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SPORT



CRICKET

South Africa sniff series-levelling win after Pakistan slump in 2nd Test

Page 2

QOC President attends opening ceremony of the Asian Youth Games

Manama: HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC), yesterday attended the Opening Ceremony of the 3rd Asian Youth Games, currently being held in Bahrain until October 31.

Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad al-Khalifah, Representative of the King of Bahrain for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, officially declared the Games open during a grand ceremony held at the Exhibition World Bahrain, in the presence of presidents of Asian National Olympic Committees and senior sports officials from across the continent. Also in attendance were Dr Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, Second Vice-President of the QOC, and Jassim bin Rashid al-Buenain, Secretary-General of the QOC.

The Opening Ceremony was a spectacular show that included various segments and artistic performances blending modernity with the rich heritage of Bahrain. It also featured the parade of participating nations, official speeches by the Organising Committee and the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), and the raising of the Games' flag.

The 3rd Asian Youth Games features 26 sports, with more than 5,000 athletes from 45 Asian National Olympic Committees, making it the largest edition in the event's history. The Games also serve as qualifiers for the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games.



The state of Qatar is represented by 67 athletes competing in 16 sports, namely: athletics, badminton, 3x3 basketball, equestrian (show jumping), golf, judo, jiu-jitsu, cycling, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, triathlon, wrestling, volleyball, beach volleyball, and boxing.



Female athletes are participating in four of these sports: athletics, badminton, volleyball, and beach volleyball.

On the other hand, Qatar's youth volleyball team lost to Chinese Taipei today in straight sets (0-3), with set scores of 17-25, 17-25, and 16-25.

Qatar's athletes will begin competition today in 3x3 basketball, athletics, golf, boxing, equestrian, and triathlon. Team Qatar aims to make a strong impression at the Games and compete for medals across several sports. This participation is also part of the nation's long-term preparation for the Doha 2030 Asian Games.

QATAR INTERNATIONAL BAJA

Bajas World Cup entrants make final preparations

Technical scrutineering will be based at Qatar's Lusail Circuit

By Sports Reporter
Lusail

The Qatar International Baja will be the penultimate round of the FIM Bajas World Cup on November 6th-8th. While competitors in the FIA World Baja Cup wait for the outcome of this weekend's Baja Portalegre 500 in Portugal before the latest championship standings are known before the Lusail-based event, riders competing in the FIM category are already making final preparations for their title-deciding rounds in Qatar and Dubai.

This year's FIM Bajas World Cup is being fought out over just seven counting rounds after the Hungarian Baja pulled out of the series in August. Action began across the deserts of north-central Saudi Arabia for the Hail Baja at the start of February and then moved on to the narrow and twisty gravel tracks of Portugal for the Baja Escuderia Castelo Branco in wet conditions.

British rider Alex McInnes claimed his maiden win on the series opener and then Junior rider Martin Ventura got the better of Jorge Brandao and Paulo Cardoso to win in Portugal.

MX Ride Dubai's Mohammed al-Balooshi then confirmed his fifth victory at the Jordan Baja in April, an event that was held across the spectacular desert terrain of Wadi Rum in the south of the Hashemite Kingdom. That victory pushed the defending champion into title contention.

The series then returned to Europe for back-to-back Bajas in Spain. Professional Honda rider Tosha Schareina overcame tricky muddy conditions to get the better of Javi Vega at the Baja TT Dehesa Extremadura at the start of May. Lorenzo Santolino then guided his Sherco to victory over Neels Theric and Vega in the Teruel-based Baja Spain Aragón in the heat of the Spanish summer.

Entries closed yesterday for the event being organised by the Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and the final lists will be announced on October 29th.

But Dubai-based al-Balooshi is expected to take the start with a nine-point advantage over his Lebanese teammate Rafic Eid in the overall 450cc riders' championship. Vega is third in the rankings, ahead of Brandao, Cardoso and a tying Santolino, Schareina, Ventura and McInnes. Tragically, Brandao lost his life while competing at the recent W2RC event in Morocco. Rafic Eid leads the Veterans' category by six points from al-Balooshi.



Entries closed yesterday for the event being organised by the Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation and the final lists will be announced on October 29.



Mohammed al-Balooshi is expected to take the start with a nine-point advantage.

The FIM Bajas World Cup also has a well-supported Ladies' category. Alona Ben Natan leads the way on 58 points and has an eight-point cushion over Spaniard Sara Garcia Alvarez. Equador's Maria Taranto is third, five points in front of Sarah Khuraibet from Kuwait. Kove Factory Racing's Lili-may Mansuy and the Duust Rally Team's Joanna Modrzewska are also in the points' hunt.

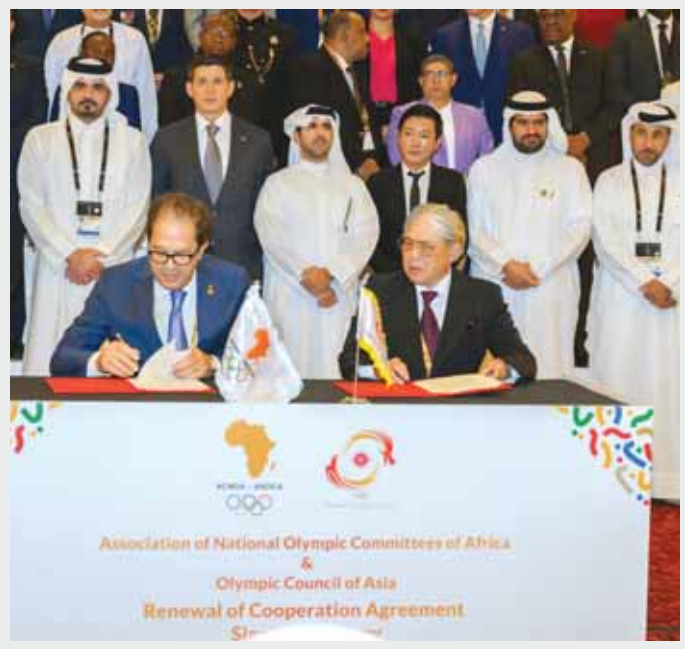
Polish rider Konrad Dabrowksi won the Qatar International Baja outright on two wheels in 2022 and 2023. He currently trails Spain's Victor Manuel Moya Aguilera by 13 points in the race to become the leading Junior rider in 2025. Dabrowski rides for the Duust Rally Team and is tied in second place in the standings with Jordan's Abdullah al-Batayneh, Ventura and McInnes.

Experienced Saudi rider Hani al-Noumesi won last year's Qatar International Baja in the quad category and has a 16-point advantage in the FIM's quad standings over Frenchman Antoine Sanchez and Portugal's Fernando Jorge Sampaio.

Frenchman Jerome Connart and the Saudi duo of Haitham al-Tuwaijri and Abdulaziz al-Shayban are also in the hunt. Administration and technical scrutineering will be based at Qatar's Lusail International Circuit on Tuesday, November 4th with re-scrutineering for any FIA vehicles on Wednesday, November 5th.

Competitive action will then take centre stage from Thursday, November 6th through to Saturday, November 8th over a total route of 773.83km and 453.21 competitive kilometres.

Sheikh Joaan attends renewal of co-operation agreement signing ceremony between OCA and Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa



Manama: HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, Senior Vice-President of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) and President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, attended yesterday the signing ceremony for the renewal of the Co-operation Agreement between the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA). The ceremony took place on the sidelines of the 3rd Asian Youth Games currently being held in Bahrain. The agreement was signed by Timothy Fok, First Vice-President of the OCA, and Mustapha Berraf, President of ANOCA. This renewed agreement aims to strengthen mutual co-operation between the two bodies, develop joint initiatives to address shared challenges faced by athletes and professionals across both continents, enhance technical exchange programmes, train sports administrators, and co-ordinate efforts in preparation for the upcoming Olympic Games in Los Angeles 2028. Also present at the signing were Dr Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, Second Vice-President of the Qatar Olympic Committee and OCA Vice-President for West Asia, and Jassim bin Rashid al-Buenain, Secretary-General of the Qatar Olympic Committee and OCA Vice-President for the Doha 2030 Asian Games. It is worth noting that HE Sheikh Joaan is the sole candidate for the presidency of the Olympic Council of Asia, with the election scheduled to take place during the OCA General Assembly in January next year.

SPOTLIGHT

Al Rayyan held to draw by Al Nahda

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Rayyan fought back to secure a 1-1 draw against Oman's Al Nahda in the second round of the Gulf Club Champions League at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat yesterday.

The home side took the lead in the 35th minute through Cameroonian striker Olomo, but Al Rayyan's Rodrigo Moreno levelled the score in the 66th minute with a fine header.

Despite dominating the final stages and missing a penalty opportunity, Al Rayyan had to settle for a point in their second match of the tournament. The Qatar side had kicked off their campaign in emphatic style, crushing Yemen's Al Tadamun Hadramaut 5-0 in the opening round.

SPORT

QATAR RALLY TO BEAT AUSTRALIA



Qatar and Australia players shake hands after their match on day five of the FIP Asia Padel Cup in Doha yesterday.

DOHA: Qatar rallied to beat Australia 2-1 in FIP Asia Padel Cup Group 2 yesterday, sealing a semi-final against Iran at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex in Doha.

The win put the hosts top of the group to close the Top 8 stage. Qatar finished unbeaten on six points while Australia advanced in second on five points.

In the other men's group, the UAE led Iran, while Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, and Pakistan were eliminated.

The hosts faced an early setback yesterday when Khalid Saadon al-Kuwari and Abdulla al-Hijji fell 4-6, 4-6 to the Australian pair Patrick Rafter and Jake Benzal, giving the visitors an early lead. Qatar fought back quickly through Rashed Naif and Mashari Naif, who delivered a confident 6-3, 6-3 win over Emeric Navarro and Marious Zelba, levelling the tie at 1-1.

Mohammed Saadon al-kuwari and Hassan Adel Waly then rose to the occasion, defeating Ross Taylor and Timothy Brown 6-4, 6-2 to complete the comeback and secure the victory for Qatar.

Meanwhile, on the women's draw, the semi-finals will feature Japan vs Australia and Indonesia vs Iran.

In Group A, Japan defeated Iran 3-0 yesterday in a battle for the first place in their group, while the UAE finished third in the group thanks to a win over Saudi Arabia.

In Group B, Indonesia ensured top position with a 3-0 win over Thailand, while Australia beat the Philippines by the same score.

Today, in the men's draw, Qatar face Iran and the UAE meet Australia for spots in the final, while the women's bracket pits Indonesia against Iran, with Japan taking on Australia.



A Lebanese player in action against Jordan yesterday. Lebanon won 2-1.

CRICKET

South Africa sniff series-levelling win in Rawalpindi

Asif Afridi becomes oldest debutant to take a five or more wickets

AFP
Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Simon Harmer grabbed three early wickets to boost South Africa's chances of securing a series-levelling victory over a faltering Pakistan in the second Test in Rawalpindi yesterday.

Harmer took 3-26 as Pakistan ended the third day on a precarious 94-4 - just 23 runs ahead with six wickets and two days remaining on a spin-spiced Rawalpindi stadium pitch.

Pakistan's last hopes rest on Babar Azam, unbeaten on 49, and Mohammad Rizwan, 16 not out, as they strive to win the two-match series, having won the first Test by 93 runs in Lahore.

South Africa piled up 404 runs after Senuran Muthusamy scored a career-best 89 not out and Kagiso Rabada posted his highest Test score of 71, giving the visitors a crucial 71-run lead.

"It was a fantastic partnership, one that we will remember and hopefully put us into a really strong position tomorrow to win the game," said Muthusamy.

The home team scored 333 in their first innings.

With their backs to the wall, Pakistan's second innings started disastrously as opener Imam-ul-Haq (nine) and skipper Shan Masood (nought) fell to Harmer with the score at 16.

It became 16-3 when Rabada had Abdullah Shafique caught in the slips for six. Harmer returned for his second spell to dismiss Saud Shakeel, who was caught in the slips for 11 to end a resolute 44-run third wicket stand.

Earlier, Asif Afridi became the oldest debutant to take a five or more wicket haul in Tests with figures of 6-79.

His effort had South Africa struggling on 221-7 as Pakistan


South Africa's Kagiso Rabada plays a shot during the third day of the second Test against Pakistan at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium yesterday. *(AFP)*



Pakistan's Asif Afridi holds the ball during the third day of the second Test in Rawalpindi yesterday. *(AFP)*

looked set for a lead, but home skipper Masood's decision to take the second new ball proved a big mistake, although Asif defended it. "Captain Shan Masood consulted us before taking the second new ball and we thought that it will help but it didn't," said Asif, although he added that "any target around 200-210 will give us victory."

Muthusamy played an anchor role in helping to add 169 for the last two wickets before Asif ended the innings on the stroke of tea.

The South African all-rounder defied the Pakistan spinners, hitting eight fours to improve on his previous highest score of 68 not out against Bangladesh at Chattogram last year. Muthusamy added an invaluable 71 runs for the ninth wicket with Keshav Maharaj (30) and then increased the lead with a last-wicket stand worth 98. Rabada smashed four sixes and as many fours, improving on the 47 he made against New Zealand at Christchurch in 2022.

The morning belonged to Asif, who at 38 years and 301 days overtook England's Charles Marriott as the oldest debutant to take five wickets.

Marriott did so against the West Indies at The Oval in 1933 aged 37 years and 332 days.

Like fellow left-armer Maharaj - who took seven wickets for the visitors in Pakistan's 333 all out - Asif used the dry conditions to maximum effect.

BRIEF SCORES
Pakistan 333 and 94 for 4 (Babar 49*, Harmer 3-26) **lead South Africa 404** (Muthusamy 89*, Stubbs 76, Rabada 71 Asif 6-79) **by 23 runs**

SPOTLIGHT

Zimbabwe crush Afghanistan for rare Test win by an innings

AFP
Harare, Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe won a Test by an innings for only the third time when they defeated Afghanistan by an innings and 73 runs at Harare Sports Club yesterday, with two days to spare.

Afghanistan batted after Zimbabwe won the toss and were all out for 127. Zimbabwe made 359 in reply with Ben Curran hitting a maiden century, giving the hosts a 232-run first innings lead.

Curran won the player of the match award for his 121 runs, which swung the one-off Test decisively in favour of the hosts on the second day.

The tourists' batters struggled again in their second innings and were dismissed for 159 with only Ibrahim Zadran (42) and middle-order Bahir Shah (32) having some success.

Brad Evans took five wickets in the first Afghan innings and second time round it was the turn of Richard Ngarava (5-37) to sparkle as the quick claimed his first Test five-for.

Zimbabwe beat Pakistan by an innings in 1995 in Harare and repeated the feat against Bangladesh six years later in Bulawayo.

It was the first Test victory by Zimbabwe in Harare since 2013, when they beat Pakistan by 24 runs in a thriller.

"It is a nice end to a tough year of Test cricket for us," said Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine, referring to seven losses in their eight previous Tests.

"On a wicket that offered a little bit throughout, I thought it was a brilliant effort with the bat from the boys.

"They have learnt a fair bit over the last few months, playing the amount of Test cricket that we did against top-class opponents.

"The bowlers were outstanding. Brad (Evans) in the first innings picked up a five-for. Richie (Ngarava) stepped up in the second innings and did the same."

Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi said: "Zimbabwe played really good cricket, and we did not. The conditions supported the fast bowlers.

"We were happy to bat first and scored 76 runs for the loss of only one wicket.

"Then there was a spectacular collapse. We let ourselves down as a team."

The sole positive for Afghanistan, who beat Zimbabwe 1-0 in a two-Test series last January, was the performance

of debutant seamer Ziaur Rahman, who captured seven wickets.

BRIEF SCORES
Afghanistan 127, 32.3 overs and 159, 43 overs (I. Zadran 42, B. Shah 32; R. Ngarava 5-37, B. Muzarabani 3-48) **v Zimbabwe 359, 103 overs**
Result: Zimbabwe won by an innings and 73 runs
Toss: Zimbabwe


Zimbabwe's Richard Ngarava celebrates his team's win against Afghanistan in Harare yesterday. *(@ZimCricketv)*

India prepare for second ODI



India's Virat Kohli during a net session in Adelaide yesterday. India take on Australia in the second ODI in Adelaide today. Australia lead the three-match ODI series 1-0. *(@BCCI)*

BOTTOMLINE

Sutherland and Gardner guide Australia to big win

Reuters
Indore

Annabel Sutherland shined with both bat and ball and Ashleigh Gardner scored an unbeaten century as Australia cruised to a six-wicket win over England in the Women's World Cup yesterday, climbing to the top of the points table.

Third-placed England suffered their first loss in the tournament as the defending champions chased down a target of 245 with 57 balls to spare, as Gardner scored 104 off 73 balls, hitting 16 boundaries, while Sutherland stayed unbeaten at 98 in their partnership of 180.

Both England and Australia have already qualified for the semi-finals along with South Africa, while India, New Zealand and Sri Lanka continue to battle over the last available spot.

"It was pretty fun, always good batting with Ash. She keeps the game moving, pretty good seat up the other end," said player of the match Sutherland, who also took three wickets after Australia put England to bat first.

England openers picked up 55 runs in the first eight overs with Tammy Beaumont scoring double digits in two of Kim Garth's overs, but Sutherland's (3-60) wicket-maiden in the ninth over sent back Amy Jones (18) and plugged the flow of runs.

England scored only 36 runs in the next 10 overs, with Heather Knight (20) being trapped lbw by Sophie Molineux (2-52) on Indore's spin-friendly track.

Captain Nat Sciver-Brunt (7) fell to Alana King, leading to a 12-over period where England's only boundary came from a misfield resulting in four byes.

King allowed just 20 runs in 10 overs and Beaumont's (78) resistance ended when she was caught trying to hit Sutherland for a six.

Hosts India face New Zealand on Thursday.

BRIEF SCORES
Australia 248 for 4(Gardner 104*, Sutherland 98*) **beat England 244 for 9** (Beaumont 78, Sutherland 3-60) **by six wickets**



HORSE RACING

Double delight for Sanna as Grace Secret claims Asherij Cup

By Sports Reporter
Doha


Connections of Grace Secret celebrate after the bay filly won the Asherij Cup at the QREC's Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday. **PICTURES:** *Juhaim*


Jockey Alberto Sanna guided Grace Secret to victory yesterday.

Grace Secret claimed the Asherij Cup for three-year-old+ Local Purebred Arabian fillies and mares at the Al Rayyan racecourse yesterday.

The three-year-old bay filly recorded an impressive 3½-length victory on her seasonal debut to notch her second career win in just her third start, showing plenty more to give for owner Umm Al Shukhut Farm and trainer Ibrahim Khaled Elahmed.

She was partnered by jockey Alberto Sanna, who completed a double on the day, winning both the first and final races of the day. Abdulla Rashid al-Kubaisi, QREC Racing Manager, crowned the winners. Sanna won the card opener – Thoroughbred Handicap (0-60) – with Injaaz Stud-owned and Jihad El Ahmad-trained Estithmar.

Jockey Soufiane Saadi also completed a double on the day as he guided Naseeb Zakhir, in the colours of Osama Omer al-Dafea, to victory in the Local Purebred Arabian Graduation Plate for three-year-old+. Saadi was in the winners' enclosure in the fifth race of the day when he rode Faleh Suwayed al-Ajami's Studio City to the Thoroughbred Handicap (60-80) for the three-year-old+.

RESULTS
3rd Al Rayyan Race Meeting - Asherij Cup
WINNERS: (Horse, Trainer, Jockey)
1 - Asherij Cup - Local Purebred Arabian Handicap
Grace Secret, Ibrahim Khaled Elahmed, Alberto Sanna
2 - Local Purebred Arabian Graduation Plate
Naseeb Zakhir, Eng Osama Omer al-Dafea, Soufiane Saadi
3 - Thoroughbred Handicap (60-80)
Studio City, Mohammed al Ghazali, Soufiane Saadi
4: Local Thoroughbred Handicap (35-60)
Horse: Saida, Hamad al-Jehani, Saleh Faraj al-Otaibi
5 - Purebred Arabian Maiden Plate
Azzam FBR, Fahad Rashid al-Khayarin al-Hajri, Abdulla Rashid al-Hajri
6: Thoroughbred Maiden Plate, 3-7YOs
Morello Man, Hamad al-Jehani, Szczepan Mazur
7 -Thoroughbred Handicap (0-60)
Estithmar, Jihad El Ahmad, Alberto Sanna

MOTORSPORT

QRC season begins with Qatar Drift Championship

AN EXCEPTIONAL SEASON AWAITS THE RACERS, SAYS SHEIKH JABOR


QRC's new season calendar features five major championships.


QRC General Manager Sheikh Jabor bin Khalid al-Thani

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Amid high expectations for an exceptional season filled with events and activities, the Qatar Racing Club's (QRC) 2025-2026 sports season officially kicks off today, with the first round of the Qatar Drift Championship (QDC).

The highly-anticipated QRC activities take place under the patronage of its chairman HE Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad al-Thani.

The club's newly approved event calendar for the upcoming season features five major championships, covering various motorsport disciplines such as drift, drag race, sand drag race, and freestyle stunt shows, in addition to over 25 testing days spread across the next seven months.

The calendar also includes roll race events and dedicated motocross racing days. QRC General Manager Sheikh Jabor bin Khalid al-Thani affirmed that the club has completed most of the preparations for the new season. "We were keen to approve the sports calendar for the 2025-2026 season early on to give racers enough time to prepare for the competitions. We are looking forward to an exceptional season by all standards — marked by a diverse range of championships, fierce competition, and strong audience engagement. This aligns with the vision of our club chairman, HE Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad al-Thani, who always strives to steer motorsports in Qatar in the right direction — technically, organisationally, and athletically," he said.

"Based on this principle, the new season's calendar has received special and exceptional attention, aiming to propel the club forward, advance motorsports, diversify our events, and attract the largest number of competitors. Our goal is to build an informed and educated community, and establish a strong youth base capable of steering Qatar toward more sporting achievements."

"Our ongoing preparations are focused on ensuring what we consider the most important factor: a safe environment, equipped with all necessary safety measures for both participants and spectators. The club consistently welcomes Gulf, Arab, and international teams.

Speaking about the sports and community events the club is organising this season, Sheikh Jabor stated: "Qatar Racing Club is well known as the home of drag racing in the Middle East. As in previous years, we will be organising two separate drag racing championships."

"The first is an international-level event — the Arabian Drag Racing League — featuring top racers from around the world. This season, it will consist of six rounds, starting on January 8–9, 2026, and continuing until the final round in mid-February. The second is the Qatar Drag Racing Championship, made up of five rounds, and attracting the best drag racers from across the Middle East. The opening round is scheduled for the second half of November, with the final round taking place in early March 2026."

He continued: "As for the Qatar Drift Championship, which kicks off tomorrow, it has consistently drawn participants from Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, Jordan, and even some European competitors.

This year's edition will feature five rounds — three in 2025 and the final two in March and April 2026. We are also organising the Sand Drag Racing Competition, held at the Sealine Sand Track."

Fans of freestyle drifting can look forward to a four-round championship, similar to last season. In addition to this, the club will also host Roll Racing events, Motocross test days, and various other motorsport activities."

Leading these community events is the Qatar Custom Show, which we will host for the 13th time this season, scheduled for January 13-17, 2026.

In addition, we're keen to host gatherings of car owners, motorcycle clubs, and other community-centred events throughout the season," Sheikh Jabor said.

QOC participates in OCA Executive Board Meeting



Dr. Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, Second Vice President of the Qatar Olympic Committee and Vice President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) for West Asia, and Jassim bin Rashid al-Buenain, Secretary-General of the Qatar Olympic Committee and OCA Vice President for the Doha 2030 Asian Games, participated in the Executive Board meeting of the Olympic Council of Asia, in Manama, Bahrain on the sidelines of the 3rd Asian Youth Games. The meeting reviewed the latest developments related to the 20th Asian Games, scheduled to be held in Nagoya, Japan in 2026, in addition to the ongoing preparations for the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, which will be hosted by the Saudi capital, Riyadh. The meeting also discussed the arrangements for the upcoming OCA General Assembly, scheduled to take place in January 2026 in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent. Several topics on the agenda were also addressed, with appropriate decisions taken to support the advancement of the Olympic movement in Asia and meet the aspirations of the sporting community across the continent.

SPOTLIGHT

Qatar and Palestine wrestling federations sign co-operation deal



The Qatar Boxing and Wrestling Federation and the Palestine Wrestling Federation signed a co-operation agreement today at the Qatar Olympic Committee headquarters in Doha.

This agreement aims to build a stronger sports partnership between the two federations through joint training camps, organising championships, creating development programmes, and exchanging technical, coaching, and refereeing expertise.

The agreement was signed by Sheikh Fahad bin Khalid al-Thani, President of the Qatar Boxing and Wrestling Federation, and Riyad Hassan, Secretary-General of the Palestine Wrestling Federation and member of the 'Sport for All' Commission at United World Wrestling.

The signing ceremony was attended by Abdullah Hamad al-Mosaifri, Assistant Secretary-General of the Qatari Federation, Ghanem Saleh al-Kuwari, Board Member, and Massimiliano Montanari, CEO of the International Centre for Sport Security.

This agreement represents an important step in supporting the development of wrestlers from both Qatar and Palestine. It will help improve their technical and physical skills through training camps and prepare them to compete at regional, Arab, continental, and international championships. Sheikh Fahad praised the achievements of Palestinian wrestlers at both the Arab and international levels.

He said that this agreement will open new opportunities for athletes from both countries, helping them develop their talents, enhance their competitiveness, and achieve greater success in the sport of wrestling.

Hassan expressed his deep appreciation to the State of Qatar for its continuous support of Palestinian sports.

He said that this agreement marks a new stage in the growth of wrestling in both countries and will help build a new generation of champions capable of reaching the top of international podiums.



TENNIS

Returning Sinner makes fast start in Vienna

AFP
Vienna

Jannik Sinner cruised to victory over Daniel Altmaier in his first-round match in Vienna yesterday as he returned to action for the first time since hobbling out of the Shanghai Masters.

The world number two raced to a 6-0, 6-2 victory over German Altmaier, posting his quickest win of the year in just 58 minutes.

Sinner will face fellow Italian Flavio Cobolli in the last 16 today as he continues his bid for a fourth title of the season.

The four-time Grand Slam champion had to retire with cramps earlier this month in his third-round match against Tallon Griekspoor in Shanghai.

But he beat Carlos Alcaraz, Novak Djokovic and Stefanos Tsitsipas in an exhibition event in Saudi Arabia last week and was in fine form again in the Austrian capital.

Sinner did not face a single break point in the match and lost just six points in the opening set as he blew the 51st-ranked Altmaier off the court.

"I feel like in the first set everything was working very well," said Sinner.

"I'm very happy about today's performance, starting the tournament in a very positive way, not only game-wise but feeling-wise."

Earlier, Daniil Medvedev continued his strong form by defeating Nuno Borges 6-4, 6-7 (7/9), 6-2.

The former world number one ended a two-year wait for an ATP title last weekend in Almaty.

After letting slip two match points in the second-set tiebreak, Medvedev regrouped in impressive fashion to begin his title bid in Vienna, where he last lifted the trophy in 2022.

Matteo Berrettini, the 2019 Vienna semi-finalist, opened centre court action yesterday with a 7-6(5), 6-3 win over Alexei Popyrin. Standing in the Italian's way of a fourth consecutive quarter-final at the ATP 500 event is Cameron Norrie, whom he leads 2-0 in their head2head series.

SPOTLIGHT

Tickets now on sale for 2026 MotoGP Grand Prix of Qatar

The tickets for the 2026 MotoGP Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar taking place at Lusail International Circuit (LIC), from April 10-12, 2026, are now available. The Grand Prix of Qatar promises to deliver an unforgettable experience for motorsport enthusiasts.

Constructed in 2004, LIC made its debut that same year by hosting the first ever Qatar Grand Prix, marking the country's entry into the MotoGP World Championship. Since 2008, the Qatar Grand Prix has established itself as one of the most visually appealing events on the MotoGP calendar with its unique night time racing format. To this day, it remains the only venue on the calendar to host night races. The combination of cutting edge facilities and the iconic illumination of LIC creates an unparalleled spectacle that has become a hallmark of the championship.

The 2026 MotoGP season is set to deliver another thrilling chapter, with the grid now fully confirmed after one of the most unpredictable contract periods in recent years, where Diogo Moreira was announced to join Honda LCR, completing an exciting line up of 22 riders.

With Ducati's powerhouse pairing of Francesco Bagnaia and Marc Marquez locked in, and rising stars like Pedro Acosta and Fermin Aldeguer ready to impress the bike fans, the 2026 MotoGP grid blends proven champions with exciting new contenders.

As anticipation builds for pre-season testing, fans can look forward to another year of fierce competition and unforgettable racing under the lights of Lusail.

TICKET INFORMATION

Fans can purchase tickets through LIC'S official website. For just QR200, a three-day ticket grants access to:

- Free seating in the Main Grandstand and Lusail Hill (Turn 1 elevated viewing area)
- Fan Zone with entertainment and activities for all ages.
- MotoGP merchandising and other retail outlets.
- Easy access to free parking and taxi pick up and drop off zone.
- As a special bonus, motorsport enthusiasts who purchase tickets for the 2026 MotoGP Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar will also receive a 25% discount on tickets for the Qatar 1812 KM - FIA World Endurance Championship.
- Wheelchair ticket holders are entitled to one free companion ticket (contact tickets@lcsc.qa)

Fans can book a maximum of 6 child tickets (free of charge for under 12 years of age) when accompanied by 1 adult purchasing a full price ticket.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Friday, April 10, 2026: Free practice.
Saturday, April 11, 2026: Qualifying for all teams and Sprint race.
Sunday, April 12, 2026: Motogp Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar

The Qatar Grand Prix will showcase the world's top riders competing on the 5.38km track. This world class venue features a flowing layout with a mix of medium and high speed corners, a main straight over one kilometre in length.

Details on Hero walks, hospitality packages, and Fan Zone activations will be available on LIC's

official website and social media channels. For corporate and group requests, contact corporatesales@lcsc.qa



Constructed in 2004, Lusail International Circuit made its debut that same year by hosting the first ever Qatar Grand Prix, marking the country's entry into MotoGP.

FOOTBALL

Arsenal's Gyokeres 'hungry' to build on after Atletico brace

Swedish striker ends a run of seven games without a goal

AFP
London

Viktor Gyokeres says he is eager to respond to manager Mikel Arteta's call to take his goal-scoring momentum into the Premier League, after Tuesday's impressive performance against Atletico Madrid. Attacker Gyokeres ended a run of seven games without a goal by scoring twice in Arsenal's 4-0 rout of Atletico in the Champions League at the Emirates Stadium.

It took the 27-year-old's tally for the Gunners to five goals following his £58mn ($77mn) transfer from Sporting Lisbon, where he scored 97 times in 102 appearances.

Gunners boss Arteta challenged Gyokeres to keep the goals coming, with Arsenal back in domestic action against London rivals Crystal Palace at the Emirates on Sunday. "I'm more hungry now," said Gyokeres. "You always want to contribute with work rate and other stuff, but when you score goals as well, it's a bit special. So that's something I always want to do.

"The group we have and the spirit is something different and something very special. When you win games and you do these performances, it builds confidence in the team. The belief has to always be there, but of course this helps to boost it. We just want to keep going like this."

Manager Arteta said Gyokeres fully deserved the ovation he received from the Arsenal fans. "I think he deserved it because everything that we were seeing in terms of what he was bringing to the team and how much he was helping the team in many areas, apart from scoring goals in the last few weeks," Arteta told reporters.

"There was no debate about that. It was about keeping that belief in himself, that emotional state that he can enjoy and play freely. I look at his teammates as well, in the picture and the video, they are all so happy for him."

His opening goal was a messy affair as his weak shot dribbled into the net via a deflection while his second came from yet another Arsenal set piece with Gabriel heading a corner into the path of the Sweden international.



Arsenal's Viktor Gyokeres (left) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Atletico Madrid in the UEFA Champions League at the Emirates Stadium in London. *(Reuters)*

"He makes us a much better team. I think we've become much more unpredictable. He's so physical, the way he presses the ball, holds the ball, that's phenomenal," Arteta said. "He's scored two very different ones today, and hopefully he starts to get some momentum and a good run of goals."

Arsenal have won their three games in Europe so far this season with as many clean sheets. They have conceded just three goals this term, away to champions Liverpool and Newcastle and at home to Manchester City, with just one of those coming from open play, in their first 12 fixtures.

Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya, who has posted five consecutive shutouts, said: "I give clean sheets the same credit as goals. If we're keeping clean sheets, it's going to make games easier to win. It's really, really important for the whole team, not giving away that many chances and being very, very solid. The depth of the squad is incredible. We have a lot of players who can play in two, three or four positions. (Mikel) Merino came on as a striker (against Atletico), but he can play as a number six, eight, or as a number 10, and that is the variety that the boss has and he is using it to our advantage. It gives us an extra level in training and in games, because if you are not at it you can lose your spot and everybody is on board with that."

Premier League table-toppers Arsenal will head into this weekend's round of fixtures with a three-point lead over second-placed Manchester City. Liverpool are a further point adrift.

La Liga chief laments Miami match collapse as others celebrate

Madrid: The cancellation of La Liga's plan to hold a Barcelona match in Miami in December is a "missed opportunity" for Spanish football, the league's president said yesterday, while elsewhere its collapse was celebrated.

Champions Barca were set to face Villarreal in the United States on December 20, which would have been the first European league fixture to be played abroad. The match will now be held at Villarreal's Estadio de la Ceramica home as normal. La Liga said their promoter for the match decided to cancel the organisation of the event because of "uncertainty generated in Spain in recent weeks".

The league's president Javier Tebas took to X to express regret at not being able to seize "this historic opportunity", adding that Spanish football had missed a chance to "develop, to project itself in the world and reinforce its future".

Villarreal were furious about the timing of the announcement to cancel the plans - the news breaking during their Champions League defeat by Manchester City on Tuesday – and also blasted La Liga's management of the whole event. "(We) wish to express our deep displeasure with La Liga over the poor handling of the match scheduled to be played in Miami," said the club in a statement.

Villarreal said there had been "no progress" in terms of organisation and the club would have "withdrawn from the project" themselves later in the week if various issues were not resolved to their satisfaction at a planned meeting with La Liga.

The plan to hold the match in the United States had also been criticised by various parties within Spain, contributing towards its cancellation. The Spanish Footballers' Association (AFE) organised protests against it last weekend, with players from every team remaining immobile for 15 seconds at the start of each league match.

Spanish giants Real Madrid also railed against it institutionally, while goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois said on Tuesday it would adulterate the competition. Madrid captain Dani Carvajal told Tebas the game being held abroad would be "a stain" on the competition.

Tebas added: "We are appealing to the 'integrity of the competition' from those who have been questioning this same integrity for years, putting pressure on referees and managers, constructing distorted narratives or using political and media pressure as a sporting tool."

The president of Spain's Sports Council (CSD), Jose Manuel Rodriguez Uribes, said La Liga had not gone the right way about trying to arrange the game. "The episode we experienced with Miami... shows that this is not the way to do things," he said on Wednesday.

"Before taking an initiative of this nature - a decision so significant that it could undoubtedly have affected the integrity of the competition - it was necessary to have dialogue, an agreement among the participants, all the clubs. "Of course, the players should be considered, as well as the fans."

Rodriguez Uribes said "absolute transparency" was necessary, as well as "appropriate regulations" in place for this kind of game, which do not currently exist. "At the CSD we will always prefer - as we have said from the very beginning - to bring sporting events to Spain rather than take them out," he added.

The AFE released a statement highlighting "the lack of transparency, dialogue, and coherence" from La Liga around the game. "The players spoke out unanimously on the pitch last week to send a powerful message: without players, there is no football," added the footballers' association.

In February, Serie A still plan to hold a match between AC Milan and Como in Perth, Australia, despite a similar backlash from both fans and players.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TWO

Al Ahli held by resurgent Arkadag

By Sports Reporter
Doha

A resurgent FK Arkadag came from behind to force a 2-2 draw with hosts Al Ahli in their AFC Champions League Two Group B clash at the Al Thumama Stadium.

Defender Matej Mitrovic's header and a thunderous strike by Michel Vlap were cancelled out by Bayram Atayev and Saparow Mekan, with the result placing Igor Biscan's men on three points, two behind Bahrain's Al Khaldiya SC. Turkmenistan's Arkadag anchor the table with two points.

A fast-paced opening 15 minutes saw Arkadag keeper Rasul Charryev under pressure from Erik Exposito, whose shot from outside the area curled left over the bar, and Sekou Yansane, who tried to squeeze the ball in from a tight angle on the right.

Yansane then went around the opposing defence but saw his shot crash against the bar after taking a deflection off Arzuvguly Sapargulyyev while former German international Julian Draxler saw his 20-yard free-kick pushed away.

The home side's pressing paid off four minutes before the break when Michel Vlap's free-kick found Mitrovic, whose powerful header hit the left post and rolled into the bottom corner beyond the reach of a flat-footed Charryev.

Al Ahli's domination was such that AFC Challenge League 2024/25 winners Arkadag failed to land a single shot on target, and instead spent the entire first half on the back foot. The Qatar side's Marwan Sherif pulled off his first save three minutes into the second half when he tipped over Gurbanow Yazgylyc's curling 30-yard shot from the right.

Al Ahli got back to business in the 56th minute when Vlap let fly an unstoppable shot from the edge of the area that hit the bar and went behind a diving Charryev. Arkadag narrowed the gap in the 79th minute when Bayram Atayev, who had come on three minutes earlier, was gifted the ball from Gurbanow Yazgylyc's failed attempt at goal and drove home from close range past Sherif, who reacted too slowly to his presence. Sherif conceded again when Mammedow Brayym's header placed the ball at Mekan's feet, who then shook off his marker to stab it home one minute into time added on. The two teams face off in the reverse fixture on November 5 at Arkadag Stadium.



Action from the AFC Champions League Two Group B clash between Al Ahli and FK Arkadag at the Al Thumama Stadium.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Bilbao bounce back from quick Qarabag goal to earn 3-1 win

Reuters
Bilbao, Spain

Athletic Bilbao conceded an opening-minute goal but came back to beat Qarabag 3-1 at home yesterday, earning their first points of this season's Champions League against the Azerbaijani side which had won their opening two games.

Bilbao had lost to Arsenal and Borussia Dortmund while Qarabag had beaten both Benfica and Copenhagen, and after a nightmare start at the San Mames stadium, a Gorka Guruzeta double helped the Basque side kickstart their European campaign.

The visitors went in front after 48 seconds, the quickest Champions League goal this season, after Bilbao defenders Aymeric Laporte and Aitor Paredes failed to deal with a throw-in and Leandro Andrade nipped in to fire past Unai Simon.

Bilbao hit back five minutes before the break when a long ball over the top from Mikel Jauregizar sent Guruzeta racing into the box to smash his low shot under keeper Mateusz Kochalski. Athletic continued to create chances after the interval, Kochalski denying Guruzeta, and a ball to the back post bounced off the chest of Paredes and over the Qarabag bar, before substitute Robert Navarro scored 20 minutes from time.

Navarro, who had been on the pitch five minutes after replacing Nico Williams, hit a stunning strike from the edge of the area which found the far top corner, and Guruzeta wrapped up the win two minutes from time with a shot from distance. Bilbao are away to Newcastle United on November 5, with Qarabag hosting Chelsea the same day.