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CRICKET

Records tumble as teen Sooryavanshi smashes 53-ball 204 in big India A win

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FOOTBALL

Mexico lead five teams into U-17 World Cup knockouts

Dominican Republic, Algeria and Ireland keep their qualification hopes alive with important victories

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Mexico hit four past Cameroon to seal their place in the round of 32 at the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026, joining Brazil, Colombia, Serbia and Venezuela in the knockout stages after another action-packed day at the Aspire Zone yesterday.

While five teams booked their places in the next round, Algeria, Dominican Republic and Republic of Ireland kept their qualification hopes alive with important victories.

Mexico produced a dominant second-half display to cruise past Cameroon 4-0 in Group K. Miguel Rivera broke the deadlock in the 51st minute with a superb volley from a corner before Adan Sanchez doubled the advantage from the penalty spot six minutes later.

Gerson Gutierrez then put the result beyond doubt with two close-range finishes in the 75th and 81st minutes, both following good work from Sanchez.

The victory took Mexico to six points from two matches, with a goal difference of plus five. Coach Jurgen Castaneda, however, felt his side had more to offer. "The goal difference is important, but what matters most is that the team does what's expected of it. I think we saw that in the second half, but not in the first," he said.

Venezuela also secured their place in the last 32 after edging Romania 1-0. Roman Lozada scored the decisive goal in the 64th minute, showing great determination to head home Andy Saavedra's fine cross from the right.

Romania's hopes suffered another blow when Rares Silitra was sent off in the 78th minute following an off-the-ball incident that was reviewed. Venezuela, who have six points from two matches, are level with Mexico at the top of Group K.

"It's an amazing feeling. We were losing, but we managed to come back and win. We made our fans happy, and we hope to make them happy again in the next match," said goalscorer Lozada.



Mexico became the latest side to punch their ticket to the next phase after a dominant second-half display against Cameroon.

In Group L, debutants Serbia booked their place in the knockout stages with a 1-0 victory over Japan. Dragan Anokic converted an 11th-minute penalty after Tadija Cojic was brought down inside the box. Japan pushed for an equaliser, with Tafuku Satomi sending a free-kick narrowly wide, but Serbia held firm to register their second successive victory and qualify with a match to spare.

Serbia coach Igor Matic hailed the achievement, saying: "It's a historic moment for Serbian football to qualify for the knockouts. Congratulations to the players and to my staff. We are very well organised and, when we are organised, we can play against any team. I also want to congratulate Japan, because the game was played in a very fair way."

Colombia joined Serbia in the last 32 after overcoming Honduras 2-0. Honduras were reduced to 10 men early in the second half when Diego Matute was sent off, but Colombia had to wait until the closing stages to break their opponents' resistance.

Matias Caicedo opened the scoring in the 76th minute with a close-range finish before Jose Escorcia capitalised on an error by goalkeeper David Paz to seal the win eight minutes later.

Colombia coach Fredy Hurtado said his team needed greater precision despite the victory. "We still need to be a little more precise. I think that's where we need to improve. When we're precise and create the spaces we need to find, the team looks good and we manage to get some shots away," he said.

"We kept pushing because we know matches last 90 minutes. We knew they were going to sit a little deeper, and when they went down to 10 men, they did exactly that, and we managed to find some spaces."

Four-time champions Brazil also advanced after edging Tanzania 1-0 in Group I. Richard Wendel scored the only goal in the 15th minute, reacting quickest after Eduardo Conceicao's effort was blocked.

Tanzania goalkeeper Haji Abdalah produced several impressive saves to keep his side in contention, but Brazil held on to claim their second victory.

Brazil player Daniel Silva insisted the team would maintain its intensity despite securing qualification. "We know we are already qualified, but we won't take the foot off the gas. We want to win all the matches, we don't want to leave any point behind," he said. Republic of Ireland revived their Group I campaign with a 2-0 victory over Costa Rica.

Maxim Afonin opened the scoring in the 51st minute after Cillian Murphy delivered a neat ball into the danger area. Murphy then got on the scoresheet himself in the 64th minute, finishing after Ryan Sheridan's persistence created the opportunity.

Ireland coach John Cotter was pleased with his team's response. "I think we deserved this win. We played well from the start, could have scored a few goals in the first half. But the players were showing patience, doing the right things and having confidence that the goals would come in the second half, which they did," he said.

In Group J, Dominican Republic strengthened their qualification hopes with a 2-1 win over Chile. Goalkeeper Aidan Betances played a key role, saving Amaro Riveros' penalty before Daniel Fernandez gave the Caribbean side the lead in the 34th minute. Gabriel Florentino doubled their advantage just before half-time.

Chile pulled one back in the 73rd minute through Amaro Perez, who scored from the rebound after Bayron Barrera's penalty was saved. The South Americans thought they had equalised eight minutes from time, but the goal was ruled out for offside.

Algeria also kept their hopes alive with a thrilling 2-1 comeback victory over Montenegro. Montenegro took the lead in the 41st minute when Petar Ivanovic's corner was deflected into his own net by Algeria goalkeeper Yazid Tifrani.

Algeria missed an opportunity to equalise when Yacine Abed struck the crossbar from the penalty spot. However, the forward made no mistake with a second penalty in the 67th minute before firing home a superb winner nine minutes later.

"It's an amazing feeling. We were losing, but we managed to come back and win. We made our fans happy, and we hope to make them happy again in the next match," Abed said.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Galatasaray's Gul stuns Villa

AFP
Istanbul

Galatasaray inflicted Aston Villa's second successive Champions League defeat as blood-soaked Deniz Gul sealed a 1-0 victory in Istanbul yesterday.

Gul was left with blood pouring from his face after being kicked in the head by Villa's Nicolas Jackson while the Galatasaray forward was in the process of nodding in the second-half winner at RAMS Park.

Villa were unable to respond to Gul's late goal, leaving them without a victory in their last six games in all competitions. Villa won their first three league phase matches but defeats at Barcelona and now Galatasaray have derailed their bid to qualify for the last-16 via a top-eight finish.

Unai Emery's side are still firmly in contention for a play-off round berth but the Spaniard will be concerned by Villa's recent dip. Villa were back in Istanbul for the first time since beating Freiburg in the Europa League final in May to end their 30-year trophy drought.

But those fond memories were no comfort on a dispiriting evening in Turkey. Concerns about the state of their pitch forced Galatasaray to move Saturday's home fixture against Samsunspor, while Villa were not allowed to train on the surface on Monday.

Emery had admitted the patchy pitch, scarred with sand patches, was "not perfect" but warned his players not to use it as an excuse.



Aston Villa's Taylor Harwood-Bellis (centre) vies for the ball with Galatasaray's Deniz Gul (left) and Baris Yilmaz in Istanbul. *(Reuters)*

In the end, they had only themselves to blame for a lethargic display. Galatasaray beat Liverpool twice in Istanbul in the Champions League last season.

Their latest success against Premier League opposition made it three wins from five Champions League games this term. Playing to a soundtrack of ear-splitting whistles from Galatasaray fans when they touched the ball, Villa found themselves dragged into a war of attrition.

Jackson has three Champions League goals already this season and the Villa striker tried to add to that tally in the opening minutes with a long-range drive that flashed wide.

That was a rare sight of goal for Villa in a frenetic first half that was high on perspiration but low on inspiration. Galatasaray were without injured forwards Victor Osimhen and Rafael Leao, leaving them desperately short of cutting edge.

Neither team mustered a shot on target in the first half and the second period was equally disjointed. Emery sent on Leon Goretzka and Ibrahim Mbaye for Joao Gomes and Alysson in a bid to spark Villa.

The move failed to pay off and Galatasaray finally broke the deadlock in the 77th minute with the first effort on target in the entire game. Emery's men failed to clear a corner and Gul survived a kick in the head from Jackson to bravely nod home from close range via a deflection off Villa defender Tyrone Mings. Gul needed a bandage applied to his wounded face but it was Villa whose European ambitions were left battered and bruised.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ELITE

Felix overhead kick sinks Sadd

By Sports Reporter
Riyadh

Al Nassr stayed firmly on track in the AFC Champions League Elite with a 2-1 win against 10-man Al Sadd SC yesterday.

Joao Felix scored the winner after Cristiano Ronaldo's penalty had been cancelled out by Mohammed Waad, who was subsequently sent off - handing Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr a numerical advantage which they used to move up to nine points, with Qatar's Al Sadd remaining on two.

Al Nassr started brightly, with Ronaldo threatening with a pair of free-kicks in the seventh minute and their sustained pressure earned them the opener five minutes later. Mohamed Camara brought down Ronaldo inside the box, with the Al Nassr captain sending his penalty high into the top-left corner to the delight of the home fans.

Al Sadd responded immediately, Waad testing Al Nassr goalkeeper Bento from distance in the 14th minute while at the other end, Sadio Mane went close a minute later when he saw his effort deflected over the bar by Meshaal Barsham.

The Qatari outfit began to push further in front with Waad drawing a fine save from Bento in the 21st minute, with Al Sadd equalising from the ensuing corner when Akram Afif found an unmarked Waad, who tucked his finish into the bottom right corner. Al Nassr thought they had restored their lead in the 35th minute when Mohamed Simakan's deep ball released Angelo down the right. He laid the ball across for Ronaldo to finish, but a VAR review ruled the goal out for offside.



Al Nassr's Joao Felix scores a scintillating overhead kick against Al Sadd during the AFC Champions League Elite in Riyadh.

Al Sadd, however, ended the first half with a numerical disadvantage after goalscorer Waad was flashed the red card for an incident involving Al Nassr's Nawaf Bu Washl.

Al Nassr immediately tried to use their numerical advantage after the break, with Felix setting up Ronaldo with an audacious flick inside the six-yard-box, only for Barsham to punch the danger clear.

Felix then made his mark in the 52nd minute, controlling Angelo's headed pass before striking with a scintillating overhead kick to restore Al Nassr's lead.

Al Sadd remained pinned back, with Angelo dragging his low drive just off the right post in the 72nd minute, with two Al Nassr strikes then ruled out for offside but it didn't matter as they made it a third consecutive win after having opened their campaign with a defeat.

CRICKET

SENSATIONAL SOORYAVANSHI



By Yash Mudgal
Doha

It wasn't AI. It was real! You had to see it to believe it on Tuesday afternoon at the University of Doha for Science and Technology ground. It was absolute carnage, unleashed by a 15-year-old!

Wonderkid Vaibhav Sooryavanshi enthralled the sizeable crowd at the stadium with an extraordinary display of power-hitting, smashing 204 runs off just 53 balls, including a staggering 28 sixes and seven fours, against the UAE in the Asia Cup Rising Stars group-stage match.

The sheer scale of his assault becomes even more astonishing when viewed against his teammates' contributions. While Rinku Singh was the next-highest scorer with 27 runs and Abhishek Sharma managed 12, Sooryavanshi alone hammered an incredible double century. It was a one-man demolition job that left the sizable crowd at the stadium spellbound!

Chasing a target of 249 in 50 overs, he produced an innings that seemed almost impossible. India A romped home by seven wickets in just 14.2 overs!

In the process, the 15-year-old rewrote many records and powered India into the semi-finals.

It was a record-breaking double century in List A cricket. Sooryavanshi reached his hundred off just 28 balls, breaking Jake Fraser-McGurk's record by one delivery. He then raced from 100 to 200 in just 24 balls, bringing up his double century in 52 deliveries and shattering the previous List A record of 103 balls, held by Chad Bowes.

Talking about his approach in a post-match interview, he revealed that his initial intention was not to launch an immediate assault.

"There wasn't much going through my mind. Having got out early in the first two matches, the plan was to go out and take some time initially. I thought that if the wicket offered some assistance to the bowlers, I would take the innings deep. Thankfully, that wasn't the case. The wicket was playing well, and the ball was coming nicely onto the bat, so I backed my game," Sooryavanshi said.

Even more impressively, this was only Sooryavanshi's second List A century in 16 innings. He now holds four remarkable records in the format: the fastest fifty (11 balls), achieved against Sri Lanka A earlier this year; the fastest hundred (28 balls); the fastest 150 (40 balls), bettering his own previous record of 59 balls for Bihar against Arunachal Pradesh; and the fastest double century (52 balls).

Sooryavanshi, who has already played for India in 10 T20I since making his debut in July 2026, also admitted that a certain degree of pressure and nervousness is always present before walking out to bat. However, he believes those initial nerves disappear after facing a few deliveries.

"Definitely, sir, always. A little bit is always there; it's a normal thing, human nature, so there are always a few nerves. After playing two to four balls, things become normal," he explained.

Sooryavanshi was also instrumental in India's triumphant campaign at the 2026 ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup, where he stole the show with a match-winning 175 in the final against England.

The latest exploits add another remarkable chapter to the burgeoning career of the teenage batting sensation. Having risen rapidly through the ranks, he has already made his mark in the Indian Premier League and earned a place in India's T20I setup earlier this year.

His captain Tilak Varma summed up the extraordinary knock perfectly: "No words to say for him. I would only say it's like absolute carnage. The way he played, I think first the five overs the match was done, five overs we were 100 and the way he carried on after that, it was tremendous to watch."



204
7 Fours
28 Sixes
Strike Rate 384.90

Former India opener **Virender Sehwag** wrote on social media: "204 off 53 balls. 28 sixes! Even in EA SPORTS Cricket, this would have been unbelievable. What a phenomena, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi."

Former India all-rounder **Yuvraj Singh** called Sooryavanshi a "special talent" while lauding his fearless batting. "Special talent and a sensational knock! A double hundred off just 52 balls is some fearless batting! Keep working hard and enjoy the journey! The best is yet to come," he said in an *Instagram* story.

Irfan Pathan also lauded the batter, saying, "This kid is special," in an *X* post, while Mohammed Kaif said, "a superstar in the making!".

Former India opener **Shikhar Dhawan** said Sooryavanshi's achievement at the age of 15 was remarkable. "The fastest double century in List A cricket, off just 52 balls! Vaibhav, to play an innings like this at the age of 15 is a massive achievement. What an incredible talent! Many congratulations, champion," he said in an *X* post.

ASIA CUP RISING STARS

Sooryavanshi hits record double ton; Pakistan unbeaten

India to meet Sri Lanka in semi-finals; Pakistan face Bangladesh

AFP
Doha

Teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi hammered 204 off 53 balls for India A yesterday to break a host of records, including for both the fastest century and double-century in List A cricket.

The 15-year-old Sooryavanshi struck a staggering 28 sixes, the most ever in a senior men's innings, as India passed their target of 250 against the United Arab Emirates in just 14.2 overs.

Sooryavanshi reached his hundred off 28 balls to take Australian Jake Fraser-McGurk's record by one delivery.

He raised his 200 off 52 deliveries, smashing the 103-ball mark previously held by Chad Bowes.

Sooryavanshi also broke his own record for fastest 150, reaching that milestone from 40 balls.

"No words to say for him. I would only say it's like absolute carnage," India A captain Tilak Varma said after the Asia Cup Rising Stars match.

"The way he played, I think first five overs the match was done, five overs we are 100 and the way he carried on after that, it was tremendous to watch. Honestly, everyone knows how he can hit the sixes."

Sooryavanshi said: "In the previous two games, I got out after getting set. After going out to bat today, I felt that bowlers weren't getting the help. So, I backed myself. My game plan is to take it long. Today it came off. It was fun captaining Bihar team and they are playing well. I have played with seniors in this team and it has been fun being with them. There might not be a lot of celebration because we hope we win the semi-final and go on to play the final in similar vein."

In July, Sooryavanshi became India's youngest men's international when he made his T20I debut against England in Manchester, eclipsing Sachin Tendulkar's long-standing record.

He amassed 776 runs for Rajasthan Royals to finish as the tournament's leading run-scorer in this year's IPL, at a remarkable strike-rate of 237.30.


India A opener Vaibhav Sooryavanshi cuts one to the boundary during the Asia Cup Rising Stars match against the UAE in Doha yesterday.


Pakistan's Rohail Nazir won Man of the Match for his unbeaten 64 against Nepal in Doha yesterday. Pakistan won by 96 runs.

Nazir's half-century guides Pakistan Shaheens

An unbeaten half-century from Rohail Nazir, followed by a clinical bowling performance helped Pakistan Shaheens register a 96-run win over Nepal in their final Group 'B' fixture of the Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars at the University of Doha for Science and Technology yesterday.

Defending champions Pakistan Shaheens remain unbeaten in the tournament, having won all three of their group-stage matches and will now take on Bangladesh 'A' in the second semi-final on 27 November.

Opting to bat first, Shaheens were reduced to 66 for six in 16.5 overs before wicketkeeper-batter Rohail rescued the innings with a fighting unbeaten 64 off 83 balls, which included four fours and three sixes.

Following the departure of Hasan Nawaz (28, 59b, 1x6) with the scorecard reading 88 for seven, Rohail knitted a valuable 70-run partnership for the eighth wicket with Ahmed Daniyal (16, 35b, 2x4) to help Shaheens post 168 before being bowled out in 42 overs. For Nepal, Rashid Khan bagged five wickets for 39 runs, while Abhishesh Gautam took two wickets.

In turn, Muhammad Imran and Mohammad Hasnain ran through Nepal's top order, reducing them to 15 for four inside six overs. Right-arm Hasnain struck twice on successive balls to dismiss Ishan Pandey and Lokesh Bam without scoring.

Left-arm spinner Sufyan Moqim then accounted for three batters as Nepal slumped to 59 for nine. Mayan Yadav, who top-scored with a 50-ball 41, was the last batter to depart as Maaz Sadaqat trapped him leg-before to dismiss Nepal for 72 in 17.3 overs.

Hasnain (3-21) and Sufyan (3-17) shared six wickets between them, while Imran returned figures of 2-29. Rohail was named Man of the Match for his match-winning knock.

BRIEF SCORES
India A 254 for 3 (Sooryavanshi 204, Rinku 27*) **beat UAE 249 for 8** (Harpreet 130, Arshad 4-43, Shahbaz 1-23) **by seven wickets**

BRIEF SCORES
Pakistan Shaheens 168 all out, 42 overs (Nazir 64 not out, Nawaz 28; Khan 5-39, Gautam 2-27) **beat Nepal 72 all out, 17.3 overs** (Yadav 41; Moqim 3-17, Hasnain 3-21, Imran 2-29) **by 96 runs.**

MATCH REPORT

South Africa build 403-run lead over Bangladesh


South Africa's Wiaan Mulder celebrates after reaching his century on day two of the second Test against Bangladesh at the SuperSport Park Stadium in Centurion yesterday. *(AFP)*

Reuters
Pretoria

South Africa's batsmen, led by opener Marques Ackerman, feasted on the runs as the hosts took a mammoth 403-run lead over Bangladesh on the second day of the second Test at Centurion yesterday.

Ackerman scored 150 and Wiaan Mulder 100 as South Africa reached 494-7 at stumps.

There were also contributions from Tony de Zorzi, who scored 66, and Marco Jansen, unbeaten on 67.

The home side started the day on 88-1, three runs behind Bangladesh's paltry 91 first-innings total, and at a brisk rate of 4.3 runs per over quickly established a commanding position.

Ackerman continued his remarkable emergence as a new opener for the team, scoring 150 off 138 balls with 27 boundaries after being 46 not out overnight.

It was a second successive test hundred for Ackerman, who scored 157 in the home team's nine-wicket first Test win over Bangladesh.

The 30-year-old made his debut in last month's series against Australia, despite never having opened the batting before, and now has 470 runs at an average of 78.3 in four tests.

He fell LBW to Shoriful Islam's full toss but took full advantage of the good fortune that befell him on day one when, with a single to his name, he was rapped on the pads by Taskin Ahmed.

To the bowler's dismay his captain did not ask for a review when the umpire waved away the appeal with television pictures showing that Ackerman would have been out.

Mulder, who came in at number seven, scored his fifth Test century but was dismissed with the second last ball of the day, caught behind as part-time spinner Towhid Hridoy grabbed a first test wicket.

Mulder put on 106 runs with Jansen for the seventh wicket, the best partnership of the innings.

De Zorzi's first Test appearance in a year, replacing injured captain Temba Bavuma, saw him survive two reviews to score 66 before falling to the second new ball.

Bangladesh's bowlers toiled through the day, bowling 98 overs and conceding 406 runs, but did snag Zubayr Hamza for 27 and Matthew Breetzke and Ryan Rickelton, who made 20 each.

BRIEF SCORES
South Africa 494 for 7 (Ackerman 150, Mulder 100, Jansen 67, Khaled 2-88)) **lead Bangladesh 91** by **403 runs**

CRICKET

Donald, Salt power England to crushing win over Australia

'THAT WAS UNBELIEVABLE. IT WAS EXPLOSIVE TO SAY THE LEAST'

Reuters
Gold Coast, Australia

England openers Aneurin Donald and Phil Salt shared a blistering 151-run partnership as the visitors raced to a dominant eight-wicket victory over Australia on Tuesday to level the Twenty20 international series at 1-1.

Chasing 185, England took control from the outset as Donald and Salt dismantled the target at a rapid rate.

Donald smashed 85 off 32 balls, including nine sixes and four fours, before falling to Riley Meredith with England on 151-1. Salt made 58 from 30 deliveries, striking four sixes and five fours before Ben Dwarshuis produced a remarkable one-handed caught-and-bowled dismissal to remove him. Captain Harry Brook (10 not out) and Tom Banton (26 not out) completed the chase with ease, Banton sealing victory with a six as England reached 188-2 in 13.1 overs, with 41 balls to spare.

"That was unbelievable (Donald-Salt partnership)," Brook said. "It was explosive to say the least.

"Those two put on an absolute clinic. They should be very proud of their performance."

Earlier, Australia captain Mitchell Marsh elected to bat after his side's three-wicket victory in Saturday's series opener, but England struck back quickly after the opener launched successive sixes at the start of the innings.

Marsh chipped a catch back to bowler Henry Crocombe (2-40), Sam Curran (2-29) removed Jake Fraser-McGurk for 27 and England debutant James Coles ran out Sam Harper with a diving underarm throw.

Spinner Adil Rashid (1-26) helped tighten England's grip as Australia slumped to 84-5 after 11 overs. Nikhil Chaudhary led the recovery with 45 from 35 balls and shared a 49-run stand with Joel Davies (39) before Dwarshuis provided late impetus by hitting Curran for three consecutive sixes as Australia finished on 184-8.

"182, I thought we were in the game," Marsh said. "Surface got good at the end, but hats off, sometimes good balls were going 40 rows back. "I think we were four down at the end of the powerplay, we probably didn't give ourselves a chance. But we came off the ground thinking we were 10-15 over par, shows how much I know."


England's Aneurin Donald smashes a six during the second T20 match against Australia at Gold Coast Stadium in Carrara yesterday. *(AFP)*

BRIEF SCORES
England 188 for 2 (Donald 85, Salt 58) **beat Australia 184 for 8** (Chaudhary 45, Davies 39, Curran 2-29) **by eight wickets.**

CRICKET'S SALIVA BAN TO STAY DESPITE GILL CALL TO OVERTURN RULE

The International Cricket Council has no plans to reverse the ban on applying saliva to shine the ball, despite India skipper Shubman Gill's call to allow the practice again. Gill on Monday said the ban should be revoked to help bowlers get reverse swing, after India's high-scoring opening Test in Wellington against New Zealand ended in a draw.
However, AFP understands that the ICC has no immediate plans to relax the rule, which is treated in the same way as any other unfair method of changing the ball's condition. Saliva can materially alter the ball when mixed with sweets, chewing gum and mints and the practice is incredibly hard to monitor and regulate.
The ICC temporarily barred the practice of applying saliva as a precautionary measure during the pandemic in 2020 and two years later made it permanent.
The use of saliva to shine one side of the old ball and keep the other rough helps fast bowlers get the leather ball to swing late.
"I don't understand why we haven't been allowed to shine the ball yet - we are way past Covid times," Gill said after the draw.
"There was a rule that you can't put saliva on the ball to make it shine. It's been seven-eight years and I still don't understand why they are not allowing it.
"I think this is also a big factor (in bowlers struggling to get wickets)."
The tourists had declared their first innings on a mammoth 720-9 midway through the fourth day, but New Zealand survived 120 overs to finish on 239-5 at the close.
The Indian Premier League lifted its saliva ban last year, much to the bowlers' delight, but the ICC finds no reason to relax it in international matches.
India and New Zealand now head to Christchurch for the second and deciding Test starting Friday, where both captains expect a more typical green, grassy and seamer-friendly wicket.

BASKETBALL

Mamlouk appointed Qatar coach ahead of South Korea, Japan ties

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The Qatar Basketball Federation (QBF) has appointed Tunisian Hatem Mamlouk as head coach of the senior national basketball team, with the experienced tactician set to take charge for two crucial home fixtures against the South Korea and Japan in the Asian Qualifiers for the FIBA Basketball World Cup Qatar 2027.

Mamlouk succeeds compatriot Hakan Demir and will lead Al Annabi during the fifth window of the second round of the Asian Qualifiers.

Qatar will face South Korea on November 26 before taking on Japan on November 29, with both matches scheduled to take place at Al Janoub Hall in Doha as part of Group F.

The new head coach will be supported by an assistant coaching staff comprising Mohammad Yazan, Abdoul Sow and Mohammad Foural.

The technical team will focus on strengthening team cohesion, improving overall performance and preparing the players for the challenges posed by two strong Asian opponents.

In announcing the appointment, the QBF expressed its appreciation to outgoing coach Hakan Demir, praising his efforts and technical contributions during his tenure with the national team.

The federation also wished him success in his future coaching career.

Mamlouk arrives in the national team position with considerable knowledge of Qatari basketball, having enjoyed a successful spell in charge of Al Arabi club.

His achievements with the club include guiding Al Arabi to the Arab Club Basketball Championship title in 2024.

He also enjoyed a remarkable 2025-26 domestic campaign, leading the club to a historic treble by winning the Qatar League, Qatar Cup and Amir Cup.

His experience in local competitions and familiarity with several Qatari players are expected to prove valuable as he begins his new assignment with the national team.

Although Qatar have already secured qualification for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 as tournament hosts, the Asian Qualifiers remain an important part of the team's preparations.

Mamlouk arrives in the national team position with considerable knowledge of Qatari basketball, having enjoyed a successful spell in charge of Al Arabi club

The matches provide an opportunity to test the squad against different playing styles, assess individual and collective performances, and build the competitive rhythm required for the global tournament.

Under Mamlouk's leadership, the coaching staff will use the upcoming encounters against South Korea and Japan to evaluate the technical and physical readiness of the selected players, identify areas for improvement and further develop the team's tactical approach.

The appointment comes at a significant time for Qatari basketball as the country prepares to host the FIBA Basketball World Cup for the first time.

The tournament finals will be held in Doha from August 27 to September 12, 2027.

With less than a year remaining before the global showpiece, the upcoming qualification window represents another important step in Qatar's preparations, as Al Annabi look to build a competitive squad capable of delivering a strong performance on the world stage.


Newly-appointed Qatar head coach Hatem Mamlouk (second from left) poses with his suppport staff.

Local Organising Committee for football events receives award for Premier Sports Event of the Year



Doha: The Local Organising Committee for Football Events received a Qatar Tourism Award for Premier Sports Event of the Year for the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 at a ceremony held in Doha, Qatar. Held from December 1-18, the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 featured 16 national teams across six FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 stadiums. The tournament drew 1,220,063 spectators across 32 matches, while the Final welcomed 84,517 spectators at Lusail Stadium, marking the tournament's highest single-match attendance.

The FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 served as a primary catalyst for tourism in Qatar in 2025, contributing towards a surge in revenue across travel, hospitality, and retail sectors. The tournament generated a total of QR2.89 billion of economic value for the local economy, as assessed by Nielsen Sport — a leader in sports analytics.

The tournament was part of the Qatar Football Season 2025, which saw Qatar make history by hosting the finals of three FIFA competitions within three weeks, including the first-ever 48-team FIFA U-17 World Cup and the FIFA Intercontinental Cup.

Qatar is currently hosting FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026. Later this year, it will also host the final three matches of the FIFA Intercontinental Cup on 9, 12 and 16 December 2026.

Other upcoming international events include the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027, the FIFA Arab Cup 2029, the 2029 FIVB Volleyball World Championship, the Asian Games 2030, amongst other mega cultural and entertainment events.

SPECTATORS' GUIDE FOR FORMULA QATAR GRAND PRIX

Doha: Lusail International Circuit (LIC) is set to welcome fans for the Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix taking place November 27 to 29. The event offers a thrilling blend of elite motorsport and top tier entertainment. Spectators can also look forward to support races from the FIA Formula 2 Championship.

LIC'S APPS
The LIC App serves as a digital guide for reaching and exploring the venue. Its immersive 3D map provides real time navigation, with detailed 3D models of key landmarks, and helps fans locate food and beverage outlets, merchandise stores and special events.
The app also includes an FAQ section covering venue timings and the weekend track schedule. Download our LIC app from the App Store or Google Play.
Mobile tickets are available through the Lusail Tickets App, which also provides event information and important notices.
As part of LIC's sustainability initiatives, the digital ticketing system promotes paperless entry. Both apps are available on the App Store and Google Play.

GATE OPENING & CLOSING HOURS
LIC will open its gates to the public at the following local times
Friday, November 27: 12:00 to 21:00; Saturday, November 28: 15:00 to 22:00; Sunday November 29: 13:00 to 21:00

GETTING TO THE CIRCUIT
Private cars: The LIC Mobility Guide directs drivers to the best parking zones for their specific grandstand allowing them to save their parking spot. VIP ticket holders can locate their exclusive entrances and dedicated shuttle services on the map, along with route changes and venue updates.
Spectators with General Admission and Grandstand tickets should use Exit 29 B on Al Khor Coastal Road or Exit 16 on Al Shamal Road, and follow the event signage and traffic marshals to the car park. Paddock & Hospitality guests should use Exit 32 on Al Khor Coastal Road and follow signs or traffic marshals' directions to their designated car park. Paddock & Hospitality car passes should be affixed to the lower right corner of the windscreen so marshals can check them on approach.
Taxi and rideshare: Karwa and Uber both offer a drop off point at the venue, while only Karwa is available for leaving the circuit from the same point.
Doha Metro: Ticket holders for the Qatar Grand Prix can enjoy complimentary travel on the Doha Metro throughout Grand Prix Weekend. Fans should travel via the Red Line to Qatar University Metro Station, where a complimentary shuttle bus service will be available to transport ticket holders directly to Lusail Circuit and vice-versa.
For the race weekend, Doha Metro services have been extended: Friday: 9:00 to 01:30; Saturday: 05:00 to 01:30; Sunday: 05:00 to 02:00
Complimentary shuttle buses, with the majority being electric, will run between Qatar University Metro Station and the circuit gates during the following hours: Friday: 11:45 to 01:00; Saturday: 14:45 to 01:00;
Sunday: 12:45 to 01:30

SECURITY AND ENTRY

All attendees must pass through security checks on arrival. Fans are encouraged to review the Prohibited Items List before arriving to avoid confiscation as well as having their mobile phones charged, and the QR code ticket displayed online through the app at venue gates and grandstand entry points. No re-entry will be allowed once fans leave the security venue perimeter.

CONCERTS
All valid ticket holders can access the post race concerts, held in a dedicated concert arena, Lusail Live Stage, accessible through the Fan Zone. Gates for the concert will open post track activity.
This year's lineup features Egyptian singer and composer Ahmed Saad, on Saturday whose powerful voice and hits have earned him a strong following across the Arab region. His set follows Formula 1 Qualifying.
Global pop and urban star Jason Derulo, on Sunday 29 November whose catalogue includes Billboard Hot 100 songs. His show follows the Grand Prix.

FAN EXPERIENCE
The F1 Fan Zone offers interactive experiences and entertainment for fans of all ages. From testing skills on racing simulators and reaction based challenges, attendees can explore arcade games and capture memorable moments at the 360° Photo Booth.
Younger fans can enjoy face painting, sand bottle art, mosaic making and slime workshops in the Kids' Corner, along with a hands-on STEM experience inspired by Formula 1 engineering.
A dedicated cultural area celebrates Qatar's local heritage, traditional craftsmanship and hospitality, alongside sustainability focused activities including a collaborative recycled art installation. Food and beverage stalls complete the experience. L
ive DJ and band performances add to the atmosphere across the Fan Zone throughout the weekend.
F1 activations include F1 Simracing, the F1 LED Pitstop Challenge, F1 Driver Selfie, the F1 DJ Podium, the FIA F1 Championship Trophy, the F1 Show Car and Blast Lane. Partner activations feature a TAG Heuer Clock and LEGO activation and retail, while F1 Retail stores will be located in the Fan Zone, at Turn 2 and at Turn 16.

Pit Lane Walk: On Thursday from 14:30 to 16:15, fans can experience the Pit Lane Walk, with an up close view of the teams' garages, pitstops and opportunities to interact with drivers and teams. For every three day ticket purchased, fans can secure up to three free tickets, available on a first come, first served basis.

What to Bring
Fans should bring their ticket app. The circuit operates largely cashless, so bank cards should be ready. Power banks are permitted, one per person.

SPOTLIGHT

Qatar Olympic Committee opens registration for 2027 Half Marathon

By Sports Reporter
Doha



Officials of the Organising Committee of the Qatar Olympic Committee Half Marathon 2027 pose after a press conference yesterday.

The Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) unveiled details of the third edition of its annual Half Marathon 2027 during a press conference. The conference highlighted the race's key features, participating categories and designated routes, as well as its objectives of promoting a sporting culture and encouraging greater participation in sport across society.

The race is scheduled to take place on Friday, January 29, at Lusail Boulevard, in cooperation with the Qatar Athletics Federation.

The press conference was attended by Abdulaziz Ghanem, Deputy-Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Qatar Olympic Committee Half Marathon 2027; Mohammed Abdulsalam, Head of the Administrative Committee; Ahmed al-Jaber, Head of the Technical and Sustainability Committee; and Ibrahim al-Qaoud, Head of the Logistics Committee, along with members of the Organising Committee and representatives of local media outlets.

Ghanem underlined the importance of the race in fostering a culture of physical activity and promoting sport as a way of life, in line with the QOC's vision: To become a leading nation in bringing the world together through sustainable sport development.

Ghanem added that the Organising Committee is targeting 12,000 participants in this edition, welcoming runners from Qatar and abroad. He also expressed the committee's ambition to attract an even larger number of participants, both male and female, representing different age groups.

Ghanem also extended his sincere thanks and appreciation to Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company, the race's Host Partner, for hosting the event for the third year in a row and providing continued support and excellent facilities that have played an important role in ensuring its success. He highlighted that this partnership reflects the company's firm commitment to community service and its support for national sports initiatives.

Meanwhile, al-Jaber announced the opening of registration through a dedicated link available on the QOC's social media platforms. He noted that the third edition of the race will offer a comprehensive range of categories tailored to different age groups and fitness levels, ensuring opportunities for broad community participation.

The program will feature a 1km race for boys and girls aged 6-14, and a 5km race for boys and girls aged 15-17. The Open Category will include separate men's and women's competitions for two age groups: 19-39 and 40 years and above, with participants competing over distances of 5km, 10km and 21km.

The Team Qatar Category will follow the same format, with separate men's and women's competitions for participants aged 19–39 and 40 years and above, also offering 5 km, 10 km and 21 km distances.

A number of national institutions and supporting companies are joining forces to ensure the success of this community sporting event, led by Qatar Diar Real Estate Investment Company in its capacity as the Host Partner. The Organsing Committee has also allocated a total of QR500,000 in cash and in-kind prizes across all participating categories.

FOOTBALL

CAS reinstates Senegal as 2025 African champions

Morocco promises to "pursue all necessary legal avenues" to contest CAS ruling

AFP
Lausanne


In March, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) overturned the result of the final, awarding Morocco a 3-0 victory, and the title, after many Senegalese players walked off the pitch in protest at a penalty given to the hosts with the game still goalless. *(Reuters)*

Senegal yesterday regained their Africa Cup of Nations title after winning an appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the decision by the Confederation of African Football to declare Morocco the winners following a chaotic final in January.

CAS said in a statement it had "upheld the appeal by the Senegalese Football Federation (FSF) against the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the Royal Moroccan Football Federation (FRMF)" by a "unanimous decision".

As a result, Senegal's original 1-0 victory after extra time is reinstated and they are confirmed as African champions for the second time following their triumph in 2022. In March, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) sensationally overturned the result of the final, awarding Morocco a 3-0 victory, and the title, after many Senegalese players walked off the pitch in protest at a penalty given to the hosts with the game still goalless.

The CAF Appeals Committee had justified its decision to overturn the result and declare Morocco champions based on Articles 82 and 84 of the AFCON Regulations.

Those state that if a team "refuses to play or leaves the ground before the regular end of the match without the authorisation of the referee, it shall be considered (loser) and shall be eliminated for good from the current competition".

However, the Senegal players eventually returned to the pitch and the final carried on. The three-person CAS panel therefore considered the referee's decision to restart the final showed "the conditions for resuming the match had been met", and that articles 82 and 84 were therefore "not applicable in this case".

"This is a huge decision because it is the first time that we have had to rule on the fate of a continental final," said Matthieu Reeb, the director general of the Swiss-based sports court.

Senegal star Sadio Mane said the court's decision "fills us with joy", while the Senegalese Football Federation president Abdoulaye Fall said the ruling "does justice to sport". On Instagram, Mane sent his "respect and encouragement to the Moroccan people and Morocco players. They had a great run and can be proud of that... the Senegalese and Moroccan people are brothers. Let's hope our passion for football continues to bring us together".

However, the Moroccan federation reacted by promising to "pursue all necessary legal avenues" to contest the CAS ruling.

It a statement, it referred to what it said was "contact" between German arbitrator Ulrich Haas, one of the three CAS panel members who issued the ruling, and the president of the Senegalese Football Federation 48 hours before the decision was announced.

The AFCON final in Rabat was goalless late in normal time, and heading to extra time, when hosts Morocco were awarded a controversial penalty.

The decision by Congolese referee Jean-Jacques Ndala to point to the spot after a VAR check when Brahim Diaz went down under a challenge in the box infuriated Senegal players and supporters in the ground.

That lit the fuse for the chaos which ensued, as most of the Senegal team walked off the field of play, while away fans fought with security personnel and tried to enter the pitch. However, the Senegal players eventually came back on and the game restarted after a long delay, only for Diaz to fluff his kick which was saved.

The match was eventually decided by Pape Gueye's goal in extra time, and the Senegal players were celebrated as heroes on their return to Dakar. The Lions of Teranga also paraded with the trophy before a friendly match at the Stade de France in Paris, two weeks after the CAF ruling which stripped them of their crown. The Senegalese federation had denounced the ruling as the "most blatant administrative robbery in the history of our sport".

Morocco, who went on to reach the quarter-finals of this year's World Cup in North America, have therefore still only ever won one AFCON title, in 1976.

Both nations last week secured qualification for the next Cup of Nations, which will take place in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda next June and July.

USA to host Copa America ahead of 2028 LA Olympics

Miami: The Copa America will be staged in the United States for a second successive edition in 2028 just ahead of the Los Angeles Olympics, organisers announced. CONMEBOL, the South American football confederation, and CONCACAF, the governing body for North America, agreed to conduct the 49th edition of the event at US venues from June 9 to July 9, 2028.

The Los Angeles Olympics are scheduled for July 14-30 but the first pre-Olympic group-stage men's soccer matches begin on July 10, only hours after the Copa final. The tournament will feature 16 teams, the 10 nations from South America plus six countries from North America that will qualify through the 2027 CONCACAF Gold Cup. The event was also played in the United States in 2016, the Copa America Centenario, and 2024 ahead of the USA co-hosting the World Cup earlier this year. The host cities and other details will be announced later. "

MAN UNITED WIN APPEAL OVER YORO RED CARD

Leny Yoro's one-match suspension for the red card he was shown in Manchester United's 4-0 mauling by Liverpool has been overturned, the Football Association announced.

The French defender was dismissed in the eighth minute at Anfield for bringing down Alexander Isak as he advanced towards goal, with referee Sam Barrott deciding Yoro had denied an obvious goalscoring opportunity. United indicated that they intended to appeal for wrongful dismissal and a one-match suspension for the centre-back has now been lifted.

Yoro, 21, will now be available for Saturday's 1500 GMT kick-off against Brentford at Old Trafford.

Dominik Szoboszlai scored Liverpool's opening goal directly from the free-kick awarded for Yoro's challenge and the home team cantered to an easy win. One question raised over the Yoro incident was whether Isak had the ball sufficiently under control for it to count as denial of an obvious goalscoring opportunity. Mauricio Pochettino's Manchester United tenure got off to the worst possible start at Anfield, with a defeat that keeps them in the Premier League relegation zone after just one top-flight win all season.

BAYERN'S OLISE RULED OUT OF LILLE CLASH

Bayern Munich winger Michael Olise has been ruled out of the club's Champions League match at Lille today, deepening the German giants' injury woes.

Olise, who was subbed off at half-time of Friday's 1-1 Bundesliga draw with Cologne, failed to recover from a foot injury. The France winger did not train yesterday and was not included in Bayern's travelling squad, although the club said the injury was not serious. The club find themselves facing a shortage of offensive options following a spate of injuries. Harry Kane is set to miss several months with an ankle injury, while Alphonso Davies, Serge Gnabry, Ismael Saibari and captain Manuel Neuer are also out. Bayern received some rare good news, however, with recently injured Luis Diaz and Jamal Musiala taking to the training pitch.

Moyes' special night ruined by Everton's heavy loss at Brentford

London: Everton boss David Moyes hoped to savour a record-breaking night on Monday but instead his side were handed a 4-0 thumping at Brentford and a questionable red card for James Tarkowski that will keep their captain out of the weekend Merseyside Derby.

The 63-year-old Moyes was in charge of Everton for the 593rd time, more than any other manager at the club, and had the chance to lead them into the top five in the Premier League.

Instead, they were undone by an excellent Brentford side, who were already 2-0 up when Tarkowski caught Yehor Yarmolyuk high on the shin with his studs in a follow-through as he cleared the ball on the edge of the box after 40 minutes.

Tarkowski appeared to attempt to withdraw his leg after making contact but after initially giving a yellow card, referee Craig Pawson upgraded it to red on review.

It killed the contest and Brentford comfortably saw out the game as they added two more goals in the second half including a stunning strike from outside the box by Vitaly Janelt for the third.

"My thoughts at the time were I didn't think it was (a red card), but probably when I've looked at it again, his (Tarkowski's) foot's high. Is there enough force for it to be a red card? Not sure about that," Moyes told the BBC.

He had few complaints about the result, though, and must now lift his side as they prepare to host Liverpool on Sunday.

"We didn't play well enough and Brentford did, so we have no complaints and they thoroughly deserved to win," Moyes said.

"The performance was way below the standards we've set and the way we've been playing recently. Hopefully we can put it right. We've been doing a lot of good things and hopefully we can do it again."

It was the heaviest defeat of Moyes' second spell in charge of Everton, and the biggest win for Brentford manager Keith Andrews since he took over from Thomas Frank at the start of last season.

"It might go under the radar because of the sending off, but 11 versus 11 we were outstanding. I was impressed with how we approached the game, the tempo, the energy and the desire," Andrews said, as his side moved up to sixth spot.

FOCUS

Wirtz says Klopp talks have helped his form for Liverpool

AFP
Bruges, Belgium



Liverpool playmaker **Florian Wirtz** said his national team coach and former Reds boss Jurgen Klopp has been giving him "advice" on how to succeed at the Premier League club. The German will be hoping to continue his fine recent form as Liverpool seek to get back to winning ways in the Champions League, starting with today's trip to Club Brugge.

"We're speaking always about Liverpool," Wirtz said of Klopp, who brought Liverpool back to the pinnacle of English football during his nine-year tenure as manager.

"He tries to give me some advice about how to be successful over here because he has shown how it's done. He knows a lot about this club... He can just give me some good advice," the 23-year-old added during his pre-match press conference on Tuesday.

But he refused to be drawn on the exact nature of his conversations with Klopp, who took over as Germany coach in August.

"It's always small things, more private things but he's just speaking good about the club," Wirtz said. "And that helps to hear from someone who has experienced it for a long time."

Since arriving at Anfield in July 2025, Wirtz has often seemed to struggle with the weight of the £100mn ($131mn) Liverpool laid out to secure his services. Since mid-October, however, he has racked up eight goals and assists in all competitions, including a fantastic hooked volley finish in Liverpool's 4-0 thrashing of Manchester United on Sunday in their first game back after the international break. "In the last few games, I got a lot of goal contributions. I think you could say I'm in the best form since I arrived," Wirtz said. The former Bayer Leverkusen star insisted Liverpool manager Andoni Iraola was also responsible for that uptick in form.

"I'm really enjoying playing under him," he said. "He's bringing me back to a place where I was two years ago, where I played really good football... He gives me confidence."

Iraola said Wirtz was now getting the praise he deserved for his overall play. "I think honestly he has been very good with us since the beginning," the Basque said. "Probably he is increasing his level but I think he has been consistently performing well. In the last games he is getting the numbers so from the outside it looks he is playing better... but I value a lot of things he does for the team that are not just the last moment, the last pass, the goal."

Both Liverpool and Club Brugge have nine points after four outings in the Champions League.