

PREMIUM DAIRY ICE CREAM

David Luiz's sweetest gift

After being humbled by Germany in the semifinal, Brazil defender David Luiz offered a tearful apology to his country on TV, saying, "I just wanted to see my people smile." This prompted nine-year-old fan Ana Luz to write Luiz a letter letting him know that everything would be OK. She even included a lovely drawing of the PSG defender holding a trophy. Luiz posted the touching letter on Instagram and wrote, "Many thanks princess Ana Luz, loved your letter! And thanks to all Brazilians for all the support! I'll never give up my dreams". --INTERNET

PRALINE & CREAM

TASTE OF TOGETHERNESS

MI AMORE

DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 13, 2014
e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net

NCC BANK
NCC Bank Ltd.
Where Credit and Commerce Integrates

TODAY'S MATCH

FINAL

GERMANY v ARGENTINA

Time: 1:00am (Monday)
Venue: Estadio do Maracana

PHOTOS: REUTERS

Lionel Messi? Or Thomas Mueller? The world waits on the Argentine genius (L) and the German machine to see who comes out smiling at the Maracana today.

Photo of the Day

Paint Your Imagination

BERGER Trusted Worldwide

KEY STATS

Germany v Argentina is the most frequently contested World Cup final, with Sunday's game marking their third clash for the biggest prize in football

Twice champions Argentina are returning to the final for the first time since losing 1-0 to West Germany in 1990

The South Americans won their first title in 1978, beating the Netherlands in the final, and their second in 1986 with a 3-2 win over West Germany

The Germans have won the world title three times, though all three triumphs were as West Germany (1954, 1974, 1990)

Cup in exchange for records

GOAL.COM

Lionel Messi has declared he would gladly hand back all his personal records if it meant Argentina could defeat Germany in the World Cup final.

The Albiceleste forward has scored four times on the path to Sunday's showpiece in the Maracana, which his side reached courtesy of a 4 -- 2 win on penalties against the Netherlands on Wednesday.

Messi has won a glittering array of awards throughout his career, including four Ballons d'Or, but claims that he would exchange all those accolades for a taste of World Cup glory.

"I would give all my personal records to be world champion," the 27 -- year -- old was quoted by Bild.

"I'd prefer to win the World Cup than the Ballon d'Or," he added in an interview with sponsors Adidas.

"As a player, winning the World Cup is the biggest thing there is. It's something you dream of as a youngster and that dream never fades away.

"I've asked my teammates at Barcelona, Xavi, [Andres] Iniesta and [Gerard] Pique, what it's like to lift the trophy and they said it's hard to explain. We'll be doing everything we can to turn this dream into a reality [for Argentina]."

The forward was echoed in his desperation to clinch a third World Cup for Argentina by Javier Mascherano, who promised his side would give everything for victory.

"We're there and we'll try it with the soul, heart and head," the 30 -- year -- old said.

"Now we are on the last step and will try to live up to the circumstances, and then get to the destination.

"I wish I could enjoy it and can play with joy and excitement it deserves. This is what you aim for in life and what you imagined was far off, almost impossible. The dream is a great one.

"Right now all this is crossing my mind. I am a person who is easily excited and this is all in part for our squad, but also for those who struggle at our side -- family and friends who have endured through thick and thin."

Mueller wary of Argentine revenge

GOAL.COM

Thomas Mueller has warned Germany that Argentina will be desperate to atone for back-to-back quarterfinal defeats against his side by winning on Sunday.

Die Mannschaft secured a 4-0 victory over the South Americans in the last eight of the 2010 South Africa World Cup after attaining a 4-2 win on penalties over them at the same stage in the 2006 tournament in Germany.

Mueller stressed that Argentina would be especially keen to avoid a third failure in as many World Cups against his team, adding that all Germany's previous wins would quickly be forgotten if they finished as runners up on Sunday.

"That makes the task more difficult," the 24-year-old told the Times of India when questioned on Germany's recent successes against la Albiceleste.

"They will be more eager to make it count in the most important match of the World Cup. And if they can win it, nobody will remember what we did in the previous two tournaments.

"In fact, the final is such a match where if you lose, people will not remember what we did in the previous match, too! It's always a nothing-but-win match and, again, we are preparing ourselves in the best way possible.

"Germany did not reach the final of a World Cup since 2002. Twelve years is quite long for Germany, not to be in another final. We reached the semifinals of the last two editions but were eliminated there.

"So, we all were quite anxious to reach the summit this time. And we are glad we did it."

Mueller is also looking to achieve a personal milestone and add to the Golden Boot he won in South Africa by becoming the top scorer in Brazil, currently sitting one goal behind James Rodriguez's tally of six.

"It is always satisfying to score goals and contribute to the team's cause," the Bayern Munich forward said.

"At the same time, it is not only about scoring goals, it's all about winning for the nation.

"Yes, it gives me immense pleasure whenever I score, especially in the World Cup. If anybody would have said that I would score five and receive the Golden Boot in South Africa, I would not have believed it."

Battles within the battle

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Sami Khedira v Lionel Messi

Stopping Messi will be Germany's priority and they are unlikely to give the job to just one player. The Germans have been studying how the Netherlands managed to keep Messi relatively subdued in the semifinal although they have not given many clues as to how they intend to go about the job themselves.

Defender Benedikt Hoewedes, who helped subdue Cristiano Ronaldo in the 4-0 win over Portugal, said it was important to swarm the Argentine number ten and not get caught in a one-on-one.

However, as Messi has effectively been a playmaker in the World Cup, German defensive midfielder Khedira is likely to have a key role in keeping him under wraps.

Khedira, a box-to-box midfielder, worked tirelessly to help close down the Brazilian midfield in his side's epic 7-1 semifinal win on Tuesday.

Gonzalo Higuain v Mats Hummels

Higuain has started all of Argentina's matches, bar the opening game against Bosnia, and has played the often unforgiving role as target man.

Although his goal haul has been disappointing, limited to the early strike in the 1-0 quarterfinal win over Belgium, his movement causes defenders endless problems, pulling them out of position to open space for Messi to thread balls through to Ezequiel Lavezzi or run at the defence himself.

Hummels is strong in the air and more versatile than his defensive partner Jerome Boateng.

Higuain had the better when he clashed with Hummels in the Champions League this season, scoring the first goal in Napoli's 2-1 win over Borussia Dortmund.

Thomas Mueller v Marcos Rojo

Mueller has been one of the outstanding players of the tournament with five goals and was the architect of both the 4-0 win over Portugal and the 7-1 demolition of Brazil in the semifinals.

Apart from his speed and clinical finishing, Mueller's secret is his exceptional and instinctive understanding of space and he is invariably in the right place at the right time.

The Bayern Munich player is usually found of the right side of the attack where left back Marcos Rojo is the first line of defence for the South Americans.

Sporting defender Rojo was far from a unanimous choice at the start but has had an excellent tournament, helping to steady a previously rocky ship.

Toni Kroos v Javier Mascherano

Kroos was one of the outstanding players in Germany's 7-1 demolition of Brazil as he showed with the fourth goal when he dispossessed Fernandinho, played a one-two and scored into an empty net.

He is one of Germany's most creative players as he spreads passes around the midfield, a ruthless finisher and a physically imposing presence.

If he plays on the left of midfield again he may fall into Mascherano's sphere of influence, setting up one of the key battles in the match.

Mascherano has been outstanding for Argentina and played a key role in helping subdue Arjen Robben during the semifinal against Netherlands.

WhatsApp

1 paisa/second to any operator any time of the day

one stop solution for social networking

banglalink social pack

choose daily, weekly or monthly internet pack based on your usage.

dial to activate: *5000*3*4#

start something new