



Di Caprio jets into Rio

In "The Wolf of Wall Street," Leonardo Di Caprio let loose in his portrayal of a hard-partying Wall Street trader. Now, he's in Brazil for the World Cup and ready to party in real life. Di Caprio and 21 of his friends jetted into Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday, where they will stay on a mega-yacht and watch the World Cup, Brazilian media reported. The Oscar-nominated star and his friends will luxuriate on the Topaz, a 482-



Star DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 13, 2014,
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SPORT



TODAY'S MATCHES

MEXICO CAMEROON
Time: 10:00pm
Venue: Estadio das Dunas

SPAIN NETHERLANDS
Time: 1:00am (Saturday)
Venue: Arena Fonte Nova

CHILE AUSTRALIA
Time: 4:00am (Saturday)
Venue: Arena Pantanal

TOMORROW'S MATCHES

COLOMBIA GREECE
Time: 10:00pm
Venue: Estadio Mineirao

URUGUAY COSTA RICA
Time: 1:00am (Sunday)
Venue: Estadio Castelao

ENGLAND ITALY
Time: 4:00am (Sunday)
Venue: Arena Amazonia

IVORY COAST JAPAN
Time: 7:00am (Sunday)
Venue: Arena Pernambuco



Singers (from L-R) Jennifer Lopez, Claudia Leite and Pitbull are at full blast during the opening ceremony of FIFA World Cup 2014 at the Arena Corinthians in Sao Paulo on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



J-Lo dazzles at opening ceremony

AFP, Sao Paulo

American star Jennifer Lopez added a dash of glamour to the colourful World Cup opening ceremony yesterday in a vivid contrast to the violent anti-tournament protests in the city.

J-Lo, wearing a carnival-inspired and revealing green outfit, appeared from a trapdoor along with rapper Pitbull to sing the official World Cup song with Brazilian singer Claudia Leite.

The ceremony was held ahead of the opening game between Brazil and Croatia. With her participation not confirmed until the last minute, J-Lo was a welcome sight as she rose up from inside a giant ball positioned on the stadium floor.

Gold-shirted fans started arriving at Corinthians Arena on Thursday morning, several hours before kick-off, and there was a huge cheer when the opening ceremony started. Figures dressed as trees walked on stilts and children representing flowers bounced on trampolines around the huge, glowing ball in the centre of the stadium.

It was not long before samba music kicked in and traditional dancers celebrating Brazil's ethnic and geographical range took the floor.

Acrobats dressed as balls replaced the dancers and 64 children came in juggling balls on strings, to another big roar as a giant Brazilian flag entered the rapidly filling arena. Finally the big ball opened to reveal

Brazilian singing star Leite, swiftly followed by J-Lo and Pitbull.

J-Lo, showing off her trademark Latin dance moves, belted out the official World Cup song, "We Are One (Ole Ola)" with her fellow performers before they disappeared back down the trapdoor.

A worldwide TV audience of several hundred million is expected for the opening game in which hosts and favourites Brazil will take on Croatia.

Earlier, military police clashed with masked anti-World Cup protesters demonstrating a few kilometers (miles) away against the huge cost of staging the tournament.

Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to break up an earlier, smaller protest near a Sao Paulo subway station.

Anarchist demonstrators menacingly dressed in black shirts and masks lit bonfires of rubbish in the city after armoured police sought to quell protests.

Preparations for the World Cup have been dogged by months of protests, reflecting widespread public anger over the record \$11 billion lavished on the event.

A cannister fired by police hit and injured a CNN journalist and an AFP correspondent saw one woman in tears clutching her arm.

In Rio de Janeiro, striking ground staff briefly blocked a road leading to the city's international airport.

Around 1,000 protesters also gathered in the city centre, a small group of them scuffling with police, who arrested four

Time to conquer final frontier

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

One is the world's best known footballer, the other the most valuable. They have scored the same number of Champions League goals and are loaded down with titles. But superstars Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are stuck in a World Cup dead end.

Between them Messi and Ronaldo have monopolised the past six world player of the year awards. But each have attended the last two World Cups and failed to even get near the trophy. Messi has scored just one goal at the finals, Ronaldo only two.

Now though the weight of Argentinian hopes rests on Messi's slight shoulders. Portugal are desperate for Ronaldo's goals to get out of one of the most difficult groups in the contest.

The Brazil World Cup could finally decide whether the name of Messi or Ronaldo is etched into football legend alongside the Peles and Diego Maradonas and Zinedine Zidanes. It is the competition which transforms reputations.

The softly-spoken Messi is 26, just 1.69 metres (5ft 7inch) tall and 67 kilogrammes (148 pounds) in weight. But his goalscorer record and brilliance pack the same weight as the 29-year-old Ronaldo -- 1.85m (6ft



1inch) and 80kgs (176 pounds) -- who revels in his glamour lifestyle.

Messi capture three Champions League wins with Barcelona while Ronaldo responded by adding a crown for Real Madrid last month to his earlier success with Manchester United.

Both average more than 50 goals a year in all competitions for their clubs. Ronaldo is the world's most recognisable and marketable footballer, according to the Repucom, a sports marketing research company.

But Messi remains the world's most valuable footballer on the market, according to the Swiss-based CIES Football Observatory. It put the Argentine's value at 216 million euros (\$294 million), while because of his age Ronaldo was worth just 114 million euros.

The case for the elevation of Messi

and Ronaldo to the almost deified heights of Pele and Maradona would surely be unanswerable were either to lift the trophy on July 13 in Rio.

"Both players are incredibly great athletes and both have outstanding qualities. Both can win a match in their club or national team on their own," said Ottmar Hitzfeld, the respected German coach who will be in charge of Switzerland at the World Cup.

But the World Cup, high pressure over one month, is vastly different from the Spanish league and Champions League duties which Messi and Ronaldo so brilliantly execute week in, week out.

Maradona is adamant that "Messi doesn't have to win the World Cup to be the best in the world."

For the 1986 world champion, "one world title more or one less can't take anything away from anything (Messi)

Ronaldinho double fools Messi

GOAL.COM

Lionel Messi was taken by surprise during Argentina's training session on Wednesday by a pitch invader he briefly mistook for his former Barcelona teammate and friend Ronaldinho. The pitch invader, Robinson Oliveira said: "When he saw me he was shocked because he thought I was the real Ronaldinho and he told me that I didn't need to run on the pitch to see him."

"He said: 'What are you doing running on here to see me?' When he held my hand, I went down on my knees [and bowed]. It was so emotional."

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