Copa America for the first time but they failed to capitalise on the chances that came their way.

Argentina, hoping to build up a loyal following across southern Asia, now head to the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka for another friendly with Nigeria on September 6.

Argentina will now stay back in Kolkata for two days and arrive in the Bangladesh capital on September 5. They will hold an open practice session for the fans at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on the same date.

## India seek revival

### First ODI against England today

### Cricket

PTI, Chester-Le-Street

Battered and bruised in what has turned out to be an abysmal tour, a demoralised India go into the five-match ODI series against England on Saturday with repeated batting collapses and toothless bowling continuing to haunt them.

Coming into the series as world's numero uno Test team and ODI world champions, India have had a nightmarish English summer so far with the visitors tasting victory only in the three practice matches ahead of the limited-overs rubber.

After the 0-4 pounding in the Test series, India lost the lone Twenty20 game against England by six wickets at Manchester on Wednesday and things don't look too bright ahead of the ODI series.

And looking at England's ruthless form and India's misery, it would prove to be a Herculean task for Mahendra Singh Dhoni and his men to get the better of the motivated home team.

England are presently world's number one Test side, which they achieved by virtue of a 4-0 clean sweep over India, and reigning

Twenty20 world champions and it is only logical to believe that they would now aim for the pole position in ODI charts as well. A 5-0 sweep in the ODI series would take England to the number three spot in the ICC rankings behind Australia and Sri Lanka and downgrade India, presently number three, to fifth position.

Besides, the upcoming series would also give England an opportunity to avenge their 1-5 and 0-5 drubbing at the hands of India on two previous visits to the sub-continent.

Besides, it would put Alastair Cook's men in right frame of mind for the return visit to India next month for five more ODIs.

To add to their agony, the Indians were also done in by a spate of injuries to their key players since stepping on English soil.

India will be without the services of Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Yuvraj Singh, Zaheer Khan and Harbhajan Singh in the ODI series after they were ruled out due to injuries.

While Zaheer Khan's tour ended before it started, Yuvraj, Sehwag and Harbhajan followed suit with Gambhir being the latest casualty.

But in spite of these injuries, the Indians still have a formidable batting line up with

SEE PAGE 17 COL 8

## Argentina to train on Monday

### BFF to release 15,000 tickets

### Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Approximately 15,000 spectators will get a chance to watch Lionel Messi, Angelo di Maria, Gonzalo Higuain, Javier Mascherano, Sergio Agüero and the like in an open training session on Monday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Uncertainty had loomed over the practice session of the Argentina team but they chose to have an open practice session instead of a closed-door one, following their revised schedule that will see the star-studded Argentina side reach Dhaka on Monday morning and the tickets of Argentina's practice session will be available from today at nearly 50 points in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Gazipur and Narshingdi.

The price of tickets has been fixed at Tk 1,000 for gallery and Tk 2,000 for VIP; it was informed through a press briefing at the BFF House yesterday.

Of nearly 15,000 tickets, some free tickets will be released for former national footballers, coaches and school students, who played the Ashiyon City School football tournament

SEE PAGE 17 COL 8



BFF member and chairman of the organising committee of Argentina-Nigeria FIFA friendly, Anwarul Haque Helal (2nd from L) speaks at a press conference at the BFF house yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Cox steps down

AFP, Sydney

Jamie Cox has stepped down as an Australian selector citing a "mood for change" in the wake of last month's sweeping Argus Review, Cricket Australia said on Friday.

Cox advised CA that he will step down from the panel and will not be reapplying for the role of part-time selector.

CA said Cox, who became a member of the panel in November 2006 replacing Allan Border, will remain a selector until a new five-man panel is assembled.

"I have made the decision not to apply for a position on the National Selection Panel recently declared open as part of the National Team Performance Review," Cox said in a statement.