Playing in front of our fans is biggest motivation: Alaa

By Sports Reporter

Qatar captain Hassan Al-Haydos and coach Marquez Lopez (below) arrive at the Al-Masila resort yesterday.

Qatar’s goalkeeper Hassan Al-Haydos said that playing in front of their fans is the biggest motivation for the team.

Al-Haydos, who was named goalkeeper of the year in the AFC Asian Cup 2021, said that it is an honor for any player to take part in such a tournament.

He said: "As an Asian Cup is a massive tournament, and it is an honor for any player to take part in it. Playing in front of our fans is our biggest motivation. The joy we felt from being eliminated by Iran.

I hope we go into this tournament as defending champions having picked up their first title five years ago with a surprise victory over four-time champions Japan in all-white. Following China’s withdrawal as hosts because of the rigid "zero-Covid" policy, Qatar will now also stage the tournament for the first time.

Qatar will be desperate to banish the memory of their miserable World Cup campaign where their preparations have been hampered by the departure of coach Cesar Queiroz, who led them last month after a year of mixed results.

The tournament will be held in five stadiums across Qatar beginning in January 12 and finishing in February 12.

Qatar will host the Asian Cup for a record third time, which will be their 17th World Cup – the first to be held in the Middle East. The country is also set to host the FIFA World Cup – the first to be held in the continent.

Despite not being one of the continent’s greatest football powers, Qatar takes on the challenge of hosting the Asian Cup with a win in the last 16 at the 2022 World Cup, where they played their first match in the competition.

Qatar will play against China on January 22, 6pm kick-off. The opening match against Lebanon in the Khalifa International Stadium will also take place on January 12.

Qatar go into the tournament as defending champions after they beat China in the final at the Asian Cup in 2019, a feat that was Leblon's second in a row, take on Saudi Arabia and China at Khalifa International Stadium, which hosted Argentina's dramatic win over Chile in the continental championship at the Lusail Stadium earlier this year.

Qatar has been drawn into group D along with Saudi Arabia, Kyrgyzstan and Lebanon.

Oman and China are scheduled to meet the last 16 at the 2022 World Cup in the same group, but the semi-finalists in 2019 under Queiroz and Amir followed by a year of mixed results.

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**SPORT**

**Anne Marie 95 gives Sri Lanka fighting win in Colombo**

The home side struggles to a two-wicket win against Zimbabwe.

**FOCUS**

Former Us Open champ Woodland set to return after brain surgery

**BOTTOMLINE**

Late birdbath lifts Kirk to PGA victory at Kapalua

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

South Africa's Klaasen quits Test cricket

**CRICKET**

Gary Woodland clinched his first PGA Tour title on Sunday when he chipped in for birdie from the fairway at the par-4 17th hole of the Kapalua Resort in Lahaina.

**SPORT**

Tiger Woods said Sunday he is making a big step forward in his long-standing struggle with back pain, as a new video released from Jan. 9 showed him playing golf.

**APP**

**Theegala and Klaasen battle through the rain for South Africa**

South Africa's Klaasen and Theegala battle through the rain for South Africa in the second Test against Sri Lanka.}

**GOLF**

**Woods reveals Nike partnership ending**

The golfer announced on Sunday that his 15-year relationship with the iconic sporting goods company will end.

**Gulf Times**

**Tuesday, January 9, 2024**

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Lieutenant Franz Beckenbauer, widely regarded as the father of modern German football, passed away on June 2 at the age of 78, the German Football Association (DFB) said. It said that he died of an illness that had been in the last few years been suffering from health problems and lived mostly from public funds, as required by the public law in Germany, but was later terminated for his involvement in the infamousue scandal surrounding Germany’s successful bid to host the 2006 World Cup. His death came only five days after he was discovered by his country’s strongest rival, Hans-Joachim Watzke.

Pepe Reina’s show against Lens last week was the starting point of Ze Roberto’s comeback, cashing in on her third match point to seal victory. “It was a great match, with two fantastic teams,” said Reina after her side’s victory was hailed as “miracle”.

In the opening game of the third set, third seed Barbora Krejcikova 7-5 defeated Russian Anna Kalinskaya 6-4. Krejcikova broke Kalinskaya’s 13th match point to seal victory. “It was a great match, with two fantastic teams,” said Reina after her side’s victory was hailed as “miracle”.

Yesterday, it was a hard won arm that allowed the world champion, but the Rinderlauer facing cover remains undefeated. “It was a good win, very fast. We try not to take risks and we were both a near arm and we stepped down on the outside lane to the first pitch. It’s a weak point of the car because it was taken in the first pitch. We’ll try to work with the team and I’m happy with the result,” said Reina.

“Sometimes you have punctures during training, sometimes you go faster and sometimes you just don’t know what to do. On Monday, it was two punctures on the rocky roads from Al Duwadimi to Al Ain. Yesterday, Leopold had a run out of tenses in his last 24 minutes and dropped to earth. The third set was a 100 16-3 and the French Cup quarter-final against the winner on Saturday, retained first place in the competition with a haul of 30 points. It was an unbeaten arm that allowed the world champion, but the Rinderlauer facing cover remains undefeated. “It was a good win, very fast. We try not to take risks and we were both a near arm and we stepped down on the outside lane to the first pitch. It’s a weak point of the car because it was taken in the first pitch. We’ll try to work with the team and I’m happy with the result,” said Reina.

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Moriyasu confident despite selecting new-look Japan squad

O ur 24-gram eyes from the 30 that featured in the FIFA World Cup 2022 qualifying group C in 2022, Japan’s 23-man squad have not been selected since 2019. And their competitive rhythm has been broken.

Japan is a country where football is a part of everyday life. The national team, the Samurai Blue, is considered one of the strongest in Asia. However, their recent performance has been lackluster. In the 2022 World Cup qualification, they finished second in their group, behind Australia, and were eliminated in the quarter-finals of the Asian Cup. The team's confidence was further damaged when they lost to Iran in the semi-finals of the Asian Cup.

Moriyasu confident despite selecting new-look Japan squad

Moriyasu is confident that the team can bounce back in the upcoming World Cup and Asian Cup tournaments. He believes that the team has the potential to do well if they can put in the effort and work together.

Moriyasu said that the team's focus will be on the World Cup, and he is confident that the team can qualify for the tournament. He also mentioned that the team's performance in the World Cup will be a good indicator of their readiness for the upcoming Asian Cup.

Moriyasu's confidence is based on the team's recent performance in the Asian Cup, where they reached the final and won the tournament. The team's performance in the Asian Cup was a significant improvement from their performance in the previous Asian Cup, where they were eliminated in the group stage.

Moriyasu also mentioned that the team's selection for the World Cup will be based on merit and performance in the past year. He believes that the team's performance in the Asian Cup and the recent friendly matches will be a good indicator of their readiness for the World Cup.

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