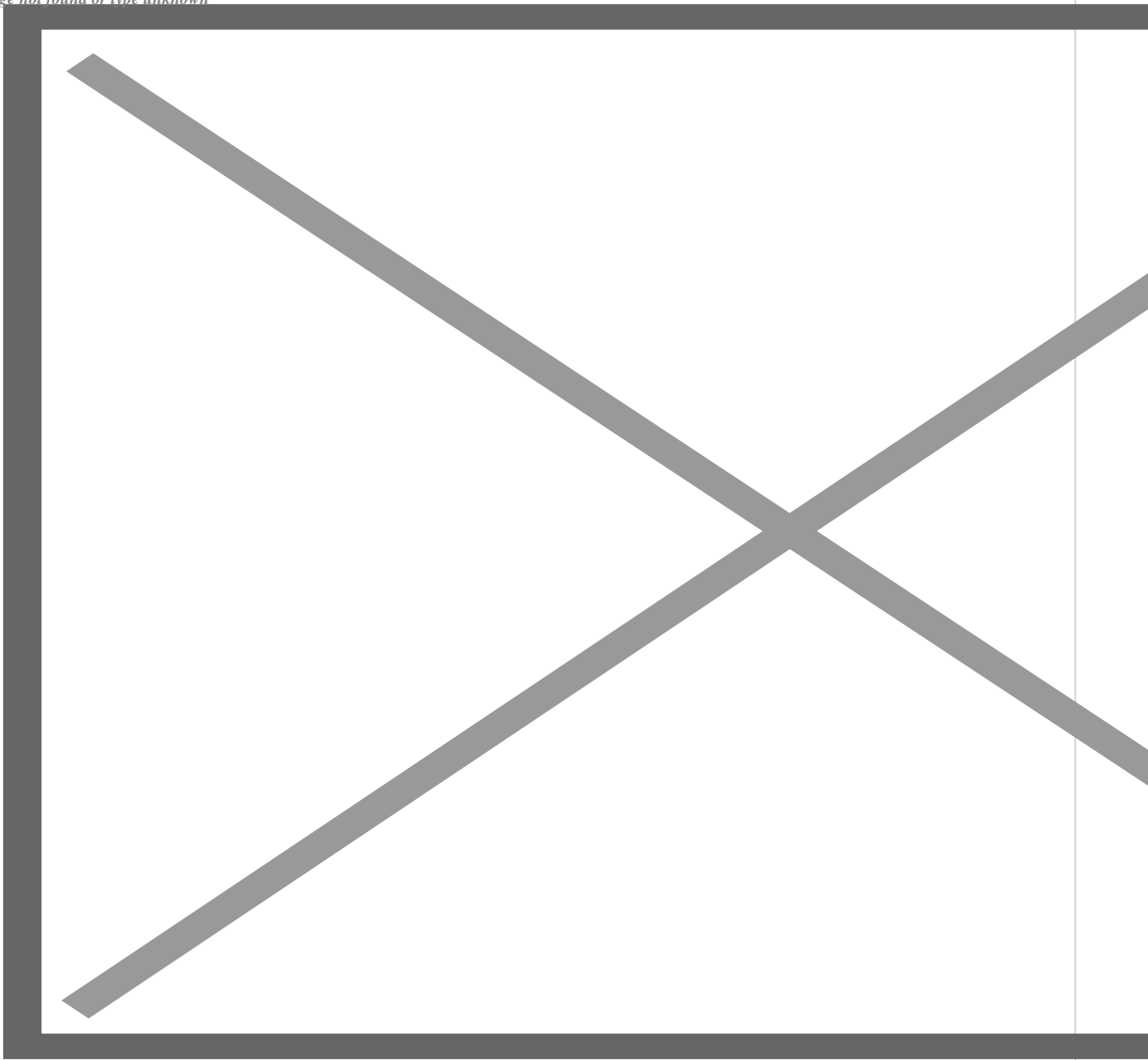


With Messi in a state of grace, Argentina goes for its third title

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By Orlando González Cruz

Havana, December 13 (RHC)-- Argentina's national team qualified today for the final of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 by defeating Croatia (3-0).

Zlatko Dali?'s pupils came out with energy in the early stages of the game and it seemed that they would make things difficult for the team from the land of tango, but in the blink of an eye, the Argentines showed that they are going for everything in the tournament and scored a couple of goals.

Star Lionel Andrés Messi Cuccittini became the Argentinean with the most goals in these matches (11), surpassing Gabriel Omar Batistuta, and together with his teammates will try to take the South American nation to the top of the podium for the third time.

The first goal for the Albiceleste was scored by Messi from a penalty kick (minute 34), the foul was provoked by Julián Álvarez, who was facing the goal and had to be intercepted by the Croatian goalkeeper, who earned a yellow card in the process.

The second was scored by Julián himself (39th minute), after a long gallop and a series of fortuitous rebounds, which well explains his nickname of the spider, to beat Croatian goalkeeper Dominik Livakovi?.

With two nil on the board and Lionel Scaloni winning the tactical battle in preparation for the challenge (he reinforced the midfield with the addition of Leandro Paredes) they went to the break.

In the second half, Dali?', desperate to score, put all his efforts into attacking changes, but the goal defended by Emiliano "Dibu" Martínez remained untouched.

The one that did come was the third for Argentina, a true masterpiece generated by their star player. Messi made a Maradonian move, taking the ball next to the line and playing as he pleased with the solid Croatian defense, to serve the ball to Julian, who scored his second goal of the night (69th minute).

Scaloni's men now await their opponent for next Sunday's final. Their companion will emerge from Wednesday's clash between Morocco and the reigning champions of France.

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