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India close in on win over South Africa after Jadeja heroics



TENNIS | Page 3

Sinner beats De Minaur to reach ATP Finals title match



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SPORT



FIFA U17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025

FIFA U-17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025

Burkina Faso and Uganda enter pre-quarter-finals

ENGLAND, ITALY, JAPAN, NORTH KOREA, AUSTRIA AND UZBEKISTAN WILL JOIN THE PAIR IN LAST 16

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Uganda and Burkina Faso produced the standout results of the day, as the World Cup first-timers got past Senegal before Oscar Barro's side downed reigning champions Germany to secure spots in the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2025 last 16 at the Aspire Zone yesterday.

England, Italy and Japan joined the African duo with comfortable wins, while North Korea edged out Venezuela and Uzbekistan beat Croatia on penalties.

Uganda continued to defy the odds at their debut World Cup with a hard-fought victory over Senegal. The Cranes netted with their first effort of note, as Abubakali Walusimbi rifled home the first goal their opponents have conceded this tournament from outside the area.

The Lions of Teranga pushed for a leveller and forced Edrisah Waibi into a number of impressive saves, most notably from a sweetly struck Mignane Ndour half-volley.

Senegal had a penalty overturned and a goal ruled out for offside as the Cranes held firm to book their last-16 spot.



Burkina Faso defeated reigning champions Germany in the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2025 match at the Aspire Zone yesterday.



Uganda players celebrate their victory over Senegal. *(@CAF_Online)*

Germany 0-1 Burkina Faso

A Mohamed Zongo stunner sent shockwaves through Qatar 2025, as Burkina Faso eliminated reigning champions Germany. A giveaway by defender Mussa Kaba was pounced upon by Cherif Barro, who fed Zongo down the right to cut inside and flash a stunning effort into the far corner.

The inevitable wave of Germany pressure came and looked to have told in the 97th minute, as Benno Kaltefleiter bundled home, but his effort was disallowed for offside as the Indonesia 2023 winners bowed out.

South Korea 0-2 England

Reigan Heskey netted his fourth goal of the tournament as England beat Korea Republic to book their spot in the last 16. The Three Lions hit the front when defender Jung Huiseop attempted to cut out Seth Ridgeon's cross but deflected the ball into his own net. Heskey quickly made it 2-0, rising high to head home. England controlled the game thereafter and never looked in serious danger of relinquishing their lead.

Italy 2-0 Czechia

Two second-half goals proved enough to see Italy through to the last 16 at Czechia's expense. Adam Paar was kept busy in the first half as Italy pressed for an opener, but he was helpless to prevent penalty-box pinball falling to the feet of Antonio Arena to bundle home shortly after the restart. Arena was the coolest man in the stadium for the second, as he picked out Valerio Maccaroni inside the box to lash home the settler.

Japan 3-0 South Africa

A ruthless second-half display saw Japan sweep aside South Africa and set up a last-16 meeting with Venezuela or Korea DPR. There was never any real doubt about the outcome from the moment Hiroto Asada gave the Japanese a deserved lead, scrambling home at the third attempt after twice being denied by Lwandiso Radebe.

Minato Yoshida doubled their advantage with a smart finish after some poor South African defending before substitute Shota Fujii ghosted in unmarked to head home a third and round off a convincing victory.

Venezuela 1-2 North Korea

Kim Yu-jin was the hero as North Korea marched past Venezuela. The No10 put his side in front with a delicate, first-time effort from the edge of the area, before doubling his money from the spot shortly after. Venezuela halved the arrears through star player Juan Uribe, but they couldn't topple their Asian counterparts who have won a knockout match at this tournament for the first time in 20 years.

Austria 2-0 Tunisia

A pair of late goals lifted Austria over Tunisia and into the Round of 16. There was very little between the two sides in the first 45 minutes, with the only big chance coming for Austria's Dominik Dobis, who was denied by Tunisia shot-stopper Slim Bouaskar. Austria tilted things in their favour late when Bouaskar brought down Vasilije Markovic in the area and Johannes Moser converted the spot-kick.

Austria then added an insurance goal a minute later when a shot took a heavy deflection off the leg of Mazen Slama Essefi and spun into net.

Croatia 1-1 Uzbekistan (3-4 on penalties)

Asian U-17 champions Uzbekistan beat Croatia on penalties to set up an intriguing last-16 showdown with Italy. Sadriddin Khasanov struck the decisive kick, rifling home after Croatia's Karlo Pajsar blazed over and Raul Kumar saw his effort saved by substitute Uzbek goalkeeper Nematulloh Rustamjonov.

Khasanov had earlier headed the Uzbeks in front, but Croatia dug deep and Tino Kusanovic's late strike sent the game to a shootout.

ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY GAMES

Sheikh Ali wins showjumping silver

By Sports Reporter
Riyadh

Qatar's Sheikh Ali bin Khalid al-Thani secured the showjumping silver medal in the Islamic Solidarity Games 2025 in Riyadh yesterday.

Sheikh Ali finished second in the jump-off held at the Janadriyah Equestrian Center, recording a time of 34.62 seconds on his horse Marco Monnet. Saudi rider Khalid al-Mubti took the gold medal, while fellow Saudi rider Abdullah al-Sharbatly finished third.

Qatar's Ghanem Nasser al-Qadi finished in 13th place on his mount Chiddington Blue, while fellow Qatari rider Mohammed Khalifa al-Baker finished 17th riding Dukhan 3.

Other events at the Games include handball, where Qatar's national team is preparing for its next match against the UAE today.

Qatar's medal tally at the games rose to five, including three gold medals won by weightlifter Ouisal Yakhlef and two silver medals, one for swimmer Ali Tamer and the other for equestrian Sheikh Ali.

Badr bin Mohammed al-Darwish, President of the Qatar Equestrian and Modern Pentathlon Federation, expressed pride in Sheikh Ali's achievement of winning the silver medal in showjumping. He emphasised that this well-deserved accomplishment was the result of continuous efforts in preparing the Qatari riders for the Games. Al-Darwish said, "Sheikh Ali delivered an outstanding performance, deserving the silver medal. His level of competition reflects his technical readiness and extensive experience in showjumping. The achievement is a significant addition to Qatari equestrianism.

"We at the federation are working on developing equestrian training programmes, both at the national team level and across all age groups. These achievements are a significant indicator that we are on the right track, and we aim to build on this success in upcoming tournaments."

Turkiye continue to dominate the overall standings with 106 medals, comprising 58 gold, 28 silver, and 20 bronze. Uzbekistan are in second place with 50 medals (15 gold, 18 silver, 17 bronze), followed by Kazakhstan with 38 (11 gold, 12 silver, 15 bronze). Iran hold fourth with 40 medals (10 gold, 12 silver, 18 bronze), while Egypt rounds out the top five.



Qatar's Sheikh Ali bin Khalid al-Thani celebrates on his horse Marco Monnet after winning the showjumping silver medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games 2025 in Riyadh yesterday.

Ticket sales for FIFA Intercontinental Cup Qatar 2025 are now live

Ticket sales for the FIFA Intercontinental Cup Qatar 2025 are now live at www.roadtoqatar.qa, with an exclusive presale opportunity for Visa cardholders. General sales will begin on 23 November 2025, 8am, Doha time. Qatar will host the final three matches of the FIFA Intercontinental Cup Qatar 2025 presented by Aramco on 10, 13 and 17 December at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, one of the venues used to host matches of the historic FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The prestigious competition will crown the best club in world football for 2025, with teams vying for the FIFA Derby of the Americas Qatar 2025, FIFA Challenger Cup Qatar 2025 and FIFA Intercontinental Cup Qatar 2025 trophies.

Fans can purchase tickets for all three matches in three categories, with prices starting from QR20. A maximum of 6 tickets per person can be purchased per match. All tickets will be digital and will include accessible seating options for disabled fans. Disabled fans wishing to request accessible seats can do so by sending an e-mail to accessibility-fic@sc.qa Qatar successfully hosted the first edition of the FIFA Intercontinental Cup in its new format in 2024 when Real Madrid were crowned club champions in front of a sell-out crowd at the iconic 80,000-seater Lusail Stadium, host of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Final.

The FIFA Intercontinental Cup Qatar 2025 will take place during the rest days of the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025, showcasing Qatar's ability to host multiple sporting events at the same time.

The following matches will be played in Qatar:

FIFA Derby of the Americas Qatar 2025
Wednesday, 10 December 2025 | 8pm, Doha time
Cruz Azul (Mexico) v CONMEBOL Libertadores 2025 winner
Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium

FIFA Challenger Cup Qatar 2025
Saturday, 13 December 2024 | 8pm, Doha time
FIFA Derby of the Americas Qatar 2025 winner v Pyramids FC (Egypt)
Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium

FIFA Intercontinental Cup Final Qatar 2025
Wednesday, 17 December 2025 | 8pm, Doha time
Paris Saint-German (France) v FIFA Challenger Cup Qatar 2025 winner
Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium



CRICKET

ASIA CUP RISING STARS

India face Pakistan in Doha derby today


India 'A' skipper Jitesh Sharma.

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The Asia Cup Rising Stars tournament in Doha will witness its marquee clash today as India 'A' takes on Pakistan 'Shaheens' at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium.

This Group B fixture is a crucial determinant of the group winner, with both sides having started their campaigns with comprehensive victories on Friday.

India 'A', captained by the experienced T20 specialist Jitesh Sharma, brings an intimidating batting lineup into the contest.

Their opening win over the UAE was characterised by an astonishing display of power-hitting, anchored by 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi's sensational 144 off just 42 balls, and Sharma's blistering 83 not out.

This performance saw India post a near-record 297/4, crushing the UAE by 148 runs.

While the young team has showcased their devastating potential, the question remains whether they can maintain that same aggressive tempo against a far more skilled and disciplined Pakistan bowling unit on a pitch generally expected to be more balanced. Spinner Gurjapneet Singh and pacer Yash Thakur will be key to India's bowling success.

Standing against them are the Pakistan Shaheens, led by Irfan Khan. The Shaheens started with a dominant 40-run victory over Oman, where their performance was built on the all-round efforts of players like Maaz Sadaqat, who smashed 96 not out, and a strong collective bowling performance led by the pace of Ubaid Shah.

Unlike India's focus on top-order fireworks, Pakistan relies on a more balanced batting card and a bowling attack that features internationals like fast bowler Ahmed Daniyal and spinner Sufiyan Muqeem.

Skipper Khan has stressed the importance of discipline, agreeing that a total of 160-170 is a par score for the venue, suggesting Pakistan will look to contain rather than compete in a free-for-all run fest.

The battle for victory, however, will likely be won in the early overs today.

Can the Shaheens' pacers and experienced spinners breach the defence of the in-form Indian top three?

Or will India's batting powerhouses like Suryavanshi, Sharma, and Nehal Wadhera continue their onslaught? The team that adapts best to the pressure of this historic rivalry and executes a measured game plan — as opposed to relying solely on momentum — will secure the win and an almost guaranteed semi-final spot.

The fifth match of the Asia Cup Rising Stars tournament will feature a crucial Group B battle between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman at the West End Park Stadium today.

Both sides enter this fixture determined to secure their first points after suffering comprehensive defeats in their opening games on Friday.

In the two matches played yesterday, Bangladesh 'A' beat Hong Kong by 8 wickets. Hong Kong scored 167 for the loss of 8 wickets batting first. In reply, Bangladesh reached 171/2 off 11 overs only, thus winning the game by 8 wickets (with 54 balls remaining).

In the day's second match, Afghanistan 'A' beat Sri Lanka 'A' by three wickets.

Batting first, Sri Lanka A scored 170/9 in their 20 overs. In reply, defending champions Afghanistan scored 171/7 and ended the match with 1 delivery to spare.


Pakistan 'A' captain Irfan Khan.

SPOTLIGHT

India close in on win after South Africa collapse

More than 47,000 watch the proceedings on the day 2 of first Test

AFP
Kolkata

Veteran spinner Ravindra Jadeja took four wickets to put India in sight of victory on a manic day two of a low-scoring opening Test yesterday.

South Africa were 93-7 at stumps to lead by 63 runs in their second innings on an Eden Gardens pitch that has made batting decidedly tricky.

Fifteen wickets fell during the second day and K L Rahul's 39 - from 119 balls - in India's first innings remains the highest individual score of the match.

Proteas skipper Temba Bavuma tried to replicate Rahul's obduracy, making an unbeaten 29. Corbin Bosch, on one, was with him when play was called off due to bad light.

Spinner Simon Harmer had dragged the visitors back into the contest with figures of 4-30 that helped bowl out India for 189 with the hosts taking a slender lead of 30.

"Playing in India you know you will be under pressure and I thought we fought back well today in restricting them," Harmer told reporters.

"Cricket's a funny game, we could be sitting here tomorrow night with a completely different story. South Africa manage to get to 150 and bowl India out for 80."

"If there is one thing that this team has showed it's that they can fight when the backs are against the wall," added Harmer.

Jadeja's 27 was key to India's first innings total and the 36-year-old all-rounder showed the other side of his game with some testing left-arm spin.

South Africa found themselves in a hole when Kuldeep Yadav and Jadeja removed the openers Ryan Rickelton and Aiden Markram either side of the tea break.

Jadeja kept up the pressure as he struck twice in one over to send back Wiaan Mulder, caught behind by Rishabh Pant for 11, and two balls later Tony de Zorzi who was caught off his glove and thigh pad by Dhruv Jurel at short-leg.

He had South Africa in more trouble when he spun the ball sharply to bowl Tristan Stubbs for five to bring the house down at the iconic venue that had over 47,000 fans according to official data.

The biggest cloud on India's horizon was the absence of skipper Shubman Gill who retired hurt on four with a neck problem. He did not return to resume his innings and nor did he field, with vice-captain Pant leading the team.

Earlier, India lost regular wickets to survive just 62.2 overs in response to South Africa's first innings total of 159.

"Even we didn't expect the wicket to deteriorate so quickly," India bowling coach Morne Morkel said.

"I thought it to be a good wicket in the first couple of overs, but that's the beauty of playing in the sub-continent that you need to adapt and react quickly. We have quality with both seam and spin and that covers both bases."

The hosts resumed on 37-1 with overnight batters Rahul and Washington Sundar, who made 29, extending their partnership to 57 in a grinding first hour.

Pant hit a 24-ball 27 on a pitch with inconsistent bounce and more turn expected.

Sundar hit two fours and one six in his otherwise laboured knock before falling caught behind to Harmer.

Gill walked out to loud cheers but his stay was limited to three balls as he swept Harmer for a four at backward square-leg and then held his neck in pain. The physio soon arrived and Gill walked back to the pavilion.

Rahul kept up his hard work from day one when he made 13 off 59 balls and on day two looked more assured until his departure off Keshav Maharaj.

India went into lunch at 138-4 and Jurel started with two fours after the break before Harmer had him caught and bowled for 14 to trigger a collapse.

Jadeja took India into the lead with a boundary but fell lbw to Harmer and India slipped further when pace bowler Jansen had Kuldeep caught behind for one.

Harmer cleaned up Axar Patel to end the Indian innings. Jansen returned figures of 3-35.


India's Jasprit Bumrah (right) greets his teammate Ravindra Jadeja as they leave the ground at the end of play on the second day of the first Test against South Africa at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday. *(AFP)*

BRIEF SCORES
South Africa 159 and 93 for 7 (Bavuma 29*, Jadeja 4-29) **lead India 189** (Rahul 39, Harmer 4-30, Jansen 3-35) **by 63 runs**

ANNOUNCEMENT

Australia setback as Hazlewood ruled out of the first Ashes Test

AFP
Perth, Australia

Australia was dealt a huge blow yesterday with Josh Hazlewood ruled out of the first Ashes Test against England, leaving their pace stocks precariously thin with Pat Cummins and Sean Abbott also sidelined.

The 34-year-old tweaked his hamstring during New South Wales's Sheffield Shield clash with Victoria during the week.

He was initially given the all-clear after a scan, but repeat imaging confirmed the strain.

"Initial scans Wednesday were clear of muscle strain, however follow-up imaging today has confirmed the injury," Cricket Australia said.

"Early imaging can occasionally underestimate low-grade muscle injuries.

"As a result, Hazlewood will not travel to Perth and has been ruled out of the first Ashes Test match."

It is a massive setback for the hosts just days out from the opening Test in Perth on November 21 with Cummins also missing the match.

The Australian captain has not played since picking up a lower back injury against the West Indies more than three months ago.

He is targeting being back for the second Test in Brisbane on December 4, but it is unclear when Hazlewood will be fit enough to feature in the five-Test series.

Reserve fast bowler Abbott is also an injury casualty, hurting his hamstring in the same match as Hazlewood with his return also clouded. Michael Neser, who has played two Tests, was called up to the squad yesterday as cover.

With Hazlewood and Cummins both absent, Mitchell Starc, Scott Boland and Nathan Lyon will lead a weakened attack in Perth with Brendan Doggett looking likely to make his debut.

The blow came as star England speedster Mark Wood won his battle to be fit in a boost for the tourists as they bid to win the Ashes for the first time in Australia since 2010-2011.

Wood, 35, complained of left hamstring stiffness during England's only warm-up game this week.

It was his first match in almost nine months following knee surgery, and he only got through eight overs before leaving the field.

"Following precautionary scans on Friday, England fast bowler Mark Wood has been cleared of any concerns regarding his left hamstring," the England Cricket Board said.

"Wood will continue to train as planned in the build-up to the first Test in Perth."

He did not bowl on the final day of the warm-up match against the second-tier England Lions yesterday, where Ollie Pope blasted 90 to go with his first innings 100.

Joe Root made 31, but openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett both fell cheaply.

Barring further complications, Wood is set to lead the Test attack, potentially alongside Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson and Josh Tongue.

RR TRADE CAPTAIN SAMSON TO CSK FOR JADEJA AND CURRAN

New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals have traded their captain Sanju Samson to Chennai Super Kings in exchange for all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Sam Curran in a significant trade ahead of the 2026 season, the Indian Premier League (IPL) said yesterday.
India wicketkeeper-batter Samson has represented Rajasthan in 11 IPL seasons since his 2013 debut in the competition, having also spent two seasons at Delhi Capitals in 2016 and 2017. The 31-year-old led Rajasthan to the IPL final in 2022.
Jadeja, who is currently playing for India in the Test series against South Africa, has been at Chennai since 2012. But the 36-year-old had made his IPL debut in 2008 at Rajasthan, when they won the inaugural season of the league.
"Coming back feels special, it's not just a team for me, it's home. Rajasthan Royals is where I won my first IPL and I hope to win more," Jadeja said in a statement released by the team. Chennai's managing director Kasi Viswanathan said in a video statement the decision to lose Jadeja, who has won the IPL three times with the franchise, was "probably one of the toughest decisions" faced by the team management. "The think tank of CSK felt the need for change," Viswanathan said.

BOTTOMLINE

Pope among the runs as delighted England wrap up pre-Ashes series friendly

Reuters
Melbourne

Time in the middle and keeping their fast bowling unit injury-free topped England's agenda as they wrapped up their only pre-Ashes practice match yesterday against a second-string England Lions at Lilac Hill in Perth's north-east.

The result being of no importance, a sporting Lions declaration on the final day of the three-day warm-up gave England's first-choice batsmen just over two hours to chase 202, which they achieved with five wickets remaining.

"The guys have all had a good three days out here," said paceman Brydon Carse, who landed three wickets after recovering from a 24-hour bug.

"The group of seamers have all got a decent amount of overs in and some of the batters have spent some time at the crease. Everyone is raring to go." Number three batsman Ollie Pope backed up a first-innings century with a breezy 90 from the attacking 'Bazball' play-book, while Joe Root scored an unremarkable 31.

Earlier, Ashes hopeful Jacob Bethell top-scored for the Lions with 70. England are in good spirits after fast bowler Mark Wood, who complained of hamstring stiffness on day one, was given the all-clear following scans.

The visitors' hopes in the opening Perth Test, starting on Friday, were further boosted with confirmation that Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood had been ruled out with a hamstring strain.

"He's obviously a massive bowler for Australia, I'm sure we'll see some part of him throughout the series," said Carse.

The 34-year-old's omission leaves Australia, who have also lost skipper Pat Cummins to injury, in disarray given that the two men have combined for 31 wickets in five tests at Perth Stadium, which is always conducive to pace and bounce.

Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland will now have to shoulder a heavy workload, while South Australia's Brendan Doggett is in line for his international debut.

Seam-bowling all-rounder Michael Neser, who last played a Test in 2022, was promoted into Australia's squad.


England's Ben Stokes fields the ball during the Ashes tour warm-up match against England Lions XI at Lilac Hill Park in Perth yesterday. *(AFP)*

TENNIS / ATP FINALS

Sinner reaches title clash with win over De Minaur

'Making the final for three consecutive years means a lot to me'

AFP
Turin, Italy

Jannik Sinner continued his mastery over Alex de Minaur yesterday with a straight-sets win to reach the ATP Finals championship match for the third year in a row.

Sinner broke late in the first set and then pulled away from De Minaur to complete a 7-5, 6-2 win – his 13th in as many meetings with the Australian.

The Italian world number two has yet to drop a service game en route to the final. He will try to defend his title today against top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz or Felix Auger-Aliassime.

"It is the last event of the year and it is great to finish in this way," said Sinner.

"It was a very tough match, especially at the beginning of the first set. I felt like he was serving great, very precise.

"In the second set, I broke very early and then my level rose. I tried to be a bit more aggressive and it worked well but it was a tough match."

Sinner has won his last 18 sets played in Turin, where he beat Taylor Fritz in last year's final. The four-time Grand Slam champion is on a 30-match winning streak on indoor hard courts.

The 24-year-old Sinner hasn't dropped a set at the ATP Finals since losing the 2023 final to Novak Djokovic.



Italy's Jannik Sinner shakes hands with Australia's Alex de Minaur after winning his semi-final match at the ATP Finals in Turin, Italy, yesterday. *(Reuters)*

"Making the final for three consecutive years means a lot to me," said Sinner.

"It is a great atmosphere for me to play tennis and a great place for me to close this beautiful season. Tomorrow I will enjoy and try my best to get the best possible result."

De Minaur fought off two break points in the opening game of the semi-final but then failed to convert any of the three he carved out in Sinner's first service game.

The Australian resisted again when Sinner threatened to break in the seventh and ninth games, but the second seed eventually struck the key blow at 5-5 and snatched the first set.

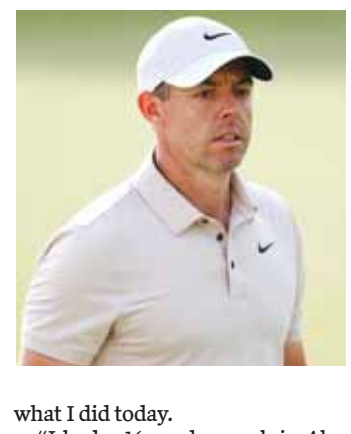
Sinner surged 4-0 ahead in the second set before wrapping up his ninth straight win at the tournament, becoming the youngest player since Lleyton Hewitt in 2004 to reach three finals at the season-ending event.

If Sinner faces Alcaraz in the final, it will be their sixth meeting of the season. Alcaraz has won four of the five previous matches, triumphing in the French Open and US Open finals.

GOLF

McIlroy shares the lead with Race to Dubai title in sight after round three

AFP
Dubai



Rory McIlroy took another step closer to a seventh Race to Dubai crown when he broke through a logjam at the top of the DP World Tour Championship leaderboard with a flurry of late birdies yesterday.

McIlroy, the tournament's defending champion who is attempting to win the Race to Dubai title for a fourth successive year, finished tied at the top alongside Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen of Denmark at 13 under par. Both players shot rounds of 68.

Six players including Rasmus Hojgaard, Tommy Fleetwood, Tyrrell Hatton and Matt Fitzpatrick shared third place at 12-under.

Ludvig Aberg and Justin Rose, also members of the Ryder Cup-winning European team, and Nicolai Hojgaard were tied for ninth at 11-under.

With Marco Penge in tied 36th place nine shots behind McIlroy, the only player who can stop him from ending the year as Europe's top player again is Hatton. For that to happen, he will have to win the title today, and then hope McIlroy finishes lower than eighth.

McIlroy rose to the top of the pack with three birdies over the last five holes after struggling with his putting for much of the round.

"I felt like the last two days were battles. Even then, to come out and shoot two scores in the 60s, is nice," said McIlroy.

"I gave myself plenty of chances, and the putter wasn't really cooperating. But I think talking to a lot of the guys in the locker room, I think everyone is struggling a bit on the greens this week. They are just hard to read, and they get a little bit crusty at the end of the day.

"But I stayed as patient as I could, and knew there were some chances on the way in, the two par 5s and the short par 4, 15th, and with my length, I know I should take advantage of those, and that's what I did today.

"I had a 16-under week in Abu Dhabi last week, and to come in here and play, or score well, maybe not play my best but keep myself right up there in contention, one last push tomorrow to try to end the season the way I feel like the way it deserves to be ended."

'Pretty special' round with McIlroy

Neergaard-Petersen, playing in the lead group with his compatriot Nicolai Hojgaard, started with a bogey on the first hole, but was solid for the rest of the day to add five birdies on his card.

"Super pleased with that round. I thought I managed to stay really patient and obviously not getting off to the best of starts, but from there I feel like I hit a lot of good shots," said the 26-year-old.

"I'm so excited to play with Rory tomorrow. I can't wait. I haven't played with him ever, and to do it here in the final group on a Sunday is going to be pretty special."

Hatton, who made seven birdies in his 67 to edge closer to McIlroy, said: "Today's round has given me a chance. I will go out there and try and put another good round of golf together and see what happens."

The tournament has the richest purse on the European circuit – $10mn – and the top 10 players also get a share of a $6mn bonus pool at the end of the season.

If McIlroy wins both the competitions, his winning cheque would be $5mn.

FOCUS

Spectacular start to 47th CISM World Military Parachuting Championships Qatar 2025

By Sports Reporter
Doha





Brigadier General Mohammed bin Zayed al-Otaibi, Commander of the Joint Special Forces and Chairman of the Qatar Air Sports Committee, at the opening ceremony of the 47th World Military Parachuting Championships in Doha yesterday. **Right:** Participants in action during the opening ceremony. The championship is taking place at Umm Shakhout Airport.

The 47th CISM World Military Parachuting Championships Qatar 2025 got off to a spectacular start here yesterday.

HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs inaugurated the championship. The opening ceremony was also attended by HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, and HE Lieutenant General (Pilot) Jassim bin Mohammed al-Mannai, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, along with several senior officials and guests.

Organised by Qatar Air Sports Committee (QASC) at Umm Shakhout Airport, the championships will run from Nov 15 to 23, with the participation of 320 male and female athletes from 30 countries, representing the elite of military parachuting champions.

The QASC presented stunning displays by the world record-holding paramotor team and the 2025 record-holding aerobatics team.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Brigadier General Mohammed bin Zayed al-Otaibi, Commander of the Joint Special Forces and Chairman of the QASC, said the gathering of the world's nations under the umbrella of this prestigious championship represents a profound sporting and humanitarian message, confirming that military sports has been and remains a bridge for acquaintance, a platform for cultural exchange, and a means to promote the values of friendship and peace among the armies of different continents.

Brigadier al-Otaibi added: "Doha has proven time and again that it is a world-class destination capable of innovative organisation and providing a comprehensive, safe, and seamless experience for all participants. We extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the Amir of the State of Qatar for his unwavering support of sports activities across all disciplines. We also express our deep thanks to HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, for his generous support and commitment to providing all necessary facilities for the armed forces and guests of the tournament, which greatly contributed to the success of this edition. We also express our profound appreciation to HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, and to all the organising bodies that dedicated their resources to ensuring the success of this global event."

QATAR TRIATHLON LEAGUE KICKS OFF



The inaugural race of the Qatar Triathlon League for the 2025/2026 season attracted a large participation in Doha. The first race was hosted by the Old Doha Port. The event saw the participation of over one hundred male and female athletes, who delivered intense competitions marked by both excitement and a strong sporting spirit, officials said.



MOTOGP

Alex Marquez posts sprint victory with slick ease at Valencia Grand Prix

Reuters
Valencia, Spain

Gresini Racing's Alex Marquez led from the start to comfortably win the 13-lap Valencia Grand Prix sprint yesterday, leaving runner-up Pedro Acosta behind by more than one second.

Marquez, who is second in the season's standings behind champion and brother Marc Marquez, has won two sprint races in a row. KTM's Acosta, who was more than 1.4 seconds behind with four laps to go, tried to make up some ground but ended 1.149 seconds slower.

Alex, who won the Spanish Grand Prix and the Catalonian Grand Prix earlier this year, will be looking to win a third straight race on home soil as the 2025 season comes to an end at Circuit Ricardo Tormo today.

"I tried my best to attack from the start. The key was to put our rhythm, save a little bit of time in the beginning and then push in the end," said the Spaniard.

VR46 Racing's Fabio Di Giannantonio came in third, 2.637 seconds behind Alex, while Raul Fernandez narrowly beat Marco Bezzecchi to finish fourth.

Good show by Bezzecchi

Bezzecchi, who took pole position in qualifying earlier in the day, has secured third place in the championship, the first for an Aprilia rider. Alex passed Bezzecchi early in the race to take the lead, with Acosta giving chase.

The pair had opened up a gap of more than 1.4 seconds to the rest of the riders by the sixth lap.

Acosta said he was happy with his performance despite not being able to match compatriot Alex's speed.

"This is like a football match, when you are trying to take a penalty," said Acosta, who is fourth in the championship, six points ahead of Francesco Bagnaia.

Last year's champion Jorge Martin, making his comeback after nearly five months out with a serious injury suffered during training, finished last, while Honda teammates Joan Mir and Luca Marini crashed out after a collision in the second lap.

The imposing Marc Marquez ended his season early after suffering a collarbone injury at the Indonesian Grand Prix last month, a week after winning his seventh premier-class crown at the Japanese Grand Prix.



FROM LEFT: Second-placed Red Bull KTM Factory Racing's Pedro Acosta, first-placed BK8 Gresini Racing's Alex Marquez and third-placed Pertamina Enduro VR46 Raging Team's Fabio Di Giannantonio celebrate on the podium in Valencia, Cheste, yesterday. *(AFP)*

HORSE RACING

Maysara strikes late to win Al Noof Cup

By Sports Reporter
Doha



Connections of Maysara pose with the trophies after the mare won the Al Noof Cup at the Al Uqda Racecourse yesterday. **PICTURES:** *Juhaim*


Jockey Arnaud De Lepine guided Maysara to Al Noof Cup win yesterday.

Maysara delivered a strong performance to claim the Al Noof Cup at the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club's Al Uqda Racecourse yesterday.

The five-year-old mare, in the colours of Mohammed Abdulhadi al-Hajri and trained by Hamad al-Jehani, showed admirable versatility to win the 1,300m Local Thoroughbred Open Race for the three-year-old+.

Under a well-judged ride from Arnaud De Lepine, Maysara advanced from mid-pack before surging to the front in the closing stages, securing victory by ½ a length and giving her owner a second win on the day.

Breaking cleanly from barrier five, Maysara was settled towards the rear as Doghan cut out the early fractions, tracked by Mutamarrid and the race favourite Harb.

Midway through the race, Messaouda swept forward to take over, with Doghan and Harb keeping close tabs on the new leader. The complexion of the race changed dramatically in the home straight. From the middle of the pack, Maysara unleashed a decisive turn of foot, slicing through her rivals and driving past Harb in the final strides to land the spoils.

Harb, trained by Ibrahim Saeed Ibrahim al-Malki for Al Rabban Racing and ridden by Tomas Lukasek, kept on well for second, three lengths ahead of Lulwat Al Faisal, trained by Khalifa Hamed Nasser al-Sawai for Al Emadi Racing and ridden by Lukas Delozier, who stayed on to secure third.

Axis was finally rewarded for his consistency, capturing his maiden victory on his ninth career start, and second appearance this season, with a determined, narrow success in a gripping opener, the Thoroughbred Maiden Plate for three-to-seven-year-olds over 1,200m (Class 6), which attracted 13 runners.

The three-year-old bay gelding, owned and trained by Ibrahim Saeed Ibrahim al-Malki, built on his second-place finish a week ago and delivered a perfectly judged effort under jockey Tomas Lukasek to prevail by a short head, with only a neck separating the runner-up and third.

Axis broke alertly from barrier one and settled in a handy position behind the early pace, which was initially shared by Breakout Star and, shortly after, Megalithic. Torgot then assumed control and set the tempo until the home bend where Axis began to make his decisive move.

Once in the straight, he swept to the front, but immediately faced fierce challenges from North Audley and Boss Dog, both finishing strongly on either side of him. The three contenders flashed past the post almost inseparable, but the photo finish confirmed Axis as the winner.

Boss Dog, representing Aldeebl Racing for trainer Mohammed al-Ghazali under Alberto Sanna, took second by a neck from North Audley, giving trainer Ibrahim Saeed Ibrahim al-Malki a 1–3 finish through the ride of Lukas Delozier.

FOOTBALL

Spain virtually seal qualification in Georgia romp

'We feel really good after this and we did a really good job as a team'


Spain's Mikel Oyarzabal celebrates scoring a goal with teammates against Georgia in the UEFA World Cup qualifier in Tbilisi yesterday. *(Reuters)*

AFP
Tbilisi

Spain made almost certain of qualification for the 2026 World Cup with a comfortable 4-0 win in Georgia yesterday.

Luis de la Fuente's side have won all five Group E matches and although not mathematically through to next summer's tournament, their vastly superior goal difference means it is highly unlikely that Turkiye will be able to overhaul them.

Spain host Turkiye on Tuesday in the final group match, with Vincenzo Montella's side three points behind them after beating Bulgaria 2-0.

For Spain not to progress to the World Cup directly from the group, Turkiye would have to win by seven goals or more.

La Roja were without star winger Lamine Yamal, as well as other key players in Rodri Hernandez, Dani Carvajal and Nico Williams, but still eased to victory in Tbilisi.

Mikel Oyarzabal opened the scoring from the penalty spot, with Martin Zubimendi and Ferran Torres extending their lead in the first half, before Oyarzabal netted again.

They have all but assured a 13th consecutive World Cup berth, scoring 19 goals in the group without conceding any.

"We feel really good after this and we did a really good job as a team," Torres told *TVE*. "It's not mathematical yet, we're now heading into last game to qualify ourselves for this World Cup.

"We can never take things for granted but we are confident in ourselves."

Ruthless performance

De la Fuente told his players that they were on their way to becoming "legendary" after their Euro 2024 triumph and Spain delivered a ruthless performance to make light work of the hosts.

Giorgi Gocholeishvili handled Torres's effort to give away an early penalty, which Oyarzabal dispatched calmly for his 20th Spain goal, and the 100th of the De la Fuente era. Spain dominated the ball and Alex Baena hit the post before Fabian Ruiz slipped in Zubimendi to finish with aplomb for the second after 22 minutes.

Oyarzabal set up Torres to strike from close range for the third as the visitors ran riot.

Liverpool goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili deflected Oyarzabal's shot to safety as Spain nearly grabbed a fourth before the break.

Oyarzabal nodded home his second after 63 minutes from Torres's cross to put further shine on a straightforward victory.

"Whenever I can help in this way I'm happiest," Oyarzabal told TVE.

"We have to seal this qualification in the best way (against Turkiye), going out to win."

Pau Cubarsi deflected the ball against his own post late on as Georgia threatened to become the first side to score against Spain in the group but could not find a way through.

"Although we won 4-0, there are things we can do better," Arsenal midfielder Zubimendi told TVE, always seeking to improve.

Defeat means Willy Sagnol's Georgia, who impressed at Euro 2024, can no longer reach the play-offs, dashing their dreams of reaching a World Cup finals for the first time.

Turkiye beat Bulgaria 2-0

Turkiye beat Bulgaria 2-0 in a World Cup qualifier yesterday to confirm second place in Group E and a spot in the playoffs for next year's finals.

Captain Hakan Calhanoglu put Turkiye ahead in the 18th minute from the penalty spot after a handball. The hosts doubled their lead in the 83rd minute when Bulgarian defender Chernev turned the ball into his own net attempting to clear a low cross.

Turkiye dominated possession and territory, and rarely looked troubled by Bulgaria who remained bottom of the group without a point. Turkiye moved to 12 points from five matches, keeping them in second place three points behind leaders Spain.

McInnes shines in fifth round of Qatar Off-Road Championship





British rider Alex McInnes produced another strong display to top the overall Class 1 timesheet in the fifth and penultimate round of the 2025 Qatar Off-Road Championship at Sealine. McInnes dominated both heats on his bike before finishing second in the final race over 19 laps. UAE duo Abdulla Lanjawi and Mohammad al-Balooshi finished in second and third spots, respectively. In Class 2 for quads, UAE's Abdulaziz Ahli claimed the victory, with compatriots Mansoor al-Suwaidi and Khalifa Albastaki completing the podium. Albastaki also took the Class 2 Challenger award, while Abdulla Anwar al-Nuaimi was named Class 1 Challenger and Allan Ramsing won the Veteran Cup. The championship will conclude with the final round on December 6.

FOCUS

Brazil beat Senegal 2-0 in friendly

AFP
London

Brazil beat fellow World Cup qualifiers Senegal 2-0 at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium yesterday thanks to goals from teenager Estevao and veteran Casemiro.

Carlo Ancelotti's team, featuring a mouthwatering attacking combination of Estevao, Matheus Cunha, Rodrygo and Vinicius Jr, dominated the first half of the friendly in London.

Manchester United's Cunha headed against the bar as Brazil took a firm grip on the game but Chelsea's Estevao gave the South Americans the lead they deserved in the 28th minute.

The 18-year-old was fortunate that the ball fell to his feet on the right side of Brazil's attack but he produced an unerring finish across Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy into the far corner.

It was his fourth goal in his 10th game for Brazil and another reminder that he could be one to watch at next year's World Cup in North America.

Captain Casemiro, 33, doubled Brazil's lead in the 35th minute, beautifully controlling a free-kick from Rodrygo and curling the ball into the top corner after finding space at the back post.

Iliman Ndiaye should have pulled one back for the West African team shortly after the break after sloppy play from Brazil goalkeeper Ederson but hit the outside of the post.

Two-time African player of the year Sadio Mane was unable to provide the spark his team needed and was withdrawn in the 75th minute, one of a number of changes for both teams.

Five-time world champions Brazil reached next year's World Cup in Canada, Mexico and the United States after a lacklustre campaign in which they finished fifth in South American qualifying. Senegal, the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations champions, beat Mauritania last month to seal their spot at the World Cup.


Brazil's Casemiro celebrates after their friendly against Senegal at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. *(Reuters)*