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Starc bags 10 as Australia thrash Bangladesh in second Test



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PREMIER LEAGUE

City snatch late win, Liverpool rescue draw

Hinshelwood strikes twice in two minutes as Brighton thrash Aston Villa 4-0

AFP
London

Enzo Maresca made a dramatic start to Manchester City's post-Pep Guardiola era with a last-gasp 2-1 victory over Bournemouth, while Andoni Iraola escaped with a 2-2 draw at Newcastle in his first game as Liverpool boss. On a day when two of the Premier League's biggest club began new eras, it was Maresca that finished happier, although neither manager could be completely satisfied after a pair of inconsistent performances.

At the Etihad Stadium, Marcus Tavernier's first half goal put Bournemouth ahead before Maresca's side staged a pulsating fightback in the final minutes.

Inspired by Maresca's decision to send on French playmaker Rayan Cherki, who provided the assists for both goals, Marc Guehi headed City's equaliser with six minutes left before Josko Gvardiol stroked in the stoppage-time winner.

Guardiola won 20 trophies, including six Premier League titles, during a glorious decade with City. His reign started with a late win at home to Sunderland in 2016 and Maresca will hope his own narrow victory serves as the prelude to an equally successful spell. City's lacklustre 3-0 defeat against Arsenal in last weekend's Community Shield raised questions about their ability to keep pace with the Premier League champions this season.

For much of their top-flight opener, City were again short of inspiration in attack and cohesion at the back. But they found a way to dig out a result that allowed Maresca to breath a sigh of relief.

"The impact was unbelievable, he is that kind of player," Maresca said. "I like Rayan, I told him also after the game, but sometimes when you plan a game and you already have (picked) four out of 11 players who arrived late (from holidays), if you go with one more maybe the difference is too big."

Liverpool midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai scored a penalty with the last kick of the game to save Iraola from a debut defeat at St James' Park. Iraola is the figurehead of Liverpool's overhaul after Arne Slot's close-season sacking, Mohamed Salah's departure to Trabzonspor and the eye-catching investment by a consortium fronted by billionaire Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

Liverpool's first steps into the future were uncomfortable, with Newcastle exposing the defensive flaws that proved fatal for Slot last season.

Anthony Elanga put Newcastle ahead in the first half before Cody Gakpo equalised soon after the interval. Joe Willock's first Premier League goal since 2024 restored Newcastle's advantage, but Szoboszlai held



Manchester City's Josko Gvardiol (centre) scores the winner against Bournemouth at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester. (AFP)

his nerve to net with a stoppage-time penalty after Lewis Hall fouled Victor Munoz.

It was a mixed start for Iraola, who can take heart from his team's refusal to accept defeat, but will be concerned by their unconvincing display.

Jack Hinshelwood struck twice in the space of two minutes as Brighton exploited Aston Villa's star exodus with a 4-0 demolition of the Europa League winners.

Villa arrived at the Amex Stadium having sold a host of players since last season, leaving them without a recognised striker amid transfer speculation surrounding Ollie Watkins. Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez and England forward Watkins were missing from Villa's squad amid reports they will join Ezri Konsa, Youri Tielemans, Lucas Digne and Morgan Rogers through the exit door.

Victor Lindelof's calamitous own goal and a close-range finish from Maxim De Cuyper set the Seagulls on course for a resounding win. Hinshelwood's quick-fire double took the game away from Unai Emery's shell-shocked side before Villa midfielder Joao Gomes was sent off on his league debut just before half-time.



Newcastle United's Joe Willock (centre) scores against Liverpool. (Reuters)

Al Duhail, Qatar SC await Gulf Champions League draw

Doha: The draw for the third edition of the Gulf Champions League will be held today via video conference from the headquarters of the Gulf Football Federation, with 12 clubs taking part. Qatar will be represented by Al Duhail and Qatar SC, both making their debuts in the Gulf Championship.

The first seeding pot features Saudi clubs Al Ettifaq and Neom, along with UAE side Al Nasr. Al Duhail, Qatar SC and UAE club Ajman are in the second pot.

Iraq's Erbil and Al Zawraa, along with Oman's Al Shabab, are in the third pot, while Bahrain's Al Riffa, Kuwait's Kazma and Yemen's Shaab Hadramout make up the fourth pot.

The 12 teams will be drawn into three groups of four. The top two teams in each group, along with the two best third-placed teams, will advance to the quarter-finals. The group stage will be played on a home-and-away basis from October 13, while the quarter-finals will also be contested over two legs from March 2 to 17, 2027.

The semi-finals and final are scheduled to be played from April 23 to 30, 2027. The third edition has attracted the largest field in the competition's history, with the number of participating clubs increasing from eight to 12, further strengthening the Gulf club competition. Qatar's Al Rayyan won the second edition last year, beating Saudi Arabia's Al Shabab 3-0 in the final.

Nordic nations say they have lost confidence in Infantino

Oslo: Six Nordic football associations delivered a united blow to FIFA President Gianni Infantino, declaring they had lost confidence in his leadership while demanding sweeping governance reforms at world football's governing body.

The six Nordic FIFA members - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the Faroe Islands - met in Helsinki and issued a rare joint statement backing calls for Infantino's resignation from three major regional confederations.

They also supported demands for an independent investigation into his controversial proposal to sell a stake in events like the World Cup to private equity investors, a plan that was quickly abandoned in the face of global backlash.

"The six Nordic football associations have lost confidence in FIFA's president and are concerned about the organization's governance and decision-making at the highest level," they said in a statement.

"The Nordic football associations stand united with UEFA and support the measures that the organization and its national member associations have jointly proposed. We expect FIFA to provide binding guarantees that the organization's governance or competitions will never again be opened up to private ownership."

On Friday, Denmark's football association (DBU) vowed to find a credible alternative to Infantino in next year's election. Infantino is under pressure from three confederations to resign, including Europe's UEFA, Asia's AFC and CONCACAF, which represents North and Central America and the Caribbean.

The sport's regional powerhouses have also discussed a potential vote of no confidence against the FIFA chief.

Al-Khelaifi stars as Team Qatar secures podium in Spa



Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium: Team Qatar by Iron Lynx secured a third-place finish in the LMGT3 category in Round 4 of the 2026 European Le Mans Series at the legendary Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. The No. 62 Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo delivered a competitive and consistent

performance throughout the four-hour race, battling at the front of the highly competitive LMGT3 field to secure a well-deserved place on the podium and valuable championship points. Adding to the team's success, Abdulla Ali al-Khelaifi was named LMGT3 Driver



of the Day, recognising his outstanding performance and contribution to Team Qatar's strong result at one of endurance racing's most challenging circuits. The Spa-Francorchamps podium marks another important achievement for Team Qatar by Iron Lynx in its 2026 ELMS campaign

and provides further momentum as the championship heads into its remaining rounds. Team Qatar will now turn its focus to the final stages of the season, aiming to build on this strong performance and continue its fight for further podium finishes.

COLOMBO TEST

Padikkal ton helps India to 300-5 on opening day

AFP
Colombo

Top-order batter Devdutt Padikkal's fine form continued as he scored 117 to help India reach 300-5 at stumps on the opening day of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo yesterday.

Padikkal, a late injury replacement ahead of the series, had scored 167 and 44 in the first Test to win the Man of the Match award as India won by 165 runs in Galle.

He followed up with another century, but only after being dropped twice early in his innings after India opted to bat first.

Padikkal was first dropped by Sonal Dinusha at backward point before he had opened his account, then received another reprieve on two runs when captain Dhananjaya de Silva spilled a chance at slip.

Padikkal added 120 runs for the third wicket with captain Shubman Gill to put India in control before off-spinner Keshara Nu-

wantha finally ended his stay. Since Gill moved down to number four after assuming the captaincy, India have tried several players in the number three position.

Padikkal's performances in this series have made him a strong contender for the role.

India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak said he felt the team lost two wickets too many.

"A couple of guys had got starts but couldn't cash in, but all in all, we are happy with where we are now," he told reporters.

Seamer Asitha Fernando was the pick of Sri Lanka's bowlers, returning figures of 3-46.

He dismissed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal for 43 in the morning session, with the dismissal followed by a heated exchange between the two. Fernando struck again to remove Gill, who slashed at a delivery moving away from him and was caught behind.

With the second new ball, Fernando produced another important breakthrough when he bowled Ravindra Jadeja.

Debutant off-spinner Saran-

sh Jain was unbeaten on four at stumps, with Dhruv Jurel seven not out.

Wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant was struck on his left forearm while attempting to pull Lahiru Kumara and was forced to retire hurt.

Sri Lanka's fast bowling coach Ryan van Niekerk expressed satisfaction with his team's performance.

"Really happy with the way our seamers went about things today. They created opportunities and troubled the batters," he said.

Only 85 of the scheduled 90 overs were bowled on the opening day.

Earlier, Sri Lanka handed opening batter Kamil Mishara his Test debut, with Nishan Fernando left out.

Pasindu Sooriyabandara, who came on as a concussion substitute for Dinesh Chandimal in the first Test, also featured in the starting eleven for the first time.

BRIEF SCORES: India 300 for 5 (Padikkal 117, Gill 50, Jaiswal 45, Asitha 3-46) **vs Sri Lanka.**



India's Devdutt Padikkal plays a shot during the first day of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground in Colombo yesterday. (AFP)

CRICKET

Starc bags 10 as Australia thrash Bangladesh

'We know how good Australia are. They showed their character'



Australia's Mitchell Starc celebrates after taking his tenth wicket of the match of Bangladesh's Taijul Islam during the second day of the second Test at the Great Barrier Reef Stadium in Mackay yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Mackay, Australia

An irrepressible Mitchell Starc bagged four wickets and 10 for the match as he ripped through the Bangladesh batting to ensure a commanding innings and 51-run second Test victory for Australia inside two days yesterday.

The visitors headed into the Mackay showdown on a high after shocking the world's top-ranked team by nine wickets in the first Test at Darwin.

But they were brought crashing back to earth by some scintillating fast bowling, led by man-of-the-match Starc who finished with 10-51 for the match to level the two-game series.

After 18 wickets fell on a frenetic first day, the hosts were all out for 210 in the morning session yesterday, securing a lead of 146 on the back of Cameron Green's 67.

Star Bangladesh quick Shoriful Islam claimed 7-48 - the best figures from a Bangladeshi bowler in

an away Test. The visitors crashed for just 64 in their first innings, when Starc took 6-12, and he was the chief tormentor again, claiming 4-39 as Bangladesh crumbled to be 95 all out. Skipper Pat Cummins chipped in with 3-10 and Nathan Lyon 3-25. "A lot of things went right these couple days and a lot of things went wrong last week," said Cummins.

"But yeah, we needed to bounce back, and it was a great few days from the lads. I thought everyone was sharp. It was a great start and we didn't really let up after that."

Bangladesh had a horror start with Shadman Islam lasting just three balls, playing a nothing stroke to a moving Starc delivery and edging to Marnus Labuschagne at point.

Mominul Haque was equally clueless next ball, failing to offer a shot with Starc removing his off stump and setting up a hat-trick opportunity.

Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto, who was out for a golden duck in the first innings, this time survived to deny Starc.



Australia's captain Pat Cummins (left) holds the trophy with Bangladesh's Najmul Hossain Shanto after the two-match series ended in a draw. (AFP)

But their woes deepened when Tanzid Hasan departed soon after for nine. Starc was again involved, taking a catch in the deep after Tanzid pulled Cummins.

Shanto did well to soak up the pressure after lunch for 46 deliveries, but he eventually lost focus against the off-spin of Nathan Lyon, holing out to the safe hands of Starc at long off on 31.

And when Starc was brought back into the attack, he was front and centre again, enticing a loose shot from Litton Das who was caught without scoring by Beau Webster at third slip.

Mehidy Hasan Miraz struggled to get going and departed to an equally poor shot, lashing at a Cummins bouncer and collected by wicketkeeper Alex Carey.

The Australian captain then removed Hasan Mahmud (two) before Starc took his 10th for the match - the fourth time he has achieved the feat - when he bowled Taijul Islam for seven.

Lyon quickly wrapped up the tail in the first over after tea.

"We know how good Australia

are. They showed their character," said Shanto. "We were not up to the mark with the bat. It was challenging conditions here with extra bounce and swing, we would like to learn from this."

Australia resumed at 165-8 with Green on 51 and Lyon on 10.

Green, who scored a century during the first Test in Darwin, kept the scoreboard moving early with quick singles.

But he was undone by an inswinging yorker from the impressive Shoriful that hit him on the toe with a review declaring him out lbw. A valiant Lyon brought up the 200 for Australia with a towering six off Taskin and with Josh Hazlewood adding 24 crucial runs for the last wicket.

The innings ended when Hazlewood skied Taijul to Shadman on six to leave Lyon not out 32.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 210 (Green 67, Smith 42, Shoriful 7-48) **beat Bangladesh 64** (Starc 6-12, Cummins 3-25) **and 95** (Shanto 31, Starc 4-39, Cummins 3-10, Lyon 3-25) **by an innings and 51 runs.**

England pacer Carse under investigation after 'nightclub incident'

England fast bowler Brydon Carse is under investigation after he reportedly became the latest England cricketer to be involved in a nightclub incident, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed yesterday.

Videos on social media appeared to show Carse in handcuffs, being led away from a club by four police officers following an incident at nightclub in Derby, central England, yesterday.

The Durham paceman, who is in England's squad for the second Test against Pakistan, was seen with team-mate Matthew Potts.

"We are aware of an incident which is reported to have taken place in Derby last night, and are currently investigating," the ECB said. "We will provide a further update when possible."

Both Carse, who has appeared in 14 Tests, and Potts played in the Durham side that thrashed

Derbyshire by 338 runs in a second division County Championship match at Derby.

Carse, 31, was England's leading bowler during their woeful 4-1 Ashes series loss in Australia in 2025/26, with 22 wickets at an average of just over 30.

He was included in England's squad for the first two Tests of a three-match campaign against Pakistan, but was not in the side as the hosts enjoyed a crushing innings and 103-run win inside three days in this week's series opener at Headingley.

The second Test at Lord's starts on Thursday. Joe Root announced last week there would be no curfew in place during his second spell as England Test captain. The curfew was introduced in January after a number of late-night incidents on the tours of New Zealand and Australia, with white-ball captain Harry

Brook involved in an altercation with a nightclub bouncer in Wellington. One of the major controversies at the end of the 'Bazball' era was an incident at a London nightclub in June where former Test captain Ben Stokes and Gus Atkinson were out past a midnight curfew.

The pair missed the second Test against New Zealand at the Oval, with Root - both Stokes's predecessor and successor as captain - taking temporary charge of the team.

Root was confirmed as England's full-time Test skipper for the second time following Stokes's dramatic retirement from all international cricket after the 2-1 series to New Zealand, with Brendon McCullum sacked as red-ball coach, although he remains in charge of the limited-overs teams. "There's not going to be a curfew," Root told the Sky Sports cricket podcast.

BADMINTON

Lanier becomes first Frenchman to win singles world title

AFP
New Delhi

Alex Lanier yesterday became the first singles badminton player from France to clinch the world championship title, moments after the French took gold in the mixed doubles.

In the women's final, South Korea's world number one An Se-young beat Japan's Akane Yamaguchi 21-17, 21-14 for her second world crown.

But it was history for French badminton, after the 21-year-old Lanier beat Japan's Kodai Naraoka 21-11, 21-11 in a lopsided men's final at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.

World number 10 Lanier smashed the winner as he jumped in delight and hugged his coach before standing on the podium for his gold medal.

"I think definitely today was a day for French badminton and it was a day for the whole staff also," Lanier said after the triumph.

"Today it was a day for France, and when the mixed won, everyone was happy, and I just thought that I needed to give them a double smile, double moments, and I needed to make history again."

The finalists went toe-to-toe until the mid-game interval of the opening game with 2025 European champion Lanier leading 11-9. The brawny Lanier, whose parents are professional sailors, then hit the gas to open the gap and take the opener in 23 minutes with a lethal combination of attack and defence.

"I showed to Kodai that I could play that speed, and also I could play that long for like two hours or even more," said Lanier.

"I mean, I was definitely ready. Now I feel sore and tired but on court I felt more ener-

gised, and I trusted my fitness."

Lanier kept up the momentum in the second game to take five straight points in a 8-3 lead.

World number 11 Naraoka fought back with his power game but soon lost steam to a fitter and inspired Lanier, who beat world number two Kunlavut Vitidsarn and Victor Lai en route to the final.

AN REIGNS SUPREME

The women's title clash was much closer with last year's winner Yamaguchi giving it her all in a fast-paced battle between number one and two.

Yamaguchi's returns and jump smashes entertained a large Sunday crowd, but An had answers to everything with her attacking and baseline play.

Reigning Olympic champion An, who won her previous world title in 2023, secured the win in 49 minutes and let out a scream and raised her hands to celebrate.

"There were lot of fans supporting me and that keeps me going and gives me energy," said An, who came into the tournament pulling out of last month's Japan Open with a foot injury.

Yamaguchi, with a silver, became the first women's singles player to claim six medals at the showpiece event.

Earlier in the mixed doubles, French pair of Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue beat Chinese top seeds Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping 22-20 19-21 21-15 to get a first-ever world championship gold for France.

In women's doubles final, South Korea's Baek Ha-na and Lee So-hee beat the top-ranked Chinese pair of Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning 21-15, 21-15.

Chinese pair of Lian Weikeng and Wang Chang served past Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia 21-17, 21-16 to clinch the men's doubles title.



France's Alex Lanier celebrates after beating Japan's Kodai Naraoka to clinch the men's title at the BWF World Championships at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi yesterday. (AFP)



South Korea's An Se-young celebrates after defeating Japan's Akane Yamaguchi to win the women's title. (AFP)

DUTCH GP

McLaren's Norris triumphs after Verstappen crash

Antonelli finishes second to extend championship lead to 59 points

AFP
Zandvoort, Netherlands

Formula One world champion Lando Norris stormed to victory in a thrilling Dutch Grand Prix yesterday, sealing back-to-back wins in a race marred by a huge crash for local hero Max Verstappen.

The Briton started on pole and managed to come out on top of a sensational three-way battle with current title leader Kimi Antonelli and seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton.

Norris crossed the line 11.54 seconds ahead of Antonelli in second place and claimed a memorable hat-trick for McLaren at the Dutch Grand Prix after wins for teammate Oscar Piastri last year and the Briton himself the year before.

"I made it tough for myself today, but a good race. Well fought. Probably one of my better wins. We had to fight for it well, but the pace was very strong," said Norris.

"I managed things incredibly well today. So over the moon, very, very happy and nice to win the final race here in Zandvoort," added the 26-year-old, who also won the previous Grand Prix in Hungary before the summer break.

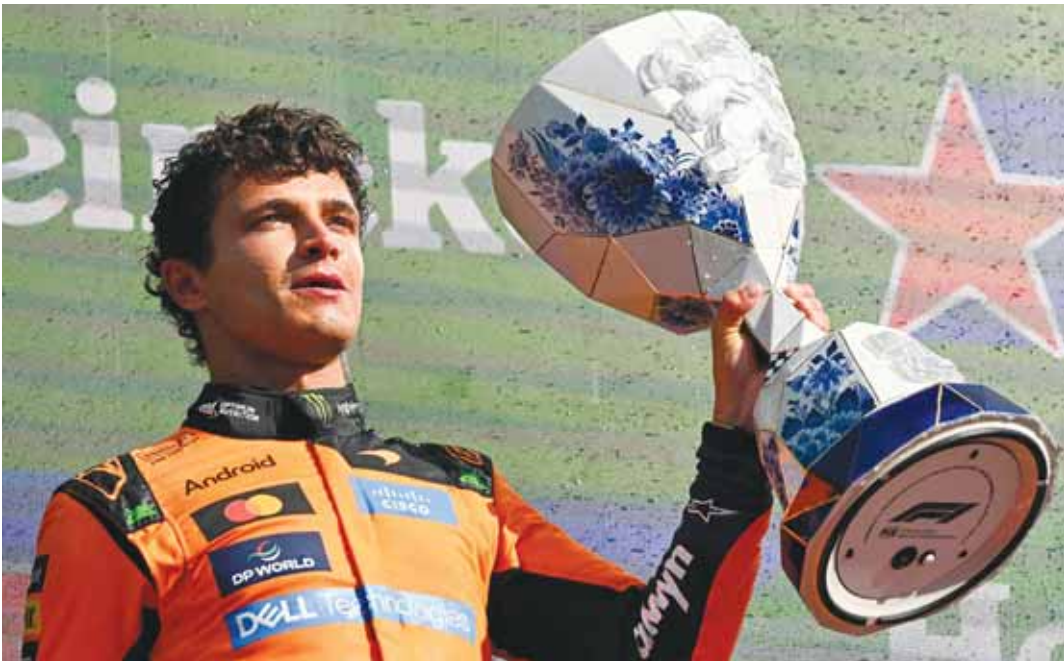
Mercedes driver George Russell completed the podium after holding off a determined challenge from Hamilton in the closing stages of the race.

A hefty downpour an hour before lights out meant drivers had to deal with a drying track and the conditions created a dramatic start to the race.

Coming into the last corner of the first lap, Verstappen lost control of his Red Bull, smashed into the wall and careered across the track, forcing several rivals to swerve out of the way.

To the relief of the tens of thousands of orange-clad Dutch fans, Verstappen immediately told his team he was unhurt and he walked free from the car. When the race restarted after a delay of more than 30 minutes, Antonelli reacted faster off the grid than Norris, passing him in the first turn.

Antonelli was ahead until the 54th lap when Norris pulled off an spectacular overtake on the Italian. Norris then cruised towards the chequered flag while behind him Hamilton engaged in a nail-biting scrap with George Russell,



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates with the trophy after winning the Dutch Grand Prix at The Circuit Zandvoort, western Netherlands, yesterday. (AFP)

RESULTS AND STANDINGS

1. Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren) 2 hr 04 min 44.859sec, 2. Kimi Antonelli (ITA/Mercedes) at 11.536sec, 3. George Russell (GBR/Mercedes) 15.906, 4. Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Ferrari) 16.755, 5. Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari) 17.258, 6. Oscar Piastri (AUS/McLaren) 32.332, 7. Liam Lawson (NZL/Red Bull) 1:19.915, 8. Nico Hulkenberg (GER/Audi) 1 lap, 9. Fernando Alonso (ESP/Aston Martin) 1 lap, 10. Pierre Gasly (FRA/Alpine) 1 lap, 11. Yuki Tsunoda (JPN/Racing Bulls) 1 lap, 12. Arvid Lindblad (GBR/Racing Bulls) 1 lap, 13. Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA/Audi) 1 lap, 14. Franco Colapinto (ARG/Alpine) 2 laps, 15. Sergio Perez (MEX/Cadillac) 2 laps, 16. Carlos Sainz (ESP/Williams) 2 laps, 17. Alexander Albon (THA/Williams-Mercedes).
DNF: Max Verstappen (NED/Red Bull), Oliver Bearman (GBR/Haas), Lance Stroll (CAN/Aston Martin), Esteban

Ocon (FRA/Haas), Valtteri Bottas (FIN/Cadillac), Alexander Albon (THA/Williams-Mercedes)
Drivers: 1. Kimi Antonelli (ITA) 242pts, 2. George Russell (GBR) 183, 3. Lewis Hamilton (GBR) 183, 4. Lando Norris (GBR) 159, 5. Charles Leclerc (MON) 155, 6. Max Verstappen (NED) 112, 7. Oscar Piastri (AUS) 104, 8. Isack Hadjar (FRA) 68, 9. Liam Lawson (NZL) 49, 10. Pierre Gasly (FRA) 44, 11. Arvid Lindblad (GBR) 23, 12. Franco Colapinto (ARG) 19, 13. Oliver Bearman (GBR) 18, 14. Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA) 10, 15. Nico Hulkenberg (GER) 6, 16. Carlos Sainz (ESP) 6, 17. Alexander Albon (THA) 5, 18. Esteban Ocon (FRA) 3, 19. Fernando Alonso (ESP) 3.
Constructors: 1. Mercedes 425pts, 2. Ferrari 338, 3. McLaren 263, 4. Red Bull 186, 5. Racing Bulls 66, 6. Alpine 63, 7. Haas 21, 8. Audi 16, 9. Williams 11, 10. Aston Martin 3.

which the Mercedes man won. The second Ferrari of Charles Leclerc came in fifth while the other McLaren driven by Oscar Piastri took sixth place.

'A big party'

Antonelli still enjoys a 59-point lead over rivals Hamilton and Russell, but he will start the next race in Monza with a 10-place grid penalty after Mercedes have been forced into an engine change.

"Just didn't have the feeling with the car that was sliding a lot overall," said Antonelli, who turns 20 next week.

The teenage sensation set the pace in the first half of the sea-

son, winning six races, including a stunning run of five consecutive Grand Prix. But the chasing pack has closed in fast, with McLaren in particular bringing upgrades to their car that have brought them into contention.

"Now as a team, we need to find a little bit of time because McLaren have done a huge step. So yeah, we've got to keep pushing," he said. It was the last edition of the Dutch Grand Prix, with promoters pulling the plug this year for financial reasons. Drivers and fans alike regret the loss of the track, whose unusual lay-out with steep banked corners provides a unique challenge for the drivers.

CYCLING

Brennan sprints to Vuelta stage two win, Pogacar keeps red

AFP
Manosque, France

Matthew Brennan emerged triumphant from a bunch sprint to claim Vuelta a Espana stage two victory, while overall favourite Tadej Pogacar retained the red jersey yesterday.

Briton Brennan was followed over the line by Spaniard Pau Miquel and Pogacar after a long 214.3 kilometre stage with over 3,000m of climbing, leaving Monaco and heading to Manosque in France. Ethan Hayter, who was pipped by Pogacar in Saturday's opening individual time trial, was part of a four-man breakaway who led for much of the race, although the peloton never let them escape too far up the road.

The Briton stayed in front to win the intermediate sprint and claim six bonus seconds. It gave him the chance to take Pogacar's red jersey but he could not stay with the UAE Team Emirates rider on the slight uphill finish, with Pogacar clinging on to red.

Wout van Aert made a move under two kilometres before the

finish, with Pogacar following, but the peloton caught them, giving Visma-Lease A Bike's Brennan the chance to claim the stage win. Hayter was dropped and came in 31 seconds behind Pogacar in the lead group, who picked up four bonus seconds too for his third place.

"We started off with the ambition of Wout trying to get in the red jersey today," explained Brennan. "We had that plan and then I was always going to be in the background for the sprint in case that plan (didn't work)... and that's exactly what happened."

Brennan is competing in a Grand Tour for the first time and claimed his first stage win at this level. "Hopefully it's not the last one, but it's nice," he added.

Slovenian cycling superstar Pogacar, a five-time Tour de France winner, is the overwhelming favourite to win the race and complete a Grand Tour career hat-trick.

Only a huge shock will prevent him finishing the race in Granada on September 13 as the ninth rider to manage the feat and just the fourth to do a Tour-Vuelta double in the same season.



Matthew Brennan celebrates winning the second stage of the Vuelta a Espana, a 214.3km race between Monaco and Manosque yesterday. (AFP)

Qatar beat Iran in Asian Junior Handball Championship



Qatar defeated Iran 24-22 at the 11th Asian Junior (U19) Handball Championship in Amman yesterday for their third successive win of the tournament. Qatar are leading Group B with six points and will play Syria in their last group match today. Qatar defeated Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in their earlier matches.

TENNIS

Pegula dethrones Swiatek to book Cincy final against Gauff

AFP
Cincinnati

Jessica Pegula rallied in the third set to topple defending champion Iga Swiatek and book a title showdown with Coco Gauff at the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Masters.

World number three Pegula won a "crazy" match against Swiatek 7-5, 4-6, 6-4.

Gauff powered past giant-killer Sara Bejlek 6-4, 6-1, ending the unseeded Czech's dream run that included a fourth-round victory over world number one Aryna Sabalenka.

Their all-American Sunday night final will a men's title clash featuring American Frances Tiafoe and Arthur Fils of France.

Fils charged into his first Masters 1000 final with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over French Open runner-up Flavio Cobolli in a match delayed for 45 minutes by rain and lightning.

Swiatek and Pegula then waited out another rain delay before their match, which was also briefly interrupted two games in.

"Crazy match today," Pegula said after needing nearly three hours to subdue Swiatek, who was coming off her first title of 2026 in Toronto last week.

"A lot of back and forth, a lot of breaks," she said, "Really windy, kind of odd conditions. I felt like we were playing well and then



Jessica Pegula of the United States lunges for a ball while playing Iga Swiatek of Poland during the Cincinnati Open semi-final at the Lindner Family Tennis Centre in Mason, Ohio. (AFP)

not playing well. "It was really tough to kind of get a gauge on the match."

The two rode a rollercoaster of breaks and re-breaks before Pegula took a 5-4 lead in the final set, Swiatek saving three break

points before double-faulting on a fourth.

Pegula quickly closed it out, firing a service winner on match point.

"I was just really happy with the way I was able to kind of handle



Coco Gauff of the United States celebrates after defeating Sarab Bejlek of Czechia in the Cincinnati Open semi-final. (AFP)

just a lot that was going on today," the 31-year-old American said.

"I did a good job of no matter what was happening."

The first five games of what evolved into an epic went against the server as Pegula and Swiatek struggled to adjust to the conditions.

Swiatek blinked first as Pegula held at love for a 4-2 lead, but Swiatek won the next three games before Pegula broke again, finally taking the set when Swiatek smacked a volley into the net on

set point. They had exchanged two breaks in the second when Swiatek broke in the final game to square the match.

Swiatek leaves for the US Open starting on August 30 with a good feeling about her game despite the defeat.

"We made some steps forward in this intensive part of the season," the six-time Grand Slam champion said.

"It was tough to play today with the wind, but we each put pressure on the other. I didn't feel good in

the first set but coming back in the second and using all of my chances was a good change."

Gauff, the 2023 Cincinnati champion, got off to a hot start against Bejlek, jumping to a 4-1 lead. Bejlek fought back to 4-4, but the American regained her rhythm to close out the set and run away with the second.

"I tried not to take my foot off the gas because I knew at any moment she could come back," Gauff said.

Tiafoe, runner-up to Jannik Sinner in Cincinnati in 2024, returned to the final with a 7-5, 6-3 victory over fellow American Brandon Nakashima.

Tiafoe saved three set points in the opening set, breaking Nakashima five times in all to earn the win in less than two hours.

"It feels damn good," Tiafoe said.

The American predicted a "hell of a show" against Fils, whose 68-minute win over seventh-seeded Cobolli made him the youngest French Masters finalist since a 20-year-old Richard Gasquet in Toronto two decades ago.

Fils admitted he had been unsettled by the weather delay.

"You come on court more nervous because it's a semi-final. The rain arrives, you wait, and when you come back conditions are completely different," he said.

"It was tough but I'm happy with how I dealt with it."

DIAMOND LEAGUE

Seville, Jefferson-Wooden roar to 100m wins at Silesia



Jamaica's Oblique Seville sprints past Kenneth Bednarek of United States to win the 100m at the Silesia Diamond League in Katowice, Poland, yesterday. (AFP)

AFP

Chorzow, Poland

World 100m champions Oblique Seville and Melissa Jefferson-Wooden roared to victories at the Silesia Diamond League, as Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis wrapped up another dominant pole vault display.

The assembled field was outstanding in Poland. Of the 260 athletes appearing in Silesia, 55 were Olympic medallists, 101 have made the podium at world championships, and 68 were European championships medallists.

Quality shone throughout the meet, in front of 40,000 spectators at the Stadion Slaski, none less so than when Jamaica's Seville blasted to a meet record of 9.83 seconds for victory.

Americans Kenny Bednarek (9.87) and Christian Coleman (9.93) completed the podium. The women's blue riband event was won by their teammate Jefferson-Wooden, in the season's first head-to-head over 100m with Olympic champion Julien Alfred, in a season's best of 10.78sec.

Alfred, of St Lucia, came in second, at 0.05sec. "Julien pushed me, but before the race my coach told me to just control the race and focus on my own lane. I did that, did not panic, I think I did a good job," said Jefferson-Wooden.

Duplantis had an uncharacteristic three failures in the pole vault, before girding himself for the business end of the showdown with Greek rival Emmanouil Karalis.

The US-born Swede eventually claimed victory with a best of 6.20m, 20cm higher than Karalis. One attempt at what would have been a



Melissa Jefferson-Wooden of Us celebrates after winning the women's 100m. (AFP)

16th world record, at 6.32m, was enough before Duplantis called it a day.

"The competition was super difficult for me. I was really sloppy at the beginning," said Duplantis. "I lost a lot too much energy at those lower heights to break the world record today."

One of the stand-out performances on the track was Brazil's Alison Dos Santos, unbeaten this season, holding off Karsten Warholm in a thrilling 400m hurdles to win in 46.43sec, the sixth fastest time ever run.

The world-leading time smashed the meet record of 46.82sec set by Warholm last year. "I expected a fast race, the line-up was amazing - everybody was here," said Dos Santos. "I knew that to win here I had to give my best. It was a great race today and a great time."

The Brazilian made it four wins from four outings in Silesia and also four wins this season over Warholm, who claimed a fourth European title in Birmingham this month, as well as a second gold as part of Norway's 4x400m mixed relay

quartet. "You cannot be mad if you set a season's best," acknowledged Warholm. "Of course I always want to win. But 46.5 is really good coming out of the European championships, which really took its toll. The other guys have not been racing in a month and they were fresher."

Warholm's teammate Jakob Ingebrigtsen, fresh from winning European 5,000m gold, made his first Diamond League appearance in a 1,500m in two years.

Ingebrigtsen clung on to finish fourth in a race won by American Ethan Strand, in 3:30.77, ahead of Kenya's Phaniel Kipkosegi Koech and Olympic champion Cole Hocker of the US.

Ethan Katzberg and Camryn Rogers, who ensured hammer throw domination for Canada with two golds at last year's Tokyo worlds, dominated the two events here for victories with bests of 82.92 and 77.09m respectively.

Olympic and 2023 world champion Marileidy Paulino of the Dominican Republic won the women's 400m in 48.87sec, but there was no such luck for Morocco's two-time Olympic 3,000m steeplechase champ Soufiane El Bakkali, beaten into second by Ethiopia's Gemechu Godana, who clocked a meet record of 8:02.74.

World record holder Ja'Kobe Tharp claimed the victory in the 110m hurdles in 13.05se, while teammate Alaysha Johnson won the women's short hurdles in 12.52.

Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh equalled the meet record to win the women's high jump in 2.00m. And Botswana's world 400m champion Busang Collen Kebinatshipi smashed the meet record set by world record holder Wayde van Niekerk in winning the one-lap race in an impressive 43.59sec.

LA LIGA

Giuliano rescues Atletico, Alvarez jeered by fans

Le Normand sees red after VAR awards Villarreal late penalty

Reuters

Madrid

Giuliano Simeone delivered a family rescue act in the dying moments, earning Atletico Madrid a dramatic 2-2 draw with Villarreal after his father Diego's side had been reduced to 10 men on a scorching afternoon of fan anger and frayed nerves.

The hosts appeared ready to melt completely after Robin Le Normand was sent off in the 76th minute for bringing down Georges Mikautadze, who converted the resulting penalty to put Villarreal ahead.

But Atletico found one last burst on the counter-attack as Alex Baena released Giuliano down the right and the manager's son kept his cool, sliding a delicate finish beyond goalkeeper Luiz Junior. The match had been simmering with tension long before the late drama, with Atletico supporters turning their frustration on Julian Alvarez.

The striker was booed while warming up, jeered again when his name was announced among the substitutes and met with louder whistles when he came on in the 66th minute.

A section of the crowd chanted: "Let him leave once and for all, let him leave..." after Alvarez had revealed at the World Cup that he had spoken to the club about a possible transfer to "fulfil my dream", with Barcelona heavily linked in Spanish media reports.

The hostility followed him beyond the final whistle as he headed straight to the changing room while teammates saluted the fans, drawing another heavy round of boos.

After a flat first half, Atletico took the lead in the 59th minute through Marc Pubill, who curled a superb strike from outside the box into the top corner. Villarreal levelled seven minutes later when Morten Hjulmand conceded a penalty for a foul on Tajon Buchanan near the edge of the box, allowing Gerard Moreno to stroke his spot kick to Jan Oblak's left.

VAR then intervened after Le Normand's challenge on Mikautadze, prompting the referee to award another penalty and flash the red card, before Giuliano ensured Atletico escaped with something from a feverish afternoon.



Atletico Madrid's Giuliano Simeone celebrates after scoring against Villarreal. (Reuters)

MOURINHO DECRIES ALLEGED BULLYING OF VINICIUS AFTER REAL'S WIN
Real Madrid manager Jose Mourinho accused opponents and supporters of bullying Vinicius Jr after the Brazil winger was targeted with rough treatment in the club's opening 2-1 La Liga win at Espanyol on Saturday.

Real, who kicked off Mourinho's return to the club with a late victory, were furious inside the opening five minutes when Alex Calatrava brought down Vinicius from behind and then appeared to catch him again while the forward was on the ground.

Madrid's players appealed for a red card but the referee took no action against Calatrava, who later scored Espanyol's equaliser after Jude Bellingham had put Real ahead.

Late Real substitute Carlo Espi struck in the 90th minute to give the visitors victory. Mourinho said the treatment of Vinicius had become a recurring theme.

"Vinicius is no saint, but what they're doing to him was too much. Right from the first minute. It's a pattern that repeats itself from

one opponent to the next," Mourinho said. "I'll give him one, now you give him one. If I get a yellow card, you give him one. If I'm substituted, another player comes on who hasn't been booked yet, and you give him one."

The Portuguese coach said Vinicius, who has often been the focus of abuse from rival defenders and crowds, needed to stay composed despite the provocation.

The controversy also carried echoes of last season, when Mourinho was Benfica manager and Vinicius was subjected to discriminatory abuse by Benfica's Gianluca Prestianni during a Champions League match against Real Madrid.

Prestianni was later handed a six-match suspension by UEFA for discriminatory conduct that was deemed homophobic.

Mourinho was heavily criticised at the time for defending Prestianni, saying Vinicius had incited the crowd with his goal celebrations and Benfica were anything but racist because the Portuguese club's greatest player, Eusebio, was also black.

SPOTLIGHT

Lusail Circuit unveils Formula 1 Grand Prix plans as race nears



With Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix just around the corner, Lusail International Circuit (LIC) has unveiled this year's key visual reflecting a side of Qatar that is ambitious, fast paced, and globally current, to mark the milestone, building anticipation ahead of the penultimate round of the FIA Formula 1 World Championship.

The race, taking place from November 27 to 29, comes as F1 enters its most significant technical regulation overhaul in more than a decade, with new cars, revised regulations, and new teams including Audi and Cadillac joining the grid.

Fans can choose from a full range of three day ticket categories for the race weekend, from grandstand seating around the circuit to general admission access at Lusail Hill. All tickets are for the standard three day package covering Friday to Sunday, and every ticket includes entry to the Fanzone, food court, post ace concerts, and merchandise outlets, along with complimentary shuttle service, free parking, and a dedicated taxi pick up and drop off zone.

Tickets are limited, with one section of the Main Grandstand already sold out. Tickets for the remaining Main Grandstand sections are available for QR2,000, while North Grandstand tickets are priced at QR1,500. Tickets for the Turn 2, Turn 3, and Turn 16 Grandstands are available for

QR1,000 each, while General Admission tickets for Lusail Hill are available for QR600.

Hospitality at this year's race will also see a new addition, with Novikov Doha joining LIC's Premiere Hospitality offering.

Located at the end of the Main Straight with direct views of Turn 1, the Novikov experience will bring the restaurant's signature Pan Asian and Italian menu to trackside guests, alongside climate controlled indoor seating and an outdoor terrace overlooking one of the circuit's main overtaking areas. The offering is complemented by live entertainment, including cultural performances and professional DJs.

DISCOUNTS

A 20 percent university student discount is available on select categories, including Turn 3 Grandstand (QR800) and General Admission (QR480), for holders of a valid student ID, with a maximum of four tickets per student. This discount is valid for students across the globe and not limited to Qatar only. Student ID is required for entry verification.

A 25 percent senior citizen discount is available on Turn 16 Grandstand tickets (QR750) for guests aged 60 and above, with a maximum of two tickets per person. A valid ID is required for age verification at the event.

Tickets and hospitality packages are available exclusively through the official LIC website at tickets.lcsc.qa.

City agree deal for Lille star Bouaddi

London: Manchester City have agreed to sign Morocco midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi from Lille in a deal worth £86mn (\$117mn), according to reports. City moved for Bouaddi after selling Rodri to Barcelona and Tijjani Reijnders to Al-Qadsiah.

The 18-year-old rising star was one of the stand-out players at the recent World Cup, helping Morocco reach the quarter-finals before they were beaten by France.

City have been in talks with Lille for several weeks and have finally reached an agreement for Bouaddi, who will travel to England to complete a medical before finalising his switch to the Etihad Stadium.

Bouaddi was omitted from Lille's squad for 2-0 win at Angers

despite taking part in the warm-up. "We protected Ayyoub and the club, we didn't take any risks," the northern outfit's sports coordinator Sylvain Armand said.

"In the past hours, things have advanced a lot concerning his departure. The president will announce things when it's time, it's advanced well, there are a few details to confirm, the deal's not far off," he added.

Bouaddi will join England midfielder Elliot Anderson in City's revamped midfield.

Maresca made central midfield a key area for new signings after replacing Pep Guardiola as manager at the end of last season.

City are also believed to retain an interest in Chelsea midfielder Enzo Fernandez,

Juventus fail to impress in win over Frosinone in Serie A

Rome: Juventus secured a 1-0 away win against newly-promoted Frosinone, but failed to impress in their opening match of the Serie A season.

Juve, who finished a disappointing sixth last season, secured all three points thanks to Gleison Bremer's 22nd-minute header. Luciano Spalletti's side then dominated proceedings but failed to put the game beyond doubt.

Goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario, on loan from Tottenham Hotspur, picked up a leg injury and had to be substituted late on, which nearly cost Juve dearly, as Frosinone pressed hard in stoppage time and hit the crossbar.

The Bianconeri, however, secured the result

they needed, following in the footsteps of reigning champions Inter Milan, who thrashed another newly-promoted side, Monza, 4-1 on Saturday in the season opener.

Lecce made a strong start to the season against the third promoted side, Venezia, as they defeated their hosts 2-0 courtesy of second-half goals from Olaf Gorter and Tiago Gabriel. Later, former Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim was making his Serie A debut as his AC Milan side faced Torino at home.

GIROUD SCORES AS LILLE GIVE DAVIDE ANCELOTTI WINNING START

Olivier Giroud scored the opening goal as

Lille gave Davide Ancelotti a winning start as coach with a 2-0 victory at Angers in their Ligue 1 opener. Former France striker Giroud, who turns 40 next month, broke the deadlock in the 11th minute with an excellent low drive from long range after collecting Nabil Bentaleb's pass. Tiago Santos volleyed in a loose ball to double the advantage just after the half-hour mark at the end of an excellent Lille move. Davide Ancelotti, son of coaching great Carlo Ancelotti, took over at Lille in June following the departure of Bruno Genesio who is now at Marseille. Lille finished third in the French top flight last season to qualify for the Champions League league phase.