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Rivalry reignited as Pakistan and India eye victory in Asia Cup



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Bezzecchi claims San Marino sprint as Marquez crashes out of lead

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WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

A Tokyo full house revels in Chebet and sprinters

American 4x400m mixed relay team won gold, avenging their defeat by the Netherlands in Paris

AFP
Tokyo

Beatrice Chebet won the 10,000m world title while the cream of sprinting delighted a sellout 55,000 crowd at the world championships yesterday – a stark contrast to the empty stadium at the Covid-affected Tokyo Games in 2021.

Chebet, 25, added the world title to her Olympic crown in Paris last year where the Kenyan also won the 5,000m. “I wanted that gold medal so much,” she said. “I have never won a gold at the world championships so I was sure I had to get it.”

That was one of several titles on offer, giving a gentle lead-in to the finals of the men’s and women’s blue riband event, the 100m, today.

Ryan Crouser proved he has no equal in the shot put as despite missing the outdoor season through injury he became the second man – after Werner Guenthoer over 30 years ago – to be crowned world outdoor champion on three successive occasions. “This is my first time throwing hard since September last year, (so) this one is the one I am most proud of,” said Crouser.

There was also gold for the American 4x400m mixed relay team, avenging their defeat by the Netherlands in last year’s Olympic final. The Dutch, anchored by 400m hurdles favourite Femke Bol, had to be satisfied with silver.

All the favourites wasted little energy in qualifying for today’s men’s 100m semi-finals. Olympic champion Noah Lyles and the Jamaican who lost out to him by the slimmest of margins at the Paris Olympics, Kishane Thompson, look in prime form despite the championships coming at the end of the season.

Lyles did not enjoy his previous, crowdless experience in Tokyo but he is a different person four years later and put on a show for his audience. “As you know, it was a bit echoing back then and this time there is all the atmosphere, whistles and children cheering for me,” he said. “It really feels good to be back. This is the best form I have ever been in my life. I am bringing special things here.”

Olympic 200m champion Letsile Tebogo and two-time Olympic 200m silver medallist Kenny Bednarek also impressed. Bednarek, who pushed Lyles in the back and accused him of showing disrespect at the US trials, will hope he remembers every bit of kit today having left his spikes



Kenya’s Beatrice Chebet celebrates after winning the women’s 10,000m at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo yesterday. (Reuters)



Ryan Crouser became the second man – after Werner Guenthoer over 30 years ago – to be crowned world shot putt champion on three successive occasions. (AFP)

in the United States. “I am just a clumsy dude,” he said.

Women’s 100m Olympic champion Julien Alfred laid down the law in her heat, storming out of the blocks and the Saint Lucia star cantered over the line in 10.93sec. Defending world champion Sha’Carri Richardson had a far stronger heat, including two-time 200m world champion Shericka Jackson, but neither had to over-exert themselves as they eased

into the semi-finals.

Jackson’s legendary compatriot Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce is also through but remains an outsider to add to her ten world golds and make it a fairytale farewell. On form alone, Alfred’s biggest threat is American champion Melissa Jefferson-Wooden. Third behind Alfred in last year’s Olympic final, the 24-year-old said she could cope with a change in expectations from a minor medal prospect to one of the

Qatar’s Saif soars into pole vault final

Doha: Qatar’s Saif Mohammed qualified for the men’s pole vault final at the World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025 yesterday, setting a new Qatar, Gulf, Arab and West Asia record for with a clearance of 5.75m.

President of the Qatar Athletics Federation, Mohammed Issa al-Fadala, hailed the achievement, expressing confidence in Saif’s ability to excel in the final.

“The historic achievement of champion Saif Mohammed in pole vault and his record is a source of pride for all Qataris and Arabs. He has not only raised the name of Qatar, but also the flag of the Arabs and Asia in the world’s toughest athletics competitions,” al-Fadala said.

Qatar is competing in Tokyo with 11 athletes. Among the standout entries, Abderahman Samba, bronze medallist in the 400m hurdles at the 2019 Doha Worlds, returns to the event alongside Bassem Hemeida. The 4x400m relay team will feature Ashraf Hussein, Hemeida, Ismail



Daoud, and Ammar Ismail.

Omar Dawood lines up in the 110m hurdles while Ammar Ismail, Khaled Hussein, Youssef Abdel Aziz, and Ahmed Haroun will race in the 400m, with Ibrahim Zakaria in the 800m.



Qatar’s Saif Mohammed in action during qualification in Tokyo. (Reuters)

title favourites. “I already hold myself to a really high standard and expectations, so the pressures of the outside world, I really don’t feel them,” she said. “I try to make sure I go out there and focus on Melissa, focus on what I can do and run my races to the best of my ability.”

Edmund Serem is just 17 but the Kenyan showed he is a real title prospect. He

kept his head after an early mistake in the 3,000m steeplechase and went on to win his heat – even having the time to join his hands together and hold them in front of his face as he crossed the line. However, he will have to go some to beat two-time defending champion Sofiane El Bakkali – Morocco’s two-time Olympic gold medalist coasted through his heat.

QATAR STARS LEAGUE

Shamal edge Arabi to take a two-point lead at the top

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Shamal continued their stunning start to the season as they beat Al Arabi 3-2 to open a two-point lead at the top of the Qatar Stars League.

At the Al Bayt Stadium yesterday, Mohammad Mannai scored a brace (32nd and 68th minutes), while Baghdad Bounedjah scored the other goal from a penalty kick in the 64th minute. For Al Arabi, Yazan al-Naimat (45+1) and Jordan Veretout (72nd minute) were on target. It was Al Shamal’s fourth straight win in as many matches and took their tally to 12 points, two ahead of Qatar SC, who drew against Al Rayyan yesterday. Al Arabi are on four points.

Shamal opened their account with a goal off a long corner kick which was intercepted by Bounedjah and pushed in by al-Manai. Arabi equalised as al-Naimat broke through and struck past defenders.

On the hour mark, Arabi goalkeeper Yousef Hassan made two quick saves but then Alhashmi Mohialdin fouled against Bounedjah and the side was penalised with a penalty which the Algerian scored duly.



Al Shamal players celebrate after scoring against Al Arabi in the Qatar Stars League at the Al Bayt Stadium yesterday.

Mannai’s second goal was a smooth effort from just inside the box and Shamal went 3-1 up. Frenchman Veretout made a fine strike to make it 2-3 for Arabi, but despite their best efforts they could not equalise again.

Later, Qatar SC battled to a 1-1 draw against Al Rayyan at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium. In what turned out to be a thrilling 11 minutes of stoppage time, Ali Saoudi produced a blazing header (90+10’) for Qatar SC to equalise after Serbian striker

Aleksander Mitrovic had fired in a goal (90+1 minute) for The Lions. With a point gained, Qatar SC’s stood second in the standings with 10 points while Al Rayyan moved up to seven points in fourth.

In the 50th minute, an own goal by Qatar SC’s Nasir Baksh was ruled out for offside.

The Lions rejoiced when Mitrovic fired in home from top of the box off a Roger Guedes assist but it was shortlived as Qatar SC’s Saoudi stormed in a fine Yan Mateus free kick to level score.



Qatar SC battled to a 1-1 draw against Al Rayyan. PICTURE: Noushad Thekkayil

It was goals galore at the Al Thumama Stadium as Al Ahli grabbed their first win defeating Al Wakrah. Ahli’s goals came from Fahad Waad (eighth minute own goal), Michel Vlap (27th & 72nd min-

utes), Suhaib Gannan (42nd minute) and Julian Draxler (89 minute). For Wakrah, Redouane Berkane (16th & 46th minutes) and Amin Zahzouh (35th minute penalty) scored.

COMMENT

Akram tells Pakistan and India to forget noise and ‘enjoy’ the Asia Cup match

AFP
Dubai

Pace bowling great **Wasim Akram** has urged Pakistan and India's cricketers to ignore the noise and enjoy the game when they meet in a highly charged Asia Cup T20 match today.

The Group A match in Dubai is the first clash on the cricket field between the countries since a military conflict four months ago took relations between the nuclear-armed neighbours to their lowest point in decades.

India resisted calls to boycott the match between the pair, who have not played in any bilateral series since deadly attacks in Mumbai 2008 were blamed on Paki-

stan militants. "Enjoy, it's a game of cricket," legendary left-armers Akram told AFP of the match, which potentially could be the first of three high-octane meetings between the countries in the T20 tournament.

"Forget about everything other than cricket. One team will win, and one team will lose," he said.

"Just enjoy the moment if you win the game. Pressure will come, enjoy that and show discipline because this is just a game. It's for both teams and for both sets of fans."

A full house of 25,000 is expected at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium and Akram recalled how he thrived in such pressure situations during his 19-year international career.

"I enjoyed every game against

India, and so did players from the opposition," said Akram, who led a Pakistan touring team to India in 1999 despite threats from extremists.

The 59-year-old was also part of Pakistan's 1987 tour during which the two countries came close to war.

Akram advised an inexperienced Pakistan team to think of the bigger picture and not get carried away by the hype of playing T20 world champions and arch-rivals India.

"Pakistan have a chance as they won a tri-series last week," said Akram, referring to a T20 series with Afghanistan and the UAE.

"They should not think that we just need to win against India, think of winning the Asia Cup," he said.

"You can lose to a big team but even then, stand up and play well in the tournament.

"I don't think the match will be one-sided like India against UAE," said Akram of India's opening romp on Wednesday where they needed just 4.3 overs to reach their target after dismissing the hosts for 57.

"Anything can happen in this tournament."

Pakistan beat Oman by 93 runs in their opening match on Friday.

Meanwhile, Pakistani batter Saim Ayub yesterday said that the team's primary goal at the men's Asia Cup was to win the tournament, not just to focus on their upcoming match against India

"We are not just looking forward to the Pakistan-India match, but we are looking forward to winning the tournament," Ayub said. When

asked about Pakistan's batting strategy against India's bowlers, Ayub said: "The focus is on playing fearless cricket against all opponents."

Following Pakistan's decisive win over Oman on Friday, the team's captain, Salman Ali Agha, also commented on the India match. He said: "We have been playing good cricket in the last two-three months and we just have to play good cricket. If we can execute our plans for a long enough period, we can beat any team."

Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Bangladesh are in Group B. The top two teams from each Group will qualify for the Super Four.

The Asia Cup final will be in Dubai on September 28.



PREVIEW

Rivalry reignited as Pakistan and India eye victory

CRICKET ARCH-RIVALS SET FOR NIGHT CLASH IN DUBAI

Reuters
Dubai

An India-Pakistan cricket match is always a blockbuster but emotions will run even higher in today's Asia Cup clash between the nuclear-armed neighbours, who engaged in a four-day military conflict earlier this year.

Even before the clashes in May, which nearly escalated into a full-blown war, bilateral cricket ties had been suspended.

The arch-rivals now play each other only in multi-team tournaments.

Political relations have deteriorated further since the clashes, with several former Indian players urging the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to boycott what will be the first meeting between the teams since the recent hostilities.

While the threat of a boycott is over, sparks may fly with India captain Suryakumar Yadav and his Pakistan counterpart Salman Agha ruling out dialling down aggression in the much-anticipated Group A fixture.

India, the reigning 20-overs world champions, are firm favourites to retain their Asia Cup title and are determined not to let geopolitics derail their campaign.

"Once the BCCI said they are aligned with the government, we are here to play," India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak told reporters on Friday.

"Once we are here to play, I think players are focused on playing cricket. I personally don't think they have anything in mind



India's captain Suryakumar Yadav (left) and coach Gautam Gambhir attend a practice session at the International Cricket Council Academy in Dubai yesterday, on the eve of their Asia Cup match against Pakistan. (AFP)

apart from playing cricket and that's what we focus on."

Pakistan coach Mike Hesson also wants his team to stay focused though the significance of the match is not lost on him.

"Being part of a highly-charged event is going to be exciting," the New Zealander said this week.

"From my perspective... it is about keeping everybody focused on the job at hand. That will be no different.

"We know India are obviously hugely confident and rightfully so.

"But we are very much focused

on improving as a team day-by-day and not getting ahead of ourselves."

India appear by far the strongest side in the eight-team tournament, having reinforced themselves with the selection of pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and top order batter Shubman Gill.

They were ruthless in their nine-wicket demolition of the United Arab Emirates, whom they routed for 57 in 13.1 overs before returning to chase down the target in 27 balls on Thursday.

Pakistan also opened their account with an easy victory against

Oman but their batting has been rather inconsistent.

Pakistan are without former skippers Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan but will take heart from winning a T20 tri-series in UAE, also involving Afghanistan, before heading into the Asia Cup.

"We have been playing good cricket in the last two-three months and we just have to play good cricket," Pakistan captain Salman said on Friday.

"If we can execute our plans for a long enough period, we are good enough to beat any team."

MATCH REPORT

Sri Lanka power to easy win over Bangladesh



Sri Lanka's Pathum Nissanka plays a shot during the Asia Cup 2025 Twenty20 international against Bangladesh at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Abu Dhabi

Former champions Sri Lanka launched their Asia Cup campaign in emphatic fashion yesterday, cruising to a six-wicket victory over Bangladesh in Abu Dhabi.

Chasing 140, the islanders got home with 32 balls to spare.

A blazing 95-run stand off just 52 deliveries for the second wicket between Pathum Nissanka (50) and Kamil Mishara provided the backbone of the innings.

Mishara arrived at the crease after Kusal Mendis fell in the second over.

He took time to settle but soon cut loose, cracking Shoriful Islam for three consecutive boundaries.

Nissanka compiled his 16th half-century before holing out in the deep.

By then Sri Lanka had the game firmly in their grip.

Mishara, a newcomer to the side, remained unbeaten on 46 to see his team across the line.

The platform for the win was earlier built by Sri Lanka's bowlers, who throttled Bangladesh to under 139-5 from their 20 overs.

Dushmantha Chameera and Nuwan Thushara struck with the new ball, sending down two maidens and removing both openers. By the third over, Bangladesh were nought for two and never recovered.

Sri Lanka's fielders played their

part too with Mishara's direct hit from deep square leg running out Towhid Hridoy to deepen the rot.

At 53-5 at halfway, Bangladesh were reeling, as leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga, returning from injury, stamped his class with two for 25.

A spirited unbroken 86-run stand for the sixth wicket between Jaker Ali (41) and Shamim Hossain (42) gave Bangladesh something to bowl at, but it was never enough to trouble Sri Lanka's powerful batting unit.

Defending champions in the T20 format, Sri Lanka now head Dubai for their next clash against Hong Kong tomorrow.

"We knew that we had to just score seven runs an over and when I walked in Pathum asked me to take my time. Once the loose balls were on offer, I played a few shots. I have been working very hard on my game. Happy to have helped my country win a game," Mishara said.

"This is not a 140 pitch. We should have scored much more than that. They put us under pressure during the Power Play and we never recovered. Our next game against Afghanistan is a must win clash. We will try our best," Bangladesh captain Litton Das said.

BRIEF SCORES

Sri Lanka 140 for 4 (Nissanka 50, Mishara 46*, Mahedi 2-29) **beat Bangladesh 139 for 5** (Shamim 42*, Jaker 41*, Hasaranga 2-25) **by six wickets**

FOCUS

Salt scores 141 as England break records in huge win over South Africa



England's Phil Salt celebrates his century in the second Twenty20 International against South Africa at Old Trafford Cricket Ground in Manchester on Friday. (Reuters)

Reuters
Manchester

Openers Phil Salt smashed an unbeaten 141 from 60 balls in England's mammoth total of 304 for two as the home side thrashed South Africa by 146 runs in the second Twenty20 international on Friday as records tumbled at Old Trafford.

Having been sent into bat, the hosts attacked the bowling from the opening delivery as Salt posted a record T20 score for an England batsman, and his team scored the most runs ever by a full member nation in this format.

South Africa were desperately poor with the ball and had to be perfect with the bat, but were never up with the rate and managed 158 all out in 16.1 overs as England levelled the series at 1-1 heading into Sunday's decider in Nottingham.

"It was really good fun, a personal

milestone but also the fact we got to 300 and won by such a big margin, you cannot ask for much more," Salt said.

"It is a really good wicket in the powerplay and we knew it might slow up a bit later on. It is my home ground and I knew the powerplay would be important, so I took it on."

Jos Buttler was the initial aggressor for the home side as he raced to 83 from 30 deliveries before he was out attempting a sweep off spinner Bjorn Fortuin.

England had already broken their record for most runs in a T20 powerplay with 100 from six overs, and managed the highest score in all T20 internationals at the 10-over mark with 166-1.

Salt got to 100 in 39 deliveries, breaking Liam Livingston's previous England record of reaching three figures in 42 balls, and then beat his own record of 119 for the team.

England easily surpassed their previous highest total of 267-2 against the

West Indies in 2023 and kept going as a mixture of sublime batting and woeful bowling propelled them along.

It is the most runs conceded by South Africa in T20s and ended up as their biggest loss in the format.

England were much smarter with the ball and their change of pace and more disciplined lines meant South Africa, needing to go in sixth gear, were unable to build momentum with the bat.

"It was a tough one," South Africa captain Aiden Markram said. "We started getting it wrong from the toss, that one is on me.

"Two masterclasses up front from them and when you are put under that kind of pressure, it is hard to pull it back. We will have to come up with some good plans and take it on again on Sunday."

BRIEF SCORES

England 304 for 2 (Salt 141*, Buttler 83) **beat South Africa 158** (Markram 41, Archer 3-25) **by 146 runs**

CYCLING

Vingegaard touching Vuelta glory with stage 20 win

AFP
Guadarrama, Spain

Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard set himself up to win the 2025 Vuelta a Espana when he increased his overall lead with victory in yesterday's penultimate stage, leaving his closest rival Joao Almeida in his wake in the final kilometre.

Vingegaard, two-times Tour de France winner and the Vuelta runner-up in 2023, won his third stage of this year's race in style, validating his pre-race favourite's tag.

After almost three weeks of racing, the Vuelta, and stage 20's 165.6-km ride from Robledo de Chavela, all came down to the last gruelling kilometres to the summit finish at Bola del Mundo, and Visma-Lease a Bike rider Vingegaard went for glory rather than

simply defending his red jersey. Portugal's Almeida (UAE Team Emirates XRG) began the day 44 seconds behind the Dane but did not have the legs to challenge and trailed in fifth on the stage, 22 seconds behind Vingegaard, who holds a one minute 16 second lead going into today's final stage to Madrid.

"I tried, I had nothing to lose," Almeida said. "I felt on the limit throughout the stage, the sensations were not the best."

Vingegaard's teammate, and 2023 winner, Sepp Kuss was second on the stage, 11 seconds behind the winner, with Australian Jai Hindley (Red Bull-BORA Hansgrohe) in third.

After a large early breakaway was whittled down to two men, Mikel Landa and Giulio Ciccone were caught with three kilometres remaining and the real race began,

with the main GC riders battling not only for the stage win but for ultimate glory.

Five riders were out in front, the top four overall along with Kuss, and, with the onus on Almeida, Vingegaard was tucked in waiting for an attack which never came.

Vingegaard seized his chance and nobody could keep pace with the 28-year-old Dane.

After he lost out to Almeida on stage 13's summit finish at Angliru, this win had an even sweeter taste for the leader.

"I wanted to win in Bilbao and at the Angliru, but the Bola del Mundo is also very special," Vingegaard said.

"I felt much better today than in the last summit finishes. I'm very happy with how things have gone and the way the team has worked throughout these three weeks.

"In the end I didn't feel at the

limit and in the final kilometre I decided to go for the stage. The last 300 metres were incredibly tough. I don't think things will change tomorrow, I hope to keep the red jersey."

Britain's Tom Pidcock (Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team) hung on grimly with Hindley attacking, and came in fourth, holding on to third place with a gap of 30 seconds to the Australian, and he looks set to claim his first Grand Tour podium finish.

In a Vuelta which has seen numerous disruptions caused by pro-Palestinian protesters, yesterday's stage did not escape entirely, with riders having to bypass a large group of protesters on the road with 18km remaining.

During stage five's team time trial protesters waving Palestinian flags halted the Israel-Premier Tech riders.



Team Visma-Lease's Jonas Vingegaard celebrates winning the 20th stage of the Vuelta a Espana 2025, a 165.6km race between Robledo de Chavela and Bola del Mundo, near Navacerrada, yesterday. (AFP)

MOTORSPORT

Bezzecchi wins sprint after Marc crashes out

'I LOST THE VICTORY ON THE START, I WAS NOT AGGRESSIVE ENOUGH'

AFP
Misano Adriatico, Italy

Marco Bezzecchi won the San Marino MotoGP sprint race yesterday after Marc Marquez crashed out just as he looked like further extending his massive championship lead.

Aprilia rider Bezzecchi completed a perfect day on his home Marco Simoncelli circuit in Misano Adriatico by winning from pole position and bringing joy to the Italian crowd, before celebrating with motorcycling icon Valentino Rossi and Formula One star Lando Norris.

He took to the podium with a wooden leg given to him by a fan, a reference to cult Italian comedy film *Three Men and a Leg* which Bezzecchi also referenced on his helmet.

But the 26-year-old claimed maximum 12 points for the win thanks to Marc Marquez sliding off the track on lap six, only moments after the six-time MotoGP champion had taken the race lead.

The Spaniard had already charged past Fabio Quartararo and his brother Alex Marquez from fourth on the grid in the opening moments of the race, and once he was ahead it looked like a matter of time before he claimed his 15th win from 16 of this season's sprint races.

"It was a fantastic Saturday, very happy to grab the sprint win, I don't really remember my last one, so very happy, very happy," said Bezzecchi, whose last sprint win came at Assen in 2023.

"The race was not perfect because we had some issues during the race, but even having these problems I was able to have a good pace and I knew that Marco was



Aprilia Racing team's Italian rider Marco Bezzecchi celebrates winning the San Marino MotoGP Sprint Race at the Misano World Circuit Marco Simoncelli, in Misano Adriatico, northern Italy, yesterday. (AFP)

on the limit, so very happy, very happy, I gave my all."

However, regardless of what happens in today's GP Marc Marquez will have a chance to win the title at the Japan MotoGP in a fortnight and move level on seven championship triumphs with his great rival Rossi.

His crash most benefitted Alex Marquez who finished second and cut his sibling's lead at the top of the standings to 174 points.

He also moved 77 ahead of Marc Marquez's struggling teammate Francesco Bagnaia who finished over 16 seconds off the pace in 13th

and is looking over his shoulder in third place in the championship as Bezzecchi now trails him by 28 points.

"I lost the victory on the start, I was not aggressive enough. And at that point I lost a little bit the way, but later on, you know, I was there behind Marco," said Alex Marquez.

"They were slightly faster than me, I should say, to be fair. But I was keeping the lap time quite constant, quite good, so happy for that.

"And yeah, tomorrow we'll try a little bit harder, a little bit better."

Marc Marquez's crash brought cheers from a chunk of the crowd even though he rides for Ducati as many Italian motorcycling fans have refused to forgive him for, as they see it, from actively working to stop Rossi from winning what would have been his eighth MotoGP title in 2015.

Rossi has openly called Marquez a "dirty" rider for crashing into him in that year's penultimate Malaysian MotoGP, after which Rossi was punished by having to start the final race of that year at the back of the grid, virtually guaranteeing Jorge Lorenzo the title.

FOOTBALL

Mbappe shines as 10-man Real Madrid defeat Real Sociedad

AFP
San Sebastian, Spain

Kylian Mbappe was at his brilliant best as Real Madrid showed grit to claim a 2-1 win at Real Sociedad in La Liga yesterday, despite playing for an hour with 10 men after Dean Huijsen's red card.

Mbappe and Arda Guler's first-half goals were enough for Los Blancos to maintain their 100 percent record, with Mikel Oyarzabal pulling one back for the hosts from the penalty spot. Xabi Alonso's side top the table on 12 points from four games, with second-placed Athletic Bilbao facing Alaves later on, while champions Barcelona host Valencia today.

Huijsen was dismissed for pulling down Oyarzabal as he ran through on goal with Madrid leading 1-0 through Mbappe's opener, and the Frenchman set up Guler for the second. Madrid lined up with Dani Carvajal at right-back, leaving Trent Alexander-Arnold on the bench, while Fede Valverde was rested and Dani Ceballos came in.

Guler had a goal disallowed for offside early on as Los Blancos started strongly, with Real Sociedad still looking for their first win under new coach Sergio Francisco. Mbappe broke the deadlock after 12 minutes when he sprinted on to a loose back-pass, beating two defenders for pace before producing a clinical finish for his fourth league goal this season.

Madrid's task grew harder when Spanish centre-back Hui-



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring during the La Liga match against Real Sociedad at Anoeta Stadium in San Sebastian yesterday. (AFP)

jsen, signed from Bournemouth this summer, was dismissed for pulling back Oyarzabal as he ran towards goal.

Despite their numerical disadvantage Guler doubled Madrid's lead before the break with a neat finish after a superb run from French superstar Mbappe, who teed him up after floating inside from the left. The hosts improved in the second half and won a penalty after a Carvajal handball, which Oyarzabal dispatched. However the Basque side did not have enough to take anything from the game, with Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois twice denying Oyarzabal.

Alonso warned Madrid's stars ahead of the match they would be picked on merit and after a frustrating afternoon Vinicius Junior was replaced by Fran Garcia with over 20 minutes remaining, as the coach tried to shut up shop against his former playing side. Madrid held on through six minutes of stoppage time to secure their victory.

TENNIS

De Minaur's Australia trail as Germany, Argentina into finals

AFP
Paris

Raphael Collignon stunned world number eight Alex De Minaur yesterday for the biggest win of his career as Belgium took a 2-0 lead over Australia in their Davis Cup second round qualifier.

Germany and Argentina became the first two teams to qualify this weekend to join defending champions Italy in the eight-team final in Bologna in November. Germany beat Japan 4-0 in Tokyo with Argentina taking an unassailable 3-0 lead against the Netherlands in Groningen.

The 23-year-old Collignon, ranked 91, overcame severe cramping at the Ken Rosewall Arena in Sydney to score a 7-5, 3-6, 6-3 upset after over three hours of play. Belgium's number one Zizou Bergs then beat Jordan Thompson 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 in the other singles rubber.

It leaves 28-time champions Australia, who were runners-up in 2022 and 2023 and semi-finalists last year, needing to win both reverse singles and the doubles today. Collignon was always going to be a tricky proposition for De Minaur after posting a career-best win over world number 12 Casper Ruud at

the just-completed US Open en route to the third round.

Beating the Australian was his biggest scalp so far. After the Belgian took the first set, De Minaur surged back with 10 consecutive points to take charge of the second and with Collignon doubling over with cramp in the first game of the third set, it appeared the Australian would bank the win. But Collignon heroically battled on to give his country an unexpected advantage.

In Tokyo, doubles duo Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz sealed the winning point for the Germans against Yosuke Watanuki and Takeru Yuzuki 6-3, 7-6 (7/4). The Japanese pair dug deep, saving four match points in a tight tie-break before conceding to the three-time champions. Justin Engel made it 4-0 after a 6-3, 6-7 (2/7), 10-7 battle with Rei Sakamoto.

Argentina's Andres Molteni and Horacio Zeballos sealed the winning point in the doubles against the Netherlands. In Debrecen, Hungary rekindled their campaign pulling level 2-2 with Austria. Fabian Marozsan and Zsombor Piros won a tight 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/2) doubles tie against Austria's Alexander Erler and Lucas Miedler. Zsombor Piros then dispatched Lukas Neumayer 7-5, 7-6 (8/6) leaving all to play for in the final singles tie.

VOLLEYBALL

Spirited Qatar go down against Netherlands

Agencies
Manila

Qatar opened their 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship campaign with a determined performance but ultimately fell short against a strong the Netherlands side, losing 3-1 (25-18, 25-23, 26-28, 25-23) in their Pool B opener in Quezon City, Philippines yesterday.

Despite the loss, Qatar pushed the European team to the limit, showing grit and composure especially in the third set, where they fought back to win 28-26 and extend the match.

The Qatari squad matched the Netherlands in kill blocks (9 each) and committed fewer unforced errors (26 compared to 29), high-

lighting their discipline and defensive effort.

Opposite Youssef Oughlaf led the scoring for Qatar with 17 points, while seasoned outside hitters Ribeiro Renan and Nikola Vasic chipped in with 11 points apiece.

The Netherlands, however, made the difference from the service line, firing nine aces to Qatar's two.

They also edged Qatar in attack with 57 spike kills to 52.

Dutch opposite Michiel Ahyi topped all scorers with 20 points, while Tom Koops sealed the victory with the match-winning point in the fourth set.

Qatar now turn their focus to their next match against world powerhouse Poland tomorrow, followed by their final Pool B game against Romania on September 17.



Action from Qatar-Netherlands Pool B match at the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship in Quezon City, Philippines, yesterday.

HORSE RACING

Wathnan Racing's Fallen Angel records Group 1 win again

Fallen Angel, a top-class four-year-old filly, added another Group 1 to her record with victory in the Group 1 Coolmore America 'Justify' Matron Stakes over 1600m at Leopardstown, Ireland, yesterday. The race, open to fillies and mares aged three and older, featured 11 runners and saw Fallen Angel confirm her elite status over a mile.

Trained by Karl Burke for Wathnan Racing and ridden by James Doyle, Fallen Angel now boasts Group 1 wins at two, three, and four, including last year's Tattersalls Irish 1,000 Guineas and her recent Prix Rothschild triumph at Deauville.

Settled soon in second behind the keen early leader Vera's Secret, who set a strong pace, Fallen Angel tracked the leader with Exactly close on the inside and January just behind.

The positions remained largely unchanged until the final bend, where Fallen Angel appeared slightly outpaced.



James Doyle rides Fallen Angel to victory in the Group 1 Coolmore America 'Justify' Matron Stakes over 1600m at Leopardstown, Ireland.

Well-ridden around the bend, she remained in second and seemed unable to make ground. Passing the long-time leader, who was weakening, Fallen Angel was briefly headed inside the final

200m by Exactly. Showing admirable determination, she rallied strongly in the closing stages, regained the advantage, and held on to win by half a length, with Atsila (Phoenix Of Spain) finishing third.

SPOTLIGHT

Lippo De Carrere triumphs in Group 1 PA UAE President Cup

Lippo De Carrere, a talented four-year-old Purebred Arabian colt, produced a strong finish to win the Group 1 (PA) UAE President Cup - UK Arabian Derby over 2000m at Doncaster on St-Leger Day yesterday. The race, restricted to four-year-olds only, featured a competitive field of eight runners.

Trained by Alban De Mieuille, ridden by Mickael Barzalona, and owned by Wathnan Racing, Lippo De Carrere impressed with powerful finishing kick. This victory marks Lippo De Carrere's first Group 1 (PA) success, confirming his status among the top generation of four-year-old Purebred Arabians.

Lippo De Carrere broke well but was soon restrained, showing early keenness as Lino set a steady pace. Settled in fourth, he tracked his owner-companion Moneer, who raced just behind Hibikinada Du Mazet. Approaching the final straight, the leader



Lippo De Carrere was ridden to victory by Mickael Barzalona.

remained clear, while Lippo was still some lengths behind but travelling nicely. Calmly handled by Barzalona, he stayed balanced and patient.

With 300m to go, the leader began to tire, and Lippo De Carrere was angled out for a clear run. Inside the final 200m, a

thrilling three-way battle unfolded between Lippo, Moneer, and the fading leader. Lippo stayed strongest, hitting the front in the closing strides to win by half a length.

Moneer finished strongly for second, while Shaihaan stayed on for third.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal spoil Ange return, Spurs win at West Ham

Woltemade scores on debut as Newcastle beat Wolves 1-0

AFP
London

A Martin Zubimendi double took Arsenal top of the Premier League with a 3-0 win over Nottingham Forest, while Tottenham beat West Ham 3-0 yesterday to join their north London rivals on nine points.

Ange Postecoglou's Premier League return in his first match as Forest manager was ruined by a ruthless Arsenal performance. Mikel Arteta's men had two weeks over the international break to mull over losing 1-0 to title rivals Liverpool due to Dominik Szoboszlai's stunning free-kick.

But the Gunners made it three wins from four games thanks to an unlikely goalscoring hero. Zubimendi scored just 10 times in 236 games for Real Sociedad. He commanded a £60mn fee in the transfer window because of his defensive abilities and distribution from the base of the midfield.

The Spanish international smashed home a blistering volley from outside the box to break Forest's resistance on 32 minutes. "Unbelievable from Zubimendi," said Arteta. "Two very difficult goals in terms of execution. He's come into the club and you feel a real presence, a real authority with everything he does on the pitch."

Less than 60 seconds into the second half Viktor Gyokeres doubled Arsenal's lead from Eberechi Eze's cross before Zubimendi headed in his second. A comfortable victory achieved without William Saliba and Bukayo Saka and, for much of the match, Martin Odegaard or Declan Rice, underlined the depth of Arsenal's squad as they aim to go one better after three consecutive second-placed finishes.

Tottenham sit behind Arsenal only on goal difference after a three-goal blitz of 10-man West Ham early in the second half. Pape Matar Sarr exposed the Hammers' frailties from set-pieces to head Spurs in front at the London Stadium on 47 minutes.

Tomas Soucek's straight red card moments later for a wild lunge on Joao Palhinha made a difficult task for Graham Potter's men an im-



Arsenal's Martin Zubimendi (left) celebrates with Mikel Merino after scoring against Nottingham Forest during the Premier League match at the Emirates Stadium in London. (AFP)

possible one. Lucas Bergvall's looping header quickly doubled Tottenham's lead before Micky Van de Ven fired in a third.

Nick Woltemade did his best to make Newcastle fans forget the departed Alexander Isak by scoring the only goal in a 1-0 win over Wolves on his debut. The giant German international powered home a header from Jacob Murphy's cross for the only goal on 29 minutes. Eddie Howe's men badly missed a focal point up front before the international break as Isak sat out the opening weeks of the season before his British transfer record £125mn move to Liverpool on deadline day. Woltemade himself cost a club record £65mn but has already begun repaying that show of faith.

Bournemouth moved up to fourth thanks to Antoine Semenyo's winner from the penalty spot to beat Brighton 2-1. Aston Villa remain without a goal this season but did succeed in blunting the threat of their former star Jack Grealish in a 0-0 draw away to a rejuvenated Everton.

Leeds were undone by a 94th minute own goal by Gabriel Gudmundsson to lose 1-0 at Fulham. Sunderland's strong return to the Premier League continued by holding Crystal Palace in a 0-0 stalemate at Selhurst Park.

Isak could make his Liverpool bow as the defending champions aim to retake top spot when they play away to Burnley today before Manchester City host Manchester United.

BUNDESLIGA

Kane nets brace as Bayern thump Hamburg again



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane scores against Hamburg in Munich. (Reuters)

AFP
Berlin

Harry Kane scored in each half as Bayern Munich piled the pain on old foe Hamburg in a 5-0 home win yesterday. Kane brought his Bayern tally to 93 goals in 101 games while Serge Gnabry, Luis Diaz and Aleksandar Pavlovic also scored.

Alongside Borussia Dortmund as the only Bundesliga sides to win the European Cup, Bayern and Hamburg have taken different paths since dominating German football in the 1980s. Bayern have won 12 of the past 13 league titles while Hamburg were promoted last season after seven seasons in the second division.

Gnabry hammered the ball into the roof of the net just three minutes in. Bayern junior Pavlovic finished off a team move six minutes later. Kane converted a penalty awarded for handball with 26 minutes played. Diaz made it four three minutes later, his fourth goal since joining Bayern in the summer. Nicolas Jackson came on at half-time, making his debut after moving to Bayern on loan from Chelsea in the summer. Bayern open their Champions League campaign at home against Chelsea on Wednesday.

The England captain then started and finished off his own move to score Bayern's fifth and final goal in the 62nd minute.

Since Hamburg's last win in Munich in 2007, Bayern have won 16 and drawn three of their home matches in the series, scoring 76 goals to Hamburg's seven, a run which includes two 8-0 wins and a 9-2 victory. Bayern moved atop the table as the only side with three wins from three.

Serhou Guirassy scored for the eighth straight league match as Dortmund won 2-0 at 10-man Heidenheim. Budu Zivizvadze received a red card 21 minutes for a studs-up challenge just below the knee on Dortmund's Felix Nmecha. An acrobatic save from Heidenheim goalie Diant Ramaj, on loan from Dortmund, denied Guirassy

from the ensuing free-kick.

The Guinean did not take long to get on the scoresheet, heading in a pinpoint Julian Ryerson cross with 33 minutes played. In the sixth minute of first-half stoppage time, Karim Adeyemi danced through the Heidenheim defence before squaring to Maximilian Beier who tapped Dortmund two in front. "Our goal is to become champions, so we have to get points. We did that," Beier said. "When you're a man up the entire game, that makes it easier."

Asked about Guirassy's performance, Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl said simply: "Serhou scores again." Guirassy, 29, has only failed to score in two of his past 15 matches for Dortmund in all competitions, racking up 18 goals in the process. Champions League finalists in 2024, Dortmund kick off their European season away at Juventus on Tuesday.

Elsewhere, Freiburg scored three goals in the final 10 minutes to beat Stuttgart 3-1 at home.

Left to carry the mantle up front after Nick Woltemade's big-money move to Newcastle, Ermedin Demirovic put Stuttgart in front with a classy backheel after 20 minutes, holding up two Freiburg defenders and sliding a slick finish into the corner.

Stuttgart looked set to hold on for victory until Freiburg's Igor Matanovic kick-started a late flurry, scoring with nine minutes remaining. Derry Scherhant put the hosts in front five minutes later and Matanovic grabbed another in stoppage time for Freiburg's first points of the season.

Union Berlin gave away two penalties and finished a man down in a 4-2 home loss to Hoffenheim. Hoffenheim's Fisnik Asllani scored a brace, while Andrej Kramaric and Tim Lempere converted from the spot. Johan Bakayoko scored his first goal since arriving at RB Leipzig in the summer in a 1-0 win at Mainz. Promoted Cologne scored in the 14th minute of second-half stoppage time to snatch a point in a 3-3 draw at Wolfsburg, with Jakub Kaminski providing the crucial goal for the visitors against his parent club.

SERIE A

Last-gasp Juve beat Inter to maintain perfect start

AFP
Turin, Italy

Juventus continued their perfect start to the Serie A season after a stunning strike in stoppage time from teenage substitute Vasilije Adzic secured a thrilling 4-3 win over fierce rivals Inter Milan.

Midfielder Adzic smashed in an improbable winner from distance in the first minute of added time to complete a late turnaround and give Juve nine points from their first three matches of the campaign.

The 19-year-old, who made his debut for Montenegro in June, had come on for Teun Koopmeiners not long before Khephren Thuram levelled the scores in the 83rd minute and hit a rocket of a shot which squirmed through Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer's fingers.

Adzic's strike overshadowed the contribution

from France's Thuram brothers. Playing on opposing sides, both netted.

Marcus Thuram headed Inter deservedly 3-2 ahead in the 76th minute after Hakan Calhanoglu twice drew the away team level with two superb long-range strikes of his own. Under the gaze of their icon father Lilian Thuram, who watched on from the Allianz Stadium stands, Khephren Thuram then nodded Juve level and set the stage for Adzic's powerful strike.

Inter are stuck on three points after a second straight defeat under novice coach Cristian Chivu, who replaced Simone Inzaghi in the summer even though his only previous elite coaching experience was a handful of matches in charge of Parma last season. Chivu's team spent large chunks of the match dictating the play in what is traditionally the biggest fixture of Inter's season - even more important than the Milan derby.

Champions Napoli can draw level with Juve at the top of Serie A with a win at Fiorentina.



Juventus' Vasilije Adzic celebrates after scoring the winner against Inter Milan at the Allianz stadium in Turin. (AFP)