

Argentina beat Indonesia 2-0 without Messi in Jakarta friendly

● **Leandro Paredes and Cristian Romero score for Argentina**

AFP | Jakarta

World Cup winners Argentina beat a spirited Indonesia 2-0 in a lucrative friendly in Jakarta yesterday without global superstar Lionel Messi.

Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Leandro Paredes opened the scoring after 38 minutes, stepping forward and hitting a rocket into the top corner after staunch defending from the home side.

Messi, the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner and new Inter Miami signing, pulled out of the game after weeks of hype in



Argentina's Nicolas Ivan Gonzalez (L) and Indonesia's Asnawi Mangkualam Bahar fight for the ball

Indonesia but that didn't stop a raucous crowd in the Gelora Bung Karno stadium.

The 149th-ranked home team were met by roars from a crowd of more than 60,000 that formed



Argentina were without several other first-choice regulars in Jakarta, including Juventus midfielder Angel Di Maria and Benfica defender Nicolas Otamendi

a sea of red shirts.

Argentina applied pressure from the kick-off, dominating the ball as Indonesia weathered the storm for the first half an hour.

Man City star Julian Alvarez could have grabbed two goals after Indonesia goalkeeper Ernando Ari Sutaryadi and naturalised centre-back Jordi Amat were both caught on the ball in their own box.

Wingers Nicolas Gonzalez and Facundo Buonanotte also drew saves from the Indonesian keeper before the opening goal.

Argentinian keeper Emiliano Martinez had his own work to do, making a smart low save at the end of the first half before tipping a looping header over the bar as Indonesia pressed for an equaliser.

But Argentina made their pressure count, denting any Indonesian hopes on 55 minutes when Tottenham defender Cristian Romero lost his man to thump home a header.

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eral other first-choice regulars in Jakarta, including Juventus midfielder Angel Di Maria and Benfica defender Nicolas Otamendi.

They beat Australia in another friendly in Beijing last week, with Messi scoring the quickest goal of his career in a 2-0 win.

Bringing Argentina to Jakarta for the first senior international match between the two sides cost the Indonesian football association as much as \$5 million, according to local media.

Indonesians did not get a glimpse of Argentina's modern-day superstar Messi but they were happy to see the world champions play their hometown heroes.

"If Messi came, we would be more excited," said Fahri Satria, a 30-year-old tourism worker.

"But it's okay."

Bahrain face Sweden in handball worlds opener

● **Kingdom's junior national handball team also set to face Slovenia on Thursday, Greenland on Friday**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-21 national handball team take on their counterparts from Sweden this afternoon in their opening Group F fixture of the 24th IHF Men's Junior World Championship 2023, which gets underway today co-hosted by Germany

and Greece.

The game is scheduled for a 3.45pm start, Bahrain time, and it will be played at the Ano Liosia Olympic Hall in Athens.

It is the first of three fixtures in this stage for the Bahrainis, who have an 18-player squad in the tournament.

Their next game will be on Thursday against Slovenia at 11am, Bahrain time, and then they complete their preliminary round campaign against Greenland on Friday at 1.15pm.

The junior nationals are hoping to be among the top two teams in their group in order to move on to the tournament's

main round.

There are 32 teams in all competing in the worlds. They have been divided into eight pools of four for the opening stage.

Group A features France, Poland, Croatia and the US. Group B comprises Algeria, Germany, Tunisia and Libya. Group C consists of Portugal, Brazil, Kuwait and Costa Rica; while Group D includes Spain, Faroe Islands, Japan and Angola. Group E features Hungary, Denmark, Argentina and Norway; while Group G comprises Serbia, Morocco, Chile and Iceland. The field is completed by Egypt, Greece, Cuba and Saudi Arabia

in Group H.

The Bahrainis are coached by Essam Abdulla, and the roster includes Abdulla Abdulkarim, Komail Fouad, Sadiq Jaafar, Hussain Ali, Mahmood Al Khunaizi, Mustafa Al Hayki, Ahmed Al Zain, Hassan Khalil, Yasser Qambar, Ali Madan, Ali Redha, Ali Al Asheeri, Hesham Ahmed, Mohammed Hameed, Ali Jameel, Ali Mahmood, Ahmed Redha and Jassim Khamis.

This year's junior worlds is only the third time Bahrain are competing. They previously also took part in the 1995 and 2019 editions, both times finishing 17th overall.

Gundogan toasts 'party machine' Grealish on Germany return

AFP | London

Manchester City captain Ilkay Gundogan admitted yesterday he did not have the stamina to keep up with "party machine" teammate Jack Grealish after his side celebrated claiming the treble.

Speaking upon his return to the German national team ahead of Tuesday's international friendly clash with Columbia in home town Gelsenkirchen, Gundogan said the 27-year-old Englishman's antics did not come as a surprise.

"You've all seen what a party machine Jack is," Gundogan told a press conference in Frankfurt.

"It wasn't surprising to me. He put everyone on his back and just carried us along."

The 32-year-old former Borussia Dortmund player added: "I can't manage two nights in a row. I needed a little break and a rest."

Pep Guardiola's team won a historic treble of the Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup last season -- becoming just the second English side to manage the feat.

Gundogan, who is out of contract in the summer, said "no decision had been made"



Manchester City's Jack Grealish (L) and Ilkay Gundogan warm up ahead of a match (file photo)



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ILKAY GUNDOGAN

yet on his future, amid links to a move to Barcelona or even a return to Dortmund.

The midfielder said while talks had taken place with Dortmund "the probability was not very high" of a return, while admitting Barcelona "is a very beautiful city".

You know where Mbappe wants to go: Guardiola

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola indicated Manchester City would not move for Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe.

"You know where he wants to go," said the City coach at a golf tournament in Spain yesterday, alluding to Spanish side Real Madrid.

The PSG forward has a contract until 2024 but has told his club he will not extend it, and also plans to stay for one more season, meaning he can leave for free next summer.

Mbappe, 24, turned down Madrid to stay with PSG when Los Blancos tried to sign him last summer.

Guardiola, speaking at the Legends Trophy tournament in Emporda, in his native Catalonia, also said City were battling with his former side Barcelona



Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola (L) gestures with Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (file photo)

over midfielder Ilkay Gundogan.

The German midfielder is out of contract with City and Guardiola wants him to stay, but Barcelona are trying to lure him to La Liga.

"I know that Barcelona

are interested -- and City are too," said Guardiola, whose side won a historic treble of the Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup last season.

"I hope he stays with us. If he goes to Barca it would be an



Mbappe has a contract until 2024 but has told his club he will not extend it, and also plans to stay for one more season, meaning he can leave for free next summer

extraordinary signing. We're fighting for him to stay.

"I know that Barca want him, that Xavi has called him many times. If he signs for Barca, I'll tell him that he will have a great time there."

Real Madrid loan Spain forward Joselu from Espanyol

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid confirmed the arrival of Spain striker Joselu on loan from relegated Espanyol for next season on Monday.

"Real Madrid and Espanyol

have agreed the loan of Joselu, who will be at the club for next season with an option to buy at the end of it," said Madrid in a statement.

The 33-year-old forward has scored three goals in four appear-

ances for his country and helps Madrid reinforce a depleted attack.

Karim Benzema, Eden Hazard, Marco Asensio and Mariano Diaz have left, leaving room for major reinforcements.



Joselu

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