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**Youssoufa Moukoko made his senior debut for the Germany national team on Wednesday evening, as he started for them in their pre-World Cup warm-up match against Oman. Aged 17 years and 361 days, the Borussia Dortmund striker made history as he became the youngest player to represent Germany since Uwe Seeler in 1954. Moukoko also became the fourth youngest player to play for Germany overall.**



# Saudi superfan awaits WC at 'home'

**AFP,** *Jeddah*

For the past two decades, Bader Turkistani has criss-crossed the globe to cheer on the Saudi national football team, leading crowds in poetic chants that have made him a social media star.

This year's World Cup in neighbouring Qatar, by contrast, has the feel of a home game: Doha is a mere two-hour flight from his base in Jeddah, on the Red Sea coast.

The close proximity has Turkistani dreaming of a ferocious turnout by football-mad Saudis, the kind of support he says could help the Green Falcons break out of the group stage for the first time in nearly three decades.

"The Saudi national team is considered to be playing on its land, playing among its fans. Having the World Cup in Qatar is like having it in Saudi Arabia," the 37-year-old engineer told AFP.

"A simple border separates us... We



will be present in very large numbers and fill the stadiums with 50,000 to 60,000 fans."

On a recent afternoon, wearing a white-and-green scarf over his traditional white thobe, Turkistani gave a preview of some of the chants he hopes will propel the Green Falcons to glory.

"This is the green of Saudi," he sang into an electronic megaphone, as a friend pounded a drum made of animal hide. "Oh Saudi, we have come."

The stands of the Jeddah stadium behind him were empty, but he is certain the scene will be completely different once play gets underway.

"50,000 fans will repeat this chant behind me in Qatar, instead of only 5,000 fans in Russia," he said.

"This enthusiasm is transmitted to the players... We hope that we, as fans, will bring out the players' best energy."

In total, Turkistani estimates he has watched more than 100 international matches played by the Green Falcons over the years, most of them documented in a bulging photo album he eagerly shows off to visitors.

He also leads the fan association for the prestigious Jeddah-based Saudi club Al-Ahly.

Beyond its high cost, the hobby can be trying in other ways: while on the road, Turkistani has struggled with language barriers, fiercely cold weather and unfamiliar foreign food.

"In Qatar, all these things will be very convenient for us," he said.

Once Saudi fans are on Qatari soil, Turkistani will be ready for them, having stocked up on green-and-white t-shirts, plastic blowhorns, drums and balloons to distribute.



**Brazil team are currently undergoing a five-day training camp at Juventus' training facilities in Turin from where they will be flying to Doha on Saturday for the upcoming World Cup in Qatar. Brazil open their World Cup Group G campaign against Serbia on November 24 before facing Switzerland and Cameroon.** PHOTO: TWITTER

# 2014 finalists land in Qatar

**AGENCIES**

Four-time winners Germany arrived at the World Cup in Qatar on Thursday after Argentina superstar Lionel Messi touched down to launch his final bid to win football's biggest prize.

After a 1-0 win in a low-key warmup game against Oman the night before, the Germans, led by captain and goalkeeper Manuel Meuer, flew into Doha.

Germany are aiming to erase the nightmare of the 2018 tournament in Russia when they crashed out of the World Cup in the group stage after winning it four years earlier.

Team official Oliver Bierhoff explained why they had opted for the seclusion of a hotel in Al-Ruwais, an hour and half from the capital.

"We want to develop a team spirit there that will carry us through the tournament -- and for as long as possible."

Messi landed with the Argentina squad in the early hours of the morning from Abu Dhabi where he scored in a straightforward 5-0 win against the United Arab Emirates in front of 36,000 spectators on Wednesday.

It was his 91st international goal for the 1978 and 1986 World Cup winners who extended their unbeaten run to 36 matches.

The tournament is likely to be the final chance for 35-year-old Messi to emulate fellow Argentine great Diego Maradona in leading his country to World Cup glory.

The South Americans begin their campaign on Tuesday against Saudi Arabia in Group C, which also includes Mexico and Poland.

Argentina's 26-man squad could





change with less than a week to go before their World Cup opener as some players are not fully fit, coach Lionel Scaloni said on Wednesday after their 5-0 friendly win over the United Arab Emirates.

Defender Cristian Romero and forwards Nicolas Gonzalez, Alejandro Gomez and Paulo Dybala were left out for Argentina's last warm-up match in Abu Dhabi, with all four recovering after feeling "some discomfort", the coach said.

"We have a few problems, we have days to decide on the list ... We can change, hopefully not, but there is a possibility," Scaloni told reporters.

"I'm not saying they are going to be dropped from the list. There are players who are not well, who have been left out of the squad today because they were not fit to play or there was a risk.

"We have to be cautious because there is a reason why they were left out."

FIFA rules say that the World Cup teams can replace players in their squads who are injured or ill up to 24 hours before their opening match.

France arrived in Doha on Wednesday, seeking to become the first team to retain the World Cup since Brazil in 1962.

Ten members of the 2018 title-winning squad are in the squad, including captain Hugo Lloris, Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann.

But the defending champions, grouped with Australia, Denmark and Tunisia, are without first-choice midfield pair Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante.

Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema, who has missed a series of games for Real Madrid this season because of injury, is set for his first World Cup appearance since 2014.

# 'Don't think Ronaldo wants to be back at Man Utd'

**AFP,** *Manchester*

Cristiano Ronaldo's contract at Manchester United should be terminated by the club, said former United captain Gary Neville.

In an explosive interview with TalkTV, Ronaldo has said he does not respect United manager Erik ten Hag and claimed he is being forced out of Old Trafford.

His latest act has made things very complicated as he also criticised the club's owners, the Glazer family, claiming they "don't care" about the sporting success of the club.

"I don't think he wants a way back," Neville told Sky Sports. "He wouldn't have done this interview if he wanted a way back.

"He knew it would bring the headlines it has and be the end of his Manchester United career."

Ronaldo has just over six months left on his contract after rejoining United from Juventus in August 2021.



**Acme Chattogram clinched the title of the inaugural Hockey Champions Trophy Bangladesh with a 4-3 win over Monarch Padma in tiebreakers after regulation time ended in a 2-2 draw in a dramatic final of the franchise-based event at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.**

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## MSC into Independence Cup quarters

**SPORTS REPORTER**

A rejuvenated Mohammedan SC became the first team to advance into the quarterfinals of the Independence Cup after registering an emphatic 3-1 win over Fortis FC in their Group A encounter at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla on Thursday.

It was Mohammedan's second successive victory as they moved into the last-eight with a group stage game in hand against Sheikh Russel KC, who kept their hopes alive for quarterfinals with a 2-0 win over Bangladesh Navy.

Mohammedan, who started with a 2-0 win over Bangladesh Navy in the tournament opener, took only six minutes to take the lead yesterday when Malian forward Suleymane Diabate's clinical finish from inside the box helped them open the score.

The lead, however, lasted only eight minutes as Fortis FC's Luiz Carlos drove home a Kawsar Ali Rabbi lob in the 14th minute.

Mohammedan's Brazilian defender Roger De Oliveira restored their lead in the 26th minute availing a pass from Jafar Iqbal, who finally wrapped up the victory by nodding in a cross from Diabate in the 39th minute.

At the Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium in Gopalganj, Sheikh Russel looked determined to register a win, especially after playing out a 1-1 draw against Fortis FC in the previous match. They did have the last laugh as strikes from Mohammed Ibrahim and Mpia Mapuku all but ensured Sheikh Russel's spot in the quarters.

From this group, Fortis FC, with just one point from two games, also have a slim chance of making into the quarters.

FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar2022

**"I'm telling everyone I'm supporting both, definitely. I can't lose." Prince of Wales, Prince William, on Wednesday promised Welsh lawmakers he would be cheering for both Wales and England in the World Cup in Qatar.**

**"It's something we want to take on board as quickly as possible and something we want to enjoy. So we're going out there to embrace it ... I enjoy playing in the sun, we don't get it so often back home, do we?" said England defender Conor Coady, adding that there was no point in "over-thinking" about the heat in Qatar as it would get them nowhere during the tournament.**

**"We want to show how big Wales as a nation can be and show how good we are," said Wales defender Ethan Ampadu.**

**"I don't think people are underestimating us. I don't think we're among the top teams but we're a very good team and we can compete with anybody. Of course, we're not favourites, but I think nobody wants to meet us. I think among the big teams, nobody wants to go up against us," said Danish young playmaker Mikkel Damsgaard.**

