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Monday, December 19, 2022
Jumada I 25, 1444 AH
GULF TIMES
SPORT
FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar2022

Match Report

Messi the hero as Argentina win World Cup Qatar 2022

Argentina's Lionel Messi celebrates with the trophy and teammates after winning the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 following their penalty shootout win over France in the final played at Lusail Stadium yesterday. *(Reuters)*

From left: Argentina's Enzo Fernandez, Argentina's Lionel Messi, Argentina's Emiliano Martinez and France's Kylian Mbappe pose after being awarded the Best Young Player, Golden Ball, Golden Glove and Golden Boot, respectively. *(Reuters)*

Argentina's Emiliano Martinez saves a spot kick during the penalty shootout missed by France's Kingsley Coman yesterday. *(Reuters)*

By Sahan Bidappa
Doha

Lionel Messi finally has his Diego Maradona moment and make a claim to be the greatest ever to play the game. The Argentina superstar laid his hand on his holy grail – a World Cup title – that had eluded him until last night, which came after a dramatic 4-2 shootout victory in the final against France in what was a fitting end to the Qatar 2022.

On an epic night at the Lusail Stadium there were plenty of twists and turns – not least from Messi and Kylian Mbappe – with arguably the finest World Cup final ever decided on penalties.

When it was finally over after Gonzalo Montiel had converted the winning penalty to give Argentina its third title and first since 1986, Messi had lived through many emotions.

It was a fairytale end to Messi's World Cup Odyssey. Clearly, it was written in the stars for Messi, even after the most stunning of France comebacks inspired by a terrific Mbappe.

As France, bidding to become the first team to win back-to-back World Cups since Brazil achieved the feat in 1962, made a laboured start, Argentina played with passion and intensity. Messi put his side in front in the 23rd minute scoring a penalty with ease before contributing to a second goal which was a team creation of a beauty finished off by Angel Di Maria.

As Argentina dominated with no sign of France fightback, Messi ambled across the pitch for most of the match. The 35-year-old's memory must have wandered to his time at Rosario, his hometown in Argentina, where he grew up dreaming of winning a World Cup medal.

But a double whammy in the space of 97 seconds from Mbappe after 80th minute – a penalty followed by a thunderous volley – changed the complexion of the game and put Messi's lifelong dream in threat.

Les Bleus manager manager Didier Deschamps made two substitutions before half-time, replacing Olivier Giroud and Ousmane Dembele with Marcus Thuram and Randal Kolo Muani and both young stars provided the fuel for Mbappe to fire.

Suddenly, Argentina were in danger of losing a final which they pretty much had under control as Mbappe looked unstoppable. But it needed an intervention from French captain and goalkeeper Hugo Lloris to take the game to extra time after he tipped a Messi shot over the bar.

It would have been a perfect ending to the final if Messi's magical left foot had curled the ball into the net, but it was his least admired right foot that gave Argentina the spark in the extra time.

After substitute Lautaro Martinez's strike was saved by Lloris, Messi pounced on the rebound with a desperate last-ditch save from a France defender in vain.

In the 1986 final, Maradona had made an assist to Jorge Burruchaga for the winning goal against West Germany and Messi looked to have gone one better than his legendary compatriot in what looked like a winning strike.

But the drama extended after Mbappe's fierce shot was blocked by the arm of Montiel to win another penalty in the 117th minute. Messi looked the other away as his Paris Saint-Germain teammate calmly dispatched to secure an hat-trick – the first in a World Cup final since Sir Geoff Hurst did it for England against West Germany in 1966 – and a tournament-topping eighth goal.

It set up a wild finish in front of a 88,966 spectators, mostly made up of Argentina's blue and white stripes, as both sides came agonisingly close. Lautaro Martinez was denied by last-ditch Dayot Upamecano interventions, while Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez made a stretching save of his life after a one-on-one from Kolo Muani. Mbappe then made an outrageous dribble past two defenders in the box before he was stopped by the third.

And so it went to penalties, with Mbappe and Messi converting theirs. Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez – who had made two stunning saves against the Netherlands in the quarter-finals – palmed away Kingsley Coman's spot kick, before Aurelian Tchouameni shot wide.

Then it was left for Montiel to seek a redemption after extra-time handball and the left-back kept his nerves to put the ball to Lloris' right. As Montiel heaved a huge sigh of relief, Messi collapsed to his knees in the centre circle and was engulfed by his jubilant teammates.

After the weight of the world visibly lifted off his shoulders, Messi, joined by his wife and three sons, celebrated with the trophy and his second Golden Ball award for best player of the tournament, before vowing to continue playing for his country despite realising his lifetime ambition.

"I want to keep experiencing a few more matches as world champion," Messi told an Argentine television.

Later France boss Deschamps suggested that the virus which laid low several of his players in the run-up to the final was partly to blame for their poor performance over the first hour.

"There were many reasons which explained why we were not as good. Several important players had less energy but bringing on younger players with less experience but plenty of freshness and quality allowed us to keep dreaming.

"But unfortunately the dream did not come true," said Deschamps, who was in his third World Cup final after he won it in 1998 as Les Bleus' captain and then four years ago as their coach.

Match Stats

3 (4) – 3 (2)

Argentina win 4-2 on penalties

ARGENTINA		FRANCE
20	Shots	10
10	Shots on Target	5
15	Chances Created	6
6	Corners	5
2	Saves	7
54.1%	Possession	45.9%
4	Offsides	4
26	Fouls	19
5	Yellow Cards	3
0	Red Cards	0

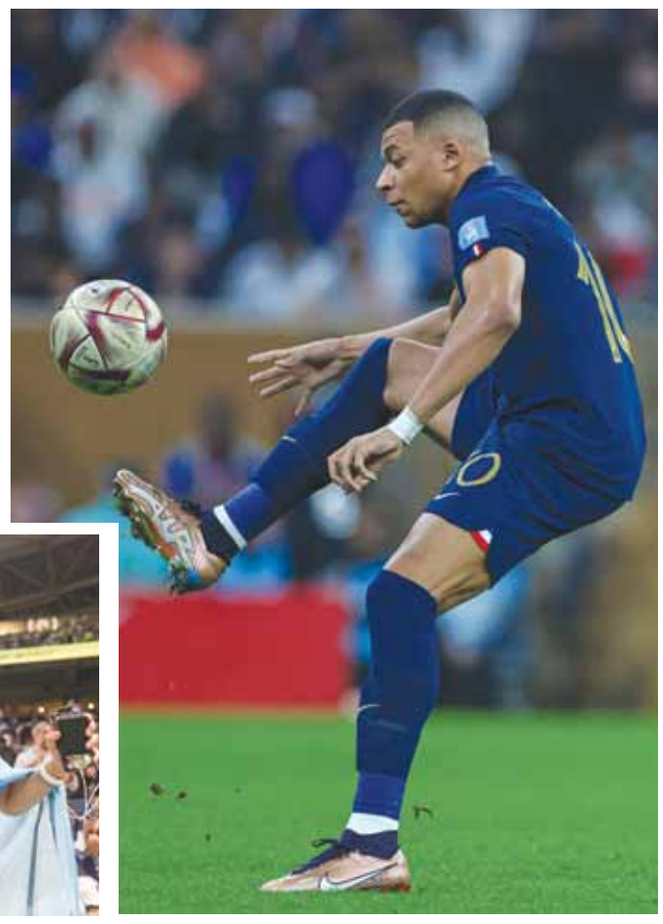
Spotlight

Qatar 2022 closing ceremony dazzles world

The closing ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 at Lusail Stadium yesterday featuring impressive shows that blended Qatar's heritage with its modernity and development. During the ceremony, Qatar thanked and bid farewell to the whole world after hosting an exceptional, unique, record-breaking and indelible World Cup. The ceremony featured songs from the World Cup Official Soundtrack that celebrated the convergence of peoples from the world over the course of the tournament that continued for 29 days. Davido and Aisha performed 'Hayya Hayya', Ozuna and Gims sang 'Arhbo', and Balqees, Rahma Riad, Manal and Nora Fatehi sang 'Light the Sky'. The closing ceremony began with Qatari artist Dana's rendition of 'What A Wonderful World', followed by a poem by Tamim al-Barghouti that celebrated bringing peoples together to celebrate football despite cultural differences. The 12-minute ceremony witnessed the lighting of 32 balls resembling celestial bodies decorated with the flags of the countries that participated in the World Cup. Two balls remained to symbolise the finalists, France and Argentina. Also, former Spanish footballer and World Cup winner Iker Casillas and Indian actress Deepika Padukone presented the World Cup Trophy before the start of the final between Argentina and France. *(Agencies)*

GLIMPSES OF AMAZING FINAL

PICTURES: *Ram Chand*



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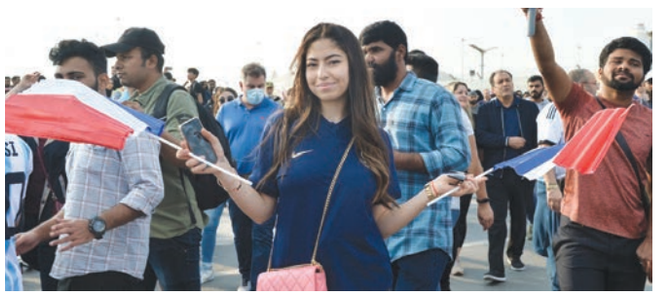
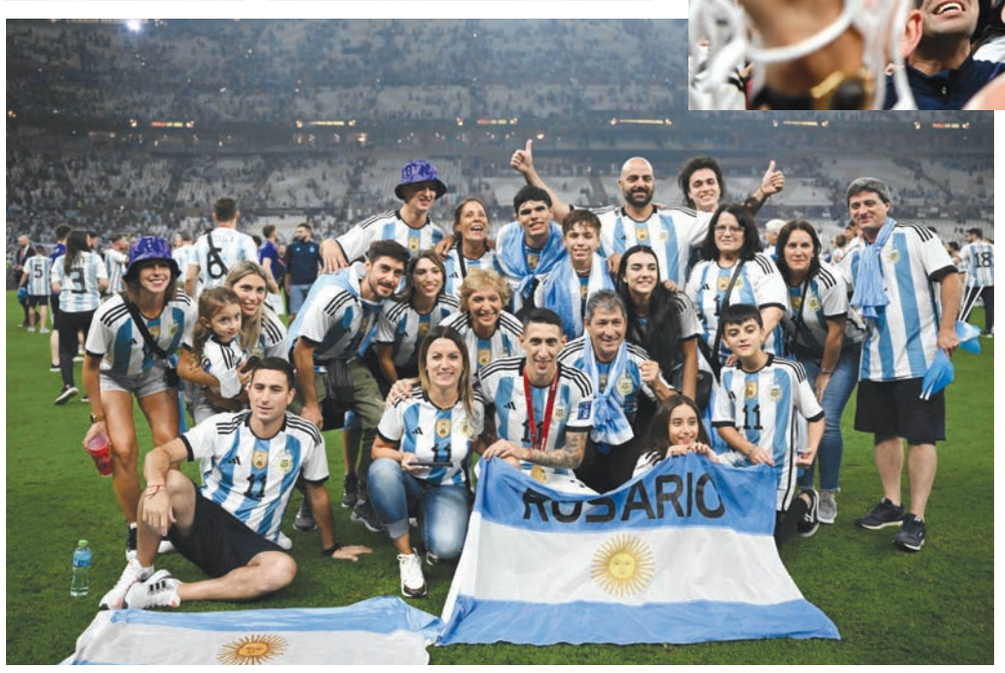
Glimpses of Qatar 2022



Pictures: *Shaji Kayamkulam*

CHAMPIONS
FIFA WORLD CUP Qat_ar2022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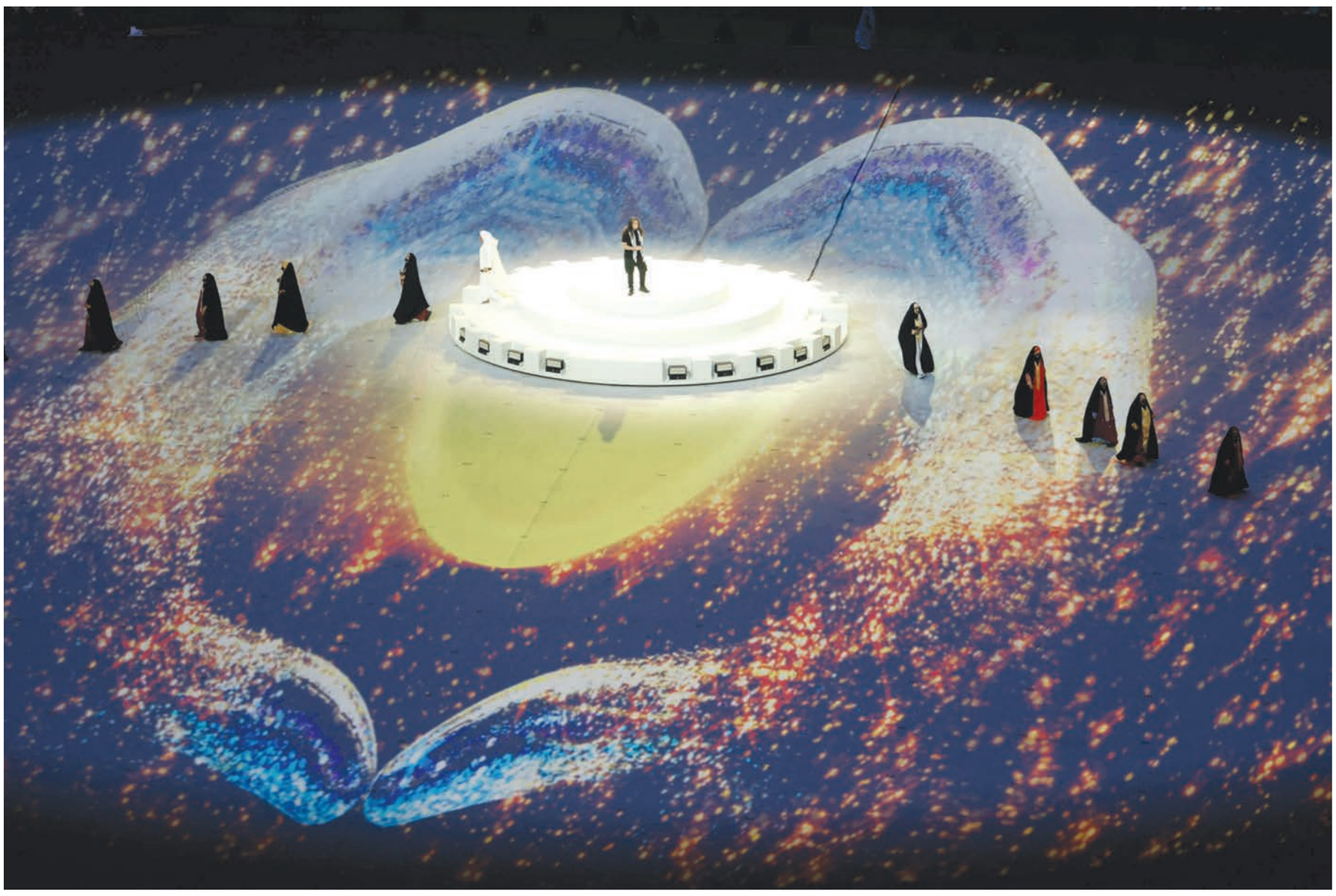

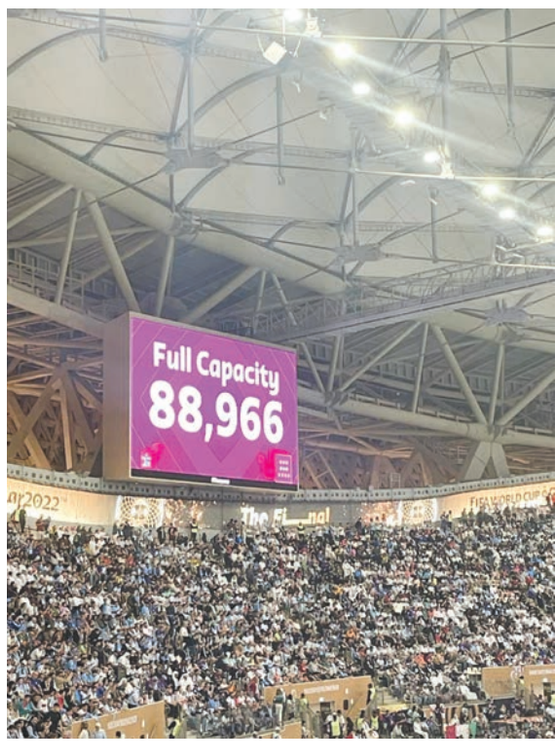
Full Capacity
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FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar2022

Spot___light

Suffering Argentines explode with joy at 'epic' Cup victory

Fireworks cracked, car horns sounded and fans draped in the national blue and white colours sang, danced and waved flags

AFP
Buenos Aires

Watching football icon Lionel Messi inspire Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar yesterday made the economic suffering engulfing the country "worth it", according to ecstatic fans.

Fireworks cracked, car horns sounded and fans draped in the national blue and white colours sang, danced and waved flags.

Messi scored two goals against France as the game ended 3-3 after extra-time, with Kylian Mbappe bagging a hat-trick for the reigning champions.

Messi also netted in the shoot-out but goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez was the hero saving one penalty before Gonzalo Montiel banged in the winning spot-kick to send Argentine players and fans into raptures.

"I can't believe it, I can't believe it," repeated Joel Ciarallo, 31, over and again before the final had finished.

It was their "destiny to suffer. It's a condition of being Argentine," he added from a cafe in central Buenos Aires.

"Epic, this is epic, all of Argentine history is suffering like this," added a fan watching the game on a giant screen in the Centenario park in the capital.

Watching the World Cup final and dreaming about winning it has been a much needed exercise in escapism for citizens of a country that has suffered years of economic turmoil due to spiralling inflation.

Some 40% of the 45mn population lives in poverty and currency devaluation has caused havoc with disposal income.

"Argentina is a country that is suffering, that is going through an economic rollercoaster where it's always hard to make ends meet at the end of the month," said Agustin Acevedo, 25, a construction worker from Temperley, who came to Buenos Aires to watch the final.

But "it's perfect, everything we've suffered has been worth it for this." "Let's be clear, Argentina is in trouble, economically, socially, it's bad. So this distraction is richly deserved," he said.

Locksmith Gabriel Escalante paid tribute to Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni for the victory. "They are playing as if in the field but with pressure, despite their luxuries. It's a wonderful job by this coach," said Escalante from the Cenetenario park.

"They deserve to win," added Sergio Loreto, 32.

'PERFECT, WORTH THE SUFFERING'

From early yesterday morning, before the match even began, the square around the iconic Obelisk in central Buenos Aires began filling with people.

It is the traditional site for Argentines to celebrate sporting victories in the capital.

Dozens of fans jumped up and down singing songs as passing drivers honked their car horns with a sense of destiny brewing that Messi, 35 and in the twilight of his incredible career, would add the one major international honour missing from his collection. Many eager Argentine fans — almost all wearing the national team's blue and white striped jersey — had started queueing up at restaurants before they opened to get the best seats to watch the highly-anticipated match-up on large television screens hours later.

From Jujuy in the north to Chubut some 2,800 kilometres to the south, from Mendoza at the foot of the Andes mountain range in the west to Mar del Plata on the Atlantic coast, the country was preparing to rejoice at a much sought after third world title.

Even the day before the final, the Argentine capital was a sea of blue and white jerseys, flags, painted faces, hats and other memorabilia. Vendors cashed in, with Raul Machuca, 22, saying face paint and flags sold like hot cakes at the Melu store in central Buenos Aires where he works.

With Christmas around the corner, he said it was a double boon for the shop.

In some major avenues, the city council had painted pedestrian crossings in the national team's blue and white stripes.

At the Obelisk, some vendors were already selling "world champions" T-shirts including a third star from yesterday morning.

Argentina fans celebrate winning the World Cup in Buenos Aires, yesterday. *(Reuters)*

A giant Argentine T-shirt that reads "Champions of the world" hangs on the facade of the Colon Theatre in Buenos Aires, after Argentina won the Qatar 2022 World Cup against France, yesterday. *(AFP)*

Another view of Argentina fans celebrating the triumph in the Qatar 2022 World Cup against France in Buenos Aires, yesterday. *(AFP)*

Des___pair

Long faces for crestfallen French fans as title triumph hopes dashed

AFP
Paris

Thousands of fans massed in Paris and other French cities yesterday hoping for victory in the World Cup final, but their national team's defeat to Argentina cut parties short and brought moods that matched the bleak winter skies.

A thrilling match in Qatar finished 3-3 after extra-time before France lost a nailbiting shootout to Lionel Messi's Argentina side 4-2.

"We're disappointed, especially with a finish on penalties," said Louane, a 14-year-old who braved the cold drizzle on the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris with his parents, who came from the central Jura region for the game.

"But there were plenty of twists in the game and we thought it was in reach," he said.

Despite the loss, many fans acknowledged it had been a match for the ages after France had fought back from 2-0 down to bring the scores level in normal time. "To come back from a two-goal deficit is incredible," said Romain Balthazar, a 22-year-old engineering student who made the trip to the French capital with friends.

"We came to experience this on the Champs — it's fabulous," he said as the rain came down.

Fans gathered in bars and restaurants to watch the contest.

At the Argentine embassy in Paris, a few blocks from the Arc de Triomphe monument, dozens of fans erupted in joy after the victory.

"It's an incredible feeling, with this finale for Messi, because we haven't won since Maradona," said Alejandro Gomez, an 30-year-old Argentine now residing in France.

'MADE US DREAM'

President Emmanuel Macron, who travelled to Qatar to watch the game, told reporters afterward that he "was very sad and disappointed" for the French side but said "Les Bleus" would still be feted on the Champs-Elysees today.

"Les Bleus made us dream," Macron also tweeted after appearing on the stadium pitch for the medal ceremony. In the southern French city of Marseille, fans followed the rollercoaster match in and outside bars in the historic port district.

"They played incredibly well, and didn't disappoint, but penalty shots are always like Russian roulette," said Laurent Bergerot, a 44-year-old engineer. "It came down to chance but we fought until the end."

In the southwestern city of Bordeaux, Anthony Brebis, draped in a French flag and sporting its red, white and blue on his cheeks, said he was still reeling from the disappointment. "We have a young team that didn't have enough experience to hold out for more than 90 minutes," he said.

The government deployed some 14,000 police officers across France to prevent violence, though France's loss and the dismal weather meant most of the parties wound up without incident.

In Paris, security forces moved in to disperse a crowd on the Champs-Elysees, while in the southeastern city of Lyon, police used tear gas to disperse a group that set off flares and fireworks after the game.

France fans react as they watch the final of the FIFA World Cup against Argentina in Paris yesterday. *(Reuters)*

World Cup viewing and foot massage for hospitalised Pele

Brazilian football legend Pele was watching the World Cup final yesterday while receiving a foot massage in a hospital as he battles colon cancer, according to his daughter, who posted a photograph of the icon.

"Foot massage and World Cup on TV," Kely Nascimento wrote.

The image shows a smiling woman rubbing the three-time World Cup champion's left foot. According to the latest medical bulletin, released by the Sao Paulo hospital where he was admitted on November 29, the 82-year-old Pele remains "conscious and with stable vital signs."

Kely Nascimento and Flavia Arantes, another of his daughters, have posted multiple messages on social media to reassure fans worldwide after rumours the superstar's health was deteriorating.

On Saturday, Pele published a lengthy statement on Instagram in which he addressed his country's ouster from the tournament in a quarter-final match against Croatia.

"Despite the pain we feel for our elimination in the World Cup, I ask Brazilians to remember what brought us the five stars (the five World Cup titles) we wear on our chest.

"It is love that moves us," he wrote. (AFP)

Bottom___Line

England manager Southgate to stay on until Euro 2024

Reuters
Bengaluru

England manager **Gareth Southgate** has decided to stay on and lead the campaign for the 2024 European Championship, the Football Association (FA) said yesterday.

The popular 52-year-old led England to the quarter-finals of the World Cup in Qatar, where they were knocked out by France, and had said he was "conflicted" about his role and giving it some thought.

"We are delighted to confirm that Gareth Southgate is continuing as England manager, and will lead our Euro 2024 campaign," FA CEO Mark Bullingham said in a statement.

"Gareth and (assistant manager) Steve Holland have always had our full support, and our planning for the Euros starts now."

Southgate, who also led England to the 2018 World Cup semi-finals and the final of the delayed Euro 2020 tournament last year, signed a new contract through to the end of 2024 in November last year.

England were relegated to the second tier of the Nations League earlier this year following a six-match winless run and five games without a goal from open play.

Some adverse fan reaction then had upset Southgate and his players, though they were widely praised for their World Cup campaign, performing impressively and losing narrowly 2-1 to France with a missed penalty by captain Harry Kane.

Spot__light

10 memorable impressions from the Qatar FIFA World Cup

THE QATAR WORLD CUP HAS DELIVERED A RICH FEAST OF SOCCER FOR THE PAST MONTH, WITH SHOCKS, GREAT GOALS, INCREDIBLE CELEBRATIONS AND RECORD-BREAKING FEATS SERVED UP BY THE ASSEMBLED CAST. HERE ARE 10 OF THE HIGHLIGHTS AS CHOSEN BY THE REUTERS TEAM OF REPORTERS COVERING THE TOURNAMENT.

1

SAUDI ARABIA STUN ARGENTINA

Argentina were cruising in their opening Group C game after Lionel Messi scored a first-half penalty. But the Green Falcons swooped after half-time with Saleh al-Shehri squeezing in a low shot to equalise and five minutes later Salem al-Dawsari curled in a scorching second to leave Argentina in disbelief and Saudi fans joyously singing 'where is Messi?'.

2

SOUTH KOREA'S NERVOUS WAIT

When Hwang Hee-chan scored a stoppage-time winner for South Korea in their final Group H game the hard part was just starting. The Korean players then had to spend almost 10 agonising minutes in a tight huddle in the centre circle peering at phones, hoping Uruguay would not score another goal against Ghana. Finally, with a last-16 place assured, they sprinted en masse towards their delirious fans.

3

MAGICAL MESSI BAMBOOZLES CROATIAN

Such has been the Argentine number 10s impact in Qatar that the seven-time Ballon D'Or winner could have multiple entries on the memorable list. But the way he held off Croatia's masked defender Josko Gvardiol, then bamboozled him with an electrifying twist to set up the third goal in a 3-0 semi-final win encapsulated the 35-year-old's genius.

4

RONALDO EXITS FINAL WORLD CUP IN TEARS

Portugal's talisman became the first male player to score in five World Cups with a penalty against Ghana. But the 37-year-old was subsequently left out of the starting line-up and after he was unable to save his side after coming off the bench in the quarter-final against Morocco he was filmed walking down the tunnel in floods of tears.

5

JAPAN HIT BACK TO SHOCK GERMANY

Before kickoff in their Group E opener Germany's players covered their mouths in protest at FIFA's threat of sanctions against the wearing of the 'OneLove' armband.
At the final whistle they were left gobsmacked after Japan's substitutes Ritsu Doan and Takuma Asano secured an unlikely 2-1 comeback win for the Samurai Blue whose fans celebrated hard before bagging the litter in the stadium.

6

MOROCCO'S FANS

Thousands of them descended on the Arabian Gulf to roar the Atlas Lions and were richly-rewarded as Morocco became the first African and first Arab country to reach the semi-finals.
The noise the red-clad hordes created in the stadiums was deafening and reached fever pitch in the penalty shootout defeat of Spain in the last 16 and against Portugal in the quarter-finals when a cacophony of whistles greeted every touch by the opposition as Morocco protected their 1-0 lead.

7

GROUP E FINALE MAYHEM

A group that began with Germany losing to Japan and Spain putting seven goals past Costa Rica concluded on a tumultuous night that almost turned the football world upside-down.
Germany needed a win over Costa Rica and for Spain to beat Japan to go through as runners-up, and at half-time that was exactly what was happening. Then everything went mad.
Japan scored twice in three minutes early in the second half and Costa Rica flipped thei . Germany ended up winning 4-2 to save Spain's bacon, although they were on the flight home the next day.

8

MBAPPE DESTROYS POLAND

Kylian Mbappe has enhanced his reputation as one of the best players in the world in Qatar and the Frenchman was simply unplayable in the last-16 against Poland.
First he set up Olivier Giroud to open the scoring then took matters into his own hands with two sublime finishes to seal a 3-0 win. The speedster was clocked at 35.3kph during the game.

9

CAMEROON'S ABOUBAKAR SINKS BRAZIL, THEN SENT OFF

A manic group phase concluded in almost comical fashion as Cameroon's Vincent Aboubakar scored a stoppage-time winner against an already-qualified Brazil, took his shirt off, and was immediately given a second yellow card by an apologetic referee who shook the player's hand.

10

FIRST FEMALE REFEREE AT A MEN'S WORLD CUP

Frenchwoman Stephanie Frappart was handed control of Germany's final Group E clash against Costa Rica, becoming the first female referee to officiate at a men's World Cup.
Costa Rica coach Luis Fernando Suarez described it as a big step forward in 'sexist sport' and the 39-year-old Frappart produced a calm and assured display in Germany's victory.

Focus

We had to suffer to win the World Cup, say the players

'Having the chance to win the World Cup with my country is priceless. Let's take the Cup and celebrate together'

Reuters
Lusail

Argentina were made to suffer before landing their first World Cup title in 36 years, having twice squandered a lead, including in extra-time before edging past defending champions France 4-2 on penalties in the final yesterday.

"It was a game where we suffered," said Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, who saved one penalty in the shootout yesterday but had also saved two more spot kicks in their quarter-final against Netherlands.

On a night of high drama and fluctuating fortunes, Argentina squandered a 2-0 lead in regular time before going back in front in extra-time with Lionel Messi's second goal.

But then Kylian Mbappe completed his hat-trick to level 3-3 in the 118th minute with France's second penalty that forced the shootout.

"Two crappy shots and they (France) levelled. They give them another penalty, they scored. Thank God later I did my thing, what I dreamed of," Martinez said.

"There could not have been a World Cup that I have dreamed of like this. I was calm during the penalties."

For Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni it was a nail-biting finish to a turbulent tournament and he could not hold back his tears following the final whistle.

"I cannot believe that we have suffered so much in a perfect game. Unbelievable, but this team responds to everything," Scaloni said.

"I am proud of the work they did. It is an exciting group. With the blows we received today, with the draws, this makes you emotional. I want to tell people to enjoy, it's a historic moment for our country.

"We who live for this and who have been through the good and the bad are used to these things... Above all it is an incredible enjoyment. Being at the top as we are now is something unique."

It was the third world title for Argentina and the first since the late Diego Maradona won the trophy almost single-handedly in 1986.

For Argentina players and captain Messi, who netted twice in the 120 minutes before also scoring in the shootout, it was the biggest title of their careers.

"It is a moment that I will never erase in my life," Enzo Fernandez, who won the Young Player award, said.

"Having the chance to win the World Cup with my country is priceless. Let's take the Cup and celebrate together."

Messi's Argentine team had made the final as recently as 2014 but on that occasion they finished second best to Germany.

"I'll never forget it. We had to suffer but we deserved to win" said Argentina defender Rodrigo De Paul.

"We've beaten the last champions, it's a joy I cannot put into words.

"I'm proud of being born in Argentina and today we are on top of the world."

Argentina's Lionel Messi and teammates celebrate winning the World Cup final against France at Lusail Stadium yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Comment

Being so close makes final defeat even more cruel: Deschamps

France's Raphael Varane, Hugo Lloris, Ibrahima Konate, Dayot Upamecano and coach Didier Deschamps (left) look dejected after they are awarded with their runners up medals following the World Cup final. *(Reuters)*

Reuters
Lusail

Coming so close to winning the World Cup again made yesterday's final defeat by Argentina all the more difficult to swallow for coach Didier Deschamps as France ended up losing on penalties after staging an incredible comeback.

Les Bleus, bidding to become the first team to retain the title since Brazil in 1962, went through the opening hour like ghosts and fell 2-0 behind after Lionel Messi's penalty and Angel Di Maria's goal, before the unthinkable happened.

After Deschamps had made several changes, taking off Olivier Giroud, Ousmane Dembele, Antoine Griezmann and Theo Hernandez, France burst into life as Kylian Mbappe scored a penalty and a stunning volley within 97 seconds to level the scores.

Messi struck again in extra time, but so did Mbappe with another penalty to make it 3-3, only for Randal Kolo Muani to be denied by Emiliano Martinez in the dying seconds before France lost the shootout 4-2, becoming the first team to taste defeat in a World Cup final after scoring three goals.

"We came back from the brink, that's what gives us so many regrets," Deschamps, who guided France to the title in 2018, told a news conference. "We've got a World Cup ball in the last minute but it was not meant to be. If we're 2-0 down and then we lose 3-0, it's different. You say 'bravo' t Argentina and that's it.

"I still congratulate them, they played a great game, with a bit of gamesmanship, but we were expecting that and it does not take any merit from their victory."

LACK OF AGGRESSION

France were hit by a virus during the lead-up to the final and appeared to lack their usual aggression in the first half.

"We did not have the energy we had in our previous games but I was not worried with any player who started the game tonight," Deschamps said. "We were against a team who played a World Cup final while I had the feeling it was not our case."

Kolo Muani and Marcus Thuram came on in the 41st minute, before Eduardo Camavinga and Kingsley Coman entered the fray in the 71st.

"(For the first two changes) I could not wait until halftime. Ousmane and Olivier took us to the final but they were not as good today. When things don't work, you have to shake things up," said Deschamps. "In the end, I'm very sad for my players, my staff."

Deschamps's contract expires at the end of the year but having reached the goal of making it to the last four, he must decide whether to extend it.

"I'm having a meeting with my president at the beginning of the year. Then, you'll know," said Deschamps, who has been in charge since 2012, reaching the Euro 2016 final, winning the 2018 World Cup, last year's Nations League and making it to the World Cup final again.

The coin could have flipped the other way, especially thanks to Mbappe's magnificent performance as he became the second player to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final. "He wanted to make his mark on this World Cup. He did, but not as much as he wanted," Deschamps said.

Hurst hails Mbappe on joining World Cup final hat-trick club

London: Geoff Hurst said he had enjoyed a "good run" after France's Kylian Mbappe became just the second player after the England great to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final.

Hurst had stood alone for 56 years as the only player to score three goals in the showpiece match, with his treble central to England's 4-2 extra-time win over the then West Germany at Wembley in 1966.

But his feat was equalled yesterday when Mbappe's treble helped France fight back from 2-0 down and then 3-2 behind at the Lusail Stadium as the final finished level at 3-3 after extra-time before Argentina prevailed in a penalty shoot-out that capped a dramatic match.

"Many congratulations to Mbappe, whatever happens I've had a great run!," Hurst tweeted after Mbappe scored his third goal and second from the penalty spot. But although the France striker was on target again when the match went to penalties, it was Argentina who won 4-2 in the shoot-out.

Spotlight

French players are dejected but proud

Reuters
Lusail

France are disappointed they could not successfully defend their World Cup crown after losing to Argentina on penalties in yesterday's final but leave Qatar with heads high having fought until the end, players Raphael Varane and Hugo Lloris said.

France fought back twice through Kylian Mbappe, who erased Argentina's 2-0 lead in 97 seconds in normal time before scoring a third in extra time to level it at 3-3.

But the South Americans won 4-2 on penalties.

"We are very disappointed of course, we gave everything. We had to face a lot of obstacles during the competition, we gave up nothing," Varane said.

"For an hour we were not in the game.

"We could have won too. I'm very proud of this group and of being French. We keep our heads high. We came back in this game when it was complicated.

"We pushed and we believed until the end. We almost turned the game around, which was not going well... There was mental strength in this group, a lot of heart.

"That allowed us to come back in this game.

"We're disappointed but also proud."

Argentina were the better team in the first half and stormed into a 2-0 halftime lead before Mbappe brought them level with goals in the 80th and 81st minute of the contest which France skipper Lloris described as a "boxing match".

"The Argentines got off to a great start, being aggressive, using all facets of the game. We were a bit reactionary all night," the goalkeeper said.

France had also come into the final after several players missed training sessions due to illness over the past week, but Lloris refused to use that as an excuse.

"We're not going to make excuses, we gave everything," he added.

"You have to congratulate the guys because we didn't give up until the end."