

Mi Amore
PREMIUM DAIRY ICE CREAM

Nude photos anger Croats

Croatia international striker Ivica Ollic slammed local media for the "shameful" publishing of photographs which showed teammates swimming naked at their World Cup base in Brazil, a local paper reported Monday. "You can write freely that it's a real shame!" Ollic lamented for the Sportske Novosti daily. "Is it normal? Do people really need to watch us without our underpants, do our families have to blush? Did media representatives come here for foot-

STRAWBERRY & CREAM



TASTE OF TOGETHERNESS
MI AMORE

Star DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 17, 2014,
e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net

SPORT

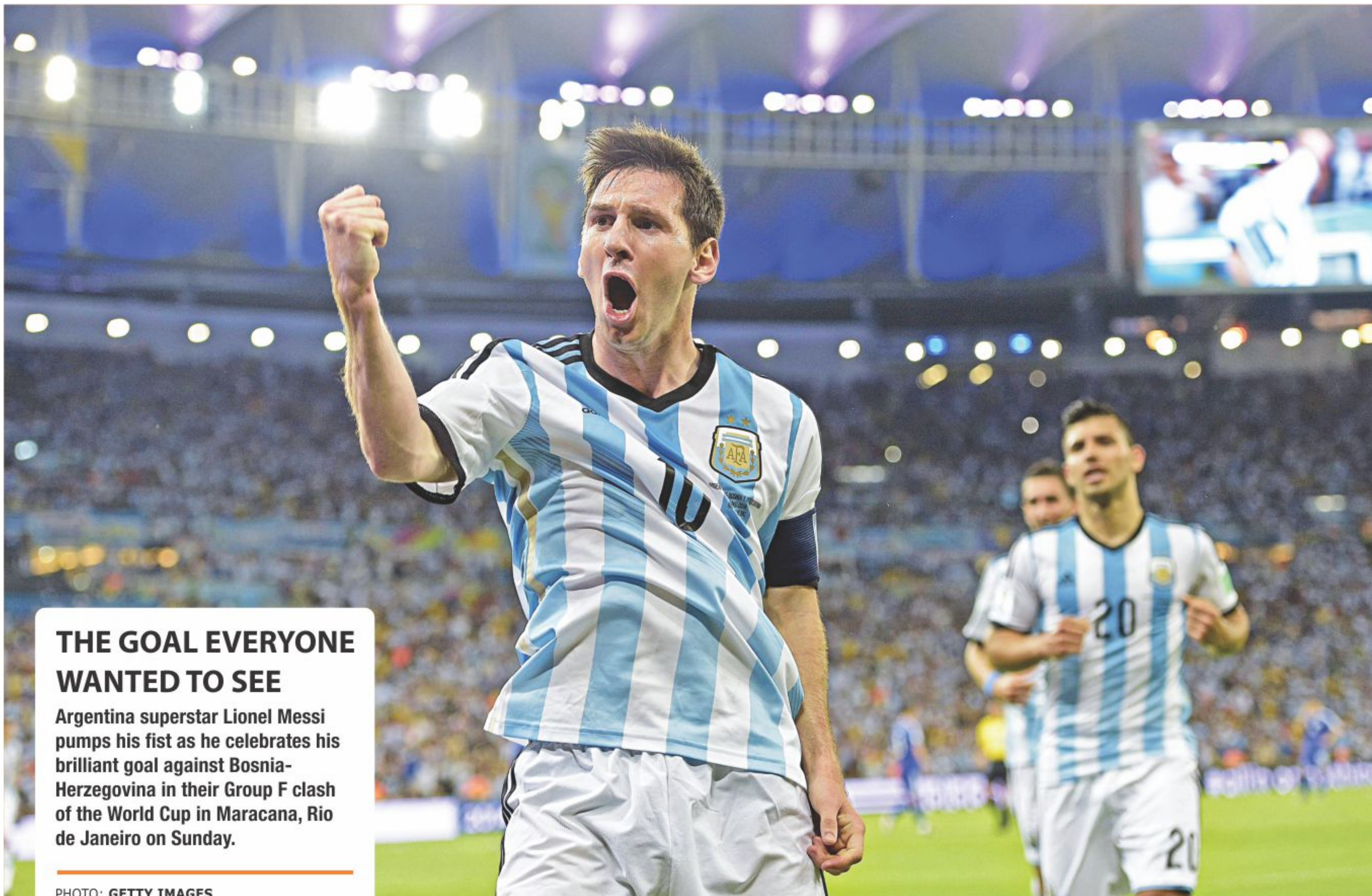


TODAY'S MATCHES

BELGIUM ALGERIA
Time: 10:00pm
Venue: Estadio Mineirao

BRAZIL MEXICO
Time: 1:00am (Wednesday)
Venue: Estadio Castelao

RUSSIA SOUTH KOREA
Time: 4:00am (Wednesday)
Venue: Arena Pantanal



THE GOAL EVERYONE WANTED TO SEE
Argentina superstar Lionel Messi pumps his fist as he celebrates his brilliant goal against Bosnia-Herzegovina in their Group F clash of the World Cup in Maracana, Rio de Janeiro on Sunday.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Stage fright got to us, says Susic
REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Bosnia paid the price for stage fright in their maiden World Cup appearance against heavyweights Argentina and will head into the next two group matches buoyed by a good performance, coach Safet Susic said after their 2-1 defeat on Sunday.

The Bosnians rarely looked second best against the twice World Cup winners at the Maracana but were undone by an unlucky Sead Kolasinac own goal and a dazzling Lionel Messi effort before Vedad Ibisevic pulled one back in the Group F game.

Messi magic lights up Maracana

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

The pressure is on Lionel Messi to make this his World Cup, and he could not have started in better fashion than conjuring the marvellous strike that sealed Argentina's 2-1 win against Bosnia-Herzegovina on Sunday.

The game at the mythical Maracana in Rio de Janeiro was 65 minutes old when Messi collected possession just inside the Bosnian half of the field and accelerated towards goal.

Messi exchanged passes with Gonzalo Higuain before cutting inside and firing a low shot into the net off a post from the edge of the area to put Argentina 2-0 up, while his marker Muhamed Besic, trailing in his wake, ended up on the floor.

With substitute Vedad Ibisevic later pulling one back for the World Cup debutants, Messi's effort turned out to be decisive.

It was a goal worthy of winning any game, and they don't come much better than a World Cup match at the Maracana, especially for Argentina and their colourful, noisy support.

Set to turn 27 later this month, Messi should only now be at the peak of a career that has already delivered so much, including a record goal

haul for Barcelona, three Champions Leagues and four Ballons d'Or.

But to cement his legacy as an all-time great, he surely has to match his great compatriot Diego Maradona and lead Argentina to World Cup glory.

Major international tournaments define the greatest players of each generation, and that is something Messi -- a year older now than Maradona was in his 1986 World Cup campaign -- can only be too aware of.

**ARGENTINA 2 (Kolasinac 3 own goal, Messi 65)
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 1 (Ibisevic 85)**

He took to the field at the Maracana sporting the captain's armband and his evening got off to the perfect start. The game was only three minutes old when his free-kick from wide on the left was helped on by Marcos Rojo and turned into the net by hapless Bosnian defender Sead Kolasinac.

However, rather than set the tone for the rest of the evening, Alejandro Sabella's side appeared unsure what to do next and his star-studded attack

-- Sergio Aguero partnered Messi -- offered very little for the remainder of the opening half.

Messi produced one slaloming run into the penalty box shortly before the break, but otherwise he was all too often reduced to walking pace as neither Angel Di Maria nor Maxi Rodriguez in midfield provided him with a sufficient supply line.

Sabella wanted more and he changed things around at half-time, replacing one of his three centre-backs in Hugo Campagnaro with a third forward in Higuain and introducing Fernando Gago into the midfield in place of Maxi.

In reverting to their standard 4-3-3 formation, Argentina became a much greater threat, and Messi set up Aguero for one chance, only for the Manchester City striker to fire over.

Messi had been watched closely by Besic all evening but his moment came with the midway point in the second half approaching, when he finally got his second World Cup goal, almost exactly eight years after coming off the bench to net in a 6-0 defeat of Serbia and Montenegro in Germany.

It was the type of goal he has scored so many times before with Barcelona, but doing it on this stage made it that little bit more special.

Leo thunder strikes Dhaka

AL-AMIN

Usually Dhaka is asleep at 5 o'clock in the morning. Apart from the constant tweets of sparrows, the bustling activity around four odd kitchen wholesale markets and off course the constitutionals of health-conscious people, it is otherwise a city still in sleep. But this Monday morning was an exception. And it felt like thunder struck when people few blocks away roared in unison -- GOAAAL! Yes, the Leo Messi thunder had struck. The Argentina talisman had just scored against Bosnia and Herzegovina -- a relief for the best player on the planet and unbridled joy for Argentina and its zillion followers across the world, including Bangladesh.

Messi, who had scored just once in his previous two World Cup tournament appearances, walked into the Maracana Stadium with a mission to solve a puzzle, a puzzle that has been haunting him and his followers -- why the Barcelona goal-machine often fails to deliver while sporting the Argentina shirt.

His goal in Argentina's opening game may not have driven away the fear entirely, but it certainly delivered a message that Messi is far more determined to transform his club form to his country on the biggest stage of world football. The goal was a typical Messi masterpiece. After receiving the ball from Kun Aguero, he dribbled past two Bosnia defenders and reached the top of the box from where he let loose a low shot with his pet left foot.

The ball swerved enough to beat the Bosnia custodian before entering the net after hitting the left-hand post. That goal apart, it was not a performance Argentina would wish to consider as a benchmark for the rest of the tournament. To be frank it was debutants Bosnia who dictated terms against disjointed Albiceleste which had a forgettable first half and only picked up their game after the break. The biggest problem Argentina had was the absence of a quality midfielder with Mascherano playing the dual role defending an impressive Bosnia attack and supplying the ball upfront. Besides, for Argentina to prosper in the tournament it is important that the attacking trio of Messi, De Marian and Aguero combines well. On Monday De Maria lacked sharpness and accuracy, so did Aguero.

Besides, Argentina coach Alejandro Sabella's tactic of starting with one midfielder did not work and he was quick to realise that and brought in Fernando Gago after the break. Argentina won the match 2-1 but it was Bosnia who won the heart with entertaining football. Despite the defeat they look like the other team to advance into the last 16 from Group F, provided that they beat Nigeria.

Goals are virtually raining in Brazil. The tournament has already witnessed 37 goals in 11 games. And with the introduction of Messi to the goal-wagon this World Cup in all probability is going to be the most memorable one, no matter who hoists aloft the trophy at the end.

'We need to improve'

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Lionel Messi left the Maracana with a smile on his face on Sunday following his man-of-the-match performance against Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"We have things we need to improve but it was a good first game at the World Cup," the 26-year-old captain said after setting up Argentina's first goal and then scoring the decisive second after a stunning burst from midfield.

"Everyone was anxious to do well. The result was the most important," he added, before admitting that a half-time tactical tweak by coach Alejandro Sabella proved crucial in helping him flourish after the restart.

Argentina switched from a system with three central defenders to their customary 4-3-3, with Gonzalo Higuain joining the attack and helping set up Messi's goal.

The Barcelona superstar was impressed with the atmosphere generated by the large Argentinian contingent in the Maracana crowd of close to 75,000.

"The stadium is impressive and it was great to see so many Argentinians, which I'm sure will be the same in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre. It was a great atmosphere and it makes me proud," he said.

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