To subscribe
GULF TIMES
Newspaper
Please call
44466635



TENNIS | Page 3

Rybakina downs world No 1 Sabalenka to win WTA Finals



FOOTBALL | Page 4

Sunderland snap Arsenal's winning run in Premier League



Sunday, November 9, 2025
Jumada I 18, 1447 AH

GULF TIMES
SPORT



FIFA U17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025

Qatar swimmers Mahmoud and Tamer reach final at Islamic Solidarity Games









Qatar swimmers made a strong start on the first day of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh yesterday. Mohammed Mahmoud qualified for the 100m breaststroke final, while Ali Tamer advanced to the 50m freestyle final, both scheduled for tomorrow at the Prince Faisal bin Fahd Olympic Complex. In volleyball, Qatar defeated Chad 25-16, 25-22, 25-18 in their third group stage match and will face Saudi Arabia and Bahrain next. In table tennis, Qatar lost to Iran in their first group game. In judo, Fatna Boukhass was eliminated in the round of 16 under-57kg category.

U-17 WORLD CUP

USA, Austria and Ireland qualify into round of 32

Burkina Faso overcame Czech Republic, Paraguay beat Panama

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The drama and excitement continued at the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2025 yesterday as several nations booked their spots in the knockout rounds, while others kept their dreams alive with hard-fought results.

At the Aspire Zone, USA, Austria and Ireland confirmed qualification with comeback wins, while Burkina Faso edged Czech Republic in a thriller, and Uganda celebrated a historic first-ever point at a FIFA tournament. Elsewhere, Saudi Arabia stunned New Zealand, France and Canada shared the spoils, and Paraguay outlasted Panama in a tense encounter.



Cavan Sullivan (centre) executed a textbook Panenka penalty to complete the comeback of USA against Tajikistan during the FIFA U-17 World Cup match at the Aspire Zone.

CZECH REPUBLIC 1-2 BURKINA FASO

Mohamed Zongo was the architect of Burkina Faso's vital victory, opening the scoring with a stunning long-range strike after his side won the ball thanks to a high press. Czechia levelled almost immediately as Adam Novak released Vit Skrkon to finish calmly, only for Zongo to then provide the corner delivery for Loukman Tapsoba to power home the winning header.

USA 2-1 TAJIKISTAN

USA overcame a shock early setback to book their place in the round of 32. Tajikistan took an unexpected lead when Muhammad Nazriev exchanged passes with Mehrubon Odilzoda before producing a smart finish, but USA levelled as Nimfasha Berchimas headed home a corner. After heavy pressure, Cavan Sullivan executed a textbook Panenka penalty to complete the comeback.

PARAGUAY 2-1 PANAMA

Pedro Villalba played a central role as Paraguay overcame 10-man Panama. Jossimar Insturain was dismissed after receiving his second yellow for a challenge on midfielder Villalba, with the South Americans then taking the lead as a smart exchange between Carlos Franco and the No 20 allowed Thiago Aranda to strike. Villalba then burst into the box to fire a low strike through Adamir Aparicio from close range, before Aldo Sanabria's late own-goal set up a tense finish.

IRELAND 2-1 UZBEKISTAN

Ireland rallied from an early deficit to defeat Uzbekistan and book their spot in the Round of 32. Uzbekistan broke the deadlock when a parry from goalkeeper Alex Noonan fell right to Abubakir Shukurullaev, who volleyed in. But Ireland levelled as Grady McDonnell rose above a pair of defenders and steered a header home. After chances for both sides to start the second stanza, the Irish wrestled away the lead, with Michael Noonan thumping in a header.



Ireland rallied from an early deficit to defeat Uzbekistan and book Round of 32 spot.

UGANDA 1-1 CHILE

Substitute Derick Ssozi scored Uganda's first-ever goal at a FIFA tournament to snatch a vital point for the African nation. Chile captain Bruno Torres' glancing header from Antonio Riquelme's curling free-kick looked set to be the winner, until a corner deep into added time caused chaos in the box and allowed Ssozi, who had been on the pitch for a matter of seconds, to fire home.

FRANCE 0-0 CANADA

France and Canada had to settle for a share of the spoils in their Group K outing, a result that leaves the duo in pole position to progress. France's Pierre Mounguengue came closest to breaking the deadlock in the closing moments as he jinked into the area and beat Jonathan Ransom, only to see his effort come back off the outside of the post.

MALI 0-3 AUSTRIA

Austria delivered an impressive team display to beat Mali and qualify for the U-17 World Cup knockout phase for the first time. They took a first-half lead through Johannes Moser's penalty. Mali's task was made all the more difficult when Samba Konare was sent off for a reckless challenge. Hasan Deshishku's fine finish made it 2-0, before Nicolas Jozepovic's stoppage-time header added some gloss to the scoreline.

SAUDI ARABIA 3-2 NEW ZEALAND

Saudi Arabia breathed fresh life into their campaign with a thrilling victory over New Zealand, who have been eliminated. Saudi Arabia took an early lead in fortunate circumstances when a New Zealand defensive clearance bounced off Abdulrahman Sufyani and looped into the net. The OFC side levelled through Matias Nunez's deflected strike, but Sabri Dahal then raced clear to score for the Saudis. Jack Perniskie's wonderful backheel made it 2-2, but Saudi Arabia were to have the last word, with Thari Saeed rifling in a stoppage-time winner.

QATAR STARS LEAGUE

Firmino nets hat-trick as Al Sadd thrash Umm Salal 8-3

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Robert Firmino registered a hat-trick as Al Sadd humbled Umm Salal 8-3 in the Qatar Stars League at the Al Khor Stadium. The defending champions led 3-2 at half time.

Firmino scored in the 24th, 65th and 70th minutes of the match while Akram Afif (28th minute), Rafa Mujica (43rd minute), Giovani Henrique (48th minute), Claudinho (73rd minute), and Agustin Silvera (80th minute) contributed a goal each.

For Umm Salal, Edidiong Essien (31st minute), Jean Evrard Kouassi (45+5 minute), and Sayed Hassan Issa (90+3 minute) were on target. The mercurial Afif besides scoring one goal was also instrumental in initiating two other strikes, and provided assists in two more.

Veteran Hassan al-Haydos made an assist for Firmino to complete his hat-trick. The big margin win was Al Sadd's fourth of the league and took their tally to 14 points to prop them two places up into 5th while Umm Salal remain 11th with six points after a seventh loss.

AL SAILIYA RALLY TO HOLD DUHAIL 2-2

Al Duhail threw away a two-goal lead and were held to a 2-2 draw by Al Sailiya at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium.

The Red Knights were in cruise control in the first half with two superb goals, a stunning opener from Krzysztof Piatek in the 38th minute and another great goal by Edmilson Junior in the 43rd minute, before Al Sailiya turned the situation around in the second half through Khaled Ali who secured the equaliser within three minutes (58th minute) and (61st minute).

Khaled Ali, who won the Man of the Match award, said his team came close to victory. "In the first half, we didn't perform as expected and fell behind by two goals," Khaled said after the match. "But in the second half, we managed to come back and equalise. It was an intense game between both sides — we created several chances after the break but couldn't make them count. We'll aim to maintain this level in the upcoming matches."

Al Duhail, who advanced to 12 points to be 7th in standings, were guilty of several missed opportunities, while Al Sailiya, who have been suffering from inconsistent performances, count themselves lucky to have escaped with a point that moved them to 7 points and 10th place in the standings.

Today, Al Shahania will play Al Rayyan while Al Arabi will meet Al Ahli.



Robert Firmino celebrates after scoring against Umm Salal.

SPORT

SPOTLIGHT

India clinch Australia series at wet Gabba

Reuters
Sydney

The fifth and final Twenty20 between Australia and India was washed out after a storm swept across Brisbane's Gabba ground yesterday, leaving Suryakumar Yadav's tourists as 2-1 series winners.

After being put in to bat, India's openers Abhishek Sharma and Shubman Gill made a bright start to the innings by putting on 52 without loss in just under five overs before the match was stopped, initially for lightning.

Gill took the early initiative and pummelled six fours in his 29 not out, while his partner Abhishek was dropped by Glenn Maxwell and Ben Dwarshuis on his way to an unbeaten 23. The sellout crowd at the Gabba hung around optimistically waiting for play to resume but the stormy weather persisted and the match was abandoned some 2-1/2 hours after it started.

The opening match in the series in Canberra was also washed out before Australia won the second in Melbourne by four wickets on the back of the bowling of paceman Josh Hazlewood.

Australia withdrew Hazlewood and a number of other players named in the Ashes squad so they could prepare to face England with the red ball and India won the third T20 by five wickets in Hobart and the fourth on the Gold Coast by 48 runs.

Abhishek was named Player of the Series for his 163 runs at an average of 40.75.

"The way everybody chipped in in every game and we came back from being one match down, I think credit goes to all the boys; a complete team effort," said Yadav after the match.

India, who top the ICC rankings in the shortest format, will head home with confidence and plenty of player options ahead of their defence of the T20 World Cup title on home soil early next year.

"I thought all in all it was a good series, two teams really going at it," said Australia captain Mitch Marsh.

"India won the games when it mattered so congratulations to them."

BRIEF SCORES
No result India 52 for 0 (Gill 29*, Abhishek 23*) **vs Australia**



India's team celebrate their series victory after the fifth and final T20 against Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. India won the five-match series 2-1 after two games were washed out. *(AFP)*

CRICKET

Ayub, Abrar shine in Pakistan's ODI series win over SA

'IT'S A COMPLETE TEAM EFFORT AND A REWARD FOR HARD WORK'



Pakistan's players and team officials celebrate the victory after the third and final ODI against South Africa at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad yesterday. Pakistan won the three-match series 2-1. *(AFP)*

AFP
Faisalabad, Pakistan

Saim Ayub hit a half century and spinner Abrar Ahmed took four wickets as Pakistan beat South Africa by seven wickets in the third one-day international yesterday, taking the series 2-1.

Left-handed opener Ayub smashed 11 boundaries and a six in his 70-ball 77 to steer Pakistan to a 144-run chase in 25.1 overs after Abrar's 4-27 had routed South Africa for 143 in 37.5 overs.

Ayub added 65 runs for the second wicket with Babar Azam (27) after Nandre Burger dismissed opener Fakhar Zaman for nought with the second ball of the innings.

Azam fell run out, much to the disappointment of a packed 16,000 Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad, having now gone 32 innings without an ODI hundred.

Ayub fell to spinner Bjorn Fortuin before Mohammad Rizwan, 32 not out, and Salman Agha, five not out, completed the chase.

The ODI series win is Pakistan's first against South Africa at home, having lost 3-2 twice in 2003 and 2007.

Pakistan won the first match by two wickets and South Africa took the second by eight wickets, also in Faisalabad.

Victorious skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi said: "It's a complete team effort and a reward for hard work."

Shaheen, captaining Pakistan for the first time in ODIs, added: "This win will give us confidence for the coming matches."

Visiting skipper Matthew Breetzke praised Abrar.

"We wanted a total of 250-plus but Abrar bowled very well and we lost too many wickets," said Breetzke, standing in for injured skipper Temba Bavuma.

Earlier in the series decider, Abrar combined with Salman Agha (2-18) and pacer Shaheen (2-18) routed South Africa who won the toss and batted, but only four batters crossed double figures.

Quinton de Kock followed his hundred in the second match with a top score of 53 off 70 balls with a six and six boundaries while Lhuan-dre Pretorius knocked a 45-ball 39 with a six and four boundaries.

When on 44, De Kock completed 7,000 runs in 158th innings, the second fastest to the milestone behind countryman Hashim Amla in 150 innings.

De Kock, 32, is the fifth South African to score 7,000 or more ODI runs behind Jacques Kallis (11,550), AB de Villiers (9427), Amla (8113) and Herschelle Gibbs (8094).

De Kock and Pretorius set the platform with a 72-run opening stand before the spinners hit back for Pakistan as the visitors lost their nine wickets for 56 runs.

Agha dismissed Pretorius and Tony de Zorzi for two in the space of 15 runs before left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz ended all hopes of a big total with the wicket of De Kock in the 25th over.

Leg-spinner Abrar jolted the innings by dismissing Rubin Hermann (one), Donovan Ferreira (seven) and Corbin Bosch (nought) in successive overs.

He then ended Breetzke's resistance-filled 16 to improve on his previous best of 4-33 which came against Zimbabwe in Harare last year.

Shaheen had Nqabayomzi Peter (16) and Lungi Ngidi (nought) to wrap up the innings in the 38th over.

BRIEF SCORES
Pakistan 144 for 3 (Ayub 77, Rizwan 32*, Burger 1-29) **beat South Africa 143** (De Kock 53, Abrar 4-27, Afridi 2-18, Agha 2-18) **by seven wickets**

Aaron Rai leads by 1 entering final round in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi: England's Aaron Rai holds a one-stroke lead over countryman Tommy Fleetwood and Denmark's Nicolai Hojgaard yesterday entering the final round of the Abu Dhabi Championship.

Rai moved to 20-under with a 6-under 66 in yesterday's third round at Yas Links Golf Club, cashing in seven birdies prior to his lone bogey at the par-3 17th hole. He is seeking his first title on the DP World Tour since 2020.

"A really good round overall," Rai said. "Drove it extremely well. Some really good iron play. Created a lot chances. Felt like I rolled it really well on the greens. A lot of putts had a good chance of going in."

Two-time tournament champion Fleetwood eagled the par-5 seventh hole and added three birdies during a bogey-free round of 67, while Hojgaard racked up eight birdies - four straight to finish the front nine - and one bogey to post a 65.

Spain's Nacho Elvira (65 yesterday) is two shots behind Rai and England's Andy Sullivan (67) and New Zealand's Daniel Hillier (65) are three strokes back. Former champion Shane Lowry (68) of Ireland is tied for eighth at 15-under while World No. 2 Rory McIlroy (66) of Northern Ireland is in a six-way tie for 12th at 14-under.

YUNA ARAKI, NASA HATAOKA SHARE NARROW LEAD IN JAPAN

Japan's Yuna Araki and Nasa Hataoka share a one-shot lead at 15-under heading into the final round of the LPGA's Toto Japan Classic.

Araki carded a 7-under 65 and Hataoka posted a 4-under 68 in yesterday's third round at Seta Golf Course in Otsu in western Japan.

Three of their compatriots round out the top five, with Miyu Yamashita (68) at 14-under, Shuri Sakuma (69) three behind the leaders and Ai Suzuki (70) four strokes back.

Defending champion Rio Takeda (68) of Japan is nine shots behind. Hatoaka has shared the lead through each of the first three rounds, with different golfers each day. She had five birdies and one bogey yesterday.

"Yeah, front nine I played really solid today, but I was not able to make birdie chances on back nine," Hatoaka said. "But I made a great birdie on 17, so, yeah, I play solid today."

Rain is in the forecast for today's final round.

"I think it's going to be greens softer, so, yeah, I need to spin control then distance control is key tomorrow," Hataoka said. "So, yeah, I will do my best."

A 20-year-old rookie on the LPGA of Japan Tour, Araki recorded her first professional win on that circuit in September.

"I can't imagine that I'm winning this tournament at the moment," Araki said. "This is US tour which kind of I have been dreaming of, so it's going to be indescribable."

COMMENT

Experienced, not old: Hazlewood confident in Australia's Ashes attack

Reuters
Sydney

Paceman Josh Hazlewood has brushed off worries about Australia's ageing attack for the Ashes, saying he personally feels as good as he has in a long time and that the unit's experience of bowling together is a major advantage for the team.

Australia's stalwart spinner Nathan Lyon will turn 38 during the series, while left-arm quick Mitchell Starc is 35. Skipper Pat Cummins, the youngest of the bowlers at 32, has been ruled out of the first Ashes Test but is likely to be replaced by 36-year-old Scott Boland in Perth.

Hazlewood, 34, said the bowling unit that has helped Australia retain the Ashes since the 2017-18 series would break up eventually but there was plenty of life in it yet.

"I feel in the best shape I've been in a long time," Hazlewood told reporters at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday.

"I think the experience, not just through red ball cricket, through all the formats, you put all the pieces together.

"You've been in so many situations now out in the middle that you've learned a lot over the years, not just as an individual but as a group, and we just bounce off each other out there and know each other's game so well, so we can help each other out," Hazlewood added.

"There'll come a time (when we move on), no doubt, but I don't think it's yet."

Hazlewood's thoughts echoed those of Lyon, who is set to overtake Glenn McGrath as Australia's second most prolific Test wicket-taker after Shane Warne during the series.

"The game has totally changed," Lyon said this week.

"It is a lot more professional than what it was probably 10 years ago with the science behind it all and the recovery.

"I feel like age is just a number. I still feel like I am yet to play my best cricket."

The Ashes first Test starts on November 21.

FOCUS

President Trump wants $3.7bn DC stadium named after him: report



A computer-generated image of the new Washington Commanders stadium. *(www.ballparkdigest.com)*

Reuters
Washington

President Donald Trump wants the Washington Commanders to put his name on their future stadium, *ESPN* reported yesterday.

A "senior White House source" told *ESPN* that the commander-in-chief has expressed his wishes to the NFL team's ownership group, led by Josh Harris.

"It's what the president wants, and it will probably happen," the source said.

Trump, of course, is no stranger to putting his name on buildings, hotels, casinos and golf courses as a real estate developer, in addition to selling Trump-branded items ranging from sneakers to caps.

"That would be a beautiful name, as it was President Trump who made the rebuilding of the new stadium possible," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told *ESPN* on Friday night via email.

The planned $3.7bn domed stadium will be constructed in Washington, DC, at the former site of RFK Stadium, home to the then-Washington Redskins from 1961-96. The 65,000-seat stadium is projected to open in 2030.A spokesperson for the Commanders, who currently play at Northwest Stadium in Landover, Maryland, declined to provide a comment to *ESPN* yesterday.

Other than Green Bay's Lambeau Field and Chicago's Soldier Field, NFL stadiums almost always sell their lucrative naming rights to corporate sponsors.

A few facilities have both nicknames and sponsors, including Kansas City's GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium and Denver's Empower Field at Mile High.

Presumably, the Commanders still could sell the naming rights while also keeping the White House happy: Northwest Field at Trump Stadium, for example.

Trump is expected to attend the Commanders' home game today against the Detroit Lions as a guest of Harris.

In advance of the game, Northwest Stadium's official X account issued the following statement yesterday afternoon, indicative of a presidential visit:

"There will be enhanced security at tomorrow's game. All fans will be subjected to TSA-style screening points and are strongly urged to arrive as early as possible," read the post.

TENNIS

Rybakina downs Sabalenka to win at Riyadh Finals

THE WORLD NUMBER 6 GETS RICHER BY A WHOPPING $5.2MN

AFP
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina lifts the trophy after defeating Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka in the final of the Women's WTA Finals, in Riyadh yesterday. Rybakina beat Sabalenka 6-3, 7-6 (7/0) to win the WTA Finals for the first time. *(AFP)*

Elena Rybakina clinched her biggest title since Wimbledon in 2022 by defeating world number one Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 7-6(7/0) at the WTA Finals in Riyadh yesterday.

The world number six put on yet another serving masterclass and was at her returning best as she became the first Kazakh and the first player representing an Asian country to lift the WTA Finals singles trophy.

Having gone 3-0 in round-robin play, Rybakina earned a record $5.2mn and will finish the year ranked number five in the world.

"It's been an incredible week, I honestly didn't expect any result, and to go so far, it's just incredible," said Rybakina, who battled a shoulder injury all week.

"I want to congratulate Aryna also for being number one for the second year in a row, it's an amazing achievement. Today was such a tough battle, some moments I got lucky, but this is tennis. I hope we're going to play many more finals together."

The ace leader on tour with 516 struck this season, Rybakina fired 13 against Sabalenka yesterday, and finished the week with a total of 48 in Riyadh.

Rybakina was the last of the eight players in the singles field to qualify for the WTA Finals in Riyadh, and she did it by winning the 500-level title in Ningbo and reaching the semi-finals in Tokyo before withdrawing from the tournament.

Her winning streak now stands at 11 matches and she improved her head-to-head record against Sabalenka to 6-8.

Squaring off for the 14th time, Sabalenka and Rybakina form one of the most gripping rivalries of the WTA, dating back to 2019.

Rybakina entered the final carrying a 10-match winning streak. The last player to beat her was Sabalenka, who knocked out the Kazakh in the Wuhan quarter-finals four weeks ago.

HARD-HITTING DUEL

Both players brought their A-game from the start, showcasing their signature brand of boom-boom tennis to stay neck and neck through the first five games.

It was Rybakina's defence though that paid off in game six, her desperate lob drawing the error from Sabalenka, who netted the overhead to get broken.

That one break was all Rybakina needed to secure the opening set in 44 minutes.

Rybakina was untouchable on serve in the second set, dropping just two points on serve through four service games.

Sabalenka was more vulnerable in that department, feeling the pressure on her own serve but still finding ways to save four break points, including two crucial ones at 4-4.

Against the momentum, Sabalenka suddenly got her hands on two set points on Rybakina's serve in game 10 but the Kazakh stood her ground to level for 5-5.

The set fittingly went to a tie-break, and despite her remarkable 22-2 tiebreak record for the season, Sabalenka couldn't halt Rybakina, who sealed the deal after one hour and 47 minutes of play.

Rybakina finished the match with 36 winners against just 22 unforced errors. Despite the loss, Sabalenka set a new WTA Tour record for most prize money earned in a single season, her $15,008,519 surpassing the $12,385,572 Serena Williams made in 2013.

"Not the best performance from me but Elena, you were definitely a better player today. You literally smashed me out of the court. Very well done. I'm happy to see you back playing your best tennis," Sabalenka said during the trophy ceremony.

Fighting tears, the Belarusian addressed her team, saying: "Maybe not the result we all wanted today, but so many things we... I guess I'm getting old, I'm getting really sensitive. So many things to be proud of. Thanks guys."

Al Shaqab International Arabian Horse Show concludes



DOHA: The 2025 edition of the Al Shaqab International Arabian Horse Show concluded yesterday, where the final championship rounds were held to crown the top horses across the Yearling, Junior, and Senior divisions.
Shihanah KL of Kaheel Stud emerged as the champion Yearling Fillies while Dandon KL, also of Kaheel Stud, won the Yearling Colts championship class of this year's 4-day event.
The Junior Fillies Championship gold went to Shaella Al Wajba of Al Wajba Stud while Yulib Al Shahania, owned by Sheikha Eman bint Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Thani, was best in Junior Colts' class. The Senior Mares Championship was won by Thorya Al Hawajer of Al Thamer Stud, and Wajeeh Aljassimya Owned by Aljassimya Stud picked up gold in the Senior Stallions Championship.
Khalifa bin Mohammed al-Attiyah, CEO of Al Shaqab, stated: "Al Shaqab's commitment goes beyond competition — it is about preserving the heritage of the Arabian horse and elevating it on the global stage. Each year, we welcome breeders, owners, and enthusiasts who share this passion. The level of excellence showcased this year reflects Qatar's ongoing role in shaping the international future of Arabian horse breeding and celebrating its timeless beauty".
The Gold winners across all championship categories received QR100,000, Silver winners QR70,000, and Bronze winners QR50,000.

Dutch rider Inge van der Heijden wins elite race



Dutch riders Lucinda Brand (left), Inge van der Heijden (centre) and Aniek Van Alphen celebrate on the podium after the elite women race at the UEC Cyclocross European Championships in Middelkerke yesterday. Van der Heijden won the race while Brand finished ahead of Van Alphen. *(AFP)*

SPOTLIGHT

Alex Marquez battles past Acosta to claim sprint win at Portuguese GP



BK8 Gresini Racing team's Spanish rider Alex Marquez (also inset) celebrates winning the sprint race of the Portuguese Grand Prix at the Algarve International Circuit in Portimao yesterday. *(AFP)*

Reuters
Portimao, Portugal

Alex Marquez powered from fifth on the grid to win a thrilling Portuguese Grand Prix sprint yesterday, denying KTM's Pedro Acosta his maiden victory after a wheel-to-wheel battle that lasted until the chequered flag.

The Gresini Racing rider, who has already wrapped up the championship runner-up spot behind brother Marc, engaged in a captivating duel with his 21-year-old Spanish compatriot that saw the pair swap positions multiple times.

For Acosta, it was a bitter pill to swallow as what appeared to be his best opportunity yet to reach the top step of the podium slipped through his fingers, leaving him to settle for second place.

Pole sitter Marco Bezzecchi of Aprilia salvaged third to improve his chances of finishing third overall in the championship and the Italian now sits 10 points clear of Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia, who finished eighth. "We needed to (take a) risk, starting from P5 was a little bit difficult but I did a really good start," Marquez said.

"I was feeling really, really good, the last corner acceleration was really good. So I was able to attack in that point.

"It's true that I used too much tyre in that point to overtake but it was my plan. So the plan was perfect."

When the lights went out, Bezzecchi shot off the line to take the lead ahead of Acosta while Marquez gained two places to slot into third in a blistering start from fifth on the grid.

But Acosta was aggressive from the outset and used the Aprilia's slipstream on lap two to overtake Bezzecchi and take the lead.

Before the Italian could respond, Marquez also made his move to push him down to third.

BATTLE FOR THE LEAD

What followed was a masterclass in wheel-to-wheel racing as Marquez and Acosta battled for the lead, with the two Spaniards constantly swapping positions while third-placed Bezzecchi was a mere spectator with the best seat in the house.

The tactical battle reached its climax when Marquez finally broke the youngster's resilience to surge into the lead with four laps left and slowly widened the gap, denying Acosta the chance to attack.

Acosta desperately hung on to Marquez's rear tyre and attempted a late gamble on the final lap but the Gresini Racing rider defended well and finished just 0.12 seconds ahead of his compatriot.

"Tough! We know that our bike is suffering a lot with the tyre consumption and we know we manage the best that we can," Acosta said yesterday.

"We were super close, even more than in Malaysia. Let's try again tomorrow."

Nicolo Bulega, the World Superbike rider called up by Ducati to replace the injured Marc Marquez, crashed out on lap four.

FORMULA ONE

Norris poised for big leap in title race with Sao Paulo pole position

Reuters
Sao Paulo



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris gets out of his car after getting the pole position during the qualifying session of the Sao Paulo Grand Prix at the Jose Carlos Pace racetrack, aka Interlagos, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, yesterday. *(AFP)*

McLaren's Formula One leader Lando Norris seized the moment as his title rivals stumbled yesterday to put himself on course for a big leap in the championship battle.

After winning the Sao Paulo sprint to go nine points clear of teammate Oscar Piastri who crashed, the Briton got back on track to seize a brilliant pole position for today's main Grand Prix at Interlagos.

Australian Piastri, his closest rival, qualified fourth.

Red Bull's reigning champion Max Verstappen, third overall in the standings but now 39 points behind, will line up 16th after his worst qualifying in nearly four years.

Mercedes' 19-year-old Italian rookie Kimi Antonelli joined Norris on the front row with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc qualifying third.

NORRIS WAS ONLY 10TH AFTER FIRST EFFORT

"I think it's going to be a big challenge tomorrow. We have to see what the weather is going to do again," said Norris.

"So far this weekend has been clean, so I'm hoping they (Antonelli and Leclerc) don't ruin it," he added.

Piastri had been on provisional pole following the first flying laps in the final phase of qualifying, with Norris only 10th after locking up into turn one.

With the pressure all on him, and one lap to pull something out of the bag, Norris produced the perfect response to go top with a lap of one minute 09.511 seconds.

Antonelli was 0.174 slower, pushing Leclerc and Piastri down the order.

"A bit disappointing with the result but the car has looked quick this weekend, especially over a longer run, so hopefully I can take advantage of that tomorrow," said Piastri.

French rookie Isack Hadjar was an impressive fifth, ahead of Mercedes' George Russell and Racing Bulls' teammate Liam Lawson.

Oliver Bearman qualified eighth fastest for Haas, ahead of Alpine's Pierre Gasly in ninth and Sauber's Nico Hulkenberg rounding out a surprising top 10 with some of the usual frontrunners misfiring.

Verstappen won from 17th on the grid at Interlagos last year but his comments suggested a repeat was unlikely.

It was the four-times world champion's first failure to get through Q1 on performance since the 2021 Russian Grand Prix in Sochi.

"I have no grip. Zero," the Dutch driver complained over the team radio.

"It was just bad. I couldn't push at all. The car was all over the place, sliding around a lot. I had to under-drive it a lot just to not have a moment. That of course doesn't work in qualifying," he said later.

Teammate Yuki Tsunoda qualified 19th, ahead only of Brazilian rookie Gabriel Bortoleto, who crashed in the sprint and was unable to take part in the session as Sauber worked to rebuild his car.

"We took some more risk before qualifying to try to see if we could put the car in a better place and it obviously went in the opposite direction," said Red Bull boss Laurent Mekies. "It's sometimes the price you pay when you take a risk."

Ferrari's seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton caused another shock when he went out in the second phase, qualifying 13th and struggling for rear grip.

MOTORSPORT

Yacopini and Oliveras claim maiden win at Qatar Baja



Qatar International Baja winners Juan Cruz Yacopini and Dani Oliveras pose with other podium winners and QMMF officials.



Konrad Dabrowski won in the bikes category, while Mohammed al-Balooshi was second followed by Jean Loup Lepan.

By Sports Reporter
Lusail

Toyota's Juan Cruz Yacopini and Dani Oliveras emerged victorious from a gruelling Qatar International Baja for the first time yesterday. The win was also sufficient for the Argentine and his Spanish navigator to confirm overall victory in the Ultimate category in the FIA World Baja Cup.

The X-raid Mini JCW Team duo of Denis Krotov and Konstantin Zhiltsov began the final day with a lead of 2min 42.4sec but came under pressure from both the FIA World Baja Cup leader Yacopini and Czech veteran Martin Prokop over the last stage.

Yacopini and his navigator Dani Oliveras went on a charge as the stage progressed. The Toyota Hilux crew grabbed the virtual rally lead before the final run through the dunes and sealed victory over Martin Prokop and Viktor Chytka after Krotov suffered a broken front differential and then stopped completely and retired on the final push through the southern desert.

Yacopini said: "I'm super happy to finish this race. Today's stage was super tough for us. Yesterday, there was a gap between us and the first car and we knew we had to push really hard. Since the first kilometre we did our best and then we had to manage the race in the dunes at the end. Now we have won the category in the World Cup. We have worked hard for this all year."

Polish rider Konrad Dabrowski led the motorcycle standings from start-to-finish on his KTM 450 Rally to seal a third victory at the event in four years (2022, 2023 and 2025). He showed an impeccable ability to manage his pace and navigate from the front on the way to a deserved win by 31min 17.0sec.

Saudi driver Dania Akeel teamed up with Frenchman Sebastien Delaunay and gave her FIA Middle East Baja Cup title ambitions a major boost by finishing third overall and first in the regional Baja. She also confirmed the Ultimate title with a round to spare. Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah enjoyed a solid stage with Fabian Lurquin in a Taurus T3 Max to finish fourth overall and win the Challenger category. A vital fifth place and points for second in the FIA World Baja Cup for Miroslav Zapletal guarantees that the final places on the Drivers' Championship podium will be decided at the final round in Dubai in two weeks' time.

The Qatari duo of Nouef al-Sowaidi and Khalifa Saleh al-Attiyah were both registered for the regional Baja Cup in their QMMF Taurus T3s and finished sixth and 11th overall and second and third in the points for the FIA Middle East Baja Cup.

Seventh overall for Nasser Racing Team's Sergei Remennik enabled him to increase his lead over Emirati rival Khalid al-Jafla in the duel for Challenger honours in the FIA World Baja Cup. Lionel and Lucie Baud were eighth in the second of the X-Raid Minis and Frenchman Ronan Chabot was 10th in his Overdrive Racing Toyota.

Young Qatari rookie Mohammed al-Marri delivered a stunning performance with navigator Szymon Gospodarczyk to finish ninth and top the SSV class standings in a Can-Am Maverick R. He finished well clear of Saudi's Maha al-Hameli and Van den Brink, although Oman's Hamed al-Wahaibi won the day's stage. Italian Amerigo Ventura suffered rear differential issues after hitting a rock in his Yamaha YXZ 1000. A change of engine block and the resultant 20-hour penalty dropped Francesco Barreto out of the top 10 and he retired midway through the stage. There were also serious problems on the final day for the QMMF Team's Abdulaziz al-Kuwari and Sweden's Mattias Ekstrom. Both Paul Severn and Eugenio Amos stopped in the dunes and lost chunks of time. Qatar's Abdullah al-Rabban held off Saudi rival Majed al-Thunayyan to win the Stock category for series production cross-country machines in his Nissan Patrol.

FOOTBALL

Arsenal winning run ends after Sunderland draw

Ligt's 96th-minute equaliser rescues draw for United at Spurs

AFP
London

Arsenal's 10-game winning run came to an end as Brian Brobbey's last-gasp goal gave Sunderland a dramatic 2-2 draw against the Premier League leaders, while Manchester United rescued a 2-2 draw at Tottenham.

Former Arsenal defender Dan Ballard fired Sunderland ahead with a powerful finish in the 36th minute at the Stadium of Light. That ended the Gunners' run of eight consecutive clean sheets in all competitions. Bukayo Saka levelled with a composed finish in the 54th minute before, Leandro Trossard smashed Arsenal into the lead from the edge of the Sunderland area in the 76th minute.

Arsenal were within touching distance of an 11th successive victory in all competitions, but Brobbey stabbed home from Ballard's header to earn a point in the fourth minute of stoppage time. It was the first time they had failed to win in any competition since a 1-1 draw with Manchester City in the top flight on September 21.

As they chase a first English title since 2004, Arsenal hold a seven-point lead at the top. But second-placed City would close the gap on Arsenal to four points if they beat champions Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium today. Liverpool can move within five points of Arsenal if they defeat City. The Gunners have finished as Premier League runners-up for the last three seasons and haven't lifted a trophy since the 2020 FA Cup.

At the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Bryan Mbeumo fired United ahead in the 32nd minute amid mounting discontent among home fans. Booed off at half-time, Tottenham hit back and looked to have secured a dramatic victory after Mathys Tel equalised in the 84th minute and Richarlison deflected in a shot from Wilson Odobert in the 91st minute.

But United defender Matthijs de Ligt powered in a 96th-minute header to extend his side's unbeaten run to five games. Tottenham's failure to hold onto the lead was another blow to their dismal record in home league games in 2025, which includes only one win in six top-flight matches in north London this term.



Sunderland's Brian Brobbey scores against Arsenal. *(Reuters)*

Seventh-placed United have now failed to beat fourth-placed Tottenham in eight meetings, including a 1-0 defeat in the Europa League final in May.

West Ham boosted their bid to avoid relegation with a 3-2 win against fellow strugglers Burnley at the London Stadium. Burnley took the lead in the 35th minute when Lesley Ugochukwu's cross reached Zian Flemming and the Dutch forward headed home from close range.

Callum Wilson hauled West Ham level with a predatory finish from the rebound after Crysencio Summerville's shot was saved in the 44th minute. Tomas Soucek netted for West Ham in the 77th minute, the Czech midfielder bundling in from close range after Lucas Paqueta's cross was parried into his path by Burnley keeper Martin Dubravka.

And, when Dubravka fumbled the ball towards Kyle Walker-Peters in the 87th minute, the defender's clinical finish put the result beyond doubt. Josh Cullen's stoppage-time strike was no consolation for Burnley. Third-bottom West Ham's second successive win moved them level on points with fourth-bottom Burnley.

Everton ended a three-game winless run with a 2-0 victory over Fulham at the Hill Dickinson Stadium. David Moyes' men went in front when Idrissa Gueye prodded home after James Tarkowski's header hit the bar in first-half stoppage time. Everton defender Michael Keane wrapped up the points when he turned in Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall's corner in the 81st minute.

BUNDESLIGA

Kane saves Bayern but record streak ends at Union

AFP
Berlin

Harry Kane snatched Bayern Munich a point in stoppage time but their record-breaking start to a season came to an end in a 2-2 draw at Union Berlin in the Bundesliga. Union defender Danilho Doekhi scored either side of an impressive solo effort from Luis Diaz. Kane's late equaliser was his 13th goal in 10 league games this season. "Winning so many games in a row is obviously incredible, but sometimes it becomes the main talking point and it might motivate other teams a little more," Kane said. "We're glad it wasn't a loss and we move on."

Despite dropping points, Bayern sit six clear atop the table, with RB Leipzig and Borussia Dortmund also slipping up. Bayern had won 16 from 16 in all competitions to start the season, a record in Europe's top-five leagues, but looked tired after fighting with 10 men for much of Tuesday's 2-1 win at Paris Saint-Germain.

Kompany made just one change to Bayern's starting XI yesterday and it showed, with the visitors sluggish and struggling to create much in the early stages.

Union had an early opener chalked off for a tight offside decision but took the lead with 27 minutes gone, Doekhi sliding the ball under Neuer from close range.

The defending champions were pinned in their own area but scored on one of their first forays goalward, Diaz somehow conjuring an improbable goal before half-time.

The Colombia forward saved a ball from going out and beat a defender on the turn, before blasting in from a tight angle.

Doekhi knocked a rebound through a crowded penalty area and into the corner of the goal to put Union in front with seven minutes remaining. But with Union on track for a first-ever win over Bayern, Kane scored in the 93rd minute to keep his side unbeaten this term.

Elsewhere, Dortmund were held to a 1-1 draw at Hamburg, with the hosts scoring an equaliser through Ransford-Yeboah Koenigsdoerffer in the seventh minute of added time. Outclassed 4-1 by Manchester City in the Champions League midweek, Dortmund were solid but unspectacular in a game with few chances, with English midfielder Carney Chukwuemeka scoring in the second half.

Koenigsdoerffer denied Dortmund victory at the death as he headed in a cross to prevent Niko Kovac's side from climbing to second and closing the gap on leaders Bayern.

RB Leipzig also stumbled, dropping points for just the third time this season in a 3-1 loss at Hoffenheim. Teenage forward Yan Diomande put Leipzig in front nine minutes in, scoring for the third straight game.

Hoffenheim hit back on 20 minutes with Albian Hajdari tapping in. The hosts took the lead just before half-time when Tim Lemperle headed in their second. Leipzig's hopes of a late equaliser were quashed when Grischa Proemel scored with 11 minutes remaining. Bayer Leverkusen romped to their biggest win of the season with a 6-0 thrashing of Heidenheim at home to climb to fourth.

Patrik Schick and Ibrahim Maza scored twice while Jonas Hofmann and Ernest Poku also grabbed goals. In late game, Borussia Moenchengladbach beat derby rivals Cologne 3-1 to lift themselves out of the bottom three.



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane scores against Union Berlin during the Bundesliga match in Berlin yesterday. *(Reuters)*

GRIEZMANN DOUBLE EARNS ATLETICO BATTLING WIN OVER LEVANTE

Madrid: Antoine Griezmann came off the bench and struck twice for Atletico Madrid to help his side beat Levante 3-1 in La Liga. The Rojiblancos moved provisionally third above Villarreal, who visit Espanyol later on hoping to go second with a victory. La Liga leaders Real Madrid travel across the capital to face Rayo Vallecano today while champions Barcelona are at Celta Vigo.

Atletico continued their run of good results in La Liga thanks to veteran forward Griezmann's second-half impact in what was a hard-fought triumph. Adrian de la Fuente's own goal sent the hosts ahead at the Metropolitano stadium but Levante levelled through Manu Sanchez. All-time Atletico top scorer Griezmann came on after an hour and hit a brace to earn his side all three points.

JUVENTUS IN TURIN DERBY STALEMATE ON GOALLESS DAY IN SERIE A

Juventus were held to a goalless draw by local rivals Torino, an uneventful day in Serie A in which the first three matches failed to provide a single goal. Luciano Spalletti's team sit fifth, three points behind league leaders Napoli after a scrappy but engaging derby at Juve's Allianz Stadium in which both teams had chances to win.

Che Adams was denied in the 63rd minute when the Scotland forward charged forward and unleashed a low drive which was brilliantly kept out by Juve goalkeeper Michele Di Gregorio.

And moments later Di Gregorio's Torino counterpart Alberto Paleari pulled off an even more impressive stop to claw away Weston McKennie's close-range header.

AC Milan can take the league lead from Napoli with a win at Parma, who sit one point above the relegation zone. Milan are a point behind Napoli with the champions facing a tricky away fixture at sixth-placed Bologna.