To subscribe
GULF TIMES
Newspaper
Please call
44466635



SPOTLIGHT | Page 2

Cycling great Cavendish wins final race in Singapore



FOOTBALL | Page 4

Arsenal stretch winless run in Chelsea draw, Ipswich stun Spurs

To advertise here,
PLEASE CALL
444 666 21

Monday, November 11, 2024
Jumada I 9, 1446 AH

GULF TIMES
SPORT



CRICKET

Pakistan win first ODI series in Australia since 2002

Page 2

BASKETBALL

Demir named as coach of Qatar team

The 56-year-old from Turkiye will replace Greece's Thanasis Skortopoulos



Saadoun Sabah al-Kuwari, Qatar Basketball Federation's Secretary-General with Qatar's new coach Hakan Demir.

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The Qatar Basketball Federation (QBF) has announced the appointment of Turkish coach Hakan Demir to lead the Qatar national team. The 56-year-old will replace Greece's Thanasis Skortopoulos. The announcement was made during a press conference held yesterday at the federation's headquarters in Al Gharafa.

The event was attended by Saadoun Sabah al-Kuwari, Secretary-General of the Qatar Basketball Federation (QBF) and Dr Khalid al-Qahtani, Chairman of the Federation's Media Committee, along with new coach Demir.

Al-Kuwari expressed his strong confidence on Demir and highlighted his impressive credentials, which include his previous role as head coach of the Iran, as well as his tenure as an assistant coach for the Turkish U-19 national team from 1998-2005.

Additionally, he served as an assistant coach of Turkiye for three years and led the Iran in the 2023 FIBA World Championship, the 2023 Asian Cup, and the qualifiers for the 2025 Asian Cup. Demir's extensive coaching experience across various clubs in the Turkish League, European League, and European Cup tournaments positions him as a formidable candidate to guide the Qatar towards success in forthcoming competitions.

In his address, the QBF secretary-general affirmed that the Qatar team is currently engaged in preparations for the second phase of the qualifiers for the 2025 Asian Cup, scheduled to take place in Saudi Arabia. He noted that the Qatari team is placed in Group Five, competing against Iran, Kazakhstan, and India. An essential match against the Indian team is set for November 21 in India, followed by a home game against the Iranian team in Doha on November 25 at Al Gharafa Hall.

Al-Kuwari emphasised that the Qatar team possesses a strong opportunity to qualify for the Asian Cup finals, attributing this potential to the anticipated performance of the coaching staff led by Demir, as well as the federation's confidence in the players.

Coach Demir, for his part, expressed his enthusiasm for assuming the role of head coach for the Qatari team and highlighted his ambition to achieve favourable outcomes. He mentioned his familiarity with several players on the Qatari team, having previously faced them while coaching the Iranian team.

Demir elaborated on his observations from the Qatar Cup final between Al Arabi and Al Ahli, which provided him with insights into the capabilities of local players. He also disclosed the team's upcoming schedule, which includes participation in the King Abdullah II Cup Championship in Jordan from November 16-18, featuring teams from Qatar, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan.

He indicated that the team's departure for the Jordanian capital, Amman, is planned for November 15, after which they will proceed to India for the second phase of the Asian qualifiers.

The coach noted that the Qatari team will encounter difficulties due to the injury of Abdulrahman Saad, a key player from Al Arabi.

Nevertheless, Demir conveyed his confidence in the potential of the younger athletes on the team, emphasising his commitment to their technical and physical development through participation in the Jordan Championship and the forthcoming qualifying matches.

In concluding his remarks at the press conference, Demir expressed gratitude to the Board of Directors of QBF for their trust in him, and he conveyed his eagerness to guide the Qatari team in the Asian qualifiers. He also commended Qatar for being awarded the privilege of hosting the 2027 Basketball World Cup, marking the first time this event will take place in the Middle East and North Africa.

He reiterated his anticipation of leading the Qatari team during this significant international occasion and delivering an exceptional performance to a global audience.

Sheikh Hamad felicitates Qatar forward Afif



HE Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Thani, Minister of Sports and Youth, honoured Qatar forward Akram Afif, who recently won his second Asian Player of the Year award.

SPOTLIGHT

Aspire Academy's Spread Your Wings Football Cup launches 20th anniversary celebrations

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The first day of the Spread Your Wings Football Cup launched Aspire Academy's 20th anniversary celebrations. The tournament kicked off yesterday on Aspire Academy's indoor football pitch and will be held on November 12 and 20, with the finals set for next April.

The tournament is for 7- to 8-year-olds, and yesterday's event featured more than 100 boys from five local public schools and five private ones. For tomorrow's competition and the one set for November 20, 260 boys from 10 public schools and 16 private ones have been invited to each event.

The academy is organising a series of community events to underline its role in promoting a healthy lifestyle and encouraging youngsters to get involved in sports. Future events include student-led sports activities, seminars, dialogues with alumni, and gatherings to foster connections within Qatar's sports community. Saeed Ali al-Marri, Football Administration Director at Aspire Academy, explained that the tournament, organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, consists of three stages.

The first stage involves qualifiers, with a total of four schools advancing from each competition day in November.

April's finals will feature six public and six private schools competing for the championship. He emphasised that the event also offers an opportunity for Aspire Academy to identify young talent who could eventually be invited to join the Academy's programmes to nurture their potential.

Founded in 2004, Aspire Academy has rapidly established itself as a beacon of sports excellence both locally and internationally. "Spread Your Wings Football Cup" is part of a series of activities demonstrating its commitment to developing Qatari sports champions and celebrating its 20-year legacy of nurturing outstanding athletes.



The tournament is for 7- to 8-year-olds, and yesterday's event featured more than 100 boys from five public schools and five private ones.

FOOTBALL

Al Ahli beat Al Rayyan to secure QSL Cup quarter-final berth



Al Rayyan and Al Ahli players vie for the ball.

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Ahli edged Al Rayyan 3-2 yesterday to secure their place in the quarter-finals of the QSL Cup. The crucial fifth round Group A win at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium, saw Al Ahli emerge as one of the top four teams from the group.

Al Ahli and Al Rayyan both finished the group stage with 7 points apiece. Leaders Al Duhail and second-placed Al Arabi ended with 10 points each while Qatar SC (3) and Al Shahania (3) missed the bus.

Erik Exposito (11th minute-penalty), Mohamed Abdelkader (66th minute), and Matej Mitrovic (75th minute) scored the goals for Al Ahli, while for Al Rayyan - Tameem al-Abdulla (24th minute) and Abdulrahman al-Harazi (37th minute) were on target.

Al Ahli hit back soon after Tabata's first attempt and when on charge Expositio was felled just inside the box by a back leg tangle of Al Rayyan's Hussain Ali Bahzad. The referee immediately called for a penalty and Exposito struck coolly with his left-footed shot finding the left corner. Al Rayyan soon equalised with Tameem al-Abdulla seizing on a rebound off Al Ahli's goalkeeper Yazan Naim's chest after Tameem Al Abdulla had sized up a long drive.

The Lions then went up the lead as Al Harazi made the most of a golden pass from Khaled Ali Binsabaa as he broke past a parallel defence line to score (2-1).

In the second session, Al Ahli kept attacking and the young Younes Hussein Abdelrahman was the pivot creating some fine opening inside the rival danger zone.

Their efforts bore fruits a little after an hour when an Expositio strike was punched away by Al Rayyan goalkeeper Samy Beldi but the ball went to Mohamed Abdelkader who did the needful to make the scores 2-2.

Nine minutes later, Al Ahli got their most important winning goal as Mitrovic deflected in a fine corner kick from Younes Hussein (3-2).

In the 80th minute, Al Rayyan had another shy at the rival goal as Tabata made a strike which was pushed out by the goalkeeper but the ball was still in play and alert defenders of The Brigadiers cleared it away.

In the other matches, table toppers Al Duhail were held 1-1 by Al Shahania at the Grand Hamad Stadium while Qatar SC and Al Arabi played out a goalless draw at the Al Khor Stadium. Ahmed El Sayed has put the Red Knights in front in the 26th minute but Pelle van Amersfoort got the equalizer for Al Shahania in 90+6 minute.

CRICKET

FOCUS

Pakistan win first ODI series in Australia since 2002

Afridi, Naseem and Rauf restricted the hosts to 140 before Pakistan completed a smooth chase in the decider

AFP
Perth, Australia

Saim Ayub hit 42 and Abdullah Shafique 37 as Pakistan raced to a commanding eight-wicket victory and their first one-day series win in Australia for 22 years yesterday.

After bowling out the woeful world champions for a miserly 140 at Perth Stadium, Mohammad Rizwan's team reached their target in the 27th over.

The impressive performance, aided by high-quality bowling from Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf, ensured a first ODI series win in Australia since 2002.

They lost a tense opening match in Melbourne by two wickets, but bounced back with an emphatic nine-wicket victory in Adelaide.

"It's a special moment for me and the fans," said captain Rizwan.

"I'll give all the credit to the bowlers. Australia in Australia is not easy. But Saim and Abdullah have given us a couple of great starts, too," he added.

"The fans love us regardless of whether we win or lose and I really appreciate that."

The hosts rested Steve Smith, Marnus Labuschagne, Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc in Perth ahead of the Test series starting this month against India, and they were missed.



Pakistan's players celebrate winning the series after their victory in the third ODI against Australia in Perth yesterday. *(AFP)*

Shafique and Ayub began aggressively and rode their luck, with little spark from the bowlers.

Ayub, who smashed 82 in Adelaide, survived two dropped catches, by Lance Morris and Spencer Johnson, as he swung the bat. Shafique was also put down on 28, by Adam Zampa, as they reached the halfway point in the chase without loss in the 14th over.

Australia finally got a reward when Morris caught and bowled Shafique and then bowled Ayub five balls later. But Rizwan (30) and Babar Azam (28) kept calm to steer them home.

Rizwan won the toss and sent in Australia, who were no match for Afridi (3-32), Shah (3-54) and Rauf (2-24). Sean Abbott top-scored with 30 before they were bundled out in the 32nd over. "It's pretty disappointing, to be honest," said skipper Josh Inglis. "I think after probably the first three-quarters of the first game (in Melbourne) we were totally outplayed.

"Not enough runs on the board in games two and three."

Jake Fraser-McGurk and Matt Short again opened, desperate for runs after failing to make an impact at Melbourne and Adelaide.

But on a pitch suited to the quick bowlers Fraser-McGurk once more flopped, nicking a swinging Shah delivery to wicketkeeper Rizwan on seven. Aaron Hardie, at three in place of Smith, lasted 13 balls for his 12 before being caught at slip off the dangerous Afridi.

That brought Inglis to the crease, but he too departed cheaply for seven, skying a Shah bouncer that Rizwan collected to leave Australia on 56-3 in the 11th over.

Rauf then accounted for Short (22) before youngster Cooper Connolly, in only his second ODI, was forced to retire hurt on seven after a blow to his hand.

Out-of-form Glenn Maxwell only survived two balls with Rauf bagging him for the third time this series, caught at point by Ayub, while Marcus Stoinis added just eight to the score as Australia stumbled to 88-6. Abbott and Adam Zampa (13) shared a handy 30-run partnership before the tail was mopped up.

BRIEF SCORES
Pakistan 143 for 2 (Ayub 42, Shafique 37, Morris 2-24) **beat Australia 140** (Abbott 30, Afridi 3-32, Naseem 3-54, Rauf 2-24) **by eight wickets.**

TWENTY20

Stubbs shines as South Africa beat India

Reuters
Gqeberha, South Africa

An unbeaten 47 from Tristan Stubbs, and a 42-run partnership with Gerald Coetzee, saw South Africa haul themselves over the line for a three-wicket win over India in their Twenty20 international at St George's Park yesterday.

South Africa scored 128-7 in 19 overs in reply to India's 124-6 to level the four-match series at 1-1 in a dramatic finish after their top order were undone by India spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who took a career-best 5-17.

Stubbs and Coetzee chased down a 40-run target in three overs of swashbuckling hitting at the death to rescue the result when it looked as if India would pull off an unlikely victory.

The visitors had been put into bat and struggled to deal with South Africa's seam attack, losing wickets cheaply before Hardik Pandya's unbeaten 39 gave them a total to try to defend.

India opener Sanju Samson, who scored a sparkling century as the tourists beat South Africa by 61 runs in Durban on Friday, was bowled by Marco Jansen three balls into Sunday's contest, while Abhishek Sharma and captain Suryakumar Yadav also departed early.



South Africa's Tristan Stubbs celebrates scoring the winning runs during the second T20I against India in Gqeberha yesterday. *(AFP)*

Tilak Varma (20) and Axar Patel (27) made contributions to India's total although South Africa would have been confident of chasing down the target when they came out to bat in reply.

But their top order were undone by a masterful display of bowling from Varun, whose googly bamboozled the home batsmen and gave India the upper hand.

He castled Aiden Markram (3), Reeza Hendricks (24) and Marco Jansen (7) before having the dangerous Heinrich Klaasen, who sliced a full delivery, caught by Rinku Singh at long-off. His next ball saw Varun deceive David Miller, bowled first ball, to reduce South Africa to 66-6.

With Stubbs still at the crease, home hopes were still alive and when Coetzee joined him at the crease at 86-7, they set about pulling the hosts out of a desperate situation.

"Fortunately the run rate never got away from us," said Stubbs.

"I had 30 in mind to get off the last three, and the dew came in to help us also. He came in and said 'We can win this'. We were always two hits away, the crowd was behind us and it was amazing."

Fast bowler Coetzee showed the way with 19 runs off nine balls in a display of lusty hitting that turned the momentum of the contest while Stubbs saw South Africa to victory with successive fours to finish with 47 off 41 balls.

"Of course in a T20 game you don't want to get 120, but I was proud of the way we bowled," said Yadav. The next meeting will be in Pretoria on Wednesday.

BRIEF SCORES: South Africa 128 for 7 (Stubbs 47*, Varun 5-17) **beat India 124 for 6** (Hardik 39*, Peter 1-20, Simelane 1-20) **by three wickets.**

BOTTOMLINE

Ferguson's hat-trick in NZ's win over Sri Lanka

AFP
Dambulla, Sri Lanka

Lockie Ferguson unleashed a blistering spell of fast bowling, claiming a hat-trick to power New Zealand to a nail-biting five-run victory over Sri Lanka in the second T20 at Dambulla yesterday.

The win levelled the two-match series at 1-1, as New Zealand managed to defend a modest target in thrilling fashion.

On a pitch where spinners were expected to thrive, Ferguson defied convention with sheer pace and precision, leaving the Sri Lankan batters helpless.

His fiery spell silenced the packed crowd in Dambulla, who watched in dismay as the hosts struggled to counter his lethal deliveries. Wicketkeeper Mitchell Hay had an exceptional outing, completing six dismissals – a record in T20I cricket.

Having missed the series opener due to calf stiffness, Ferguson returned to the lineup with a vengeance, bowling with impeccable control. His first breakthrough came when he had Kusal Perera caught behind, and he followed up with a searing yorker that trapped Kamindu Mendis plumb in front.

With the hat-trick ball, Ferguson faced captain Charith Asalanka, who attempted to flick but was caught by the keeper down the leg side. "It was a case of good bowling and good fielding by New Zealand," Asalanka said. "We struggled against the pace of Ferguson."


New Zealand's Lockie Ferguson celebrates after taking the wicket of Sri Lanka's captain Charith Asalanka during the second T20I against Sri Lanka in Dambulla yesterday. *(AFP)*

After just two overs of destruction, Ferguson left the field with a calf injury and didn't return, but he had already done the damage, setting up New Zealand's triumph.

Ferguson shrugged off the praise, saying the win was "a full team effort".

"It spun a lot and, as quicks, we were trying to hold things up from one end – and glad it all worked for us," he said. Ferguson's reputation as a T20 specialist continues to grow. In his previous outing at the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean, he bowled four consecutive maidens, capturing three wickets without conceding a single run.

His heroics in Dambulla will undoubtedly make him a coveted player in the upcoming IPL auction. "Lockie is a world class bowler," said team-mate Mitchell Santner. "When he bowls thunderbolts like that it is not easy to bat."

For Sri Lanka, Pathum Nissanka fought a lone battle.

Ranked eighth among T20 batters in the ICC rankings, he scored his 13th half-century, almost guiding Sri Lanka to victory.

With just eight runs needed off the final over, Nissanka took on Glenn Phillips, but his shot failed to clear the long-on fielder, ending his valiant 52 off 51 balls, studded with six boundaries.

Earlier, Sri Lanka's bowlers had restricted New Zealand to 108 runs in 19.3 overs. Nuwan Thushara provided a sensational start, claiming two wickets in his opening two overs, while Waninidu Hasaranga wreaked havoc in the middle order, picking up four scalps. Matheesha Pathirana then mopped up the tail, finishing with three wickets.

However, Sri Lanka's fielding let them down, conceding 19 extras, including 11 byes. That ultimately proved decisive. Sri Lanka had won the first game on Saturday by four wickets. The two teams will now shift focus to a three-match ODI series, beginning with the first game at Dambulla on Wednesday, before moving to Pallekele.

BRIEF SCORES: New Zealand 108 all out (Robinson 30, Hasaranga 4-17) **beat Sri Lanka 103 all out** (Nissanka 52, Ferguson 3-7) **by five runs.**

SPOTLIGHT

India will not travel to Pakistan for Champions Trophy, says PCB

AFP
Karachi

India will not travel to Pakistan for the eight-team Champions Trophy starting in February, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said yesterday.

Deteriorating political relations, tense at the best of times, have meant the bitter rivals have not played a bilateral series for over a decade – with India last touring Pakistan for the Asia Cup in 2008.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board has received an e-mail from the ICC (International Cricket Council), stating that the Indian board has informed them that their team will not travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy 2025," PCB spokesman Sami Ul Hasan told AFP.

"The PCB has forwarded that e-mail to the government of Pakistan for their advice and guidance," Hasan added.

Pakistan is due to host the eight-nation event in three cities – Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi – from February 19 to March 9 next year but the final schedule was hanging in the balance with India yet to confirm its participation.

PCB chairman Moshin Naqvi had previously ruled out the possibility of a hybrid event that would have seen India play all its matches on neutral venues in the UAE.

"Pakistan has shown great gestures to India in the past, and we'd like to say clearly India shouldn't expect such friendly gestures from us every time," Naqvi said in Lahore on Saturday. "The government will decide if Pakistan travel for any future event in India if they don't come to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy. The PCB will not decide that."

The ICC was set to release the Champions Trophy schedule this week, but the latest stand-off will likely delay that announcement. The Champions Trophy is the premier ODI competition after the World Cup, with the upcoming event featuring Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and South Africa.

Today marks the 100-day countdown to the event.

Any cricket match between the two is among the most watched events on the global sporting calendar. Pakistan visited India for last year's ODI World Cup and the PCB expected the gesture to be reciprocated for the Champion's trophy.

McSweeney wins race to open for Australia against India In Tests

Nathan McSweeney won the race yesterday to open for Australia in the first of five Tests against India this month, while Josh Inglis was a surprise inclusion in their 13-man squad yesterday.

Since David Warner retired in January, no firm contender had emerged to partner Usman Khawaja at the top of the order in the blockbuster series starting in Perth on November 22. Uncapped McSweeney, 25, became the front-runner after an impressive start to the domestic season.

But former Test players Marcus Harris and Cameron Bancroft, along with rising teen star Sam Konstas, were also in the picture.

It effectively culminated in a "bat-off" in two Australia A v India A four-day red-ball clashes over the past fortnight. McSweeney put himself in pole position with an impressive unbeaten 88 in the first match at Mackay, coming in at number four. Promoted to open for the first time ever in the second match at the MCG, he made just 14 and 25, but selectors had seen enough.

"Nathan has displayed the attributes we believe will equip him well for Test cricket along with a strong recent record in domestic cricket," said chief selector George Bailey.

"His performances for South Australia and Australia A weighed in his favour and supports our view he is ready for the opportunity at Test level." McSweeney said he was excited by the opportunity.

"I feel like my game's the best it's been, and I just can't wait to get out there and hopefully do everyone proud," he said.

Test squad: Pat Cummins (capt), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Nathan McSweeney, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc.

CYCLING

Briton Cavendish wins in his final race in Singapore

'The Tour isn't just a race, it's the biggest annual sports event in the world'

AFP
Singapore

Mark Cavendish sprinted to victory yesterday in the Tour de France Singapore Criterium with a signature surge to the line in his final race.

"I really wanted that so bad," the 39-year-old cycling great from Britain said after the 166th victory of his glorious career.

"I'm terribly emotional.

"I realised in the last five laps that this was the last 15 kilometres of my career and I felt that, but I was so much on the limit."

Coming out of the last bend, Cavendish, who holds the record for most stage wins on the Tour de France, briefly latched onto the wheel of defending champion Jasper Philipsen before pulling away.

Cavendish had time to glance back before raising his arms in triumph one last time, to deafening cheers from the crowd who had gathered for the race. Philipsen took second place with his Belgian compatriot Arnaud De Lie finishing third.

The criterium, organised by the Tour de France, covered 25 laps of a street circuit in hot and humid Singapore.

"I was nervous about crashing, or something like that," said Cavendish, after the final act in a career spanning 19 years. "Not that there is anything wrong with that but I really wanted to finish.

"But I was lucky and I gained the wheel and I went past him. "I couldn't have wished for a better send-off."


Britain's Mark Cavendish (centre) celebrates as he crosses the finish line during the third Tour de France Singapore Criterium race in Singapore yesterday. *(AFP)*

Cavendish ended speculation about his cycling future when he announced his retirement from the sport on Saturday. He made Tour de France history last July when he won a stage for the 35th time to eclipse Eddy Merckx's record which had stood since 1975.

Cavendish made his Tour de France debut in 2008 before becoming world road race champion three years later. He won an omnium silver medal at the 2016 Olympics. Since turning professional in 2005 he had won 165 races before Sunday, including 17 stages in the Giro d'Italia and three in the Vuelta a Espana.

He won the points classification in the Tour in 2011 and 2021, in the Giro in 2013 and in the Vuelta in 2010. The 'Manx Missile' is just 5-foot-9 (1.75m) tall but showed a pure sprinter's ferocious acceleration, courage and aggression and developed a knack for reading how a sprint was unfolding and positioning himself for the final surge.

He intends to stay involved with cycling. "I love this sport. I've always loved it," he said.

"The Tour de France isn't just a bike race, it's the biggest annual sports event in the world.

"It's what children dream of. It's what adults dream of."

TENNIS

Fritz off to winning start at ATP Finals after Medvedev meltdown

Reuters
Turin

American Taylor Fritz won his first match in the group stage of the ATP Finals when he beat Daniil Medvedev 6-4 6-3 yesterday after the Russian lost his cool and risked getting defaulted because of his bizarre antics.

Medvedev, who was the ATP Finals champion in 2020 and runner-up the following year, lost his composure after a string of double faults in the first set as Fritz beat the Russian for the first time in his career.

The victory was the 50th for US Open finalist Fritz in 2024 and his eighth top-10 win of the season.

"I definitely felt like at 5-3 (in the second set) he was going to reset and try as hard as he could to break me and I just had to kind of tell myself, 'He's not going to just be done with the match'," Fritz said.

"It's very easy sometimes when someone's doing that to kind of relax and think that they're just going to be done and then you drop your level.

"I just had to try to tell myself to stay focused at 5-3 and play a really good game because he was going to fight for that game. Luckily, I served a great game."

The opening set went with serve without a single break point until the final game, with Fritz especially dominant on his first serve while Medvedev struggled with his second serve.

But with Fritz leading 5-4, Medvedev won a long rally with a beautiful drop shot before he imploded and served three double faults to hand the set to his American opponent.

Medvedev was so incensed that he smashed his racket on the ground as he finished the set with seven double faults.

The Russian soon lost his composure again in the second set and began to unravel, breaking a microphone with his racket while he was also given a point penalty.

Medvedev kept pushing his luck and tested the chair umpire's patience by continually throwing his racket up in the air and dropping it. He also faced a Fritz serve holding the racket by its head as the Turin crowd began to whistle and jeer.

"I get angry, frustrated. This time completely with myself, not with anyone. Just with myself," Medvedev told reporters.

"I was like, 'Whatever, I lost the match. I don't care'. I mean, you have to finish the match. You cannot withdraw, no? I just finished the match."

Fritz eventually put Medvedev out of his misery when he served to love in the final game.

"I really want to make it out of the group stage. Let's say I'm putting more expectation on myself to do better, I think I'm just a better player," Fritz added.

World number one Jannik Sinner faces Alex de Minaur later on Sunday in the day's other group match.


USA's Taylor Fritz celebrates his victory over Russia's Daniil Medvedev in their ATP Finals tournament match in Turin yesterday. *(AFP)*

GOLF

Englishman Waring clinches Abu Dhabi title

AFP
Abu Dhabi

Englishman Paul Waring birdied the last two holes yesterday for a bogey-free six-under-par 66 to win the Abu Dhabi Championship by two shots.

The 39-year-old, a resident of Dubai, delivered the hammer blow to the chasing pack with a 41-feet birdie putt on the par-3 17th hole at Yas Links Golf Club.

He then hit a brilliant three-wood second shot to set up a birdie on the last to clinch the 9 million dollar (8.4 million euro) tournament. At 24-under par total, Waring was two shots ahead of English compatriot Tyrrell Hatton (64). World No,3 Rory McIlroy (64) finished in a three-way tie for third place at 21-under alongside Matt Wallace (63) and Thorbjoern Olesen (66).


England's Paul Waring holds the winner's trophy after winning the Abu Dhabi Championship yesterday. *(AFP)*

Waring, who shot a course-record 61 on Friday en route to a new European tour 36-hole scoring record of 19-under par, began Sunday one ahead of Dane Niklas Norgaard Molle, and birdied the first two holes.

As the pursuers made plenty of birdies, Waring, the world No. 229 kept making steady pars and he raced ahead on the closing stretch.

It was Waring's second win on the tour, coming nearly six years and three months after the 2018 Nordea Masters. He pocketed $1.53m and should rise move to 101 in the world rankings today.

LEADING SCORES
264 - Paul Waring 64-61-73-66
266 - Tyrrell Hatton 64-68-70-64
267 - Rory McIlroy 67-67-69-64, Thorbjoern Olesen (DEN) 63-67-71-66, Matt Wallace 67-65-72-63
268 - Tommy Fleetwood 62-68-71-67, Ugo Coussaud (FRA) 68-64-70-66.

Olympics star Kim takes break from shooting for family

Olympic shooting star Kim Ye-ji is temporarily putting down her gun to spend time with family, her agency told AFP yesterday, saying she was exhausted from competition and the huge public attention her nonchalant cool has generated.

The 32-year-old shooter rose to stardom during the Paris Olympics – where she won a silver in the women's 10m air pistol – after a video of her calmly taking a shot and unloading her gun went viral.

The clip, which was actually taken from a competition in May 2024, triggered an Internet frenzy, with people praising her "main character" energy, and Elon Musk calling for her to be cast in an action movie, proclaiming: "no acting required".

Kim will "temporarily suspend her sports career... to have some time together with her young daughter," said her agent Yang Yong-sik. As part of the decision, she will not renew her contract with her team, which is due to expire in December, he said.

Kim is not retiring from shooting, he added, but wants to "take some time off and make up for the time she couldn't spend with her family".

"The level of fatigue has mounted significantly... with tournaments and training, in addition to the public's interest in her," the agent said. He reported that Kim had also experienced "mean-spirited" comments online and strangers had asked her for money.

Yang said he and Kim were still discussing when she might return to competition.

SECOND ROUND OF QATAR DRIFT CHAMPIONSHIP

Qatar's al-Jabsheh, Kuwait's al-Sarraf emerge victorious

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Kuwait's Salem al-Sarraf and Qatar's Ali al-Jabsheh emerged champions in the second round of the Qatar Drift Championship 2024-2025 held at the drift track of the Qatar Racing Club over the course of two days last week.

In the local category, this was al-Jabsheh's the second consecutive win in as many rounds, with Yasser Mustafa finished second and Ahmad Abu Rshaid came third.

The round event was held under the gracious patronage of HE Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad al-Thani, the club's chairman, and attended by Sheikh Jabor bin Khalid al-Thani, the club's general manager.

The round also saw participation from elite drift champions from across the Gulf and the region, along with an official delegation from Kuwait's Basil Salem al-Sabah Motor Sports Club, represented by club director Saif Awadh al-Mutairi, Secretary Fahad al-Elaaj, Khaled al-Ajeel, head of the drag racing committee, and Nawaf al-Safi, head of the drift committee.



Thursday's test sessions were topped by Ali Makhseed, the previous round's champion, while Mohammed Khourshid finished second, followed by Ali al-Jabsheh in third place. In the local category, Ali al-Jabsheh claimed the top position ahead of Qatari driver Saud al-Atiyah, with Yasser Mustafa and Abdullah al-Muhtasib finishing in third and fourth, respectively. Salem al-Sarraf, who suffered a severe accident just before the qualifying sessions during the tests and made a dramatic comeback, secured 13th place.

Following the qualifying trials, Friday's first round featured intense matchups which saw qualifying leader Ali Makhseed, Mesyer Abu Shaibah, Salem al-Sarraf and Ahmad Abu Rshaid advance. On the other side of the bracket, Mohammed Khourshid, newcomer Yasser Mustafa, Yazan al-Jabsheh and Ihab Falah also secured spots in the second round.



Al-Jabsheh was crowned champion of the local category for the second consecutive round, with Mustafa finishing in second place and Ahmad Abu Rshaid taking the third spot on the podium.

The second round saw Mesyer Abu Shaibah, al-Sarraf, Mohammed Khourshid and Ihab Falah advancing to the semi-finals. In the first semi-final, al-Sarraf went head-to-head with Mesyer Abu Shaibah, securing his spot in the final for the second round in a row. Ihab Falah, who defeated qualifying runner-up Mohammed Khourshid in the other semi-final, also advanced. Khourshid claimed victory over Abu Shaibah, securing the third podium position.

Unfortunately Falah encountered car issues that prevented him from competing in the final, leaving him in second place, while al-Sarraf claimed the title, marking his second podium finish of the season after placing second in the opening round.

QRC General Manager Sheikh Jabor and Basil Salem al-Sabah Motor Sports Club Director al-Mutairi, along with the accompanying delegation, presented trophies to the winners.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal stretch winless run in Chelsea draw, Ipswich win

Manchester United sign off van Nistelrooy's temporary stint in charge with a 3-0 win over Leicester

AFP
London

Arsenal and Chelsea are nine points behind Premier League leaders Liverpool after their 1-1 draw yesterday, while Ipswich stunned Tottenham 2-1 for their first Premier League victory in 22 years.

Manchester United signed off Ruud van Nistelrooy's temporary stint in charge with a 3-0 win over Leicester and Nottingham Forest dropped out of the top four after a 3-1 home defeat to Newcastle. Arsenal are now winless in four Premier League games as their bid for a first title since 2004 is at risk of unravelling.

The Gunners welcomed captain Martin Odegaard back to the starting line-up for the first time in two months and were much improved at Stamford Bridge, but still could not come away with a vital three points. Odegaard teed up Gabriel Martinelli to open the scoring with a near-post shot on the hour mark.

Chelsea responded through Pedro Neto's brilliant long-range effort for his first league goal since a £51mn move from Wolves. A share of the spoils sees the Blues remain ahead of Arsenal on goal difference as both sides move into the top four. Ruben Amorim will be in charge for the first time when Manchester United return from the international break.

But Van Nistelrooy was able to hand over the reins with a four-game unbeaten run since stepping up to replace the sacked Erik ten Hag.



Arsenal's Kai Havertz misses a chance to score against Chelsea during the Premier League match at Stamford Bridge in London. *(Reuters)*

"I really enjoyed it, it's been a short but amazing period," said Van Nistelrooy. "We are in an uncertain position but we tried to do our jobs and help the club which is important."

Bruno Fernandes marked his 250th United appearance in style by smashing in his fourth goal in four games after a neat interchange of passes with Amad Diallo. Fernandes' burst into the box also created the second goal as his glancing touch deflected off Leicester defender Victor Kristiansen and in for an own goal.

Diallo's two-goal showing in a 2-0 Europa League win over PAOK on Thursday earned the Ivorian a start over Alejandro Garnacho. The Argentine, though, came off the bench to show what he is capable of with a stunning strike into the top corner to round off the scoring.

United remain down in 13th but are now just four points off the top four in a congested table.

Ipswich will play host to Amorim's first match in two weeks and go into that game buoyed by their first win since ending a two-decade wait to return to the top flight. "It's a massive moment, one to cherish," said Ipswich boss Kieran McKenna. Sammie Szmodics took advantage of statuesque Tottenham defending to open the scoring with an overhead kick on 31 minutes. Liam Delap doubled the visitors' lead in far less spectacular fashion as he lashed in from point-blank range after Radu Dragusin directed a cross towards his own goal.

Spurs had come back to win in eight of the previous 12 league matches they conceded first at home this year but this time left themselves with too much to do. Rodrigo Bentancur reduced the arrears with a powerful header from Pedro Porro's corner but they fell to a fifth league defeat in 11 games. Ipswich move out of the relegation zone at Crystal Palace's expense, while Spurs slip to 10th.

Forest had won three games in a row to sit just behind Liverpool and Manchester City at the top of the table and their dream run looked set to continue at the City Ground.

Murillo's towering header from Anthony Elanga's free-kick opened the scoring. But Newcastle hit back strongly after half-time through goals from Alexander Isak, Joelinton and Harvey Barnes to climb up to eighth.

SERIE A

Kean nets hat-trick in Fiorentina win, Roma sack Juric



Fiorentina's Moise Kean celebrates after completing a hat-trick during the Serie A match against Hellas Verona in Florence, Italy. *(Reuters)*

AFP
Milan

Moise Kean fired Fiorentina level with Serie A leaders Napoli after scoring all three goals in 3-1 win over Verona, while crisis club Roma sacked coach Ivan Juric following a 3-2 home defeat at the hands of Bologna.

Italy forward Kean has scored 11 times in all competitions for Fiorentina since signing from Juventus in the summer, and his first professional hat-trick moved his new team up to third on 25 points – also alongside Atalanta and Lazio – following a sixth straight league win. Kean put Fiorentina ahead in the fourth minute in Florence with a fine finish and, after Suat Serdar smashed home an 18th-minute leveller, acrobatically flicked home the second just before the hour.

The 24-year-old, who has been reborn in Tuscany after failing to score a single goal at Juve last season, then completed his treble in stoppage time when he collected a long pass from goalkeeper David de Gea and surged forward before rifling home.

Fiorentina, Lazio – who 1-0 win at Monza was their 10th from 11 games in all competitions – and second-placed Atalanta trail Napoli despite having superior goal differences as they have all played one game more. Atalanta cannot finish the day top as champions Inter Milan host Napoli in the weekend's final match and are a point behind the leading four teams in fifth place.

Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta won their sixth straight league match after coming back from a goal down at half-time to beat Udinese 2-1 thanks to Mario Pasalic's leveller 11 minutes after the break and an own goal from Isaak Toure moments later.

Atalanta have won eight in an unbeaten run of 10 matches spanning all competitions and have deserved to be considered contenders for what would be their first ever Serie A title.

Under Gasperini and the guidance of the Percassi family, who are from Bergamo, Atalanta have slowly worked their way up from provincial also-rans to become one of Italy's top teams and last season's Europa League winners.

Juric was sacked less than two months after being hired to replace Daniele De Rossi as Roma languish just four points above the relegation zone in 12th following another dismal performance in front of livid fans, a large chunk of whom decided to leave at half-time in protest. Santiago Castro, Riccardo Orsolini and Jesper Karlsson gave eighth-placed Bologna an impressive win at Roma who were loudly booed before, during and after their fourth defeat in five league matches.

Roma are reportedly set to make former Italy coach Roberto Mancini their fourth coach of 2024 following Juric, De Rossi and Jose Mourinho, who was fired in January. The capital club's technical director Florent Ghisolfi admitted that "history would suggest" that it was a mistake to sack De Rossi so early in the season.

Roma, who scored through a Stephan El Shaarawy brace, travel to Napoli after the international break before then having to face Tottenham Hotspur in London and Atalanta at home.

LA LIGA

Atletico scrape narrow victory at Mallorca

AFP
Palma, Spain

Julian Alvarez earned Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win at Mallorca yesterday to take his side third in La Liga. Diego Simeone's side secured their fourth consecutive victory across all competitions in a tight clash at Mallorca's Son Moix stadium.

Alvarez netted his fourth league goal since joining Atletico from Manchester City in the summer in the 61st minute after being set up unselfishly by Diego Simeone's son Giuliano Simeone.

"We knew it would be a tough game, we got better in the second half, the goal came and we took three important points," said Argentina international Alvarez. "You can always improve, (but) I feel very good, my teammates and the staff have helped me to adapt as quickly as possible... but I'm always looking to improve day to day."

An even first half was barren of excitement until Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak tipped over Cyle Larin's header shortly before the break. The second half improved after Giuliano Simeone ran onto Oblak's long ball and squared for Alvarez to finish.

Rodrigo Riquelme might have doubled Atletico's lead but fired too close to Mallorca goalkeeper Dominik Greif after cutting in from the left, leaving his coach making gestures of frustration on the sideline. Mallorca struggled to carve out more clear chances of their own



Atletico Madrid's Julian Alvarez shoots past Real Mallorca's goalkeeper Dominik Greif during the La Liga match in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. *(AFP)*

until substitute Abdon Prats broke through but Oblak denied him by racing out quickly and blocking his prodded effort. "It was an even game, I think we deserved a bit more, a draw would have been fairer," said Mallorca defender Martin Valjent.

Late last night, leaders Barcelona were visiting Real Sociedad. Champions Real Madrid, second, cut the gap on the Catalans to six points with a thumping 4-0 win over Osasuna on Saturday. Atletico's win took them two points above fourth-place Villarreal a day after they beat Alaves 3-0, although the Yellow Submarine have played one fewer match.

Lille held to draw by late Nice goal

Nice, France: Lille passed up the opportunity to go into the top three in Ligue 1 after a 96th-minute equaliser by Nice held them to a 2-2 draw. Tom Louchet slotted home deep in injury time to deny the visitors a win that would have taken them above Marseille and into the automatic Champions League qualification spots. Lille led twice in the match but were pegged back on both occasions by Nice, who now have five draws in their 11 league outings and are yet to lose at home this season.

Matias Fernandez-Pardo broke the deadlock inside the opening 20 minutes, before Sofiane Diop levelled early in the second period. Mitchel Bakker sent the Dogues back in front after the hour but Nice struck back in the final moments to keep Lille fourth on 19 points. Nice are one place behind them in the table on 17, after a stuttering start to the campaign.

Reims joined Nice on 17 points with a 3-0 victory at 17th-placed Le Havre. Oumar Diakite and Keito Nakamura scored inside six first-half minutes and Junya Ito added a third in the 57th minute. Bottom-of-the-table Montpellier got a much-needed 3-1 win at home to Brest.

BUNDESLIGA

Marmoush inspires Eintracht to thrilling win in Stuttgart

AFP
Berlin

Eintracht Frankfurt striker Omar Marmoush continued his blistering run of form in the Bundesliga yesterday with an assist and a goal in his side's 3-2 win away to Stuttgart.

The Egyptian international enjoyed a dream return to former club Stuttgart, setting up Frankfurt's first goal and scoring their third in a roller-coaster game. Marmoush, who has been linked with a move to Liverpool in recent weeks, has now notched up 14 goals and 10 assists in all competitions this season.

With 11 of those having come in the league, he is now level with Bayern Munich's Harry Kane at the top of the Bundesliga scoring charts. "Omar always wants to win, regardless of whether it's a Bundesliga game or a training match," Frankfurt coach Dino Toppmoeller said after the game.

The win saw Frankfurt remain in third, six points adrift of league leaders Bayern Munich and three ahead of reigning champions Bayer Leverkusen. Meanwhile, last season's runners-up Stuttgart are now wallowing in mid-table having won only three of their first 10 games.

In earlier game, Hoffenheim's Pavel Kaderabek picked up the joint-fastest yellow card in Bundesliga history during his side's 0-0 draw with Augsburg. Former Czech international Kaderabek was booked after just eight seconds for a high elbow against Augsburg's Dimitris Giannoulis, equalling


Eintracht Frankfurt's Omar Marmoush has notched up 14 goals and 10 assists in all competitions this season. *(AFP)*

a record previously held by former Freiburg striker Florian Niederlechner.

The early yellow proved to be the most notable event in an otherwise forgettable game, as the two southern sides cancelled each other out on a chilly afternoon in Augsburg. The draw left both teams in the bottom half of the table, with Hoffenheim just a point clear of the bottom three in 15th.