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Warner says Khawaja claims '100 percent accurate'



SHOOTING | Page 4

Stojadinovic wins gold as Serbia, Korea and Japan book LA28 places

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SPORT



TENNIS

Gauff outruns Pegula to win thriller at WTA Finals, Noskova beats Kostyuk

Page 3

QOC elects Sheikha Hind as vice-president and completes board formation



HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani felicitates Dr. Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, who stepped down from his role as vice-president of the Qatar Olympic Committee.



HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, president of the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC), poses with newly-elected vice-president HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Mohammed bin Yousuf al-Mana, Dr. Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari and secretary general Jassim Rashid al-Buenain after QOC's Extraordinary General Assembly yesterday.

FOOTBALL

Qatar team eager to shine at FIFA U-17 World Cup

Hosts have been drawn alongside Panama, Greece and Egypt

By Sports Reporter
Doha

With 10 days to go until the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Qatar, the host players shared their excitement ahead of the prestigious competition. Qatar have been drawn into Group A alongside Panama, Greece and Egypt.

Team captain Mohsen al-Hajri is looking forward to showcasing his skills on the world stage. The young forward, who plays his club football for Qatari side Al Rayyan, will lead the Young Maroons in their first match of the tournament, against Panama on Thursday, November 19 at 6:30pm at the Competition Complex in Aspire Zone.

Al-Hajri said: "This is a huge honour for me to play at the U-17 World Cup and I hope I represent my country in the best way possible. Playing against teams from around the world enables us to showcase our football but also share our culture and heritage."

The matches will take place across eight pitches in the Competition Complex in Aspire Zone, with the final taking place on December 13 at Ahmad bin Ali Stadium at 7pm. The state-of-the-art facility is home to Aspire Academy, which has produced a number of world-class athletes including Olympic and world champion high jumper Mutaz Barshim, as well as Almoez Ali and Akram Afif, the forwards at the centre of Qatar's back-to-back Asian Cup wins.

"I've been training at the Aspire Zone from a very young age. The sporting infrastructure and the stadiums here offer the best environment for all athletes to grow, not only football players," added al-Hajri.

All tickets for the matches are digital and are available as a Day Pass, which will enable fans to attend multiple matches a day, as well as cultural and entertainment activities at the Fan Zone, in what will be an electrifying football festival-like atmosphere.

Fans can also purchase a Prime Pass, which will enable them to reserve seats for high demand matches.

For Al Duhail midfielder Hadi Khalil, the tournament offers players the opportunity to shine in front of a global audience: "This is the world's biggest U-17 football tournament. We will be competing with the best players and future stars from around the world. It is important to showcase our capabilities on the international stage. I hope to play for the first team some day and help Qatar achieve more success in the future."



The tournament's centralised format is particularly attractive for international scouts. Last year's edition welcomed 130 scouts from top clubs around the world. A number of players that featured in the tournament have gone on to play first team football in premier European leagues. Most notably Egyptian forward Hamza Abdelkarim went on to play in the FIFA World Cup 2026 as well as Spanish giants FC Barcelona. Qatar U-17 coach Alvaro Mejia recognises the significance of the tournament in the development of football talent in Qatar and the region. "Hosting this level of tournament in Qatar, where all the best U-17 teams from around the world will compete, provides young players with an unmatched experience," he said.

Mejia, who is leading the young Maroons for the second consecutive year, added: "I am certain that this tournament will once again be a launching pad for the next generation of football stars. I look forward to showcasing the immense passion for football and the tremendous talent we have here in Qatar."

Qatar's Dana wins 100m bronze at Youth Olympics



Qatar's Dana Salem won bronze medal in the women's 100m at the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games, after she clocked 11.48 seconds in the final. Nigeria's Rosemary Nwankwo claimed gold in 11.16 seconds, while the UAE's Arwa Ali took silver with a time of 11.41 seconds. Qatar's Adham al-Deeb also impressed in the men's individual foil competition, reaching the quarter-finals before bowing out to Japan's Masashi Maeda. Al-Deeb began his campaign with a 15-12 victory over Venezuela's Angel Santiago Martinez Bravo but was unable to progress further, losing 15-10 to Maeda in the quarter-final.

Lopetegui names 28-man Qatar squad for friendlies against Australia and South Korea

Doha: Qatar coach Julen Lopetegui has named a 28-man squad for the national team's November friendlies against Australia and South Korea

Qatar will begin their November programme against Australia on November 13 at Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium, with kick-off at 5:45pm. Four days later, they will take on South Korea at the same venue, with the match scheduled to start at 5pm.

The Spanish coach retained veteran Hassan al-Haydos, while Mahmoud Abunada, Meshaal Barsham and Salah Zakaria continue as the three goalkeeping options.

Star forwards Akram Afif and Almoez Ali remain central to Qatar's attacking plans, with Edmilson Junior, Hashim Ali, Youssef Abdulrazzaq and Shehab Ellethy also included among the forward options.

The midfield features experienced campaigners Abdulaziz Hatem, Assim Madibo and Karim Boudiaf, along with Ahmed Fathy and Jassim Gaber. Defensively, Lopetegui has selected Bassam al-Rawi, Boualem Khoukhi, Tarek Salman and Homam al-Amin.

The two matches form part of Qatar's preparations for the AFC Asian Cup, where they are due to defend their title. The continental tournament, however, has been postponed from its original January 7-February 5, 2027 dates and will now be held from December 23, 2027 to January 21, 2028.

The postponement also led to the cancellation of Qatar's planned December 27 friendly against Saudi Arabia in Al Khobar. The Qatar Football Association said the decision was reached in coordination with the Saudi side.

Saudi Arabia will also play two friendlies in Doha during the November international window. They face South Korea at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium on November 13 at 5:30pm before meeting Uzbekistan at the same venue on November 17 at 6:30pm.

QATAR SQUAD

Mahmoud Abunada, Meshaal Barsham, Salah Zakaria, Shehab Ellethy, Abdulaziz Hatem, Ahmed al-Janehi, Ahmed Alaa, Ahmed Fathy, Akram Afif, Almoez Ali, Assim Madibo, Ayoub al-Alawi, Bassam al-Rawi, Boualem Khoukhi, Edmilson Junior, Hashim Ali, Hassan al-Haydos, Homam al-Amin, Ibrahim al-Hassan, Issa Laye, Jassim Gaber, Karim Boudiaf, Mohammed Mannai, Niall Mason, Sultan al-Brake, Tarek Salman, Youssef Abdulrazzaq, Youssee Ayman.

Coach: Julen Lopetegui

CRICKET

COMMENT

Warner says Khawaja's claims are true

AFP
Sydney

David Warner backed former teammate Usman Khawaja's claims that the entire Australian team was in on the 2018 "Sandpapergate" scandal as "100 percent accurate" on Monday.

Warner, one of three players banned over the ball-tampering controversy in Cape Town along with Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft, said he stood "with my brother" Khawaja.

"It's been eight years since I spoke on this topic," the former opener said on *Instagram*.

"Uzzie, I throw my full support behind you. I thank you for what you've done.

"It's 100 percent accurate what you've said. Now everyone knows the truth. It's out there. People wanted to know it. You've come out and said it."

Khawaja, Warner's close friend and long-time opening partner, re-ignited the infamous incident on Saturday ahead of the release of his autobiography this week, where a chapter is dedicated to the issue.

"It was all of us. Not the batters, not the bowlers, not the staff. All of us," Khawaja claimed about who was in on the plot to doctor the ball with sandpaper.

Cricket Australia's original investigation found only Smith, Warner and Bancroft were in the know, with the governing body at the weekend saying it remained "comfortable" with its findings.

Bowlers Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon all denied publicly in 2021 that they knew about it, while Darren Lehmann, who was head coach at the time, denied on Saturday there was widespread knowledge.

"This isn't about reopening old wounds," said Warner, who retired from Test cricket in 2024.

"It's about acknowledging that some wounds never properly healed. I stand with my brother Usman Khawaja.

"Speaking your truth takes courage, especially when people would rather you stay silent.

"Time passing doesn't replace accountability, and asking questions shouldn't be mistaken for holding grudges. Respect, honesty and accountability. That's all anyone can ask for."

Smith was banned for a year and sacked as captain over the furore during the third Test in Cape Town. Warner was suspended for 12 months and stripped of all leadership roles, while Bancroft was slapped with a nine-month ban.

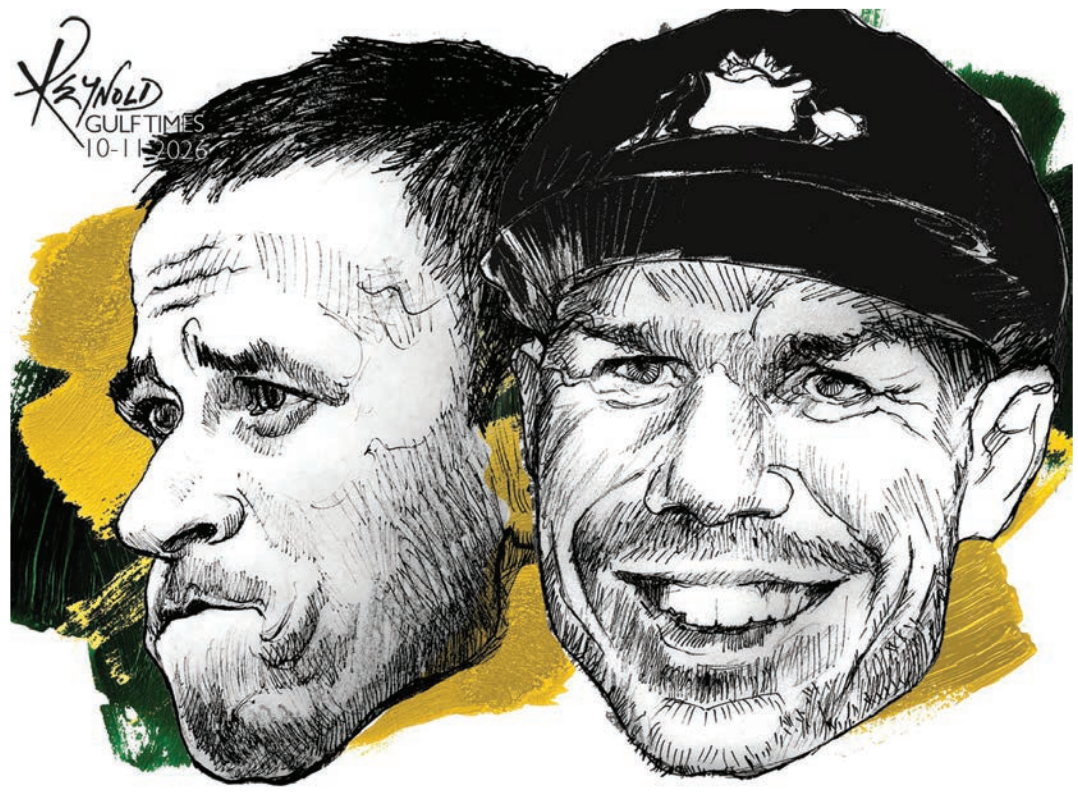
"These three guys (Smith, Warner and Bancroft) took the blame for all of us," said Khawaja, who retired this year. "They're the victims... people telling them that they're cheats, getting nailed by the crowd. Public humiliation."

Warner said the past eight years had been "a tough time for my family, Steven and Cameron no doubt".

"But this is what needed to come out."

He was scathing of the Cricket Australia investigation process, calling it "rushed and botched".

"Uzzie was sitting next to Cameron Bancroft. Uzzie was not interviewed. How is that a thorough investigation? It baffles me," he said.



FOCUS

Bangladesh force draw, West Indies bag Test series

'Coming to Bangladesh is always a tough place to play cricket'

AFP
Sylhet, Bangladesh

Towhid Hridoy became the first Bangladesh batter to score 324 runs in a Test match, as the second Test against West Indies ended in a draw in Sylhet yesterday.

Chasing 369 to win, Bangladesh were 184-4 when fading light ended the final day's play.

West Indies, who won the opening Test in Mirpur by eight wickets, took the two-match series 1-0.

"Coming to Bangladesh is always a tough place to play cricket, so to beat them in their own backyard is always a pleasure," West Indies captain Roston Chase said.

Hridoy rescued Bangladesh from 88-3 with an unbeaten 242 in their first innings, helping the hosts post 386 for a 30-run lead over West Indies' 356.

His marathon knock surpassed Mushfiqur Rahim's previous Bangladesh record of 219 not out, and included a 117-run partnership with Taijul Islam.

Hridoy added 82 in the second innings, taking his match aggregate to 324 and surpassing Mominul Haque's previous record of 281 against Sri Lanka in 2018.

West Indies resumed on 345-3, with Kavem Hodge unbeaten on 140. Bangladesh took three early wickets, including Hodge for a career-best 142 off 194 balls.

Mehidy Hasan Miraz trapped Justin Greaves lbw for nine, before Nayeem Hasan removed Shamar Joseph for one, leaving West Indies on 372-6.

Joshua Bishop hit an unbeaten 20 off 11 balls, including two sixes, while Amir Jangoo made 39 off 74 deliveries.

Chase declared at 398-6, setting Bangladesh a target of 369. Taijul, Mehidy and Nayeem took two wickets each.

Bangladesh began their chase without regular opener Shadman Islam, who was ruled out with an ankle injury.

Tanzid Hasan made 21 before falling to Jomel Warrican, who also trapped captain Najmul Hossain Shanto lbw, leaving Bangladesh on 40-2. Hridoy and Mushfiqur steadied the innings, bringing up a century stand off 185 balls.

Mushfiqur reached 7,000 Test runs during the partnership, becoming the first Bangladeshi batter to achieve the milestone.

Bangladesh went to tea on 162-2, with Mushfiqur on 40 and Hridoy unbeaten on 82.

Warrican broke the 135-run partnership by bowling Hridoy for 82 off 140 balls, claiming his 100th Test wicket.

Player of the series Warrican took 16 wickets across the two Tests, with Chase praising his ability to build pressure on Bangladesh's batters.

"He built a lot of pressure and put the ball in front of the batsmen for a long period of time," Chase said. "He really kept us in this series and won the series for us."

Joseph dismissed Mushfiqur for 49 off 123 balls before bad light ended play.

Shanto said Bangladesh had failed to implement their plan.

"We didn't play well in batting, bowling or fielding, that's why we lost. I think the plan was right, but the execution wasn't," he said.



West Indies' cricket players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Test series against Bangladesh at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. *(AFP)*


Bangladesh's Towhid Hridoy watches the ball after playing a shot during the fifth and final day of the second Test in Sylhet. *(AFP)*

BRIEF SCORES
West Indies 356 (Jangoo 133, Hasan 6-90) **and 398 for 6 dec** (Hodge 142, Da Silva 78) drew **against Bangladesh 386** (Hridoy 242*, Warrican 4-104) **and 184 for 4** (Hridoy 82, Warrican 3-44)

FIRST TEST

Pakistan post 281-5 to punish Sri Lanka

AFP
Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Captain Babar Azam and two debutants were among four batters to hit half-centuries as Pakistan reached 281-5 on day one of the first Test against Sri Lanka yesterday.

Opener Tayyab Arif scored an impressive 57 and Mohammad Taha a patient 51 -- both playing their first Test -- while Azam hit 50, with Sri Lanka's decision to bowl on what appeared to be a green pitch in Rawalpindi seeming to backfire.

Saud Shakeel was unbeaten on 57 when bad light stopped play 15 minutes before schedule, with Ghazi Ghori seven not out.

Sri Lanka's decision to go with a pace quartet and without a frontline spinner could also prove costly, with the pitch not offering much to the fast bowlers.

Asitha Fernando was the pick of bowlers with 2-64.

Azam looked in good touch but still failed to score an elusive century, and was dismissed by Dilshan Madushanka after the lunch break.

He hit seven fours in his 58-ball innings.

Azam has now gone 41 innings without a Test century, his last coming against New Zealand in Karachi in December 2022.

Salman Agha made 16 before giving Sri Lankan wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis his fourth catch of the innings.

Arif said Pakistan has done well under the conditions.

"We have played good and positive cricket considering the conditions," said Arif. "I have played a lot with some of these players so I was supported well and I am happy on scoring a half century."

Arif put on a confident 86-run opening stand with Azan Awais (30) as Sri Lanka's pace bowlers struggled to break through.

The 20-year-old, playing his maiden first-class season, cracked nine boundaries and a six in his impressive 51-ball knock.

Sri Lanka had to wait until the 16th over for a breakthrough, when Milan Rathnayaka had Awais caught behind by Mendis.

Fernando found an edge off Arif's bat to Mendis, making it 90-2.

Sri Lankan bowling coach Ryan van Niekerk wasn't happy.

"Probably not satisfied as bowling first and with the seamers we have we should have taken a couple of more wickets," said Niekerk. "But bowlers pulling it back in the last session was good."

Allrounder Arafat Minhas and pace bowler Saqib Khan are also making Test debuts for Pakistan.

The second and final Test is in Lahore from November 17.

BRIEF SCORES
Pakistan 281 for 5 (Shakeel 57*, Arif 57, Taha 51, Babar 50, Fernando 2-64) **vs Sri Lanka**


Pakistan's Saud Shakeel (right) and Ghazi Ghori leave the field at the end of first day's play during the first Test against Sri Lanka at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium yesterday. *(AFP)*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Australia drop out-of-form Labuschagne for New Zealand Test series

Reuters
Sydney

Australia have dropped Marnus Labuschagne for next month's four-Test home series against New Zealand after a prolonged slump in form, selector George Bailey confirmed yesterday.

The 32-year-old number three, once the world's top-ranked Test batter, has gone 49 innings without a century and endured another poor tour of South Africa, scoring zero and four in the final Test as Australia lost the match and series 2-1.

"At this stage we won't be considering Marnus for selection for certainly that first test, but for the New Zealand series," Bailey told reporters. "There's been a lot of speculation around his place in the team, and so I think this gives him a little bit of space and clears up a bit of conjecture."

Labuschagne has averaged 23.66 and managed only 2 half-centuries in 10 Tests since being dropped for Australia's three-test series against West Indies in the Caribbean last year.

He will return to captain Queensland in the Sheffield Shield while selectors weigh replacements.

Bailey said Labuschagne could still force his way back into the team for next year's tours of India and England.

"It's still possible, absolutely," Bailey said. "And I think we all know how good and how effective Marnus can be at his best. But that performance hasn't been there."

Labuschagne's omission means another shake-up for an Australian top order which has been in almost constant flux since opener David Warner retired nearly three years ago.

Steve Smith, who is expected to return for the New Zealand opener in Perth on December 9 after missing the Cape Town test with a neck injury, could bat at number three but has been reluctant to budge from his favoured number four slot since an ill-fated spell as an opener.

All-rounder Cameron Green has previously batted at three at Test level while Matt Renshaw could also be considered, though it would mean bringing in another opener. Australia will finalise their squad following the next round of Shield matches, which begins tomorrow.

CARSE GETS ENGLAND LIONS CALL-UP FOR SOUTH AFRICA TOUR

England fast bowler Brydon Carse, who was stood down from the national team after an incident outside a nightclub in August, has been named in the second-string England Lions squad to tour South Africa next month along with the national team.

British media reported that Carse, who has not played for England since January, may return to the senior squad for the first Test, with Josh Tongue set to miss the match in Johannesburg next month for the birth of his second child. Carse, 31, was last month charged with breaching the England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) professional conduct regulations over the incident in Derby. A final decision about his punishment has not yet been announced.

England Test squad: Joe Root (captain), Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Sonny Baker, Jacob Bethell, Harry Brook, Sam Cook, Jordan Cox, Ben Duckett, Emilio Gay, Dan Lawrence, Liam Patterson-White, Ollie Robinson, Jamie Smith, Josh Tongue.

QATAR STARS LEAGUE ORGANISES VISIT TO QATAR NATIONAL LIBRARY

Qatar Stars League (QSL) organised a visit to Qatar National Library (QNL) yesterday. The event was attended by Dr. Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari, President of QNL, and Hassan Rabiah al-Kuwari, Executive Director of Sales, Marketing and Communication at QSL, alongside a group of prominent players from Doha Bank Stars League.

The visit is part of QSL's initiative to showcase Qatar's landmarks, aiming to introduce players and their families to one of the country's most significant cultural institutions and to encourage them to take advantage of the programmes and services offered by the library.

The visit began with a welcoming address by Dr. Al Kuwari, who provided an overview of QNL and its role in fostering access to knowledge and promoting a culture of reading. He emphasized the importance of sports in society, noting that the presence of star players from various clubs at this cultural landmark exemplifies the synergy between sports and knowledge.

Following the address, the attendees took a guided tour of the library's facilities and departments, where they explored its services, knowledge resources, and various cultural and educational programmes.

For his part, Hassan al-Kuwari expressed his gratitude to Dr. al-Kuwari and the team at QNL for their warm welcome and dedicated efforts in serving the cause of culture and knowledge. He added that this visit reflected QSL's commitment to collaborating with national institutions while leveraging the influence of football stars to support cultural initiatives and promote reading.







WTA FINALS

USA's Gauff outguns Pegula as Noskova beats Kostyuk

'I'm just really happy to get through today. It was a tough match'

Reuters
New York


Coco Gauff of the United States serves to Jessica Pegula of the United States during WTA Finals at Indian Wells Tennis Garden. *(AFP)*

Coco Gauff shredded her shoes but stayed one step ahead of Jessica Pegula to defeat her compatriot 6-4 6-7(5) 6-2 on the first day of the WTA Finals at Indian Wells, while Czech Linda Noskova got the better of Marta Kostyuk 6-2 6-4.

Gauff had beaten Pegula three months ago in Cincinnati and had the right formula once again, as the 2024 winner showed superb versatility in a round-robin clash between the top two Americans in the season-ending championship.

The frequent rivals were 5-5 in their head-to-head record before Sunday and appeared perfectly matched through a tight opening set, where Gauff got the break from the baseline on the fourth set point. Pegula took back the momentum by winning the first three games of the second set before Gauff dug in her heels, saving three set points in the 10th game to level it at 5-5.

Gauff then saved two break points and shouted in celebration as she clinched the 10-minute 11th game. Pegula saved match point in the 12th and found another gear in the tiebreak, taking the set with a shot down the line.

Up a break in the third set, Gauff extended her lead to 5-2 when she ran up to the net and forced her opponent into an error. She capped a terrific performance with a triumphant roar as Pegula sent one past the baseline on the third match point. "Honestly, I was having a lot of fun today. I took a little break, it was my first match in a month," said Gauff, who was last in action at the China Open in early October.

"To play a tournament like this with no preparation is something I've never done in my career. I'm just really happy to get through today. It was a tough match."

The 22-year-old said she had to be aggressive to deal with Pegula's game. "I also had to run a lot," she added. "My shoes are pretty torn up now. Some of my shoes are like somewhere on the court there, so I'm going to have to change shoes tomorrow."

The eighth-ranked Noskova is keen for another accolade after her breakthrough win at Wimbledon this year and she got off to a fine start in her WTA Finals debut, applying pressure from the baseline and at the net. The pair traded early breaks before Noskova slammed her foot on the gas in the first set, where Kostyuk was unable to hold her serve until the seventh game.

Kostyuk was a late addition to the competition after world number one Elena Rybakina pulled out, and the Ukrainian was never able to settle in against the Czech, who sent across 20 winners and sealed the match with a forehand to the back corner. "I definitely wanted to give this week one last push of the season," said Noskova, who reached the semi-finals at Indian Wells earlier this year. "It's a long year, we all are kind of drained and injured and all the things together, but it's one of the most important tournaments of the year."

Eala ready to disappear for a bit after season comes to an end

Alex Eala said she is looking forward to lying low for a while after her breakout campaign ended on Sunday with a 6-3 6-0 defeat by American Claire Liu in the Hong Kong Open final. The 21-year-old, who became the highest-ranked Filipino and Southeast Asian player in WTA history earlier this season, has become a fan favourite this year and her run in Hong Kong will lift her to a career-high 15th in the world rankings. Eala won her first WTA Tour-level title at the Washington Open in August and claimed seven wins over top-10 players across the year. She also won a bronze medal at the Asian Games last month. "I didn't know that was on the cards for me, to end the year at 15th," she told reporters after the Hong Kong final.

"This whole season, just to top it off with ending the year 15th, it's like dreams are only dreams until they're not."

Asked what her goals were for 2027, Eala said she had not spent much time thinking about next season. "I've been really enjoying the fruits of my labour of this year. Just because it's been one (tournament) and then the other and then the other...

"I'm going to spend time with my family, just lay low, disappear for a little bit," she added.

"Yeah, those are my plans. Just to disappear."

FOCUS

Morocco and UAE golfers shine at Arab Championships

By Sports Reporter
Doha



Qatar's Saleh al-Kaabi climbed to the fourth spot after the third round of the Arab Golf Championships yesterday.

The 45th Arab Golf Championships continued at Doha Golf Club (DGC), with Morocco leading the men's individual standings and the UAE topping the team competition after the third day of action.

Morocco's Reda El Hali maintained his lead in the men's individual event, moving to 10-under-par 206. Emirati Jonathan Selvragh was second on six-under 210, followed by compatriot Sam Mulani on five-under 211.

Qatar's Saleh al-Kaabi climbed to fourth with a three-under 213, two strokes behind third place. Daniel Sokolov shared sixth with Morocco's Hugo Trometer on one-under 215. Ali a-Shahrani was 16th on 14-over, while Fahad Mir finished 34th on 29-over.

"I am satisfied with my performance today and my move to fourth place, just two strokes behind third. I hope to maintain this form in the final round," al-Kaabi said.

He added that he was aiming for a positive result to boost Qatar's chances of reaching the podium in both individual and team events. He also expressed pride in Doha hosting the championship and thanked the Qatar Golf Federation for its support.

In the men's team event, the UAE led with seven-under 641, ahead of Morocco on five-under 643. Qatar were third on 10-over 658, followed by Bahrain and Tunisia.

The women's individual title was decided in a play-off after Morocco's Maria Harrouch and Reem Imni, along with the UAE's Intissar Rish, finished tied on four-under 215. Harrouch won gold, Imni took silver and Rish claimed bronze.

Qatar's Nada Mir finished 12th on 28-over, while Moza al-Thani was 19th on 72-over. Morocco won the women's team gold with a 13-under 425, ahead of the UAE on five-under 433. Tunisia took bronze on 47-over 485. The championship features 73 players from 14 countries.

Mohammed Faisal al-Nuaimi, a Doha Golf Club board member, praised the competition and described the championship as an important Arab sporting gathering, highlighting the close contest among players in both the men's and women's events.


Morocco's women won the team gold at the 45th Arab Golf Championships at Doha Golf Club yesterday.

JUDO KING RINER JOINS FIGHT FOR FRENCH PRESIDENCY

France's five-time Olympic judo champion Teddy Riner announced yesterday he would run in next year's presidential election, after expressing concern about the "rise of the far right".

"My name is Teddy Riner and today, I am telling you face to face: I am a candidate in the 2027 presidential election," the 37-year-old said in a surprise announcement on social media. Riner, one of the greatest judokas in history, said in the two-minute-37-second video that he feared France could soon become deeply divided, appearing to cast himself as a candidate for voters unwilling to choose between two political extremes - the far right and the hard left.

His announcement comes as far-right candidate Marine Le Pen leads in the polls to replace centrist President Emmanuel Macron next year, with hard-left firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon in second place.

"Today we live alongside one another," said Riner, who hails from the French overseas territory of Guadeloupe. "I fear that tomorrow we'll be living in confrontation."

Riner, among France's best-known sports figures, has publicly said he was very worried about the "rise of the far right".

Le Pen has benefited from one of the most fractured political landscapes in modern French history, with a crowded field of candidates competing for support.

Infighting among centrists has increased the likelihood of a second-round runoff between Le Pen and Melenchon. Riner voiced concern about a France that is "collapsing under the weight of debt" and said he was troubled to see "a father or mother gritting their teeth while filling a shopping trolley".

He lamented that "state authority has disappeared" in the face of "thugs".

Riner, who is black, also criticised excessive bureaucracy and a system where he said "a young person's future can be destroyed simply because they don't have the right network, the right name or the right skin colour".

"I will not be among those who watch the country burn while making excuses," he added, sitting in front of a bookcase and wearing a white shirt and dark jacket.

"Fighting has always been part of who I am. I know what it means to struggle, to fall, to always get back up."

He acknowledged that some people would dismiss his candidacy. "I know what people are going to say about me: 'He's crazy. He's not from the establishment. He doesn't have the codes. He's never done politics,'" he added. "If refusing to bow my head and refusing chaos makes me crazy, then yes, I'm completely crazy."

Dani Podgoretskaya, an analyst at Eurasia Group, said Riner addressed "the right pain points" but that she did not see him as a serious contender. "The French take the presidential election very seriously, given how much power the office holds. He has no experience in elected office, no party and no detailed programme yet," she said. "While I still find it possible that we may yet see a providential figure emerge who unites the anti-populist vote, I doubt that Riner is that figure."

Erwan Lestrohan of polling firm Odoxa said that while no candidate was generating broad enthusiasm among French voters, Riner's popularity would not necessarily translate into electoral support.

"He's starting from zero in terms of political credibility," Lestrohan said. In an interview with *Le Parisien*, Riner said he intended to continue his sports career.

If elected president, he said he planned to compete in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, "if the position allows me to, and if the French people allow me to".

Riner said he intended to launch his campaign quickly, with financing coming from donations as well as his own funds.

Riner won the heavyweight division at the 2012, 2016 and 2024 Olympics and mixed team gold at the 2020 and 2024 Games. He has also won 11 world titles.

ISSF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DOHA 2026

Stojadinovic wins gold as Serbia, Korea and Japan book LA28 spots

Agencies
Doha

Aleksandra Stojadinovic claimed the 50m Rifle 3 Positions Women world title at the ISSF World Championship Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun Doha 2026 winning a thrilling final with 358.4 points at the Lusail Shooting Range yesterday.

The Serbian athlete held off South Korea's Oh Sehee, who finished just 0.7 points behind on 357.7, while Japan's Nobata Misaki took bronze with 348.2.

All three medallists also secured Olympic quota places for their respective National Olympic Committees for LA28.

Stojadinovic built her challenge through the three positions, reaching 206.6 after kneeling and prone before moving into the standing eliminations. She maintained her composure as the final progressed, eventually finishing on 358.4 to take gold for Serbia.

Oh was close throughout and kept the pressure on the eventual champion until the final shots. Her total of 357.7 earned her the silver medal and an Olympic quota place for the Republic of Korea.

Nobata completed the podium with 348.2, securing bronze for Japan and the third LA28 quota place awarded in the event.

Norway's Jeanette Hegg Duestad finished fourth with 336.4, ahead of Switzerland's Chiara Leone, who placed fifth with 325.4. Korea's Im Hana was sixth (314.4), Kazakhstan's Alexandra Le (303.7) finished seventh, and Great Britain's Seonaid McIntosh took eighth place with 302.6.

The women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions final added three more Olympic quota places to the tally in Doha, with Serbia, South Korea and Japan each securing a place for LA28.



Serbia's Aleksandra Stojadinovic (centre) celebrates winning the 50m Rifle 3 Positions gold with second-placed South Korea's Oh Sehee and third-placed Japan's Nobata Misaki at the Lusail Shooting Range yesterday.

FOOTBALL

Lopez double earns leaders Barcelona win over Atletico

'I have nothing to complain about, we played the match we wanted to play'

AFP
Madrid

Fermin Lopez struck twice to help Barcelona come from behind to beat Atletico Madrid 2-1 on Sunday and move three points clear at the top of La Liga.

The Spanish champions lead second place Real Madrid, who beat Valencia 3-0 on Saturday, by three points with Atletico third and a further two points off the pace.

Giuliano Simeone fired Atletico ahead in a high-octane start, before Lopez pulled Barca level shortly before the interval at the Metropolitano stadium.

The 23-year-old Spain international netted the winner after 66 minutes when Lamine Yamal slipped him in, helping Barca triumph despite not being at their best.

Last season Atletico defeated Barcelona in the Champions League quarter-finals and also in the Copa del Rey, but the Catalans earned some measure of revenge here.

"Coming off last season, when they beat us... we knew what they were going to offer - a very difficult game," Lopez told Movistar.

"It got tricky for us in the first half with their goal, but I think we knew how to come back and we had a great match."

After criticism following defeats by Paris Saint-Germain and Real Madrid in recent weeks, Flick's side proved they can handle themselves in big matches.

"We have the quality to win these matches... I totally believe in the team," Flick told reporters.

"In the second half especially we did a great job today, it's not easy to win here."

Atletico coach Diego Simeone said his team performed well despite the result.

"I have nothing to complain about, we played the match we wanted to play," he told reporters.

"I'm leaving here knowing that we are a work in progress, that we still have things to improve, and that obviously we have players who still need to keep growing."



Barcelona's Fermin Lopez scores their second goal past Atletico Madrid's Jan Oblak during their La Liga match in Madrid. *(Reuters)*

The match started at a fast pace and both teams hit the woodwork in the opening stages.

Alvarez, who tried and failed to force a move from Atletico to Barca in the summer, rounded goalkeeper Joan Garcia but could not finish off the chance as the defence blocked his route to goal.

From the resulting corner Atletico defender Marc Pubill headed against the crossbar with Garcia beaten.

At the other end Pedri crashed a strike against the woodwork after being fed by Barca's teenage star Lamine Yamal.

Atletico took the lead in the 10th minute, slicing Barca's defence open. Alvarez crossed for Giuliano Simeone to turn home from close range.

Alvarez was denied by Garcia as Atletico looked for a second and Barca struggled to click into their top gears.

Despite their struggles they went in level at the break, with a goal out of nowhere.

Lopez's path to the box was blocked but the ball bounced loose to the midfielder and he quickly smashed a strike past Jan Oblak.

Early in the second half Alvarez lobbed a good chance over the crossbar when running in on goal.

"He's a great player, we love him... we need the best version of Julian Alvarez, without him we won't get to where we want to be," said Diego Simeone.

The forward came to rue the miss when Barcelona took the lead. Yamal played a clever pass through Atletico's defence and Lopez kept his cool to beat Oblak.

It was his seventh league goal in 11 top flight appearances this season.

Barcelona kept Atletico at bay well in the final stages to take three points home from the capital before the international break.

Atletico captain Koke said his team would not let the defeat, their first in La Liga since September 5, upset them too much.

"I think the team had a really great first half. We had chances to kill off the game and we didn't take them," said Koke.

Earlier on fourth-place Real Betis earned a 2-0 win at Elche, while Real Sociedad, fifth, defeated Rayo Vallecano 1-0.

Villarreal beat Getafe 2-0 to move eighth and Celta Vigo and Levante shared a goalless draw.

INFANTINO RE-ELECTION A 'FOREGONE CONCLUSION', SAYS AFC OFFICIAL

Gianni Infantino's re-election as FIFA chief is "a foregone conclusion", Asian Football Confederation vice-president Hashem Haidar said yesterday.
"We fully and publicly support Infantino," Haidar, who is also president of the Lebanese Football Federation, said at an event in Lebanon which Infantino also attended.
Infantino had faced stinging criticism and calls to quit after his plan to sell off commercial interests in the World Cup came to light in July.
With European confederation UEFA and CONCACAF in North America, and initially the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) leading the opposition, it seemed Infantino would have a fight on his hands.
But the Swiss now appears to be in a strong position to secure re-election for a fourth and final term as FIFA president in March after the AFC performed a U-turn and endorsed the 56-year-old last month.
Kozo Tashima, the honorary president of the Japan Football Association, announced last week he would stand against Infantino, but Haidar said he would not have the necessary support globally.
"Kozo Tashima might get a few votes, but it will be difficult for him to compete, as the FIFA presidency requires maintaining relationships in all regions of the world," Haidar said.



SPOTLIGHT

Liverpool's Becker wants new contract

AFP
London

Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker has urged the club to extend his successful stay at Anfield by handing him a contract beyond this season.

Becker has played a key role in Liverpool's Premier League and Champions League triumphs since signing from Roma in 2018.

The 34-year-old Brazilian has made 347 appearances for the Reds, winning seven major trophies.

Becker is out of contract at end of the current campaign and has been linked with a move, but is keen to prolong his time on Merseyside with a new deal.

"Yes (I want to stay), in my mind. I'm focused on playing every game but in my mind I'm happy to stay," Alisson said after Sunday's 3-1 win at Crystal Palace in the Premier League.

"That depends on a lot of aspects and different situations. But my will is to stay. I'm happy here and my family is happy here.

"I'm still hungry for titles and to (keep) delivering good performances. I still want to play at the top level for as long as I can, so that's my thinking."

Liverpool boss Andoni Iraola recently said he hoped the 'keeper could "continue for more time" with his team.

Becker revealed "my agent is talking with the club" after a close-season that featured talk of a potential switch to Juventus.

He underlined his enduring value with a fine performance to help Liverpool beat Palace.

But Giorgi Mamardashvili is waiting in the wings as Becker's solid deputy, with teenage 'keeper Lucca Brughmans set to join Liverpool from Genk next year.

"Our reality is that we're not doing as well as we can. The consistency is not there yet," Becker said of Liverpool's inconsistent start to the season.

"We have a top manager, top players. We are capable of great things but as a team we need to get to a point where we feel: 'We are OK now. We have the confidence. We have everything that's needed to win.'"

FOCUS

Vicens appointed as Lyon coach

AFP
Lyon

Spaniard Carlos Vicens has been appointed coach of French club Lyon on an 18-month deal, the Ligue 1 outfit announced yesterday.

The 43-year-old, a former assistant to Pep Guardiola at Manchester City, replaces Portuguese Paulo Fonseca who left for Sporting Lisbon.

Fonseca's assistant Jorge Maciel had stepped in on an interim basis guiding the club to a 3-2 win over Crystal Palace in the Europa League but losing Sunday's Ligue 1 trip to Brest 2-0. Vicens played in the lower tiers of Spanish football as a semi-professional until the age of 27.

It was also at this level he began his coaching career in Spain in 2010, before moving to England in 2017 to join Manchester City.

There he rose through the ranks of the academy progressing from the U12s to the U18s with whom he won the FA Youth Cup. In 2021, he joined Guardiola's first-team coaching staff, where he spent four years overseeing set-pieces.

In 2025, he was appointed head coach of Braga, marking his first experience as a manager at the highest level.

During his first season, he led Braga to a fourth-place finish in the Portuguese league and reached the semi-finals of the Europa League.

Braga also reached the final of the Portuguese League Cup. Vicens was dismissed on October 20 following three defeats that left his team eighth in the league.

He arrives in Lyon with four assistants and is under contract until June 30, 2028. He will oversee his first training session today. His first match with Lyon will be against Lille on November 21, following the international break.

Lyon are currently fifth in Ligue 1, five points behind leaders Paris Saint-Germain having won five of their 10 matches so far this campaign.

Struggling Sassuolo sack coach Aquilani

Sassuolo sacked Alberto Aquilani yesterday, becoming the sixth Serie A club already this season to dismiss their head coach following a difficult start to the campaign. Aquilani only lasted 13 matches in charge having been appointed in the close-season, after a run of five straight defeats left Sassuolo 17th in the Italian top-flight table and just one point above the relegation zone.
"Sassuolo Calcio announce that Alberto Aquilani has been relieved of his duties as (the) first team's coach, along with his staff," the club said in a brief statement, two days after a 3-0 loss at Roma.
Former Liverpool, Roma and Italy midfielder Aquilani was given the job after leading Catanzaro to the Serie B playoffs last season. He follows in the footsteps of a slew of Serie A coaches to lose their jobs this term, kicked off by Fabio Grosso's sacking by Fiorentina just three games into the campaign.
Meanwhile, Former Real Madrid striker Raul Gonzalez was appointed as coach of Spanish second-division side Real Oviedo yesterday.