

To subscribe
GULF TIMES
Newspaper
Please call
444 666 35



CRICKET | Page 2

Lawrence's fifty leaves Pakistan facing record chase to level series



FOOTBALL | Page 4

Tiny Elversberg stun Leverkusen, Dortmund beat Hamburg

To advertise here,
PLEASE CALL
444 666 21

Sunday, August 30, 2026
Rabia I 17, 1448 AH

GULF TIMES

SPORT

TENNIS

Alcaraz anxious after layoff but feels 'great' about wrist

Page 3

PREMIER LEAGUE

Munoz's late strike earns Liverpool draw with Forest

Spurs lose again as Hull City beat Coventry to move up to second place, Bournemouth held by Everton

AFP
London

Victor Munoz saved An-doni Iraola from his first defeat as Liverpool manager with the late strike that rescued a 2-2 draw against Nottingham Forest yesterday, while Newcastle condemned big-spending Tottenham to a second successive defeat.

Forest were set to win at Anfield for the third consecutive season as Dan Ndoye and Morgan Gibbs-White's penalty twice put the visitors in front.

Alexander Isak briefly brought Liverpool level in the second half before Munoz's deflected effort rescued a late point for the second time in Iraola's two matches in charge. "It's quite clear the first half has been poor, we haven't controlled the game," Iraola said.

"We improved a lot in the second half, much more intense, much quicker on the ball but not enough to win the game."

After a 2-2 draw at Newcastle in his first game as Liverpool boss last weekend, Iraola had hoped for a memorable day to mark his first match in charge at Anfield.

But instead the former Bournemouth boss got a reminder of why he was hired to replace the sacked Arne Slot in the close-season.

Iraola could have Bradley Barcola to unleash by the time Liverpool are next in action at Ipswich on Friday.

The France winger has been one of the Reds's top targets for months and a £106mn (\$144mn) deal with Paris Saint-Germain, which could rise by a further £17mn, is reportedly close to completion.

"I cannot tell you anything



Liverpool's Victor Munoz celebrates scoring the team's second goal during the Premier League match against Nottingham Forest at Anfield in Liverpool yesterday. (Reuters)

right now. There are still things going on at this moment," Iraola said.

At the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Roberto De Zerbi's men endured a dispiriting 2-0 defeat.

Anthony Elanga put Newcastle ahead in the 62nd minute before Wissa killed off lacklustre Tottenham 10 minutes later as their frustrated fans streamed to the exits long before the final whistle.

Newcastle manager Matthias Jaissle was able to celebrate his maiden Premier League win after a 2-2 draw against Liverpool in the German's first game following his surprise appointment as Eddie Howe's replacement. It was another chastening result for De

Zerbi, whose expensively assembled team suffered an embarrassing 3-0 defeat at Brentford in the opening game of the season last weekend.

Tottenham have spent over £300mn (\$406mn) in the close-season as De Zerbi overhauled a squad that narrowly avoided relegation on the final day of last term.

But for the first time since 1992-93, Tottenham have failed to score in their first two games of a league season.

Omar Marmoush, Tottenham's latest new recruit, failed to impress on his debut after joining on loan from Manchester City this week.

Elsewhere, Hull substitute Liam

Millar struck in the closing stages to steal a 1-0 win at Coventry as the Tigers extended their dream return to the top-flight.

Millar slotted home with eight minutes left as Hull won a battle between sides promoted from the Championship last term.

Having stunned Manchester United with a 2-0 victory last weekend, Sergej Jakirovic's men have won both their matches in their first season in the top tier since 2016-17.

Frank Lampard's Coventry won the Championship to end a 25-year exile from the Premier League, but they are still awaiting their first point back in the big time after losing their opener at Arse-



Newcastle United's Yoane Wissa celebrates scoring their second goal with Anthony Elanga against Tottenham Hotspur in London. (Reuters)

nal last week. James Tarkowski's stoppage-time equaliser earned Everton a 1-1 draw that left Marco Rose still waiting for his first win as Bournemouth manager.

Alex Scott's 41st-minute goal put Bournemouth ahead at the Vitality Stadium.

But Everton defender Tarkowski capitalised on a mix-up between Ryan Christie and Marcus Tavern-

ier to drill home following a corner in the closing seconds.

Everton remain unbeaten after a 2-0 win against Crystal Palace last weekend, while Bournemouth lost 2-1 at Manchester City in Rose's first game since replacing Iraola.

Manchester City eased to a 4-1 win at Crystal Palace on Friday thanks to two goals each from Rayan Cherki and Erling Haaland.

QATAR STARS LEAGUE

Duhail held by Arabi as Shahania edge Sailiya 3-2

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Duhail were held to a 1-1 draw by Al Arabi while Al Shahania beat Al Sailiya 3-2 in their second round matches of the Qatar Stars League yesterday.

The results meant that Al Duhail are now 4th with four points while Al Shahania with the maiden win moved into fifth place with 3 points. Al Arabi are 7th with two points and Al Sailiya 12th having suffered two defeats.

The first action at the Al Bayt Stadium saw Al Duhail and Al Arabi fight it out. The first half ended goalless as both sides squandered promising opportunities, while resolute defending and alert goal-keeping ensured the deadlock remained intact.

Al Duhail eventually broke through in the 52nd minute when Lucas Silva Melo leapt high to head Edmilson Junior's well-delivered corner from the centre of the box into the top right corner.

The goal rattled Al Arabi who then stepped up their search for an equaliser.

Their efforts were rewarded in the 70th minute when Michael Olunga poked home with his left foot from close range after a rebound from a free kick taken by substitute Oussama Tannane, who made



Action from the Al Duhail vs Al Arabi match played at the Al Bayt Stadium yesterday.

an immediate impact after being sent in. Al Duhail had a chance to snatch victory with a final attempt but Ibrahima Bamba headed Edmilson's corner too high and wide, allowing Al Arabi to hold on for a point.

At the Lusail Stadium, Al Shahania beat Al Sailiya 3-2 to log

their first winning points. Al Shahania took the lead early in the 6th minute as Andreas Van Beek headed in a fine Francesco Antonucci corner kick.

The lead was doubled in the 23rd minute by Antonucci from a penalty kick after Al Sailiya's Abdelaziz Mitwali had tripped

Al Shahania's Mohamed Surag in front of the goal. The referee awarded the spot kick after a long VAR.

Al Sailiya hit back post break (51st minute) as Kellian Albertus got his foot to the ball and pushed it in after a goal-mouth melee following a Younes Belhanda free



Al Shahania's Francesco Antonucci celebrates after scoring against Al Sailiya at the Lusail Stadium.

kick. Al Shahania moved further ahead with a third goal in the 57th minute with Abdoulaye Traore driving home a through ball after a long run.

Al Sailiya scored their second

goal in 90+5 minute with substitute Salem Al Sufiani's good header that beat a diving goalkeeper on the volley to his left. Over 48,000 fans attended the second week games at six stadiums.

HOCKEY

Argentina beat Netherlands to lift World Cup

Reuters
Amsterdam

Argentina were crowned Women's Hockey World Cup winners yesterday after defeating hosts and favourites the Netherlands 3-1 in a shootout following a 1-1 draw in the final.

The Dutch were seeking a fourth successive World Cup title and took the lead through tournament top-scorer Yibbi Jansen on 30 minutes, her eighth of the World Cup.

But Argentina levelled on 54 minutes via Maria Granatto to send the game to penalties.

It is Argentina's third World Cup title, and first since 2010, and some revenge for losing in the final to the Dutch four years ago.

An elated Argentinian goalkeeper Cristina Cosentino was named as Player of the Match and said afterwards: "I really have no words for this. We were looking forward to this moment... Holland is a really tough opponent, and we knew it was going to be like that. So it was like fight each ball and the goal will come, and then just have fun in the shootout.

"I think it was something the team was looking forward to two tournaments ago in the Olympics, in the other World Cup. I think we really deserve it. We were a really good team along all the tournament, and I'm really proud of the girls that were fighting with me in this tournament," she added.

Earlier, Belgium claimed their first bronze medal since 1978 when they defeated Australia 1-0 in the third-place playoff. Charlotte En-

glebert scored the only goal of the game.

Germany and Spain to contest men's Hockey World Cup final
Spain came from a goal down to edge co-hosts Netherlands 4-3 in their men's Hockey World Cup semi-final and will play Germany in today's final.

The Germans were 2-1 winners over Argentina in the second semi-final in Wavre, Belgium.

The Netherlands had a 1-0 lead late in the third quarter in their clash at Amstelveen, but Spain equalised through José Basterra and then went on to win the match when the Dutch had Duco Tegenkamp yellow-carded and penalised for 10 minutes.

Basterra tipped in for Spain to take the lead and a penalty corner converted by Pepe Cunill put Spain

up 3-1, after which Basterra completed his hat-trick from a penalty strike.

Jip Janssen reduced the score from a penalty corner, and a minute before time, Joep de Mol also tapped in.

But back to their full complement, the Dutch ran out of time intervals in their quest for an equaliser.

In the other semi-final, Justus Weigand and Paul-Philipp Kaufmann scored for the Germans, while Tomas Domene scored Argentina's equaliser from a penalty corner in a tense clash.

FIH president Tayyab Ikram hands over the World Cup to Argentine players after their win over the favourites Netherlands in the final yesterday. (www.fih.hockey)



SPOTLIGHT

Brevis slams another half century as South Africa beat Zimbabwe



Dewald Brevis in action during his unbeaten 75 from 32 balls for South Africa who beat Zimbabwe by seven wickets in the second match of the Tri-Series in Windhoek yesterday.

Reuters
Windhoek, Namibia

Dewald Brevis smashed an unbeaten 75 from 32 balls as South Africa defeated Zimbabwe by seven wickets in the second match of the Tri-Series also involving hosts Namibia in Windhoek yesterday.

South Africa have a depleted squad for the series, having rested most of their regulars, but bounced back from defeat to Namibia on Friday to chase down their victory target with 38 balls remaining.

Zimbabwe posted 144 for eight in their 20 overs, but South Africa replied with ease as they posted 146 for three.

Zimbabwe made a fast start to their innings, with an opening stand of 45 in 5.1 overs between Brian Bennett (34 from 35 balls) and Ben Curran (24 from 12 balls).

As they did against Namibia on Friday, South Africa's spinners yesterday managed to peg them back though, with Prenelan Subrayen (2-27 in 4 overs) and Bjorn Fortuin (1-25 in 4 overs) bowling

with control through the middle of the innings.

Lanky fast bowler Duan Jansen, twin brother of South Africa all-rounder Marco Jansen, was expensive in his second international, but returned figures of 3-45 in his 4 overs.

Brevis, the Player of the Match, said yesterday: "It's great to get off to a win, the boys showed improvement and great to see. I'm enjoying it (here), it's a lovely ground and the crowd. Today the wicket was really nice and it's an amazing place to play cricket."

Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza said yesterday: "When we batted we were 15 runs short, that's down to how the lower order batted. Maybe 160 was par and we also didn't bowl as well as we should."

Namibia host Zimbabwe in the third match in the Tri-Series at the same venue tomorrow.

BRIEF SCORES
South Africa 146 for 3 (Brevis 75*, Evans 1-19) **beat Zimbabwe 144 for 8** (Bennett 34, Marumani 30, Jansen 3-45, Subrayen 2-27) **by seven wickets**

CRICKET

Pakistan facing record chase to level Test series

England lead by 357 runs after rain-hit day three of second Test

AFP
London

Dan Lawrence's unbeaten fifty on Saturday left Pakistan needing to rewrite the record books in their quest for a series-leveling win against England in the second Test at Lord's.

Only 24.5 overs were possible on a third day cut short by several rain delays and finally finished off by bad light despite the floodlights shining under increasingly sunny skies. But England still reached stumps on 177-7 in their second innings - a huge overall lead of 357 runs - with Lawrence 50 not out.

That could well be more than enough of an advantage already given Pakistan were dismissed for 171 and 135 in an innings and 103-run thrashing by England in last week's first of a three-Test series at Headingley.

Pakistan then collapsed to a woeful 110 all out in their first innings at Lord's, with England seamer Ollie Robinson taking a remarkable 4-11 in 13 overs.

And they have also never scored more than 234 in the fourth innings of any Test against England in England.

Pakistan will have to set a new record if they are to achieve an improbable victory, with the highest fourth-innings total to win a Test at Lord's still West Indies's 344-1.

Mohammad Abbas was again in the wickets for Pakistan on Saturday, with 3-48 following the veteran seamer's four-wicket haul in England's first-innings 290.

England, after Saturday's morning session was washed out completely, resumed on 81-3 in gloomy conditions and on a still green-tinged pitch that also promised to aid Pakistan's pace-



Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan (left) and Pakistan's Muhammad Abbas (right) celebrate taking the wicket of England's Harry Brook on day three of the second Test at Lord's cricket ground in London yesterday. (Reuters)

men. Under-pressure opener Emilio Gay was 30 not out after a dogged 69-ball effort Friday, when he walked out to bat, averaging just 22.50 from his first eight Test innings.

But the left-hander had added just one run when he was plumb low to an Abbas delivery that hardly bounced before hitting him on the back leg.

Abbas might have had another wicket when a charging Lawrence edged a booming drive over the slips. Harry Brook, seven not out

overnight, jumped down the pitch and whipped medium-pace Khuram Shahzad through wide mid-on for four.

Brook went down on one knee before edging a flamboyant drive off Shahzad that flew in the air through gully for another boundary.

But Brook fell for 34 to leave him still searching for his first Test century in over a year when well caught by wicket-keeper Mohammad Rizwan, standing up to the stumps, from an Abbas

delivery that nipped off the pitch and bounced to graze the shoulder of the bat.

An undaunted Lawrence then carved Mohammad Ali for four and next ball drilled him high over cover for six.

Lawrence also slog-swept spinner Ali Usman for six on his way to a 64-ball fifty.

BRIEF SCORES: England 290 and 177 for 7 (Lawrence 50*, Abbas 3-48) **lead Pakistan 110 by 357 runs.**

CYCLING

Pogacar abandons Vuelta after stage eight crash, Mas grabs overall lead



Team UAE's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar is seen entering an ambulance after crashing on a giant screen in the finish area of the Vuelta a Espana 2026, a 171 km race between Pucol and Xeraco, yesterday. Race leader Pogacar pulled out of the race after a heavy fall 31km from the finish with shoulder and face injuries. (AFP)

Reuters
Xeraco, Spain

Tadej Pogacar's bid to complete cycling's Grand Tour hat-trick came to a painful end at the Vuelta a Espana yesterday when the race leader and five-time Tour de France winner crashed out with blood on his face and an injured shoulder.

Slovenian Pogacar, who has been wearing the red jersey since winning the first stage, went down in the peloton with over 30 kilometres left in the ride from Pucol to Xeraco.

A television replay showed the 27-year-old swerving onto his right, colliding with another rider before going down. He was also hit by other riders coming from behind, a couple of whom also fell.

The 27-year-old tried to stand up and get back on his bike as his teammates stopped around him, but he sat back down as medics rushed to him.

He later walked into an ambulance with his arm in a sling.

"Sadly Tadej Pogacar has been forced out... following a crash on stage eight," UAE Team Emirates-XRG posted on X, confirming their rider's withdrawal.

Pogacar, who won his fifth Tour de France last month and had won the Giro d'Italia in 2024, was aiming for his first overall victory in the Vuelta to become the ninth rider to win all three European Grand Tours.

He began the stage with a lead of three minutes and 50 seconds over second-placed Enric Mas.

Mas (Movistar) took the red jersey after stage eight, becoming the

first Spaniard to lead the Vuelta since Jesus Herrada in 2018. Felix Gall is second overall, a minute and 11 seconds behind.

SUBDUED PODIUM

Frenchman Bryan Coquard (Cofidis) won the stage after several riders went down in another crash in the final kilometre. Mads Pedersen finished second while Jordi Meeus was third. At the podium, a sombre Mas accepted the red jersey but did not wear it, holding it in front of him instead.

"It's a real shame," Mas said about Pogacar's crash.

"I hope he gets better quickly. We've still got a few races left and I hope he'll be in good shape for them."

The race continues today with a 187.5 km mountainous ride from Villajoyosa to Alto de Aitana.

TENNIS

Alcaraz anxious after layoff but feels ‘great’ about wrist

Alcaraz, 23, the youngest player to win the career Grand Slam, hasn’t played singles since April 16

AFP
New York

Carlos Alcaraz said yesterday he feels at “100 percent” ahead of his defense of the US Open, but acknowledged feeling anxious after a four-month layoff due to a wrist injury.

The Spaniard has drawn confidence from grueling practice sessions ahead of the Grand Slam, he told reporters at a pre-tournament media day.

“I need to come here to practice with these guys to feel the competition once again, and this is really testing,” he said.

“I’m feeling great and ... that helped me a lot to know right now that it’s all in my head,” he said.

Alcaraz, 23, the youngest player to win the career Grand Slam after triumphing in Australia in January, hasn’t played singles since April 16, withdrawing from the Barcelona Open with a right wrist injury and subsequently skipping both the French Open and Wimbledon.

Alcaraz, who partnered Serena Williams in the US Open’s mixed doubles event on Tuesday, told reporters that his coaching and support team had complete confidence that he was ready to go.

“I gotta trust my people that tell me that it’s gonna be fine. So I just have to go 100 percent,” he said. “So I’m just trying to do like stay away ... from that fear.”

Alcaraz will open his defense against Russian veteran Roman Safiullin.

Should he clear that and the subsequent two matches, he could face a potential fourth round match with Tommy Paul or Alexander Bublik, with potentially either Ben Shelton or Arthur Fils looming in the quarter-finals.

The Spanish star would normally be an automatic favorite to win again in New York. But the injury



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain addressing the media ahead of the US Open at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City. (AFP)

has made him more of a question mark in 2026.

Other top players are not discounting Alcaraz’ chances.

“I expect him to be maybe a bit rusty the first or second match, but once he gets through that, I think he’s going to be a contender for sure here,” said second-ranked Alexander Zverev, the top seed due to the withdrawal of world number one Jannik Sinner.

Coming back after a layoff at a Grand Slam where men play three out of five sets is “not necessarily easy to do,” said American Taylor Fritz, the ninth seed.

“But, you know, if you can get past those first couple of rounds, you start to feel pretty good,” Fritz said. “Then at that point there’s no reason why he couldn’t, you know, find form and play really well. Who knows?”

SINNER RIVALRY ON HIATUS
Fans reacted rapturously to Al-

caraz’ brief partnership with Williams, with the superstar pair winning their first match before losing soundly in the second round to Belinda Bencic of Switzerland and Flavio Cobolli of Italy.

While Alcaraz showed flashes of brilliance, he looked rusty at times, with some pundits also noting that his serve lacked its customary pop.

In 2025, Alcaraz and Sinner split the four Grand Slams with each winning two. The two young stars have been the most bankable champions since the generation of Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, the only one of three older greats still playing and a contender in New York.

But after Alcaraz and Sinner met in the finals of three slams in 2025, they will not face off in any of the biggest events in 2026 after Sinner’s withdrawal from New York due to a knee injury.

“We are not gonna see each other

for, like, six months now, seven months. So it’s kind of weird situation, to be honest,” Alcaraz said of his rival.

“I just wish him all the best. Hopefully a really great recovery and see him back on court at his best once again.”

Alcaraz acknowledged that being out of competition was difficult, particularly early on when he couldn’t use his arm, he made the most of the break.

“At the same time, I enjoyed my time,” he said. “I enjoyed my time with family, with friends, staying at home.”

In July, Alcaraz appeared in New York at the World Cup final to watch his native Spain defeat Argentina.

“It was a really cool experience and really cool moment,” he said of the appearance, while calling the chance to see Spain win their second World Cup “a lifetime experience.”

Top seed Zverev downplays favourite status

NEW YORK: The US Open looks more open than ever, and top-seeded **Alexander Zverev** says the absence of Jannik Sinner and questions surrounding defending champion Carlos Alcaraz as he returns from injury do little to enhance his own status as favorite. “I feel like I’m one of the 128 players that are favourites in the draw,” the German said as he prepared for the start of the last Grand Slam of the season today in Flushing Meadows. Zverev captured a long awaited first Grand Slam title at the French Open this year and finished runner-up to world number one Sinner at Wimbledon. Alcaraz, whose Australian Open title in January made him the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam, missed both of those tournaments with a right wrist injury that the Spaniard says is fully healed.

But more than four months have elapsed since he last played, and it remains to be seen if he has the requisite fitness to become the first man to win back-to-back US Open titles since Roger Federer won his fifth straight back in 2008.

“I expect him to be maybe a bit rusty the first or second match, but once he gets through that, I think he’s going to be a contender for sure here,” Zverev said. A host of players who could challenge the top two seeds includes 39-year-old Novak Djokovic, seeded fourth as he again chases a record-setting 25th Grand Slam singles title.

Like Zverev, Shelton was reluctant to paint Sinner’s withdrawal with a knee injury as an automatic boost to his own title hopes.



“I know how much quality that there is in the draw,” Shelton said. “I think it would be disrespectful to just think ‘Oh, there’s no Sinner, it’s a massive opportunity.”

Shelton pointed to Zverev, the returning Alcaraz and Djokovic, but also to rising talents like France’s Arthur Fils, who won his first ATP Masters title in Cincinnati last week.

“All the American guys are pretty dangerous on this surface,” added Shelton

SABALENKA SWOON

Women’s world number one Aryna Sabalenka insists no one should count her out as she bids to become just the third woman, after Chris Evert and Serena Williams to win three straight US Open titles.

But since her back-to-back hard-court titles in Indian Wells and Miami the Belarusian star hasn’t reached a final, and even if she pulls off the rare treble she could still lose her world number one ranking.

Second-ranked Elena Rybakina, who beat Sabalenka for the Australian Open title in January, has been steadily closing in and could secure the top spot with a run to the semi-finals regardless of Sabalenka’s results.

MOTOGP

Marquez brothers go one-two as Marc claims record 20th sprint win

Reuters
Alcaniz, Spain

Marc Marquez beat his younger brother Alex to win the Aragon Grand Prix sprint yesterday, as the reigning MotoGP champion underlined his dominance on home turf and at one of his favourite tracks.

Victory also gave Marc a hat-trick of sprint wins at Aragon as the seven-times MotoGP champion moved up to third in the championship standings with 212 points, behind leader Jorge Martin (245) and Marco Bezzecchi (216).

Bezzecchi had claimed pole position with a lap record earlier yesterday, but he had a poor start off the line, with both Marc and Alex overtaking the Aprilia rider to drop him down to third after turn one in the 11-lap sprint.

Once Marc was out in front, there was no catching him as he peeled away with Alex in tow, while Bezzecchi found no opening to attack the two Ducati bikes, which both had medium compound rear tyres compared with the Italian’s soft rear tyre.

“I knew that Marco was with the soft tyres so the (best) chance of (winning) the race was at the first corner,” Marc said after a record 20th sprint win in MotoGP.

“Tomorrow will be a bit of the



Team Ducati Lenovo Team’s Marc Marquez celebrates winning the sprint race of the MotoGP Aragon Grand Prix at the Motorland circuit in Alcaniz, northeastern Spain, yesterday. (AFP)

same, so let’s see. Of course, a good start helped a lot and I was riding at a good pace but I saw that the group was also quite fast, especially Alex. “Let’s see if tomorrow we can improve a bit (in the race) and try to be as consistent as today.”

HOME CROWD

The Marquez one-two mirrored last year’s Aragon sprint, delighting the home crowd as fans, who had packed into stands bearing the brothers’ names, roared as they collected their medals.

Marc, a seven-times race winner at Aragon, dived down the inside of turn one to take the lead, nudging

Bezzecchi aside and creating a gap that Alex also capitalised on to slip past the Italian.

“I knew Marc and Alex had something more. Unfortunately, I missed a little bit the braking point in the first corner,” Bezzecchi said.

Behind them, Bezzecchi’s teammate Martin lost position while fighting with Trackhouse Racing’s Raul Fernandez and KTM’s Pedro Acosta. However, Martin eventually managed to find his way past Fernandez. Although Martin finished fifth behind Acosta, he collected enough points to ensure he would retain his championship lead regardless of today’s race result.

FORMULA 1

Norris extends to 2030 and would be happy to end career at McLaren

Reuters
London

Formula One world champion **Lando Norris** announced a contract extension with McLaren until at least the end of 2030 yesterday, and said he would be happy to see out his career with a team that felt like home.

The 26-year-old Briton, winner of the last two races in Hungary and the Netherlands, broke the news to McLaren employees at a friends and family day at the Woking factory.

McLaren said there was also a multi-year option to commit beyond 2030, and Norris had been gifted an MCL39 car from last season when he became the team’s first drivers’ champion since Lewis Hamilton in 2008.

Speaking earlier to reporters, Norris said the deal came at a perfect time for team morale and motivation, but the figures seen in some media speculation were wide of the mark.

“At the minute there’s really no reason to want to even put a thought into somewhere else,” he said. “I kind of want my whole career to be with McLaren because I’m happy here and I don’t want to change.

“I want to fight with McLaren even when things are not go-



ing well and I want to win with McLaren when things are going amazingly well. So yeah, I’ll be very, very happy at the end of my career to say that McLaren was the only team I’ve been with.”

Norris made his McLaren F1 debut in 2019, after joining in 2017 as a test and simulator driver, and has now won 13 Grands Prix with the reigning constructors’ champions, as well as 18 poles.

“This extension gives us important continuity and reinforces our confidence in the direction we are taking together,” said team principal Andrea Stella. “With him and Oscar (Piastri), we know we can count not only on one of the strongest partnerships but also on one of the most united and close-knit teams in Formula One.”

Some media reports have sug-

gested the new deal would put the Briton third in Formula One’s pay rankings, behind only Red Bull’s Max Verstappen and Ferrari’s Hamilton.

One speculated that Norris’s new salary could be around €60mn (\$69.6mn) a year.

“I feel like I should earn as much as that,” he grinned in response to a mention of what four-time champion Verstappen and seven-time champion Hamilton might be on. “But it’s certainly not close to the figures that I’ve been seeing online, sadly... of course it’s a bit more, as it is with any job when you kind of extend and do those things, but it’s certainly not close to the level of Lewis or Max, which in a way it shouldn’t be, because I’ve not achieved as much as what they’ve achieved in their careers.

“I’m working on it, you know. I don’t know when my next extension or renewal would be and hopefully I can then try and match it one day. I dream of seeing those figures that I’ve seen online so I’ll keep dreaming of them one day.”

Norris said there had been some interest from other teams, but none expressed towards them, and it would have felt like a betrayal to go anywhere else.

“Really it was quite the easiest decision I’ve had to make in my career so far,” he said.

INDIA’S CHOPRA ENDS SEASON EARLY AFTER LIGAMENT TEAR

NEW DELHI: Former Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra has ended his 2026 season early after sustaining a ligament tear during training, the javelin thrower announced in an Instagram post yesterday, three weeks before the Asian Games. The 28-year-old Indian, who took gold at the Tokyo Olympics and won silver in Paris, placed second in the Lausanne Diamond League with a throw of 88.05 metres last week, but suffered the injury soon after, getting sidelined for a long period for the second time in a year. “After discussions with my doctor and team, we’ve decided that I will sit out the rest of this season,” Chopra posted. “It’s disappointing, especially because I felt close to

finding my rhythm. But as they say, setbacks are a part of the journey.”

Chopra, who was dealing with lower back discomfort since 2023, aggravated a disc injury in September 2025 during training. He went into a nine-month rehabilitation period after the Tokyo World Championships, and returned in June. He had qualified for the Diamond League finals next week. “My focus now is on recovering well and coming back even stronger,” Chopra added.

The injury means Chopra will miss the Asian Games, where he was expected to spearhead India’s medal campaign in athletics. His absence will be a major setback for the country’s hopes at the continental

showpiece, which begins next month in Japan. Chopra’s 2026 campaign had been a mixed one. He returned to competition at the Doha Diamond League in June following a lengthy injury layoff and finished fourth with a throw of 85.69m. He then won silver in Glasgow with an 85.83m effort, although Sri Lanka’s Rumesh Pathirage stole the spotlight by clinching gold with a huge 89.75m throw. The Lausanne Diamond League was Chopra’s third competitive appearance of the season and had offered signs that he was moving closer to his best. His season’s-best effort there had provided a much-needed confidence boost and was expected to serve as an important build-up to the Asian Games.



LIGUE 1

Marquinhos rescues last-gasp draw for PSG at Lille

AFP

Lille, France

Captain Marquinhos headed in a dramatic last-gasp equaliser as Paris Saint-Germain scored twice in stoppage time to snatch a 2-2 draw at Lille in Ligue 1 on Friday.

It looked as though the reigning French and European champions were heading for defeat as goals by Hakon Haraldsson and Dilane Bakwa for Lille left PSG trailing 2-0 with the 90 minutes up.

But a Vitinha strike in the first added minute gave Luis Enrique's team sudden belief. The Portugal playmaker then crossed for Marquinhos to head in with the final act of the game in northern France.

It was a cruel blow for Lille and their new coach Davide Ancelotti, who worked with Marquinhos as part of the Brazil staff at the recent World Cup.

"It is never finished against PSG," said Marquinhos.

PSG remain without a victory at the start of this Ligue 1 season but this was the second successive game in which they had come from two behind late on to grab a share of the spoils.

Last weekend they trailed 2-0 away to Rennes before Spain's World Cup final hero Ferran Torres

came off the bench and netted a brace to earn a point.

"It says a lot about us," added Marquinhos. "The positive thing is our mentality, and our ability to come back and get a result from behind. That augurs well for the rest of the season."

Torres, a new arrival from Barcelona, had replaced Ousmane Dembele at half-time in Rennes, and the French international was then told by his manager to go away and have this week off.

He was therefore not involved here, while another of France's World Cup stars Bradley Barcola was also absent with a huge-money transfer to Liverpool understood to be imminent.

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia was also benched at kick-off for the visitors, who saw Achraf Hakimi come close to giving them an early lead with an effort which grazed the post.

Haraldsson then struck in stunning fashion just before the midway point in the first half for Lille, who this week sold prodigious teenage talent Ayyoub Bouaddi to Manchester City for an initial 100 million euros (\$117m). The Icelandic international midfielder scored with a thumping first-time effort from the edge of the area after a brilliant reverse pass by Olivier Giroud to set him up.

Kvaratskhelia and summer recruit Mika Godts both came on in the second half for PSG, but they were reeling when Bakwa - just on for his debut after joining on loan from Nottingham Forest - curled in for 2-0 with six minutes left.

It seemed set to be two wins out of two for Lille under new Italian coach, whose father Carlo Ancelotti - the current Brazil boss - watched from the stands at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy.

Davide Ancelotti was on the staff at PSG when Carlo was in charge of the Qatar-owned club between 2012 and 2013.

But PSG's late show denied them, and Luis Enrique's side will take confidence from their remarkable comeback here as they prepare for the upcoming defence of their Champions League title.

"At this point in the season it would be very dangerous to be at 100 percent already," said the coach.

The two-time reigning European champions, who have already beaten Aston Villa to claim this season's UEFA Super Cup, will notably play Barcelona and Manchester City in the league phase of the Champions League.

Elsewhere in Ligue 1 this weekend, last season's runners-up Lens go to Strasbourg, while Monaco face Marseille today.



PSG's Brazilian defender Marquinhos heads the ball past Lille's Turkish goalkeeper Berke Ozer to score his team's second goal during the Ligue 1 match in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AFP)

BUNDESLIGA

Tiny Elversberg stun Leverkusen, Dortmund win

'WE WORKED HARD TO EARN THE RIGHT TO PLAY IN THIS LEAGUE'

AFP

Berlin

Bundesliga newcomers Elversberg kick-started their first top-flight campaign in style, stunning 2023-24 champions Bayer Leverkusen in a dominant 3-2 home victory, while Borussia Dortmund beat Hamburg in Saturday's late game.

Lukas Petkov and American striker Cole Campbell scored within 60 seconds of each other to put Elversberg 2-0 up before the 10-minute mark.

David Mokwa added another early in the second half. Leverkusen's Patrik Schick and Christian Kofane scored late, but it was not enough to prevent a famous victory for the minnows.

Elversberg has a population of just 13,000, making it the smallest town ever to have a German top-flight side.

Just 9,307 fans were able to watch the surprise win in the club's home ground, which is still under construction.

"It's an indescribable day," Elversberg captain Lukas Pinckert told Sky.

"We worked hard to earn the right to play in this league. The victory is deserved. I am incredibly proud of the team."

Leverkusen looked disorganised and lacked energy until late, showing coach Carles Martinez Novell has work to do after taking over in the summer.

Dortmund sink Hamburg

Dortmund opened their season with a 2-0 home win over Hamburg but the comfortable victory was soured by a potentially serious injury to impressive debutant Giannis Konstantelias.

The Greece midfielder dazzled in his first Bundesliga game since arriving earlier in August, drib-



Elversberg's David Mokwa (left) celebrates scoring the team's third goal with Cole Campbell against Bayer Leverkusen Spiesen-Elversberg, Germany, yesterday. (AFP)

bling through the Hamburg defence before scoring Dortmund's second just after the break.

Konstantelias's goal came after teenage countryman Konstantinos Karetzas, another off-season arrival, had set up Dortmund's

opener for Serhou Guirassy with just nine minutes gone. Midway through the second-half, Konstantelias fell to the turf after a challenge and was immediately subbed out, grabbing his left knee.

Teenage Dortmund forward

Samuele Inacio was shown straight red shortly after coming on for a dangerous challenge with 13 minutes remaining but the hosts held firm to claim victory.

"The complete diagnosis will come tomorrow, but the doctor told me it doesn't look good," Dortmund coach Niko Kovac told Sky.

Elsewhere, RB Leipzig cruised to a 3-0 home win over Borussia Moenchengladbach, with former Chelsea and France forward Christopher Nkunku setting up a goal on his return to the club.

Ridle Baku's first-half goal came against the run of play for Leipzig but the hosts took control when Antonio Nusa produced a stunning, curling effort early in the second half.

Nkunku, who scored 70 goals in a four-year spell at Leipzig before his Chelsea move, came on midway through the second half and set up a goal for former Gladbach forward Rocco Reitz just two minutes later.

Leipzig have been drawn to face Manchester City and Real Madrid on their return to the Champions League after missing Europe completely last season.

In the capital, Union Berlin came from 3-1 down to draw 3-3 with Eintracht Frankfurt, cancelling out Younes Ebnoutalib's hat-trick for the visitors.

Union's Tim Skarke scored in the third minute of stoppage time to level things up for the hosts.

Elsewhere, substitute Thijs Dallinga bagged a double and Germany starlet Said El Mala scored a dazzling solo effort as Cologne came from behind twice to beat Hoffenheim 3-2. Hosts Mainz played out a scoreless draw with promoted Paderborn.

On Friday, Bayern Munich got their title defence off to a blistering start, steamrolling past Stuttgart 5-1 in a rematch of last season's German Cup final.

LA LIGA

Mbappe worthy of Ballon d'Or: Mourinho

AFP

Madrid

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho said Kylian Mbappe deserves to win this year's Ballon d'Or, arguing the award should go to "the best player in the world" rather than be decided by World Cup or Champions League success.

"The best players in the world, there are two, three or four of them, and we know who they are: they're here," Mourinho told reporters Saturday ahead of Madrid's game against Malaga in La Liga.

"And for me there is one who, individually, made history this summer," Mourinho said, in reference to Mbappe, who became the all-time leading scorer in World Cup history during the tournament.

The France captain is among the contenders for the Ballon d'Or after finishing last season as the top scorer in La Liga, the Champions League and the 2026 World Cup, despite failing to win a major trophy.

His rivals include England striker Harry Kane, Spain midfielder and World Cup winner Rodri, and Paris Saint-Germain's European champions Ousmane Dembele and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

Mbappe, who scored a hat-trick in Wednesday's 4-1 win over Real Sociedad, featured on the front page of Madrid-based sports daily AS on Saturday under the headline: "Mbappe targets the Ballon d'Or".

"You cannot give the Ballon d'Or to a player simply because he won the Champions League or the World Cup," said Mourinho.

"For me, the Ballon d'Or should go to one of those players who, when they retire, will be missed forever. Maradona, Ronaldinho, Ronaldo Nazario, Cristiano Ronaldo, Messi, Zidane..." he said.

"If we want to reward the Champions League, then give it to Luis Enrique. For the Spanish national team, give it to (Luis) De la Fuente. The best player in the world is something else, and he is neither at PSG nor in the Spain team," Mourinho added.

Iran beat France to win maiden FIVB Boys' U17 World Championship title

Iran completed an unbeaten campaign by defeating France 3-1 (25-18, 25-15, 22-25, 25-12) to win their first FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship title in Doha yesterday.

Iran dominated the opening two sets, with setter Akam Ebrahim-nezhad effectively distributing the ball among Sina Hazrati, Arash Ashrafi and Azhvan Namazi. Iran also made an impact from the service line, producing 10 aces, including three each from Hazrati and Ashrafi.

France fought back in the third set as Antonin Bonnard, Jaden Ebagne Yon and Enzo Savalli helped them take a 25-22 win and reduce the deficit to 2-1.

Iran, however, quickly regained control in the fourth, turning an 8-4 lead into 16-8 before pulling further clear. Hazrati finished the match with 19 points, while Ashrafi scored 17 and Namazi added 16, including four blocks.

Bonnard was France's top scorer with 22 points.

Meanwhile, Brazil secured the bronze medal after overcoming Argentina 3-1 (21-25, 25-17, 25-18, 25-13). Brazil recovered after losing the opening set, with their blocking proving decisive as they produced 14 points at the net.

Lorenzo Jose Trentin led Brazil with 19 points, while Lucas Pereira de Abreu contributed 12, including seven blocks.



Qatar enter Asian U19 handball final

Qatar advanced to the final of the 11th Asian U19 Handball Championship in Jordan after defeating South Korea 32-28 in the semi-final yesterday. The victory came after Qatar secured qualification for the 2027 U19 World Handball Championship by reaching the last four.

Qatar produced a strong performance against South Korea, maintaining their composure and control throughout

the match to book their place in the title decider.

The team had on Friday secured their World Championship berth with a commanding 33-13 quarter-final victory over hosts Jordan, after leading 16-4 at half-time.

Qatar had enjoyed a perfect run in Group B, collecting eight points from wins over Saudi Arabia (30-22), Kuwait (30-19), Iran (24-22) and Syria (42-29).