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West Indies may ‘cease to exist’, warns inquest report



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SPOTLIGHT

Al-Marri wins gold at horseback archery Worlds qualifiers

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatar’s Badr Mubarak al-Marri won gold in the singles competition at the horseback archery World Championships qualifiers in South Africa yesterday. The event, which began on January 15 concluded yesterday at the Rossfield Equestrian Club in Pretoria.

The competition is part of the World Horseback Archery Championship Qualifiers. It was held in five groups, under the umbrella of the International Horseback Archery Federation, with three teams qualifying for the final.

Thirty-four players from different parts of the world participated in the tournament. The event was divided into four competitions: clog throwing, chain throwing, Kasai system and the team system.

Al-Marri scored 4 points in the individual pole throwing competition, leading the competition with 38 points. Coach Fouad al-Mudhahka, who is also a member of the World Horseback Archery Federation (WHAF), was gratified with the good accomplishment at the international level.

“I congratulate Badr al-Marri for winning the gold at these qualifiers for the international championship, and for hoisting the Ada’am (colloquial for Qatar flag) very high and of course all the riders in the Qatari team,” he told Gulf Times yesterday.



Qatari rider Badr Mubarak al-Marri (centre) poses with coach and World Horseback Archery Federation (WHAF) member Fouad al-Mudhahka (right) and a teammate after winning gold at the horseback archery World Championships qualifiers in Pretoria, South Africa, yesterday.



Badr Mubarak al-Marri in action during the competition.

Al-Mudhahka confirmed also that “the international competitions were highly competitive, and the nature of the tournament is the quick throw from horseback.

“Horseback archery is one of the ancient traditional sports, and it is practised in Qatar, as one of the unique sports in the region, and a contribution to the expansion of the Arab heritage.”

Three other Qatari riders Abdulaziz al-Qahtani, Abdul Rahman al-Ishaq and Hayel al-Anzi also participated in the competition.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Liverpool in ‘good hands’ despite slump, says Klopp

Liverpool, Chelsea clash today with both teams languishing 10 points adrift of League’s top four

AFP
Liverpool

Jurgen Klopp insists Liverpool remain in good hands under the ownership of Fenway Sports Group, despite not being able to match the huge sums spent by Chelsea in the transfer market. Liverpool and Chelsea clash at Anfield today with both teams languishing 10 points adrift of the Premier League’s top four.

Chelsea have responded by taking their spending in the first season under new ownership to over £400mn (\$494mn) with the signings of Mykhailo Mudryk, Benoit Badiashile and Joao Felix on loan this month. “Interesting. I cannot explain it, I have no idea. But if the numbers are true then it’s impressive,” said Klopp of Chelsea’s spending.

By contrast, FSG have been accused by Liverpool fans of not giving Klopp the resources to refresh a side that came close to a historic quadruple last season. The American ownership group have begun the process of either selling the club or inviting investment for a minority stake.

Liverpool look a shadow of their former selves at present, with Klopp describing last weekend’s 3-0 defeat at Brighton as the worst performance of his managerial career. “We are here in a good position. I know that sounds strange because we didn’t play our best football but in general we are in good hands,” added Klopp ahead of his 1,000th game as a manager. “So we don’t get crazy or whatever. We really know about the responsibility we have and we really try absolutely everything to try to bring us back on track and not worry too much.”

Former Manchester United boss



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp. (Reuters)

Alex Ferguson knows all about longevity at one of the Premier League’s superpowers. Ferguson, who spent 27 years at United, paid tribute to Klopp’s 1,000-match milestone in his role as League Managers’ Association committee member.

“Jurgen is undoubtedly one of the most gifted managers in world football and the dedication and passion which Jurgen brings to his role is inspiring to anyone aspiring to a career in football management,” he said. “The many trophies he has already won in his career, including in recent seasons the Champions League and Premier League with

Liverpool, confirm his status amongst football’s elite. I am certain that Jurgen will continue his trajectory of success and add many more matches to the 1,000 he achieves this weekend.”

Injuries have hampered Liverpool all season, with Virgil van Dijk, Diogo Jota and Luis Diaz among those still sidelined for the visit of Chelsea. The Blues have had even more severe injury problems in Graham Potter’s first few months in charge and Klopp believes that can explain a poor season so far for both clubs.

“I think it’s the only team with a similar injury list like ours. It’s tough,” added Klopp in comparing Liverpool and Chelsea’s absentees to Premier League leaders Arsenal. “Arsenal deserve to be where they are at the moment. Play outstanding football. But cut out five players or three offensive players and nobody would think Arsenal where are you? Injuries are a massive problem, Chelsea has them as much as we have. It’s not the only problem but it’s a big problem so that’s why I’m not surprised that they do not do well.” Klopp looks set to have at least one key player back fit as Darwin Nunez returns after missing the last two games.

MUDRYK SET FOR CHELSEA DEBUT

Graham Potter says Chelsea’s new £88mn winger Mykhailo Mudryk is set to make his debut in today’s clash with Liverpool. Chelsea boss Potter landed Mudryk from Shakhtar Donetsk after Premier League leaders Arsenal appeared on the verge of signing him.

The 22-year-old was paraded in front of Chelsea fans on the pitch at half-time of Sunday’s 1-0 win over Crystal Palace. Mudryk has trained with his new teammates this week and Potter is likely to use him at some stage at Anfield this weekend. “Yeah, there’s a chance (he will feature). “It’s how much he can do. I think 90 minutes, no. There’s probably a role for him at some stage in the game,” Potter told reporters. “He’s obviously come from a mid-season break, so hasn’t played so much football recently but has been training well. We’ll assess him and see how much he can play at the weekend.”

With Chelsea struggling in 10th place in the Premier League, Potter hopes the skillful Mudryk can prove the spark to ignite his team. “He’s a young player, exciting player, fantastic speed one v one, can attack the backline and now we’ve just got to help him adapt to the Premier League, adapt to us,” he said.

Mudryk might not be the last signing of a busy January window for Potter, who has already brought in Joao Felix, Benoit Badiashile, David Datro Fofana and Andrey Santos. Chelsea have been linked with PSV Eindhoven’s England Under-21 winger Noni Madueke, who has reportedly had a medical ahead of a transfer worth around £35 million.

Chelsea’s win against Palace last weekend was only their second in 10 league games, while Liverpool have endured their own problems of late. Jurgen Klopp’s are only one place above the Blues, but Potter is certain the German remains the right man to lead Liverpool.

FIXTURES (1500 GMT UNLESS STATED)

Today: Liverpool v Chelsea (1230), Bournemouth v Brighton, Southampton v Aston Villa, West Ham v Everton, Crystal Palace v Newcastle (1730)

Tomorrow: Leeds v Brentford, Manchester City v Wolves (both 1400), Arsenal v Manchester United (1630)

Monday: Fulham v Tottenham (2000)

Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Rifle Day today

Doha: The Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC) will organise the 31st race meeting in the 2022-23 season, Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) president Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Rifle Day, at the Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday.

The race will be held with the participation of the best horses, along with financial prizes amounting to \$550,000 and the participation of 139 horses.

The QREC has allocated huge cash prizes, including \$100,000 for the eighth, ninth and tenth rounds, \$40,000 from the third round until seventh round, and \$25,000 for the first and second round races.

The 10th round will be dedicated for HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Rifle, Thoroughbreds (age 4+) at a distance of 2,200m, while the 9th round will be assigned for HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Trophy, (Gr3 PA) Purebred Arabians (age 4+) at a distance of 2200m.

Other rounds include HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Trophy, Purebred Arabians (age 4+) distance 1750m; HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Trophy, Thoroughbreds (age 4+) distance 1750m; HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Trophy, Thoroughbred Open Race (age 4+) distance 1,400m; and HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Trophy, Thoroughbreds (age 3) distance 1,500m; and HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani Trophy, Thoroughbred Sprint (age 3+) distance 1200m.

A bumper 10-race card with various entertainment activities throughout the day will be held at the Al Rayyan Racecourse. The first race will start at 11 am

CRICKET

WI may ‘cease to exist’, warns inquest report

AFP
Miami

West Indies cricket may “cease to exist” unless the issue of its players prioritising global Twenty20 leagues ahead of international duties is resolved, according to a report commissioned by Cricket West Indies (CWI).

The report from a three-man panel made up of former captain and batting great Brian Lara, experienced South African coach Mickey Arthur and a senior judge Patrick Thompson, was commissioned after West Indies’ shock early exit from last year’s T20 World Cup in Australia.

West Indies have struggled with availability issues for players who

feature in the Indian Premier League and other T20 competitions around the world.

“It is essential that some middle ground is arrived at. Otherwise, West Indies cricket may cease to exist as an entity,” said the report.

“This group does not indulge in doomsday predictions but no entity, sporting or otherwise, has a viable future if its talent is not harnessed and effectively managed,” the report added.

“It is not in the best interests of West Indies cricket that our best players play in every global league and play for the WI Team on an optional basis,” the report said. The report urged a “frank and honest discussion” about the issue in order to find a solution to what it called an “impasse”

One of the issues blocking better agreement about player schedules and



Brian Lara

availability is the long-standing conflicts between players and CWI, the report said.

“In this group’s view, there is significant distrust between the players and



Mickey Arthur

administration and this distrust is inimical to ensuring that the best 11 players turn out for the WI Team in every match,” the report said.

The report made a series of recom-

mendations for improving the functioning of the West Indies team ahead of the 2024 T20 World Cup which will be held in the Caribbean and the United States.

But the authors did not back the idea of a separate coach for red ball and white ball teams given the limited amount of Test cricket being played.

They also suggested that key players for the T20 side should be given more exposure to Test cricket in order to get used to the conditions and standard of opposition.

West Indies have enjoyed success in the T20 format, winning the World Cup in 2012 and 2016 - only England have also won the competition twice.

But in Australia, the Caribbean side finished bottom of their group, finishing behind Zimbabwe, Ireland and Scotland.

The report said the team were “underprepared” and pointed the finger at the short time between the Caribbean Premier League tournament and the T20 World Cup.

The report said that unless change was made, the talent pool of Caribbean players risked being used by others.

“WI cricket does not lack for talent but our small size in comparison with other cricketing nations means that we cannot afford to lose any talented players.

“Cricket West Indies (CWI) must develop and create clear pathways for the identification, development and management of talent.

“Otherwise, WI cricket runs the risk of being strip-mined by other professional leagues that can afford to harvest and develop our players for their benefit.”

GOLF

Italians Molinari and Migliozzi lead Abu Dhabi Championship

‘I started by missing a driver on one, driver on two and then made a few three-putts as well’

EUROPEANTOUR.COM
Abu Dhabi

Guido Migliozzi produced a big finish on day two of the 2023 Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship to head into the weekend tied alongside countryman Francesco Molinari at the top of the leaderboard.

The Italian duo came into this event fresh from their outstanding displays at last week’s inaugural Hero Cup, where they both delivered 3.5 points and finished unbeaten as Continental Europe defeated Great Britain & Ireland 14.5-10.5 over three days of competition.

And they were on top form again on day two at Yas Links Abu Dhabi, finishing strongly to reach 10 under par at the halfway stage of the first Rolex Series event of the season.

After Molinari had shot a second successive 67 in the morning courtesy of six birdies on his back nine, Migliozzi closed his second-round 69 with a hat-trick of birdies to join him at the summit.

Having started at the tenth tee, Molinari saw two early birdies wiped out as a double bogey-bogey run at the 16th and 17th threatened to stall his progress.

But he recovered with five birdies in seven holes from the first before sending his wedge shot at the ninth to within two feet to set up a guaranteed closing birdie.

Migliozzi, meanwhile, mixed one birdie with one bogey on the front nine before kick-starting his round at the 16th with a strong shot-of-the-day contender.

He pitched his approach towards the

front of the green and let it run all the way to the pin at the back to give himself a tap-in birdie.

The 25-year-old then took advantage of the par-three 17th before birdieing the last from 17 feet to grab a share of the lead.

As the wind strengthened in the afternoon, no-one was able to catch the Italian pair at the top, with Jason Scrivener their nearest challenger on nine under after mixing four birdies with two bogeys in his 70.

Alexander Levy, making his return to action after 11 months out due to a back injury, is among those on eight under, with fellow Frenchman Victor Perez, Swede Alexander Björk, South African George Coetzee and Scotland’s Scott Jamieson.

Play was suspended due to fading light in the evening, with only a handful of players still out on course.

Migliozzi was delighted with his finish in tricky conditions, saying: “It’s been a tough day of golf.

“I started by missing a driver on one, driver on two and then made a few three-putts as well. It was not the best way to start the second day.

“But I stayed focused, I tried to stay on my game because I’m feeling great on the golf course and I was just waiting for some turning point and then I saved that beautiful par on the 15th.

“Then after that I felt a bit better and I could accelerate, push on the accelerator and then beautiful golf shots came on the final three holes.

“Today those three holes are pretty, pretty tough because the wind is hurting a lot. It was good to finish like that.”

Migliozzi is excited to do battle with



A player tees off at the Yas Links Golf Course on day two of the HSBC Abu Dhabi Golf Championships yesterday. @YasLinksGC

Molinari, who captained him at the Hero Cup, over the weekend.

He added: “I was watching the leaderboard and I saw the Captain right there on top, Francesco Molinari. It’s

good; it will be a great battle over the weekend.”

Molinari reflected on a good day’s work, saying: “I’m very pleased. Same score as yesterday but very different

day. Many more up-and-downs than yesterday. A couple of three-putts, a couple of mental errors but also lots of good stuff, a couple of long putts made. So a bit of everything.

“Obviously a very good back nine, which is nice. I think where you are, where I’m at at the moment, when you go through a tough patch, it’s nice to see that I can pick it up again.”

SPOTLIGHT

Rookie Thompson soars to PGA American Express lead with two superb eagles

AFP
Los Angeles

US PGA Tour rookie Davis Thompson bagged back-to-back eagles on the way to a two-shot lead on Thursday in the American Express Tournament at La Quinta, California.

Thompson, a 23-year-old graduate of the developmental Korn Ferry Tour, was seven-under through six holes thanks to his eagles at the fifth and sixth on the La Quinta Country Club course, one of three in use for the event in the Southern California desert along with the Nicklaus Tournament course and the Stadium course.

His 10-under par total of 62 put him two clear of five players, a group led by fourth-ranked Spaniard Jon Rahm and including Americans Tyler Duncan, Taylor Montgomery and Sam Burns and German Matti Schmid.

Thompson already had three birdies under his belt when he eagled the par-five fifth.

He missed the green at the par-five sixth but chipped in for another eagle, becoming the first player to eagle consecutive holes in



a PGA Tour-sanctioned event since Shane Lowry in the third round of last year’s Open Championship. He added a birdie at the ninth to make the turn at eight-under.

The former top-ranked amateur said staying focused on each shot was his main task coming in.

“That was kind of like my biggest challenge today was staying present-minded and trying to put one foot in front of the other,” said Thompson, whose two birdies on the back nine included an exclamation point at the 18th.

“Your mind definitely starts to wander a

little bit. But I played enough rounds to where I try to teach myself over and over you can’t get ahead of yourself.”

Thompson, who has made 19 starts on the PGA Tour as an amateur and a pro, said he still feels like a rookie - especially at a tournament that features three new courses to learn.

“You kind of have to play practice rounds pretty fast and kind of figure out what you want to do during the week,” he said.

“But at the same time it kind of goes both ways. You don’t put as much stress on yourself kind of preparing for every course because you’re trying to see every hole.”

Rahm, who also opened his week on the La Quinta course, is no stranger to the event, which he won in 2018.

His nine birdies included three in a row at the fifth, sixth and seventh and another three straight at the 11th, 12th and 13th.

Second-ranked Masters champion Scottie Scheffler, who again has a chance to supplant Rory McIlroy at number one this week, opened with a four-under par 68 on the La Quinta Country Club course.

So did world number five Patrick Cantlay - who also has a slim chance of reaching number one this week.

‘I’M INNOCENT’ - AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC TRACK STAR BOL FAILS DRUGS TEST

Melbourne: Australian Olympic track star Peter Bol said he was innocent and “in total shock” yesterday after being provisionally suspended for failing an out-of-competition drugs test.

The 800m runner, who narrowly missed bronze when he finished fourth at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics behind Kenyan winner Emmanuel Korir, returned the positive result on January 10.

Athletics Australia chief Peter Bromley said Bol’s A sample showed an Adverse Analytical Finding for performance-enhancing Erythropoietin Receptor Agonists (EPO).

The test was carried out in October.

“It is critically important to convey with the strongest conviction that I am innocent and have not taken this substance as I am accused,” the Sudan-born Bol, a silver medallist at last year’s Commonwealth Games, said on social media.

The 28-year-old said he was in “total shock” when told that a urine sample had returned a positive test.

“To be clear, I have NEVER purchased, researched, possessed, administered, or used synthetic EPO or any other prohibited substance.”

Bromley said Bol can have a second, B sample analysed to reconfirm the initial result.

“There are procedural fairness and investigative considerations that constrain how much we can say,” he said.

“And at this point it would be inappropriate for Athletics Australia or anyone else to speculate about the specific details or pre-empt any outcome. “However, what we can say is that learning about this adverse analytical finding was both extremely concerning and completely out of the blue.”

Under the provisional suspension, Bol is not allowed to train or compete at a national, state or club level.

Son of ex-global athletics chief Diack seeks to overturn conviction

Lawyers for Papa Massata Diack, the son of the disgraced former head of global athletics, called in an appeal hearing in Paris for his corruption conviction to be overturned.

Diack, whose father Lamine headed the IAAF, now called World Athletics, from 1999-2015, was one of six men convicted in France in 2020 for hushing up 23 Russian doping offences in exchange for Russian sponsorship contracts. He was sentenced to five years in prison and fined 1mn euros (\$1.1mn).

The trial heard that as a result of hiding the doping cases, the Russian athletes were able to compete at the 2012 London Olympics and 2013 world championships in Moscow.

Papa Massata Diack, known as PMD, had a high-profile role as a marketing consultant for the IAAF.

TENNIS

Young Korda stuns Medvedev after a feisty 3-set battle

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS AND IGA SWIATEK DAZZLE IN BRIGHT SUNSHINE

Reuters
Melbourne

Stefanos Tsitsipas and Iga Swiatek dazzled in bright sunshine to make short work of their third-round opponents yesterday as some normalcy returned to the Australian Open after scheduling woes, wild weather, upsets and late finishes.

That sense of normality was shattered in the cool of the late evening, however, when American Sebastian Korda stunned former world number one Daniil Medvedev 7-6(7) 6-3 7-6(4) for the biggest win of his young career.

The 22-year-old, son of 1998 Australian Open champion Petr, unleashed an all-court assault on the Russian 2021 US Open champion, hammering 50 winners and making regular charges to the net.

“Probably one of the better matches I’ve played in my career,” said an elated Korda. “Just stuck with the game plan, kept going after it. I think positive mentally throughout it. No matter what happened, kept pushing forward.”

Third seed Tsitsipas, the top surviving seed in the men’s draw, beat Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor 6-2 7-6(5) 6-3 and then waxed lyrical on the clement conditions after hours of tennis were lost this week to extreme heat and rain.

“Fair crack of the whip mate, I mean, it was great,” Tsitsipas said, slipping into the local vernacular.

“Kind of kept things clean and I enjoyed the weather today, what a lovely day for tennis it is today, isn’t it? It’s great playing in sunshine like this, this is what Melbourne’s all about.”

Tsitsipas has still not dropped a set in the tournament as he chases his maiden Grand Slam, with his chances boosted by the exits of holder Rafa Nadal and second seed Casper Ruud and an injury cloud hanging over favourite Novak Djokovic.

The departure of Medvedev, the losing finalist for the last two years at Melbourne Park, further opened up the draw.

Women’s favourite Swiatek was even more dominant in her 6-0 6-1 victory over Cristina Bucsa as she took another step towards adding a first Australian Open title to the French and US Open crowns she won last year.

“A couple of years ago when I was in the fourth round I was really exhausted, and right now I feel this is the right place to be,” the 21-year-old top seed said.

“Hopefully I’m going to continue to playing solid and hopefully I’m going to play more matches here.”

Up next for Swiatek is Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, who battled past last year’s Melbourne Park runner-up Danielle Collins 6-2 5-7 6-2.

It was a bad start to the day for the American women but in-form Jessica Pegula, the third seed, soon swatted aside Marta Kostyuk 6-0 6-2 and seventh seed Coco Gauff dismissed compatriot Bernarda Pera 6-3 6-2.

Madison Keys looked like continuing her unbeaten start to the season when she took the first set against Victoria Azarenka only for the 2012 and 2013 Australian Open champion to rally for a 1-6 6-2 6-1 upset of the 10th seed.

Azarenka will next play world number 87 Zhu Lin of China, who stunned Greek sixth seed Maria Sakkari 7-6(3) 1-6 6-4 in the final match of the day.



Greece’s Stefanos Tsitsipas hits a forehand return against Netherlands’ Tallon Griekspoor during their singles match on day five of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday. (AFP)



Sebastian Korda of the US shakes hands with Russia’s Daniil Medvedev after winning his third round match at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. (Reuters)

AMERICAN CHARGE

No American man has captured a Grand Slam singles title since Andy Roddick at the 2003 US Open, but the country’s hopes had been raised after eight men made the third round.

Nadal’s unseeded conqueror Mackenzie McDonald was unable to continue his run, however, as he fell 7-6(6) 6-3 6-2 to Japan’s Yoshihito Nishioka. Frances Tiafoe and his eye-catching outfit also departed 6-3 6-4 3-6 7-6(9) at the hands of Russian Karen Khachanov in a meeting of the losing semi-finalists at last year’s US Open.

Organisers were grateful for the swift early victories after being forced to defend their scheduling following Andy Murray’s five-set victory over Thanasi Kokkinakis, which concluded at just after 4.05am yesterday morning.

Murray described the late finish as a “joke” but tournament director Craig Tiley, who had been battling to get the schedule back on track after the weather disruptions, ruled out immediate changes.

“We’ve got to fit those matches in the 14 days, so you don’t have many options,” he said.

Although none matched the six hours that Murray took to triumph in the wee hours, there were plenty of lengthy men’s matches for the fans to enjoy.

Italian Jannik Sinner came from two sets down to beat Marton Fucsovics 4-6 4-6 6-1 6-2 6-0, while Czech Jiri Lehecka took five sets to upset British 11th seed Cameron Norrie 6-7 6-3 3-6 6-1 6-4. Sixth seed Felix Auger Aliassime also advanced with a 6-1 3-6 6-1 6-4 win over Francisco Cerundolo but his fellow Canadian Denis Shapovalov came up short in a stirring comeback against 10th seed Hubert Hurkacz and bowed out 7-6(3) 6-4 1-6 4-6 6-3.



Poland’s Iga Swiatek hits a return against Spain’s Cristina Bucsa during their singles match on day five of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday. (AFP)

Results at Melbourne Park

Collated results from Day 5 of the Australian Open Grand Slam tennis tournament at Melbourne Park yesterday:

Men’s singles - 3rd round

Yoshihito Nishioka (JPN x31) bt Mackenzie McDonald (USA) 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 6-2
Karen Khachanov (RUS x18) bt Frances Tiafoe (USA x16) 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (11/9)
Hubert Hurkacz (POL x10) bt Denis Shapovalov (CAN x20) 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 1-6, 4-6, 6-3
Sebastian Korda (USA x29) bt Daniil Medvedev (RUS x7) 7-6 (9/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/0)
Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x3) bt Tallon Griekspoor (NED) 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3
Jannik Sinner (ITA x15) bt Marton Fucsovics (HUN) 4-6, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-0
Jiri Lehecka (CZE) bt Cameron Norrie (GBR x11) 6-7 (8/10), 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4
Felix Auger-Aliassime (CAN x6) bt Francisco Cerundolo (ARG x28) 6-1, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4

Women’s singles- 3rd round

Iga Swiatek (POL x1) bt Cristina Bucsa (ESP) 6-0, 6-1
Elena Rybakina (KAZ x22) bt Danielle Collins (USA x13) 6-2, 5-7, 6-2
Jelena Ostapenko (LAT x17) bt Kateryna Kozlova (UKR) 6-3, 6-0
Coco Gauff (USA x7) bt Bernarda Pera (USA) 6-3, 6-2
Jessica Pegula (USA x3) bt Marta Kostyuk (UKR) 6-0, 6-2
Barbora Krejickova (CZE x20) bt Anhelina Kalinina (UKR) 6-2, 6-3
Victoria Azarenka (BLR x24) bt Madison Keys (USA x10) 1-6, 6-2, 6-1
Zhu Lin (CHN) bt Maria Sakkari (GRE x6) 7-6 (7/3), 1-6, 6-4

CYCLING

Bilbao conquers Corkscrew as Vine grabs Tour Down Under lead on Day 3

AFP
Adelaide

Spain’s Pello Bilbao conquered the demanding Corkscrew climb to win the third stage as Australia’s Jay Vine seized the overall lead in the Tour Down Under yesterday.

Bilbao (Bahrain Victorious) prevailed up the final climb to beat Britain’s Simon Yates (Jayco-AlUla), with Vine taking third to grab the ochre leader’s jersey with two stages left.

Vine (UAE Team Emirates) leads Bilbao overall by 15 seconds. Yates, the 2018 Vuelta a España winner, is 16 seconds down on the leader.

“The stage win was the main goal for the team,” Bilbao said.

“It was a short climb and a fast descent, but I had some difficulties to reach Yates and Vine.

“I was a bit disappointed yesterday so today I was really focused on the stage win.”

Vine has a first World Tour race victory in his sights after winning two stages at last year’s Vuelta a Espana.

“If they gave me another three more Corkscrews I would be fine,

there is a lot of road to come before Sunday evening so I definitely have to be conservative,” Vine said.

Yates fancies Vine’s chances of overall victory.

“I knew Bilbao was fast there at the line, but I just couldn’t get around him,” Yates said.

“The way Jay is climbing he is looking very strong. We will see what we can come up with on Sunday.”

Overnight leader Rohan Dennis (Jumbo-Visma) yesterday tumbled out of the reckoning when his bike’s gears stopped working as the peloton hit Kersbrook, just kilometres out from the second key climb of the day at Checker Hill.

Australia’s two-time world time trial champion had to change his bike and the effort trying to catch up the peloton took its toll.

Dennis was never in contention on the key Corkscrew climb towards the end and is now 1min 25sec off new race leader Vine heading into the weekend.

After Friday’s series of climbs, the penultimate stage on Saturday from Port Willunga to Willunga Township over 133.2km will be one for the sprinters.



Spanish rider Pello Bilbao from Bahrain Victorious team (right) beats English cyclist Simon Yates from Team Jayco-AlUla to win stage three of the Tour Down Under - a UCI cycling event - near Adelaide yesterday. (AFP)

Results from 3rd stage of men’s Tour Down Under, a 116.8km ride from Norwood to Campbelltown:

1. Pello Bilbao (ESP/Bahrain Victorious) 2hr 48min 10sec, 2. Simon Yates (GBR/Team Jayco AlUla) at Osec, 3. Jay Vine (AUS/UAE Team Emirates), 4. Michael Matthews (AUS/Team Jayco AlUla) 28sec, 5. Sven Erik Bystrom (NOR/Intermarche-Circus-Wanty)

General Classification:

1. Jay Vine (AUS/UAE Team Emirates) 10hr 32min 50sec, 2. Pello Bilbao (ESP/Bahrain Victorious) at 15sec, 3. Simon Yates (GBR/Team Jayco-AlUla) 16sec, 4. Magnus Sheffield (USA/INEOS Grenadiers) 45sec, 5. Mauro Schmid (SUI/Soudal Quick-Step) 46sec.

FOCUS

Undocumented workers from Paris 2024 sites speak out

AFP
Paris

Gaye Sarambounou is used to toiling long days for a pittance. He’s a Malian living in France with no working papers, but it’s a situation that occurs around the world.

The difference here is that Sarambounou is one of an army of construction workers preparing next year’s Olympic Games in Paris.

The fact that France’s upcoming sporting showcase is being put together with the help of illegal workers is becoming a source of political and social tension.

For three months Sarambounou, 41, worked between eight- and 11-hour shifts for 80 euros per day.

Obviously, “overtime was never paid,” he said ruefully.

“I accepted because I know my situation. If you don’t have papers, you do all the hard work, all the crappy jobs. You have no choice,” he said as he boiled water on a stove on the floor of the tiny room he shares with four compatriots.

“Everyone knows what’s going on, but nobody talks about it,” said a smiling Sarambounou, who was kicked off an Olympic building site last year after a

raid by labour inspectors. Trade unionist Bernard Thibault, who co-chairs the Paris 2024 Social Charter Monitoring Committee says there is “a great deal of hypocrisy on the part of the political authorities”

As a sign of the concern, the Labour Inspectorate has created a specialised unit that has been checking nearly one site a day for the past two years.

In June, nine irregular workers were identified on a site run by Solideo, the public company responsible for building facilities and infrastructure for the Olympics.

At the same time, a local public prosecutor’s office opened a preliminary investigation into the “employment of foreigners without a permit in an organised gang”

Solideo swiftly “took the necessary steps” by terminating the contract of the offending subcontractor but also of the construction giant that used it, said Antoine du Souich, the company’s strategy director.

“All these beautiful stadiums are built by poor people... who are exploited,” said another Malian worker, who requested anonymity. “It’s always 80 percent immigrants who do the work. You see Malians, Portuguese, Turks. And the French... in the offices!” he added.

MOTORSPORT

Team Thuraya eye Middle East Championship title at Abu Dhabi 6H

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Just days after winning their second podium spot in the Middle East Trophy in Dubai, Qatar Motor & Motorcycles Federation's (QMMF) Team Thuraya began their bid for the regional title at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

The team's Porsche 911 car is driven by Qatari drivers Abdulla Ali al-Khelaifi, Ghanim al-Maadheed and Ibrahim al-Abdulghani while German semi-pro Julian Hanses joins as a fourth driver behind the steering wheel.

The Abu Dhabi race – a six-hour endurance contest – is the second round of the 24 Hour Series and it's the third round of the Middle East Endurance championship, following stops in Kuwait (12 hours) and the Dubai (24 hours) endurance races. The 992 class in the Middle East Trophy series is currently led by Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors (60 points) with NKPP by HRT Performance (50) in the second spot, while



QMMF's Team Thuraya during a practice session for the Abu Dhabi 6H race at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

Team Thuraya sits in the third spot with 44 points. Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) Executive Director Amro al-Hamad yesterday said: "The car number 929, Team Thuraya did really well. And they're now contenders for the title of the Middle East Cham-

pionship. Since they came third in Kuwait, second in Dubai, depending on the results in Abu Dhabi, there might be a big chance that they win the Middle East Endurance title if they get good results, of course."

Al-Hamad also said the team's par-

ticipation in the series is part of a long-term plan set out by the QMMF. "This is part of the long plan. It was not just a coincidence that they have these results or us competing for the Middle East title. It is part of a long term plan for the QMMF to move the motorsports



Team Thuraya's Porsche 911 car is driven by Qatar's Abdulla Ali al-Khelaifi, Ghanim al-Maadheed, Ibrahim al-Abdulghani with German Julian Hanses being the semi-pro.

from what was perceived as an individual sport to a group sport or a team sport. Now the drivers can work together. They have a very close relationship professionally. They have to carry

each other and support each other to be able to score, score a win," he added.

Following free practice and the qualifying rounds, the race flags off at 3:00pm Qatar time today.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arteta confident Trossard will have immediate impact

Belgium forward joins Arsenal from Brighton for £27mn

AFP
London

Mikel Arteta expects Arsenal forward Leandro Trossard to make an immediate impact after the Belgium forward signed from Brighton for a reported £27mn (\$33mn) yesterday. Trossard agreed a "long-term" contract as Arsenal bolstered their attacking options in their bid to win the title for the first time since 2004.

The 28-year-old could make his debut for Arteta's side, who are five points clear at the top, in tomorrow's crucial clash against Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium. Asked about Trossard's proven Premier League pedigree, Arteta told reporters: "It's very important. We have to think short-term, but as well medium and long-term. He gives us all that. He's a very intelligent player. When you look at what he's done in the last few years, he's a player who fits our way of playing. We are happy to have him. He knows the league, he has enough experience here and I think he can have an immediate impact on the team."

Arsenal moved for Trossard after being pipped to the signature of Ukraine winger Mykhailo Mudryk by London rivals Chelsea last weekend. Trossard played under Arsenal assistant Albert Stuivenberg at Genk and Arteta said he had spoken to the Dutchman who gave a glowing reference.

"We talked about everybody that is connected that we want to recruit because character is something crucial, but as well to understand how they are going to be around the club, but as well personal conversations," he added. "Albert did give a good reference. We are really happy to have him. He's a player we followed for a while. The opportunity came and we had the necessity for a player in the front line who is versatile enough to play different positions."

Trossard, who played for Belgium at the recent World Cup, scored seven times in 16 Premier League matches for Brighton this



Arsenal's new signing Leandro Trossard (right) trains in London yesterday.

season, including a hat-trick at Liverpool in October. "I'm really excited to get started," Trossard told Arsenal's website. "This is a big club and I'm ready to show the fans what I can do. Everyone has seen how well we're doing already and I'm here to help achieve their dreams – including myself. I'm going to take it day by day, work hard and try to help the team to achieve their goals. I want to get better as well. I know the manager is a great coach and I hope to be involved in doing great things and getting better as a player in every aspect."

The winger's four-year spell at Brighton

ended acrimoniously after his agent requested a transfer following a row with Albion manager Roberto De Zerbi.

De Zerbi said former Genk player Trossard "disappeared" from training after being told he would not be playing in Brighton's FA Cup tie against Middlesbrough earlier in January.

Trossard was subsequently left out of the squad for Brighton's Premier League match against Liverpool last weekend, which they won 3-0. De Zerbi said: "I'm sorry for the last period, but I still would like to wish Leandro good luck for the future."

Double delight for al-Qadi at Hathab



Ghanim Nasser al-Qadi astride 12-year-old Aslan 69 won the Medium Tour class at the 8th round of the Longines Qatar Equestrian Tour Hathab at the Al Shaqab arena yesterday. Al-Qadi and Aslan 69 timed 38.82 seconds in the jump off. Faleh Suwaid al-Ajmi on Ambre De Beaufour was second, while Mohamed Saeed Haidan finished third with D Saucedo. The Medium Tour Team event was won by Alfardan, followed by Al Shaqab and ExxonMobil. Earlier, al-Qadi also emerged triumphant with 14-year-old Quick Step in the Small Tour. Jassim al-Jaham al-Kuwari (Calydor) was second, with Mohamed Nasser al-Qadi (Galwaybay Merbreaker) third. In the Young Riders category, Mohamed Jamal al-Derbesti took top spot, while Hind AbdulHadi al-Hajiri took both second and third positions.



Hind AbdulHadi al-Hajiri in action in the Young Riders category.

FOCUS

Anderson wins opening round of Qatar Off Road Championship

By Sports Reporter
Doha

South African rider Michael Anderson took the victory in the season-opening Qatar Off Road Championship (QORC) at the Sealine region yesterday.

Anderson, who finished in the second spot behind Emirati rider Mohamed al-Balooshi in the final standings last season, was the fastest yesterday. He completed 16 laps at the 5.7km off-road track in 01 hour, 22 minutes and 31.657 secs. The South African's fastest lap was clocked at 4 minutes 58.724 secs.

Meanwhile, al-Balooshi, the first Emirati rider to take part in the legendary Dakar Rally, was 1 minute 03.990 secs slower than Anderson yesterday. His compatriot Abdulla Lanjawi was third with a time of 01:26.48.393.

The popular off road series, usually held over six rounds, will see two additional round this year. Regarding the amendment to the Championship, Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) Executive Director Amro al-Hamad yesterday said the decision came after requests from drivers and riders.

"We've done some modifications after listening to the competitors. We increased the number of rounds. It used to be six rounds, which is three rounds



South Africa's Michael Anderson in action during the opening round of the Qatar Off Road Championship at the Sealine region yesterday.



of survival and three rounds of Baja. Now it has become five rounds of Baja and three rounds of survival, taking it from six to eight rounds. The two extra rounds of Baja are going to be in the international Baja's that we're going to run here in Qatar very soon as part of the World Championship. It's going to be

significantly longer distances than the normal distance of the Bajas that we do nationally. And this is going to encourage the competitors to go and compete on the international Bajas with longer distances overseas," al-Hamad said.

The next round of the QORC will take place on January 26-27.

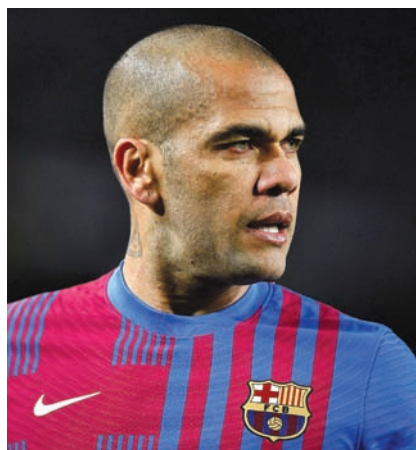
Dani Alves remanded in custody on assault allegations

Barcelona: A Spanish court yesterday ordered Brazil defender Dani Alves to be held in custody without bail after he was arrested in Barcelona on allegations he sexually assaulted a woman. A Barcelona judge took the step after questioning the 39-year-old player regarding "events that allegedly took place at a nightclub," the court said in a statement.

A source close to the dossier said the judge had taken the step – which was requested by public prosecutors – because the court considered there was a risk Alves would try to flee. Alves, one of football's most successful players, was taken into custody earlier yesterday after being summoned to a Barcelona police station and was then sent before the judge.

Catalan police said they received a complaint on January 2 from a woman who accused Alves of sexual assault. While police declined to give no details on the case, a source close to the investigation said that Alves is accused of rape. The woman reiterated her accusation before the judge yesterday, the source added.

The alleged assault took place at a popular Barcelona nightclub overnight December 30-31, according to Spanish media reports. The woman is said to have



informed security staff in the club, who activated Barcelona city council's protocol against assaults and harassment.

A Barcelona court said earlier this month it had opened a probe "into an alleged crime of sexual assault as a result of a complaint filed by a woman against a footballer". Alves has confirmed he was at the nightclub at the time but has denied any wrongdoing, telling private Spanish television station Antena 3 earlier this month

that he has "never seen" the woman before.

"I was there, at that place, with more people having fun. Everybody knows I love to dance. Having a good time but without invading the space of others," the former Barcelona, Juventus and Paris Saint-Germain player added.

His wife, Spanish model Joana Sanz, told Antena 3 in an interview on January 9 that her husband had gone "out to dinner with friends, to disconnect a bit" on December 30. "He went out to dance and try to enjoy music as he likes, period. Nothing wrong happened...I know how respectful he is," she added.

Alves, who now plays for Mexican side Pumas UNAM, was in Barcelona on holiday following his participation at the World Cup with Brazil in Qatar. He was the oldest player to represent Brazil at the men's World Cup. In a phenomenally successful career, Alves made 408 appearances for Barcelona, with 391 of those coming in his first spell from 2008-2016.

During that initial stint, he won six La Liga titles, three Champions League crowns and four Copa del Rey trophies.

Alves joined PSG in July 2017 on a free transfer after leaving Juventus and spent two years at the French giants.