me -- far from it," he told FourFourTwo magazine recently.

best and lift the trophy, which is our fundamental objective."

"It's not a weak defence," Garay asserted this week. "The

Despite the obvious threat posed by Messi, Bosnia coach

"It is a dilemma for me, but to sacrifice a player just to

Bosnia are the only tournament debutants in Brazil and

will become the 77th nation to take part in the sport's most

Safet Susic's preference for a zonal marking system means

man-mark Messi, I don't think it would be good for us,"

that the Argentina captain will not be man-marked.

defence and midfield will have to be compact to do the dirty

Ezequiel Lavezzi is on hand to deputise.

retains a solid footing nonetheless.

Susic told the FIFA website.

prestigious competition.

going to be the same (against Argentina)."

work together."





Spain goalkeeper Iker Casillas (R) is on his knees, which only epitomises the holders' total surrender against the rampant Dutch, who came from a goal down to win 5-1.

## Blame me: Casillas

Iker Casillas believes he must shoulder

much of the blame for Spain's humbling 5-1 defeat to the Netherlands. Louis van Gaal's side recovered from

falling behind to a first-half Xabi Alonso penalty, with Arjen Robben and Robin van Persie both scoring twice and Stefan De Vrij adding another to avenge the 1-0 defeat the Dutch suffered in the final of the 2010 World Cup.

tap-in, acknowledged that he was below fortunate, starting with me. Now only we least of all Iker Casillas."

Brazil trip

welcomed by FIFA."

Alexis Sanchez helped Chile pile

the pressure on world champions

Spain after a 3-1 win over Australia

Netherlands on top of Group B.

provider 70 seconds later to set up

Athletic's Jean Beausejour grabbing

June 18th to avoid an ignominious

certainly must beat Chile in Rio on wanting

in the time it takes to make a pisco the helpless Ryan's head.

Arena Pantanal's floodlights

Kaiser cancels

German football legend Franz Beckenbauer is cancelling his

trip to the World Cup in Brazil in the light of FIFA suspend-

ing him for 90 days over the investigation into the Oatar

2022 World Cup bid, he told the German media on

The 68-year-old, who won the World Cup both as a

player and as a coach in 1974 and 1990 respectively, told

daily newspaper Bild he did not feel he would be made

welcome after FIFA announced he had been suspended

because he refused to speak to investigators looking into

allegations that Qatar paid bribes to secure votes for its 2022

"I won't be going to Brazil," said Beckenbauer, whose

"I am basing that decision on the fact I will not be

sole title these days is honorary president of Bayern Munich

early on, the Barcelona star turning defence all at sea.

NETHERLANDS 5 (Van Persie 44, 72, Robben 53, 80, De Vrij 64) the standard expected of him and apolo-

SPAIN 1 (Xabi 27-pen)

gised to the Spain supporters "It's time to be quiet, to reflect and think about the next match against Chile as a final," the 33-year-old was quoted as

"We apologise, and I am the first in goalkeeper. Casillas, whose heavy touch allowed line. Our fans must give out the criticism

The picture says it all. Spanish supporters are inconsolable after

watching their beloved La Roja dismantled by Netherlands.

heat despite the evening kick-off,

Manuel Pellegrini, and the coun- Cahill, the country's all-time top outstretched hand denied Mark

Sanchez set up the second, Chile captain Claudio Bravo in stop Eduardo Vargas's shot, which

The perfect start then for a Chile from a quick second, his shot as Beausejour sealed Australia's fate as

city's Gary Medel, to head past Wilkinson performed heroics to

Africa, wasn't a million miles away their toll, second half substitute

Among those celebrating in the 
If Australia were going to get ably disallowed for offside.

Chile pile pressure on Spain

CHILE 3 (Sanchez 12, Valdivia 14, Beausejour 90+2)

AUSTRALIA 1 (Cahill 35)

ball landing at Sanchez's feet, After that frenetic opening to the

The prolific striker did not let entered a quiet phase as Ange

the opportunity slip, clipping Postecoglou's bunch of largely

Tim Cahill pulled one back the ball right-footed past keeper untested youngsters tried to the ball out of the back of his net,

pulsating encounter under the were Manchester City manager take some magic from veteran Australia's favour and only Bravo's

Two minutes later the Aussie Bulls striker duly obliged,

enough to snuff out the Socceroos from the edge of the box sailed over match four years ago in South As the stifling conditions took

The 12th minute opener came side that arrived in Brazil with huge half-time beckoned only denied by Chile joined the Dutch at the top of

reigning champions almost backline was once again found outjumping his marker, Cardiff on the hour, as Aussie defender Alex

But following Spain's 5-1 rout by try's president Michelle Bachelet. scorer. And the New York Red Bresciano's attempt.

feeding the ball to an unmarked the 35th minute.

Chile thought they'd done Valdivia whose sweetly struck shot Cahill, sent off in Australia's first ing an empty goal line.

in their World Cup opener in Aranguiz in the Australia box, the the first time since finishing third

Sanchez set Chile on their way spelling danger for an Australian game, played in stifling 30 degree

a third for Chile in injury time of a 20.000-strong Chilean support back into the game it was going to

Cuiaba saw them join the midfielder's efforts resulting in the on home soil in 1962.

after sterling work by Charles ambitions to make a real impact for the shins of Bravo.

"I have to take the blame. All we could do is think about the next game when they scored the third goal and went further behind. I am mature enough to receive all criticism. We must sort La Roja boss Vicente Del Bosque,

No record for Iker

Iker Casillas came up short in his bid to

break Italian goalkeeper Walter Zenga's

long unbeaten World Cup record on

at least the last four minutes of Spain's

Friday. Had Casillas kept a clean sheet until

Group B opener against the Netherlands in

Salvador, he would have overtaken Zenga's

517-minute unbeaten run from Italia 1990.

goal since Rodrigo Millar scored in the

47th minute of world champions Spain's

final group game 2-1 victory over Chile in

But when Dutch striker Robin van Persie

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

WC OPENER BREAKS FACEBOOK

ceremony in Hollywood, the social media

company said on Friday. The most

Neymar's first goal, which levelled the

match after Brazil fell behind early with an

embarrassing own goal. The second most

talked-about play was the controversial

penalty that led to Neymar's second goal,

putting Brazil ahead for the first time.

HERRERA PLEDGES

Herrera pledged to repay

his country's fans who he

said would "sell their

houses, cars and even pawn

their grandma's clothes to

come to Brazil" by battling

to keep their World Cup

unbelievable and I think

there are going to be

thousands of them in all

the stadiums throughout," said Herrera

"They made us feel like we were playing at

the Azteca (stadium, in Mexico City). We

Brazil striker Fred insisted Friday that

Japanese referee Yuichi Nishimura was right

to give a controversial penalty in their

pointing out FIFA's refereeing commission

want to repay them for their efforts."

opening World Cup win over Croatia.

Lovren and the Brazil centre forward.

FRED DEFENDS PENALTY

"The Mexico fans were

dream alive.

mother's clothes!

Mexico coach Miguel

TO AZTEC FANS

Pellegrini would no doubt have

given anything to descend from his

commentary box and impart a

word or two of advice to his 11

Chile, buoved by Arturo Vidal's

return to fitness after a knee

problem, faced a serious task at the

restart to reassert their early domi-

nation against a reinvigorated

But soon after, Bravo was picking

only for Cahill's effort to be justifi-

had nipped past Ryan, from cross-

countrymen at the interval.

Brazil's 3-1 win over Croatia in the World reach."

netted in the 44th minute of Friday's clash,

to equalise Xabi Alonso's earlier penalty,

Casillas's run stopped at 477 minutes, 40

South Africa four years ago.

Casillas had not conceded a World Cup

however, insisted that no one player should shoulder the burden of responsibility for the loss, especially not their "When a team loses a match it's not

van Persie to nip in and score the that comes to us and forget what just the performance of one single player, Oranje's fourth goal on the night after he happened soon. I have not been up to par its a weakness in the total squad," the 63had earlier missed the cross for De Vrij's and I accept that. We have not been year-old said. "We can't blame anyone,

# Spanish media mournful

Dutch delighted

ESPNFC.COM

The Spanish press were trying their best to be optimistic -and almost managing it -- after Spain were walloped 5-1 by Netherlands in their opening Group B opening game in

Saturday's mostly black Marca front cover said: "Fix This," telling readers that "Netherlands humiliated the champions in 45 minutes of a physical overrunning and football hurricane."

The paper said the remaining two group games, against Chile and Australia, were "two finals to show the talent and football that made us champions. We believe."

Inside, the main match report was headlined "Global Humiliation", while another reaction piece went under the banner "A Historic Defeat".

"Never in history has a defending champion been punished so in a World Cup finals," it said. "Never. A team with a star never took such a punch to the face. Netherlands' revenge for the last final was so tough for us. The hammering at the Arena Fonte Nova has a place in the blackest moments in the history of the Spain team."

Much of the focus post-game was on La Roja captain Iker Casillas, who was at fault for the third and -- especially -- the fourth Netherlands goals. Juanma Trueba's match report in AS, headlined "The worst nightmare of the champion," acknowledged his errors but put the scale of the defeat down to a more general bad reaction to going unexpectedly

"If you want, you can torture yourself watching again the Casillas mistake for Netherlands' fourth goal," Trueba wrote. "His mistake symbolises the collapse. The player who protected us for six years left us in the open.

"But we did not lose because of Iker. We lost as we had to lose. The scoreline is another story. First we slipped in the dark, and then we did ourselves unnecessary damage trying to switch on the light. We stumbled over all the sharp

Reaction in the Netherlands media was of stunned delight, with De Telegraaf headlining its report "Oranje slaughters Spain" and saying: 'For a moment, the trauma of 2010 is forgotten." The paper crowed: "Flying start -- amazing revenge on Spain.

Algemeen Dagblad -- which said "'Amazing Oranje runs Spain ragged" -- focused on two-goal Arjen Robben, who had been denied by Casillas' outstretched foot in the 2010 final with the score at 0-0, saying: "Robben takes revenge on It added: "Casillas' toe will probably haunt Robben for

the rest of his life. It's the pain that will never go away, because it cost Oranje the world title. But on Friday, the 30year old attacker from Bedum took a little a bit of revenge for his much-talked about miss. Former Netherlands player Willem van Hanegem wrote

in the paper: "The Dutch national team made me so happy" and hailed Van Persie's magnificent headed equaliser as "one of the most beautiful goals he has ever scored."

Football writer Charles Bromet said in De Volkskrant "The world is upside down, and this reversed world looks

BRAZILIAN BAURU

Cup opener on Thursday generated 58 "I lost my balance and fell," he explained,

times more than this year's Academy Awards Brazil's warm-up match against Serbia.

million posts on Facebook, almost five adding a similar situation had arisen in

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Screen Size

# Claro-

Messi's moment to shine

But while his previous World Cup experiences in 2006 an extravagantly gifted three-man frontline, usually along-

As an 18-year-old in 2006, he scored once off the bench Champions League final, also darting forward from midfield, in

and 2010 proved unfulfilling, there is a feeling that 2014 side Gonzalo Higuain and Sergio Aguero.

GPH GPH ispat

succeed, with coach Alejandro Sabella carefully crafting his

system, Sabella now asks Messi to line up on the right side of

Having abandoned attempts to recreate Barcelona's

With Real Madrid's Angel di Maria, man of the match in the

ensures that Messi is not the sole focus of

opposition defenders' attentions, but he rejects

any notion that Argentina are a one-man

adidas

team to put Messi in an optimal position to thrive.

Brazilian striker Neymar and Dutch forward Robin van Persie have made their grade scoring twice each in their opening games. The onus will be now on Argentina talisman Lionel Messi (C) to make his mark against Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday.

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ARGENTINA V BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Lionel Messi will be attempting to cement his legacy as an

all-time great when Argentina tackle Bosnia-Herzegovina in

their World Cup Group F opener in Rio de Janeiro on

Trophies, plaudits and individual honours have rained

down upon the record-shredding 26-year-old Barcelona

sensation over the past few years, but a signature showing at

claimed Olympic gold in Beijing in 2008, success in the World

A four-time Ballon d'Or-winner and three-time

European champion with Barcelona, Messi's devastating

ability cannot be questioned, but without success with

Argentina, there will always be an asterisk against his

against Serbia and Montenegro, while in 2010 Diego

Maradona's tactics left him overburdened as the sole

Now, though, he has been given everything he needs to

creative force in an unbalanced 4-1-3-2 formation.

adidas

Cup and the Copa America has proved harder to come by.

Although he was a member of the Argentina team that

a major international tournament still eludes him.

should be Messi's time.



France v Honduras

## Giants v underdogs

REUTERS, Porto Alegre

Former champions France should put underdogs Honduras to the sword in their World Cup Group E opener in Porto Alegre on Sunday although their penchant for self-destruction gives the Central Americans hope of an upset.

Les Bleus go into the campaign with a happier, more settled squad under coach Didier Deschamps and will aim to banish the memories of the 2010 tournament in South Africa, when the players revolted against Raymond few seasons and was expected to spearhead the expected of Paul Pogba.

Domenech and flew home in disgrace after a French challenge. Midfielder Clement Grenie

Those with longer memories will also recall their opener as reigning champions in 2002 against Senegal, who handed them an embarrassing defeat that led to an early exit.

Ribery pulled out of the squad with a back injury. The 31-year-old, though erratic in his performances for the national team, was in outstanding form for his club Bayern Munich in the past

has also been ruled out of action.

Morgan Schneiderlin and Remy Cabella have been drafted in their place. Deschamps, who captained the 1998 World Cup-winning side, Lovren's wife resisted the temptation to call up Samir Nasri France were dealt a blow when veteran Frank whose girlfriend poured scorn on the French coach mocks after her man was left out of the original squad.

The focus will now be on Karim Benzema, the 26-vear-old Real Madrid striker, who has excelled for the Spanish club this season. Much is also



"I don't think we have ever played a match having 2 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 dedicated a player to man-mark a specific opponent, and it's

RESULT OF THEIR LAST MEETING: ARGENTINA 2-0 BOSNIA (FRIENDLY, NOV 18 2013)

### **KEY PLAYERS**

Battle on the wings

SWITZERLAND V ECUADOR

REUTERS, Brasilia

Stephan Lichtsteiner, whose marauding runs down right flank for Switzerland have earned him the nickname Forrest Gump, may find his style cramped by Ecuador's pacey wingers in Sunday's World Cup match.

The Swiss right back, one of his team's most potent attacking weapons, could find himself bogged down with less-favoured defensive duties to help his side cope with the threat posed by Ecuador winger Jefferson Montero in Sunday's Group E match.

Lichtsteiner, who has won three successive Serie A titles with Juventus, usually plays on the right of a fiveman midfield for his club, giving him more freedom for his probing runs.

But Switzerland coach Ottmar Hitzfeld prefers him as a right-back in a 4-4-2 which, against teams such as Ecuador who attack down the flanks, invariably limits his freedom to harge forward.

Sunday's match will also be played at 1300 local time and, with temperatures likely to be in the mid to upper 20s Celsius, Lichtsteiner may also have to dose his energies.

"When it's 30 degress Celsius and you have to run 80 metres back, it's a different story," he said after scoring in a 2-0 friendly win over Peru on June 3.

Montero's speed and trickery can make him unplayable on his day, although he is prone to aconsistency and frustrating tendency to go it alone.

The wife of Croatia centreback Dejan Lovren mocked referee Yuichi Nishimura for his performance in the 3-1 loss to Brazil by posting a picture of him wearing a

The Croatians felt aggrieved by a number of decisions made by the Japanese official in their 3-1 defeat, particularly the awarding of a 71st-minute penalty as a result of Fred's tumble in the box under pressure from Lovren.

The Southampton man's wife Anita took to social media to make her feelings



### INFO ZONE

M W D

### LIONEL MESSI **EDIN DZEKO**

1

CAPS WC GOALS

TEAM FORMATION 4-4-1-1 4: Mujdza, Bicakcic,

4: Zabaleta, Fernandez, Spahic, Salihovic Garay, Rojo 3: Biglia, Mascherano, 4: Hajrovic, Medunjanin Pjanic, Lulic Di Maria 8: Messi, Higuain, Aguero 1: Ibisevic, 1: Dzeko

HEAD-TO-HEAD

WITZERLAND **ECUADOR** 

> THEY HAVE NEVER FACED EACH OTHER **KEY PLAYERS**

CAPS

WC GOALS TEAM FORMATION

4-2-3-1 Benaglio **Dominguez** 4: Paredes, Erazo, Guagua, l: Lichsteiner, Van Bergen, Djourou, Rodriguez

2: Inler, Behrami

1: Stefanovic

W Ayovi 4: A Valencia, Gruezo, 3: Shaqiri, Xhaka, Stocker Noboa, Montero 2: E Valencia, Caicedo

> HEAD-TO-HEAD HONDURAS

THEY HAVE NEVER FACED EACH OTHER

**KEY PLAYERS** 







WC GOALS

**TEAM FORMATION** 

Valladares 4: Beckeles, Bernandez 4: Debuchy, Varane, Sakho, Evra Figueroa, Izaguirre 3: Matuidi, Cabaye, Pogba 4: Garrido, Palacios, Garcia, Espinoza 3: Valbuena, Giroud, 2: Costly, Bengtson. Benzema

CEMON

## option, which we didn't do.

"They've done the impossible just to come to Brazil to support us, selling their because he's afraid of injections. houses, cars and even pawning their grand-FLYING KEBAB JOKES

Germany midfielder Kevin Grosskreutz

In an interview on the Germany team's official website, Grosskreutz bristled when asked if he was glad there were no kebabs at

"You know what, I don't think that's

### On that occasion, he recalled he managed, while going to ground, to hook commented play on Facebook was the ball into the net. RIBERY COULD HAVE PLAYED Franck Ribery could have played at the World Cup if he wasn't afraid of injections,

the France team's doctor Franck Le Gall A week ago Bayern Munich star Ribery With 16 million posts, Brazil was the pulled out of the World Cup due to a back most active country on Facebook during the injury that virtually stopped him running. game, followed by the United States and

the Brazilian Football Confederation

website. The striker said that after receiving

the ball and trying to turn "I felt a weight on

my shoulder and the ball went beyond my

But Le Gall now claims that Ribery could have played if the France team had listened to him rather than another doctor. while he also said Ribery's SINGER own fears hampered his

willingness to take such a "Franck belongs to a club where the treatment for all problems, whatever they are, starts from a base

of injections," said Le Gall. "He can have 10, 20, 25, 40 per problem, per year. We could have chosen this

"The time came when he couldn't cope with any more injections, so we didn't do it

said he's fed up with jokes about his two recent run-ins with the law - hurling a spicy kebab sandwich at a fan and urinating in a Berlin hotel lobby.

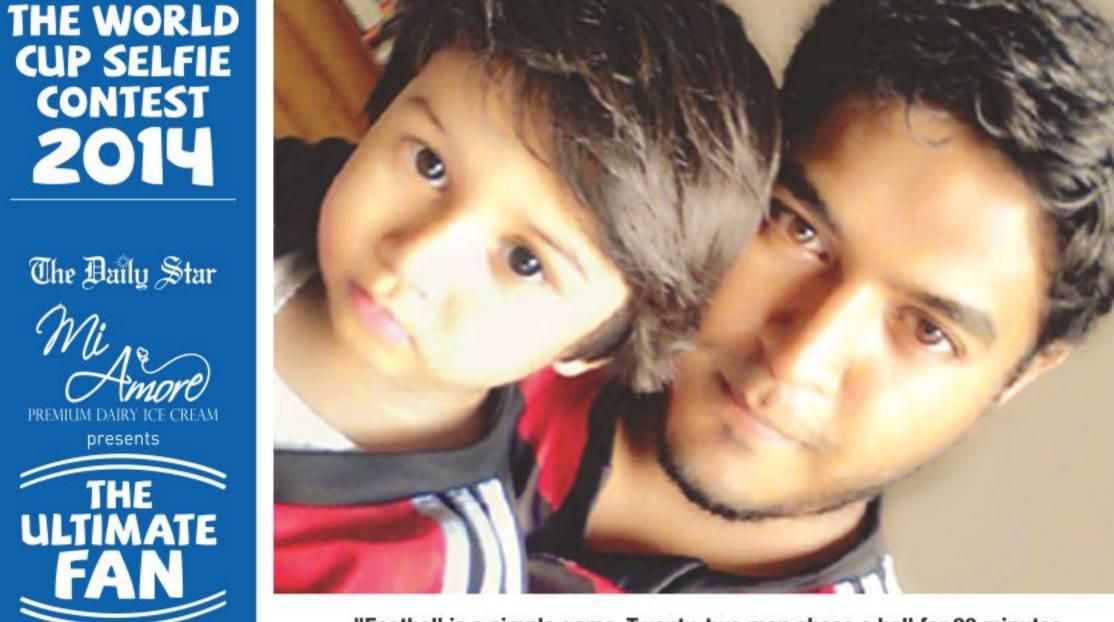
"It was clearly a penalty," said Fred, the team camp in Brazil. chief had seen an apparent shove. Television very funny at all," said Grosskreutz, who

replays indicated little contact between faced assault charges after a Cologne fan told authorities the Dortmund midfielder "There's no such thing as a more or less had thrown a kebab in his face that burned penalty," Fred said in a video statement on his eyes.

## The Daily Star presents THE FAN

CONTEST

2014



"Football is a simple game. Twenty-two men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans always win" - Gary Lineker

FROM THE MAKERS OF **EXOTIC EUROPEAN FLAVORS** 





PREMIUM DAIRY

over the incident clear, posting a mocked-up photo of Nishimura in a Brazil shirt on her Instagram account. Alongside the image of Nishimura in the style of a Panini World Cup sticker was a still of Ivica Olic's challenge on Brazil keeper Julio Cesar that led to Croatia being denied an equaliser with the score at 2-1.