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Sunday, September 1, 2024  
Safar 28, 1446 AH

# GULF TIMES SPORT



TENNIS

Djokovic stunned  
by Popyrin, Sinner  
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QSL CUP

## Salah nets hat-trick as Wakrah beat Khor

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

Omar Salah scored a hat-trick as Al Wakrah beat Al Khor 5-1 in the opening round match of the QSL Cup at the Thani Bin Jassim Stadium yesterday.

In the other match of the day, Al Shamal defeated Umm Salal 2-1 in their Group B match at the Suhaim Bin Hamad Stadium.

Hat-trick man Salah struck in the 12th, 16th and 44th minutes of the match while Mohamed Khaled Hassan (51st minute) and Nasser al-Yazidi (53rd minute) scored the other two goals for The Blue Wave.

Al Khor's only goal was scored by Fares Saeed Amer in the 17th minute.

Al Wakrah launched their first offensive in the 10th minute but the telling header was punched away by Al Khor goalkeeper Ali Nader.

But two minutes later, the Al

Wakrah wave hit again as Salah and al-Yazidi combined superbly breaking in from the left with the former providing the pass.

Al-Yazidi's kick was however blocked by the goalkeeper but the ball bounced to a waiting Salah on the right who coolly put it into the net (1-0). The goal-scoring action continued as a minute later, Salah broke in again to realize a fine move initiated by Abdelkarim Hassan from left of the midfield.

Salah first headed the ball but it fell out of a diving goalkeeper's hands before kicking it back into the goal (2-0) Al Khor immediately hit back with an against the run of play strike with Fares Saeed seizing an opportunity as he battled to win the ball from defenders Yousef Tarek and Aissa Laidouni just inside the 'D' to run in and beat the Al Wakrah keeper Saoud Mubarak (1-2).

Just before half time, Salah completed his hat-trick as Al Khor defence tried to clear a Abdelkarim ball from the left but it went

to Salah who moved in to make his way for a fine field goal, his third of the match (3-1).

Al Khor's hopes of fighting back were dashed soon in the second half as Jassim Fahad provided Mohamed Khaled with a fine lob from the right to head the fourth goal of his team (4-1). Minutes later, with Al Khor defenders grappling to keep control of the ball just outside the box, Al Yazidi pounced on a chance to turn and make a telling kick (5-1).

Omar, Mannai scored for Al Shamal Mohamed Omar (41st minute) and Mohamed Naser al-Mannai (61st minute) scored while Al Shamal's consolation goal came off the boot of Antonio Mance in 90+4 minute.

Mance earlier had a moment of brilliance in the 23rd minute, as he cut past three Al Shamal defenders inside the 18-yard box before releasing a low-driven shot that went just inches wide of the goal.

Al Shamal got their own major chance in the 38th minute, with

Mohamed Naser al-Mannai having the opportunity to fire home a long ranger after a rebound of Abdulaziz Mohamed's shot, but he missed the ball.

Three minutes later, the deadlock was broken when Omar's well-taken shot from the edge of the box sailed into the back of the net. Al Mannai eventually registered his name on the scorers sheet in the 61st minute from a set piece with his low but precise shot-catching goalkeeper Jehad Mohammed Hudib napping.

A late rally saw Umm Salal cut the deficit in the fourth minute of stoppage time, with Mance nodding home from close range following a brilliant pass by substitute Othman Alawi.

Omar Salah of Al Wakrah in action against Al Khor during their QSL Cup match at Thani Bin Jassim Stadium yesterday. Al Wakrah won 5-1.



FOOTBALL

## Haaland treble fires City, Rice sent off as Arsenal held

BRENTFORD EASE PAST SOUTHAMPTON, DURAN DELIVERS FOR VILLA

AFP  
London

Erling Haaland fired Manchester City to the top of the Premier League with a hat-trick in the champions' 3-1 win at West Ham, while Declan Rice was controversially sent off as Arsenal were held to a damaging 1-1 draw by Brighton yesterday.

Haaland's second hat-trick in successive matches ensured Pep Guardiola's team extended their flawless start to the new season.

City have won the opening three matches of their bid for an unprecedented fifth successive English title and Haaland has been their driving force.

The Norway striker netted in the opening weekend win at Chelsea, hit a treble in the rout of Ipswich and tore West Ham apart with the latest display of his predatory finishing. Haaland has scored an incredible 70 goals in 69 league games since joining City from Borussia Dortmund.

The 24-year-old put the visitors ahead in the 10th minute from Bernardo Silva's pass before City defender Ruben Dias turned Jarrod Bowen's cross into his own net nine minutes later.

Haaland restored City's advantage in the 30th minute, drilling into the roof of the net from the edge of the area, and wrapped up the points in the 83rd minute with a deft chipped finish. Both Arsenal and Brighton had maximum points from their opening two games and the Gunners looked set for another victory when Kai Havertz pounced on a Lewis Dunk error to lob in the opening goal.

However, the game turned just seconds into the second half when Rice controversially received the first red card of his career. The England midfielder was deemed to have kicked the ball away as



Manchester City's Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring his third goal during the English Premier League match against West Ham United at the London Stadium yesterday. (AFP)

Joel Veltman shaped up to take a Brighton free-kick and was shown a second yellow card.

"I was amazed, amazed, amazed!" an outraged Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta said. "Amazed because of how inconsistent

decisions can be. "In the first half, there are two incidents and nothing happens. Then, in a non-critical area, the ball hits Declan, he turns around, he doesn't see the player coming and he touches the ball."

Brighton quickly made their man advantage count as Joao Pedro swept home the rebound after David Raya denied Yankuba Minteh.

Both sides had chances to win it as Bart Verbruggen denied Havertz and Georginio Rutter headed off target late on for the visitors.

But Arsenal had to settle for a point that sees them cede early ground in the title race.

Aston Villa bounced back from their defeat to Arsenal last weekend, defeating Leicester 2-1 to secure their second win in three games.

Amadou Onana stretched to turn in Jacob Ramsey's cross from a well-worked free-kick to open the scoring at the King Power Stadium. Jhon Duran's towering header just two minutes after replacing Ollie Watkins gave Villa the breathing space they needed.

Facundo Buonanotte pulled a goal back, but the Foxes remain winless on their return to the Premier League.

Southampton have found the jump up to the top flight just as hard. Brentford eased past the Saints 3-1 with Bryan Mbeumo scoring twice. Everton suffered another gut punch on their final season at Goodison Park as Bournemouth came from 2-0 down after 87 minutes to win 3-2.

Two quickfire goals from Michael Keane and Dominic Calvert-Lewin early in the second half had put the Toffees in control.

But Antoine Semenyo gave Bournemouth life before Lewis Cook and Luis Sinisterra ensured Everton remain without a point this season. Ipswich got their first Premier League point in 22 years in a 1-1 draw against Fulham.

Honours were also even in a 1-1 draw between Nottingham Forest and Wolves. Manchester United host Liverpool in the blockbuster fixture of the weekend at Old Trafford today.

PARALYMPIC GAMES

## Qatar's Arshad confident of good show in Paris

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

Qatar's Ali Arshad yesterday said he was confident of a good show at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games as he begins his medal hunt in the 100m wheelchair event.

Owing to his success in recent years including a bronze medal at the Hangzhou Asian Para Games in 2022, Ali appeared to be a strong candidate to secure a podium finish in the event.

"It's a big responsibility as Qatar fans expect a medal from me. I am relishing the challenge," Ali said in a statement.

"The competition no doubt will be very tough but I am ready and will give my best," he added.

Qatar's head of the delegation Dr Hassan al-Ansari said Ali's morale was high ahead of his opening event, reposing his confidence on the athlete.

"Ali Arshad has been performing very well in international events. We are hopeful of a medal from him but the first target is to reach the 100m final," he said.

Ali will also take part in the 800m wheelchair race event starting on September 6.

Qatar's other athlete Sara Masud will take part in women's shot put event scheduled to begin on September 5.



Qatar's Ali Arshad to start his medal hunt in the 100m wheelchair event today. He will also take part in the 800m wheelchair race starting on September 6.

### Bosnia and Egypt clinch crucial wins in sitting volleyball

Gold medal hopefuls Bosnia yesterday booked their place in the semi-finals of the Paris Paralympics men's sitting volleyball semi-finals, while Egypt kept their hopes of reaching the last four alive by beating hosts France. Bosnia, the two-time Paralympic champions in the event, ensured their progression to the semi-finals with a thrilling 3-2 win against Kazakhstan. Since first qualifying for the Paralympics in 2000, Bosnia have never finished outside of the podium and they made a big move to maintaining that record when they sealed their second Pool A win in as many matches. "We hoped this was going to be much easier," said Bosnia's Stevan Crnobrnja. "In the end, we won the game through our will to win." The Bosnians won a closely-contested first set before racing into a 2-0 lead with a dominant performance in the second. However, Kazakhstan fought back to level matters and force a decider against the European champions. Bosnia showed their mettle by claiming a 15-8 victory in the fifth set and became the first team to qualify for the semi-finals. Later in the same pool, Egypt raced to a straight-sets win against France to secure their first win of the tournament. Despite a partisan 3,800 fans packed into the Paris North Arena, France were unable to trouble the Egyptians as they fell to back-to-back defeats. Egypt and Kazakhstan will face off tomorrow with the winner set for a place in the semis, while Bosnia will seek to maintain their 100 percent record when they play France.

CRICKET

# Root leaves Sri Lanka with a huge task after going past Cook's tally of 33 centuries

THE 33-YEAR-OLD FORMER ENGLAND CAPTAIN SCORES SECOND CENTURY OF THE MATCH

AFP  
London

Joe Root set an England record of 34 Test centuries as Sri Lanka were left with a mammoth chase to win the second Test at Lord's yesterday.

Root's 103, the star batsman's second hundred of the match after he made 143 in the first innings, took England to a second-innings total of 251 all out on the third day.

That left Sri Lanka needing 483 to level this three-Test series at 1-1 following England's five-wicket win at Old Trafford last week.

Root was last man out after edging ahead of retired England opener Alastair Cook's mark of 33 Test centuries.

And having made the quickest century of his 145-Test career, off just 111 balls, the 33-year-old Root then held two catches at first slip before bad light ended play for the day.

Sri Lanka were 53-2 at stumps, needing 430 more runs for what would be an astounding win.

His seventh Test hundred at Lord's gave Root sole possession of the record for the most Test centuries at the 'Home of Cricket' he had shared with his fellow former England captains Graham Gooch and Michael Vaughan.

It was also the first time Root had made hundreds in both innings of the same Test, with the Yorkshireman joining the West Indies' George Headley, Gooch and Vaughan as the only batsmen to have achieved that feat at Lord's.

England resumed on 25-1, already 256 runs ahead, after dismissing Sri Lanka for 196 in reply to their first-innings 427.

Ollie Pope, two not out overnight, ended a run of three single-figure scores since succeeding the injured Ben Stokes as England captain at the start of this series.

But Pope, who prior to this match had spoken about the difficulties of balancing the responsibility of captaincy with his role as a No 3 batsman, gave his wicket



England's Joe Root (centre left) is embraced by his father Matt (centre right) as he walks back to the pavilion after making his second hundred in the same match on day three of the second Test against Sri Lanka at Lord's Cricket Ground in London yesterday. (AFP)

away on 17. Asitha Fernando dropped short and Pope backed away, only for his square slash to fly straight to Prabath Jayasuriya at deep point.

England, who have won their last six Tests against Sri Lanka, were now 69-3 but led by exactly 300 runs.

Harry Brook should have been out for nine when he top-edged a slog sweep off left-arm spinner Jayasuriya only for Nisshan Madushka to drop a routine catch.

Jayasuriya did dismiss Brook for 37, with Madushka making no mistake at deep midwicket, and had Jamie Smith lbw for

26 after the wicketkeeper missed a sweep. The serene Root, however, twice swept and then reverse-swept Jayasuriya for three fours in an over.

After Gus Atkinson, fresh from his maiden first-class century of 118 in the first innings, and Matthew Potts both fell in quick succession, Root - then 88 not out - risked running out of partners before he reached three figures.

But Olly Stone held firm, with an elated Root going to his hundred when he cut Lahiru Kumara for a 10th four before he holed out off the paceman.

That left Sri Lanka needing to make history of their own, with the highest fourth-innings total to win a match in 147 years of Test history - the West Indies' 418-7 against Australia at St John's in 2002/03, and the corresponding record at Lord's the West Indies' 344-1 against England in 1984.

Even with the floodlights on, the increasingly gloomy conditions made batting difficult and Pope deployed frontline spinner Shoab Bashir and Root's part-time off-breaks in a bid to stop the match being halted for bad light.

But the umpires did let England's quicks bowl as Atkinson had Madushka (13) edging to Root before the injury-plagued Stone, in his first Test for three years, removed Pathum Nissanka (14) in similar fashion.

SCOREBOARD

<b>England 1st Innings</b>	<b>427</b>
<b>Sri Lanka 1st Innings</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>England 2nd Innings (overnight: 25-1)</b>	
B. Duckett c Mathews b Rathnayake	24
D. Lawrence c Madushka b Kumara	7
O. Pope c Jayasuriya b A Fernando	17
J. Root c Ka Mendis b Kumara	103
H. Brook c Madushka b Jayasuriya	37
J. Smith lbw b Jayasuriya	26
C. Woakes c Nissanka b Rathnayake	5
G. Atkinson c Kumara b A Fernando	14
M. Potts c Chandimal b A Fernando	2
O. Stone c Nissanka b Kumara	0
S. Bashir not out	1
<b>Extras (lb5, nb1, w2)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Total (all out, 54.3 overs, 255 mins)</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Fall of wickets: 1-22 (Lawrence), 2-36 (Duckett), 3-69 (Pope), 4-127 (Brook), 5-171 (Smith), 6-196 (Woakes), 7-221 (Atkinson), 8-227 (Potts), 9-250 (Stone), 10-251 (Root)</b>	
<b>Bowling: A Fernando 13-0-52-3 (1nb, 2w); Kumara 12.3-0-53-3; Rathnayake 9-1-36-2; Jayasuriya 20-2-105-2</b>	
<b>Sri Lanka 2nd Innings (target: 483)</b>	
N. Madushka c Root b Atkinson	13
D. Karunaratne not out	23
P. Nissanka c Root b Stone	14
P. Jayasuriya not out	3
<b>Extras</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total (2 wks, 20 overs, 91 mins)</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>To bat: A Mathews, D Chandimal, D de Silva, K Mendis, A Fernando, L Kumara, M Rathnayake</b>	
<b>Fall of wickets: 1-19 (Madushka), 2-43 (Nissanka)</b>	
<b>Bowling: Woakes 5-1-9-0; Atkinson 4-0-15-1; Bashir 5-0-11-0; Root 4-1-9-0; Potts 1-0-8-0; Stone 1-0-1-1</b>	
<b>Match position: Sri Lanka need a further 430 runs to win with eight wickets standing</b>	
<b>Toss: Sri Lanka</b>	

SPOTLIGHT

## Mehidy's 5 wickets give Bangladesh advantage

AFP  
Rawalpindi

Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz grabbed five wickets to help Bangladesh skittle Pakistan for 274 on the second day of the second Test in Rawalpindi yesterday.

The 26-year-old recorded his 10th five-wicket haul in Tests to cap a good day for the tourists, who are looking to win only their third away series.

Bangladesh finished the day on 10-0 despite opener Shadman Islam being dropped by Saud Shakeel off Mir Hamza on the first ball of the innings. But it was Bangladesh's bowlers who steered them to a strong position.

Mehidy dismissed Pakistan captain Shan Masood for 57 and opener Saim Ayub for 58 after the home team had been well-placed on 99-1 at lunch.

He produced match-turning figures of 4-21 in Bangladesh's 10-wicket win in the first Test a week ago, and snared Khurram Shahzad for 12 and then Mohammed Ali and Abrar Ahmed to end the innings with 5-61.

Mehidy was ably assisted by fast bowler Taskin Ahmed, who took 3-57.

Agha Salman, dropped on nought by Zakir Hasan off Shakib Al Hasan, was Taskin's third wicket after scoring 54 with three boundaries and two sixes.

Taskin said he was happy to be back in the longer format of Test cricket.

"It's a good sporting pitch and we need to bat the full day and get a good lead," Taskin said. "It's great to be back in red ball (cricket) after one-and-a-half years. I enjoyed that and adapted well."

Salman said the pitch was bet-



Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz (fourth left) celebrates after the dismissal of Pakistan's Saim Ayub during the second day of second Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium yesterday. (AFP)

ter than the first Test track and should provide help for the spin bowlers.

"Unlike the first Test, this wicket has lively grass and I believe we have enough runs," he said.

Desperate for a win to level the two-match series, Pakistan started well but lost wickets at regular intervals to slump from a relatively strong 107-1 on a greenish but slow Rawalpindi pitch.

Taskin bowled first Test centurion Saud Shakeel for 16, the left-hander having already survived a dropped catch by Mehidy off Nahid Rana on one.

Babar Azam, Pakistan's best batter, fell leg-before to spinner

Shakib Al Hasan for 31, having now gone 15 Test innings without a half-century.

The first day's play on Friday was washed out due to rain but Pakistan shone with solid batting in the first session.

Masood, under pressure after scores of six and 14 in the first Test, hit two boundaries before he fell leg-before to Mehidy in the third over after the lunch break.

Fellow left-hander Ayub was more aggressive, hitting two sixes and four boundaries before he was stumped by wicketkeeper Liton Das off Mehidy.

Taskin, brought in for the unfit Shoriful Islam as Bangladesh's only change, bowled Abdullah

Shafique for nought off the sixth ball of the match.

Bangladesh's 10-wicket win in the first Test, also in Rawalpindi, was their first over Pakistan in 14 attempts.

Pakistan made two changes from the first Test, resting spearheads Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah to bring in pace bowler Hamza and spinner Abrar Ahmed.

BRIEF SCORES

**Pakistan first innings 274** (Saim Ayub 58, Shan Masood 57, Salman Agha 54; Mehidy Hasan Miraz 5-61, Taskin Ahmed 3-57)  
**Bangladesh first innings 10-0**  
**Toss: Bangladesh**

## Groves wins Vuelta stage 14 as Roglic survives puncture scare



Team Alpecin's Kaden Groves (right) celebrates after crossing the finish line of stage 14 of the Vuelta a Espana, a 200.5km race between Villafraanca del Bierzo and Villablino, yesterday. (AFP)

MADRID: Australian rider Kaden Groves edged Wout van Aert in a thrilling sprint to win stage 14 of the Vuelta a Espana yesterday as Primož Roglic survived a late puncture scare to remain in contention for the title. Overall leader Ben O'Connor, who had a horror day in the saddle on Friday, had a smoother ride on the longest stage of the tour, a 200km route between Villafraanca del Bierzo and Villablino. He will go into today's 15th stage still wearing the leader's red jersey, 1 minute 21 seconds ahead of Roglic.

The day, however, belonged to Alpecin-Deceuninck rider Groves who added this win to his victory in stage two.

Van Aert, who was aiming for a fourth victory in this Vuelta, had his Visma-Lease a Bike team riding all day to control and recapture the breakaway, and secure a good position in the sprint. The Belgian kicked first, as he likes to do, but in the dash to the line, it was the 25-year-old Quaeenslander who crossed the line first, just centimetres ahead of his rival.

"To win a man on man sprint against Wout is pretty awe-

some," Groves told *Eurosport* at the finish.

"I didn't hesitate. I think I did a pretty good sprint, and it felt like a bit of a drag race against Wout but in the end it was good enough to beat him.

"My third Vuelta and my sixth win, it's good to see the consistency paying off."

Van Aert still heads the green jersey classification 109 points ahead of Groves.

O'Connor dropped nearly two minutes to Roglic on Friday but had a more comfortable ride this time and almost snatched a couple of bonus seconds when Roglic suffered a puncture 14 kilometres from the finish.

His Red Bull-Bora-hansgrohe car was on hand to ensure a quick bike exchange, however, and the Slovenian was able to rejoin the peloton.

Roglic and O'Connor will both be aware that today's stage 15 could well decide the outcome of the Vuelta.

It is a mountainous 142.9 kilometre ride with the riders tackling the Alto de Santo Emiliano and a double ascent of the Alto de la Colladiella before the Cuitu Negro with a vicious steep finale.

TENNIS / US OPEN

# Djokovic falls to fearless Popyrin, Sinner advances

THE 25-YEAR-OLD AUSSIE HANDS DJOKOVIC HIS EARLIEST NEW YORK EXIT IN 18 YEARS

AFP/Reuters  
New York

**N**ovak Djokovic's latest bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title crashed to a halt as 28th-ranked Alexei Popyrin knocked the defending champion out of the US Open third round.

One day after third seed Carlos Alcaraz slumped to a shock defeat against 74th-ranked Botić van de Zandschulp, 25-year-old Popyrin robbed the tournament of another superstar with a 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 victory.

Also yesterday, world number one and Australian Open champion Sinner crushed 87th-ranked Christopher O'Connell of Australia in straight sets for a place in the last-16 of the tournament.

Sinner, 23, yesterday won 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 in 1 hour and 53 minutes. The Italian fired 15 aces in his re-sounding win.

Sinner is the only men's top-three seed to make it into the second week after shock defeats for Djokovic and Alcaraz, and he did it in efficient style.

"Today was a great match," he said yesterday. "I felt like today the serve was working very well."

Sinner also made a point of thanking the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd for their support.

Popyrin handed Djokovic his earliest US Open exit in 18 years and his earliest Grand Slam exit since he fell in the second round of the Australian Open in 2017 - which was also the last year the Serbian great failed to claim a single Grand Slam title.

Although he won the Olympic gold he had long coveted at the Paris Games, an uneven season that included knee surgery saw Djokovic come up empty in the majors. He had beaten Popyrin in three prior encounters, including at the Australian Open and Wim-



Alexei Popyrin of Australia celebrates his victory over Novak Djokovic of Serbia during the 2024 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. (USA TODAY Sports)

bledon this year. But a career-high 14 double faults - 49 unforced errors total - were too much for Djokovic to overcome.

"It was just an awful match for me," Djokovic said. "I mean, I tried so many things, and sometimes that's an issue...you move away from the basics that work. You lose the foundation. You lose the movement, the timing, the rhythm, the tempo, everything, whether it's a serve or any other shot."

Popyrin, coming off the biggest title of his career at the Montreal Masters, saved five break points in the sixth game of the match, swinging fearlessly to seize the first two sets.

Djokovic gave himself some breathing room with an early break in the third. Popyrin clawed back only for Djokovic to break him twice more, the Serbian taking full advantage of Popyrin's mounting

errors. But the Aussie responded in a tense fourth set, saving break points in the second game before breaking again for a 3-2 lead.

He stayed patient as Djokovic saved three break points and when the Serbian double faulted to gift him another Popyrin capitalized with a blistering forehand winner and let out a massive roar. Djokovic delivered four double faults in dropping his serve to trail 5-2. He won the next two games, but Popyrin claimed the match with a love game.

"I was waiting for him to kind of step up," Popyrin said. "I didn't want to be one of those moments where Novak kind of stepped up and came back from two sets to love down. It was kind of extra motivation for me not to do that and to win that fourth set."

Popyrin will next face Frances Tiafoe, who beat fellow American

Ben Shelton 4-6, 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-3 in a pulsating afternoon contest on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Tiafoe avenged a quarter-final loss to Shelton in New York last year, withstanding 23 aces.

**Late show for Sabalenka**

All the drama on Ashe Stadium meant second-seeded Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka didn't get underway on the cavernous court that seats nearly 24,000 until eight minutes past midnight - the latest start to a match in US Open history by eight minutes.

She took it in stride, and after a slow start wrapped up a 2-6, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova at 1:48am.

Men's fourth seed Alexander Zverev started earlier but laboured later on Louis Armstrong Stadium, where he beat Argentina's Tomas Martin Etcheverry 5-7, 7-5,



Aryna Sabalenka from Belarus in action during her match against Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova yesterday. (Reuters)



Italy's Jannik Sinner plays a return to Australia's Christopher O'Connell during their third-round match yesterday. (AFP)

6-1, 6-3 in a match that ended at 2:35am - the second latest US Open finish ever.

World number six Andrey Rublev of Russia beat Czech Jiri Lehecka 6-3, 7-5, 6-4 and eighth-seeded Norwegian Casper Ruud rallied from two sets down to beat 19-year-old Shang Juncheng of China 6-7 (1/7), 3-6, 6-0, 6-3, 6-1.

Olympic gold medalist Zheng Qinwen of China, who rallied from a set down in each of her first two

matches, dispatched Germany's Jule Niemeier 6-2, 6-1.

**Pegula beats Bouzas Maneiro** Jessica Pegula's strong serving and smothering defence led to a text-book 6-3 6-3 win over Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro yesterday.

The sixth-seeded American, who struggled with injuries earlier in the year, produced her best form of the tournament so far on Arthur Ashe Stadium court.

FORMULA ONE

# Norris sets up chance to chop Verstappen's lead

AFP  
Monza, Italy

**L**ando Norris gave himself a great chance to further cut Max Verstappen's Formula One championship lead by taking pole position for the Italian Grand Prix yesterday.

Trailing by 70 points in the drivers' standings, Norris clocked one minute and 19.327 seconds in a one-two with teammate Oscar Piastri, as Red Bull's Verstappen finished nearly seven-tenths of a second behind in seventh.

Briton Norris claimed his fourth pole of the season, and second in succession, in a car which looks capable of a similar result as at last weekend's Dutch GP, when he romped home to victory nearly 23 seconds ahead of the three-time champion Verstappen.

A dominant display from Norris and Piastri is great news for McLaren who are only 30 points behind Red Bull in the constructors' championship.

"I think for us to come away with a 1-2, to come away with another pole, was probably not quite what we were expecting. But in a good way, of course," Norris told reporters.

Verstappen's troubles continued, the Dutchman complaining on the team radio about steering and lack of grip on the newly laid tarmac at the Temple of Speed.

The 26-year-old has failed to win any of the last five GPs - only finishing on the podium in two - after claiming the honours at seven of the first 10.

However Norris expects Verstappen to fight back and give the McLaren cars a run for their money.

"For sure it's a good opportunity (to cut Verstappen's lead). I mean I expect him to come through and probably be behind us quite quickly... I expect them to



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates his pole position after the qualifying session, ahead of the Italian Grand Prix at Autodromo Nazionale Monza circuit yesterday. (AFP)

probably be a bit more hopeful tomorrow," said Norris of Verstappen. "He still seemed quick, like in Q2 he is right there and ended up quicker than me even on a used tyre."

George Russell will sit on the second row for Mercedes alongside Ferrari driver and home hope Charles Leclerc while Lewis Hamilton was one place and 0.509sec ahead of Verstappen in the second Mercedes.

"I don't really know what to expect because I've just not really done the laps to be honest, so I'll just have to trust my instincts and go from there really and adapt on the fly," said Russell.

"I'm really, really pleased to be lining up P3 after the day we've had and the car definitely seems

to have potential." Hamilton, who was fastest in the day's practice session, is racing for the last time at Monza as a Mercedes driver and Ferrari fans will be keen to see how the 39-year-old will perform today ahead of his move to the Scuderia at the end of the year.

Mercedes announced yesterday morning that Hamilton would be replaced by teenage rookie Andrea Kimi Antonelli, who has had an eventful weekend after crashing and damaging Russell's car in Friday's first practice.

The Italian, who celebrated his 18th birthday last weekend, nearly crashed out of his Formula Two sprint race almost straight after the start, but managed to get back on the track and finish in 18th.

However Mercedes did not say

for how long Antonelli's contract would run and team chief Toto Wolff didn't close the door on snatching Verstappen for 2026 when asked if he discarded the idea.

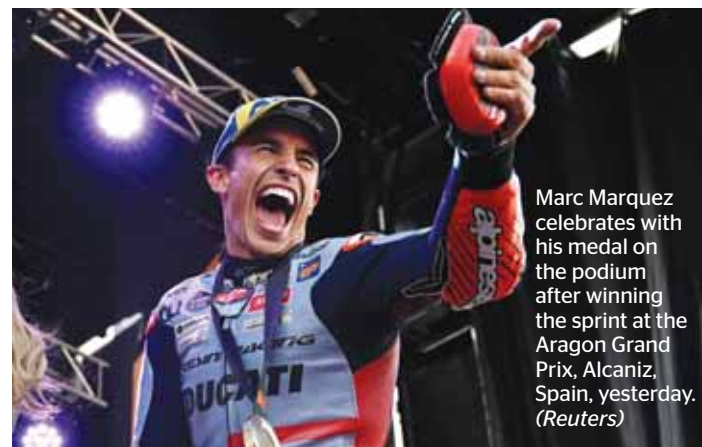
"If flirting outside happens, then they will know it before me. These guys will know it at the same time," Wolff told reporters yesterday.

Another rookie Franco Colapinto will have a tough debut F1 race after replacing struggling Logan Sargeant who was axed by Williams after a disastrous weekend at Zandvoort.

The 21-year-old is the first Argentine driver to compete in F1 for over two decades but will start way back in 18th after being eliminated in Q1.

MOTOGP

# Marquez delights his home fans at Aragon



Marc Marquez celebrates with his medal on the podium after winning the sprint at the Aragon Grand Prix, Alcañiz, Spain, yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP  
Alcañiz, Spain

**M**arc Marquez dominated the Aragon sprint race yesterday to end three years in the MotoGP wilderness.

The six-time MotoGP champion led from pole on his Ducati-Gresini bike to crush his rivals, taking the chequered flag by almost three seconds from Jorge Martin with Pedro Acosta in third.

"I feel so very good," beamed Marquez. "The most important day, of course, is tomorrow. Looking forward to it!"

Reigning double world champion Francesco Bagnaia suffered a miserable time, finishing ninth to relinquish the overall riders' lead to Martin.

But the afternoon belonged to Marquez.

The Spaniard made a lightning start from pole to lead Martin into the first bend as Bagnaia suffered a slow getaway.

The 31-year-old Marquez had cruised to pole in qualifying. He quickly pulled clear by over a second from the chasing pack, to the delight of tens of thousands of his home fans.

At the midway point of the 11-lap dash, the only potential obstacle between Marquez and the chequered flag was Marquez himself.

In the end, his winning margin was a yawning 2.961sec - celebrated by his supporters waving flags marked with his race number 93 - the year of his birth.

This was the Spanish star's first-ever sprint success after five runner-up finishes this campaign.

Today, he will start hot favourite in the Grand Prix itself after knocking at the door having finished second three times in the first half of the season.

Victory ends a long painful wait, stretching back to October 2021 and his last Grand Prix success at Emilia Romagna, after a series of crushing injuries and crashes and a misfiring bike.

"It's already been a fantastic weekend, but the race is the race," reflected Marquez who towered over the pack in qualifying.

"You can't make any mistake. It was a bit tricky in the opening laps but then I of this fantastic crowd." Marquez has enjoyed a stunning upturn in fortune since leaving Honda after 11 years to join Ducati's Gresini team this season.

His performances have been rewarded with a seat on a factory Ducati alongside double world champion Bagnaia who now trails Martin by three points.

"It was a great race after my fall in qualifying," reported Martin.

"It was hard to regain my confidence. I tried to follow Marc but it was impossible. I hope tomorrow that I'll be able to battle with him."

## FOCUS

# QREC to participate in Salon du Cheval

The Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC) will participate in the Salon du Cheval to be held in Morocco from September 30 to October 6 with a large international participation.

The 15th edition of the Salon will be held under the patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI of Morocco. QREC's participation in the salon this year comes at the invitation of the Morocco side and QREC accepted the invitation and included it under the framework of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture.

The city of El Jadida has been hosting the activities of the Salon since 2008. QREC was the platinum sponsor of the salon for the first time in 2018, which contributed to the value of the salon, emphasised the depth of strate-

gic relations between Qatar and Morocco in various fields and increased the co-operation between QREC and the Association du Salon du Cheval, which organises this event annually.

QREC is keen to participate in the Salon du Cheval every year, especially as the salon is considered one of the distinguished events in Morocco. QREC will participate in the Salon through an official delegation that will be present in the QREC's pavilion at the International Village in El Jadida. Preparations are currently underway to equip the pavilion and provide all the requirements to promote Qatar's equestrian sport.

Through the pavilion, QREC promotes its events, including the purebred Arabian horse shows and horse races at the Al Rayyan and Al Uqdah racecourses, as well as the



major international racing events, which QREC sponsors annually, including the Qatar Goodwood Festival in the UK and the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe in France.

While the latter will coincide

with the timing of the Salon du Cheval this year, QREC will be present in both events.

Every year, QREC's pavilion receives large numbers of guests and visitors attending the Salon.

The Qatari pavilion provides the

opportunity to learn about Qatar's commitment to Arabian horses and role in the development of Arabian horse breeds in the world, as well as to learn about the horse racing programme each season and the most prominent victories of Qatari-owned horses at the world's top racecourses.

The Salon du Cheval comprises several events, including the Grand Prix of the King Mohamed VI of jumping, the International Arabian Horse show (A) and the Grand Prix of King Mohamed VI of Tbourida.

The latter attracts huge public interest and its contests are held daily throughout the Salon.

This year's edition of the Salon will be held under the theme "Horse Farming in Morocco: Innovation and Challenge". During the Salon's activities, all profes-

sions related to horses will be represented, modern and traditional saddle making, modern farriery, "Tbourida" rifle making, and veterinary medicine laboratories.

The Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida celebrates the equestrian heritage in its cultural, historical and scientific dimensions through the display of paintings, artworks and manuscripts, as well as through cultural and scientific lectures.

According to the figures officially announced by the Association du Salon du Cheval of Morocco, last year's edition of the Salon, in which QREC participated, saw the participation of 40 countries represented by 100 exhibitors.

The events were attended over seven days by 160,000 local and international visitors with 700 riders and 1,000 horses completing in various contests.

## LA LIGA

# Raphinha claims hat-trick as Barca trounce Valladolid

'We're growing as a team. I think it's a very good start to the season'

AFP  
Barcelona

Brazil winger Raphinha scored a hat-trick as Barcelona thrashed Real Valladolid 7-0 yesterday to make it four wins from four in La Liga under new coach Hansi Flick.

While bitter rivals Real Madrid have stumbled early following the much-trumpeted arrival of Kylian Mbappe, Barcelona are off to a flying start despite their continued financial difficulties.

They are also missing Frenkie de Jong, Gavi and Ronald Araujo but have a maximum 12 points heading into the international break, leaving them seven clear of Madrid who face Real Betis today.

"We're growing as a team. I think it's a very good start to the season," said Barcelona captain Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

"I'm proud of how things are going... hopefully we can continue like that in the next weeks."

Barcelona's best start to a La Liga campaign came in 2013-14 when they started the season with eight straight wins, although they were piped to the title that year by Atletico Madrid.

Raphinha opened the scoring for Barcelona at the Olympic Stadium on 20 minutes as he chested down a pass from Pau Cubarsi and flicked elegantly into the far corner with the outside of his left boot.

Robert Lewandowski soon doubled the lead when he latched onto a ball through from Lamine Yamal and squeezed a shot past Valladolid goalkeeper Karl Hein, on loan from Arsenal.

Jules Kounde made it three before half-time when a corner dropped to the France defender inside the area and he stabbed into the top corner while off-balance.

Raphinha had a simple tap-in from close range just past the hour, with Lewandowski and Yamal involved before the ball broke kindly for the Brazilian.

He completed his treble on 72 minutes following a brilliant burst forward from Yamal, who then



Barcelona's Raphinha celebrates scoring during the La Liga match against Real Valladolid at the Estadi Olimpik Lluís Companys in Barcelona yesterday. (AFP)

slid through a delightful pass for Raphinha to stroke home.

Dani Olmo, who got the winner midweek at Rayo Vallecano, on his debut, struck with his final touch after twice hitting the post and having a goal disallowed for offside.

The Spain international danced past a series of defenders and rolled in Barcelona's sixth. He

missed Barcelona's first two games this term with the club unable to register him as they struggled to meet La Liga's strict financial rules.

Raphinha rounded off a glittering performance with the assist for Ferran Torres as Barcelona hit a seventh, fizzing in a cross from the left for the substitute to steer home in clinical fashion.

Atletico snatched a 1-0 victory away to Athletic Bilbao as Angel Correa scored in stoppage time to send Diego Simeone's side up to second, four points adrift of Barcelona.

Espanyol came from behind to win 2-1 at home to Rayo Vallecano with Tottenham loanee Alejo Veliz striking in the sixth minute of added time.

## FOOTBALL

# Leverkusen's 35-game unbeaten streak in Bundesliga snapped

AFP  
Leverkusen, Germany

Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen suffered their first Bundesliga defeat since May 2023 as a 3-2 loss at home to RB Leipzig yesterday snapped their 35-match unbeaten run in the top flight.

In a volatile match which saw visiting coach Marco Rose sent to the stands in the first half, Leverkusen jumped out to a 2-0 lead thanks to goals from Jeremie Frimpong and Alex Grimaldo.

But Kevin Kampl scored for Leipzig against the run of play just before half-time and Loïs Openda levelled things up early in the second period.

Openda scored again with 10 minutes remaining to secure victory for Leipzig against last season's unbeaten league and cup winners.

"We had the chance to finish the game, but the goals we conceded were far too easy," said Leverkusen captain Jonathan Tah.

"We defend as a team, but we fell asleep a few times and of course we're going to be punished."

The loss for Leverkusen ended a run of 43 domestic matches without defeat, a run spanning 463 days. Xabi Alonso's side, who have scored 17 goals in the 88th minute or later this year, pushed to keep their record alive, but could not find an equaliser this time.

"We knew it was going to be very hard to play here, Leverkusen play lethal football. We wanted to be courageous and get on the front foot," said Kampl. "We know we've also got quality up front. We were ice-cold today."

Rose was sent to the stands after he was yellow-carded twice in quick succession in the first half for touchline outbursts after a foul on his player.

The Leipzig coach appeared to still be seething after Leverkusen striker Victor Boniface caught the head of Amadou Haidara while attempting a bicycle kick. He was upset Boniface escaped with a booking as Haidara needed to be replaced.

## Dortmund held at Bremen

Earlier yesterday, a toothless and ill-disciplined Borussia Dortmund were held to a 0-0 draw at Werder Bremen.

Dortmund dominated possession but failed to break through and played the final 17 minutes

a man down after centre-back Nico Schlotterbeck was sent off.

They came into the game with Maximilian Beier as their one recognised striker, having sent Sebastian Haller out on loan to La Liga side Leganes late on Friday.

Summer signing Serhou Guirassy, brought in to replace Niclas Füllkrug after the German striker left for West Ham, is still weeks away from a return from a knee injury.

Schlotterbeck picked up a second yellow for a challenge on Justin Njimi, reducing his side to 10 men.

"Everything isn't exactly great yet," said Dortmund midfielder Pascal Gross. "The coach prepared us well but we need to do better at implementing it."

Last season's surprise runners-up Stuttgart again gave away points from a winning position, drawing 3-3 with Mainz after conceding an equaliser in stoppage time. Strikes from Enzo Millot and Jamie Lewelling inside the opening 15 minutes put Stuttgart in control.

The hosts however let Mainz back into the match when Millot gave away a clumsy penalty late in the first half which was converted by Nadiem Amiri.

Jonathan Burkardt, who won the penalty, headed Mainz level after 62 minutes.

Stuttgart - who led in their Bundesliga opener and in the Super Cup against Leverkusen before losing both - led again when Fabian Rieder scored a stunning free-kick with two minutes remaining.

Mainz's Maxim Leitsch scored in the fourth minute of added time to snatch a point for the visitors.

"We actually played a pretty good game, but we undid it by making simple mistakes," Stuttgart's Angelo Stiller told Sky.

Eintracht Frankfurt won their opening home game 3-1 against Hoffenheim.

Frankfurt forward Hugo Ekitike again impressed in the win, scoring the opener and laying on a perfect pass for Hugo Larsson's second.

Hoffenheim's Andrej Kramaric, who scored a hat-trick in last week's season opener, pulled one back for the visitors early in the second half but Egypt winger Omar Marmoush added another to seal the match.

Borussia Moenchengladbach won 2-0 at Bochum, while top-flight newcomers Holstein Kiel are still looking for their first Bundesliga point, going down 2-0 at home to Wolfsburg.



Leipzig's Loïs Openda scores the goal past Bayer Leverkusen's defender Edmond Tapsoba during the Bundesliga match in Leverkusen, southwestern Germany, yesterday. (AFP)

## Chelsea confirm deal to sign Sancho from Man United

Chelsea confirmed Jadon Sancho has joined their wealth of attacking options yesterday with an initial loan deal from Manchester United to be made permanent next season. The Blues made their move for the England international in the final hours before Friday's transfer deadline. United have cut their losses on the 24-year-old, who has failed to live up to his price tag ever since a £73mn (\$96mn) move from Borussia Dortmund in 2021. Chelsea will reportedly pay £25mn to make the move permanent in the summer of 2025. Sancho has not played a league game for United since posting on social media he had been made a "scapegoat" for poor performances just under a year ago. But he shone during a loan spell back at Dort-

mund during the second half of last season, helping the German giants reach the Champions League final. Sancho scored 12 goals in 83 appearances for the Red Devils and won just one trophy - the 2023 League Cup. He becomes Chelsea's 11th signing of the summer transfer window with the number of players on the club's books having swelled to over 50. Sancho faces competition from Pedro Neto, Noni Madueke, Mykhailo Mudryk, Cole Palmer, Christopher Nkunku and Joao Felix for a place in Enzo Maresca's side, but said he is excited by Chelsea's project. "I'm really excited to be here. London is where I grew up and I'm happy to be back," said Sancho in a club statement.

"The manager spoke to me about the project and, for a young player, it's exciting. Hopefully I can bring goals and assists to the Bridge."

## Zouma leaves West Ham for loan to Saudi club Al Orobah

West Ham defender Kurt Zouma moved to Saudi Pro League club Al Orobah on loan yesterday just weeks after a transfer to the United Arab Emirates collapsed. The 29-year-old Frenchman made 103 appearances after joining the Hammers from Chelsea in a £29mn (\$38mn) deal in 2021 but attracted widespread criticism in 2022 when a video emerged of him kicking and slapping his pet cat, for which he was sentenced to 180 hours of community service.