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FIFA U17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025

U-17 WORLD CUP

Brazil hit late winner to break Moroccan hearts

Austria, Italy and Portugal also reach semi-finals at Aspire Zone



Brazil players celebrate after Dell's stoppage-time winner against Morocco in the U-17 World Cup quarter-final.

By Sports Reporter
Doha

On a dramatic day at the FIFA U-17 World Cup at the Aspire Zone yesterday, Brazil struck late to sink to Morocco and book their spot in the semi-finals. Austria had earlier edged out Japan to become the first team to book their place in the last four. Italy and Portugal followed them after respective victories over Burkina Faso and Switzerland.

BRAZIL 2-1 MOROCCO

Dell hit a stoppage-time winner as Brazil edged past Morocco in a dramatic quarter-final. The strike was his second of the game, after he had expertly converted a Ruan Pablo cross to give the South Americans the lead. Backed a feverish crowd, Morocco refused to buckle after falling behind and equalised on the stroke of half-time.

The African U-17 champions were awarded a penalty when Angelo fouled Ismail El Aoud in the box, and Ziyad Baha stepped up to fire in from 12 yards. The match seemed certain to be heading for a shootout, but Dell was to have the last word, racing clear before rounding the goalkeeper and slotting home to break Moroccan hearts.

AUSTRIA 1-0 JAPAN

Austria edged Japan to make it six U-17 World Cup wins from six and secure a last-four tussle with Italy.

Following an absorbing first half when both teams had chances to open the scoring, Austria hit the front just after the interval through Johannes Moser's fine curling finish.

It was his sixth goal of the tournament. Hasan Deshishku almost made it 2-0 but was denied by a stunning Shuji Muramatsu save. Japan substitute Minato Yoshida headed fractions over as they hunted a leveller, before Hiroto Asada's drive stung the palms of Austria stopper Daniel Posch. The Samurai Blue continued to pile on the pressure but could not break through. Deshishku then saw a late penalty saved, but the Austrians held out. Austria captain Jakob Pokorny said: "It was a really tough match. Japan is a very good team and they played so well. I'm so happy we got the win. It's such a nice group to be a part of. We are a real team and it is a very special feeling."



Austria edged Japan to secure a last-four clash with Italy.

ITALY 1-0 BURKINA FASO

A late Thomas Campaniello goal proved the difference as Italy scraped Burkina Faso to set up a meeting with Austria in the semi-finals. The Stallions twice came close in the first half, with electric attacker Mohamed Zongo striking the bar from range before smashing the post following a smart Alessandro Longoni stop.

Italy held firm and looked to have snatched it when Luca Reggiani tapped home from inside the six-yard box, but he was greeted with the offside flag as he wheeled away to celebrate. The flag wouldn't come to Burkina Faso's rescue five minutes later, though, as a poor goal-kick from Rahim Ouattara fell to Campaniello, who burst inside two defenders and lashed home.

PORTUGAL 2-0 SWITZERLAND

Jose Neto scored one of the goals of the tournament as Portugal reached the semi-finals for the first time since 1989 following a comfortable victory over Switzerland. The European champions dominated from the outset and launched wave after wave of attacks on the Swiss defence. Stevan Manuel had two glorious chances in quick succession when he blazed over the bar from 10 yards and then had a shot deflected wide.

The Portuguese pressure eventually paid off when Anisio Cabral made his presence felt following a deep pass into the Swiss area and the ball fell into the path of Mateus Mide, who powered home.

Victory was sealed when full-back Neto rifled the ball from 20 yards into the corner of the net as Switzerland suffered their first-ever defeat at the FIFA U-17 World Cup.

Portugal coach Bino said: I knew the team was coming in with a lot of confidence. We had talked about the respect we must have for Switzerland. And that was fundamental because that respect made us very accurate defensively. We knew that with the ball we had quality and that we could create danger for our opponents. And that's what happened.

:After the first goal, we were calmer, Switzerland had to open up a bit more and we were able to create more chances. It's a deserved victory for Portugal. Difficult, but deserved."

QATAR STARS LEAGUE

Gharafa edge Wakrah to extend lead as Ahli stun Duhail



Al Gharafa's Yacine Brahimi (centre) battles for the ball with Al Wakrah's players at Thani Bin Jassim Stadium yesterday.

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Gharafa extended their impressive winning run and tightened their grip on the Qatar Stars League summit with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Al Wakrah at Thani Bin Jassim Stadium yesterday.

Yacine Brahimi's 34th-minute penalty proved the difference in a tense encounter in which Al Wakrah pushed relentlessly for an equaliser but failed to break through. The win marked Al Gharafa's fifth consecutive league triumph and ensured the Cheetahs will finish the first half of the season in first place – a feat they have not achieved in more than 15 years.

The victory lifted Al Gharafa to 25 points, widening the gap over second-placed Al Shamal, while Al Wakrah remain stuck on 15 points with their fifth position under threat as the round concludes. The defeat also halted Wakrah's small unbeaten spell, which had included a draw and a win.

Meanwhile, at Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium, Al Ahli rallied to defeat Al Duhail 3-2 in a pulsating contest. Al Duhail struck early through Luis Alberto in the second minute after a precise cross from Sultan al-Brake. But defensive lapses proved costly, beginning with Omar Seko capitalising on a mistake to level for Al Ahli in the 17th minute.

Edmilson Junior restored Al Duhail's lead with a fierce left-footer in the 34th minute, only for Michel Vlap to punish another defensive error and make it 2–2 just two minutes later. Al Ahli carried their momentum into the second half, and Idriss Fettouhi completed the comeback in the 80th minute with a composed finish from inside the box. Despite going down to ten men after Jassim Mohammed's 85th-minute dismissal, Al Ahli held firm.

Al Duhail squandered a golden chance to rescue a point when Edmilson Junior's stoppage-time penalty was saved by goalkeeper Marwan Sharif. The victory lifted Al Ahli to 12 points, level with Al Duhail, as the race for mid-table positions continues to tighten.



Al Ahli players celebrate after a comeback win over Al Duhail.

FOOTBALL

Participating in Arab Cup is an honour: Qatar forward Almoez



By Sports Reporter
Doha

With just 10 days to go until the FIFA Arab Cup in Qatar, national team player **Almoez Ali** is gearing up to lead his team into a competition he believes carries a special meaning for players and fans across the region. As Qatar's all-time top scorer and a two-time AFC Asian Cup champion, Almoez has netted 60 goals in 123 caps in his career, building a reputation as one of the most influential players in the region.

A graduate of the renowned Aspire Academy, Almoez is part of a successful generation of Qatari footballers that have recently secured qualification to the FIFA World Cup 2026.

"Representing Qatar and wearing our national jersey is the greatest honour. It's an extraordinary feeling. Every match is an opportunity to give something back to the fans, my family and live up to the responsibility to raise your country's flag," he said.

The forward, who famously broke the Asian Cup goal-scoring record in 2019, believes this year's edition of the Arab Cup will be one of the most competitive and memorable yet: "The Arab Cup is special because it brings together nations that share history and culture with Qatar. You can see the brotherhood and unity between the players and fans," he said.

Hosts Qatar have been drawn in Group A, alongside Tunisia, the winners of Syria vs South Sudan and the winners of Palestine vs Libya. Al Annabi are set to play the opening match on December 1 at Al Bayt Stadium at 7:30pm.

Almoez emphasised the importance of performing on home soil: "When we play in Qatar, we feel the energy of the fans in every moment. Their passion lifts us. I expect the second edition of this tournament to exceed the first in every way."

He also highlighted Qatar's commitment to delivering world-class football events: "Since 2022, Qatar's capabilities in hosting major global tournaments has grown tremendously, positioning the country as a sports hub on the global stage. It shows that Qatar is always up for the challenge and is passionate about sports development, especially football. This benefits not only our country, but the region as a whole."

This year's Arab Cup will be played across six venues: Al Bayt Stadium, Lusail Stadium, Stadium 974, Education City Stadium, Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium and Khalifa International Stadium.

The tournament will see 16 teams competing for the coveted trophy, with 9 teams already qualified and 14 others battling in crucial qualifiers on November 25–26 for the remaining seven spots.

Fans can also expect a vibrant programme of entertainment, cultural showcases, and family-friendly experiences throughout the competition. All venues will feature digital ticketing and accessible seating options for disabled fans.

Tickets for the Arab Cup, including qualifying matches are available at: www.roadtoqatar.qa

SPORT

ASHES

Carnage as 19 wickets fall on opening day of first Test

Starc ripped through England with a 7-wicket haul but Stokes' five-wicket haul helps reduce hosts to 123-9



Australia's Mitchell Starc (centre) celebrates the wicket of England's Ben Stokes on Day 1 of the first Ashes Test in Perth yesterday. *(AFP)*



England's Ben Stokes celebrates with teammates after taking his fifth wicket against Australia in Perth yesterday. *(Reuters)*

AFP
Perth

Nineteen wickets fell on an opening day of carnage in the first Ashes Test yesterday, with England's fearsome attack led by skipper Ben Stokes bowling them into a position of strength after Australia dismissed the tourists for 172.

A rampaging Mitchell Starc took 7-58 to put England on the back foot after Stokes won the toss on a fine day at a packed Perth Stadium and chose to bat.

Harry Brook (52) and Ollie Pope (46) offered the only resistance as they crumbled after lunch. But England's elite fast bowlers, led by an exceptional Stokes with 5-23, fought back to reduce the hosts to 123-9 at stumps, trailing by 49.

Nathan Lyon was on three with Brendan Doggett yet to score. "What a day," England bowler Brydon Carse, who took two wickets including Steve Smith, told broadcasters.

"I think everyone that's come today has got their time's worth - 19 wickets.

"Fantastic last session from everyone to put us in a strong position heading into tomorrow."

In a brutal introduction to Test cricket, opener Jake Weatherald went for a second-ball duck, left on the floor by a Jofra Archer bullet and given out lbw. Marnus Labuschagne fended off 41 balls for nine before he too succumbed to the sheer speed of Archer, bowled by a fuller delivery.

And when Smith fell for 17 to Carse in the next over, caught by Brook at slip, it was game on. Usman Khawaja, who was feeling stiff so did not open, came in at four but lasted just six balls, blown away by a Carse bouncer that took a nick to wicketkeeper Jamie Smith, leaving Australia reeling at 31-4.

Cameron Green (24), Travis Head (21), Alex Carey (26) and Starc (12) all got starts, but in a reflection of the depth of England's pace stocks, Stokes removed them when he brought himself on.

"He's amazing. His character, his resilience is everything this team strives to be," Carse said of the skipper.

"A game-changing spell from him in that session."

Starc had bagged three wickets in an intimidating opening spell, including Joe Root for a duck, before returning to send Stokes packing in his first over after the lunch break, then mopping up.

All five previous Tests at the Perth venue have been won by the side batting first, but England did their best to challenge that, getting off to a horror start.

Veteran strike weapon Starc delivered as he has so many times before, enticing a thick edge from Zak Crawley on his sixth ball that Khawaja did well to collect low at slip, the opener gone for nought.

"I mean, it's always the plan, isn't it? But it doesn't always happen that way," he said of his knack of bagging wickets in the first over.

"I've just been pretty fortunate to have done it a few times. But it's always been my role to be aggressive, look for wickets. I've never been one to worry about economy rates. My role is to go looking for wickets, especially with the new ball, and hopefully make inroads into the opposition."

Starc has now taken a wicket in the first over of an innings 24 times. At the other end Ben Duckett settled his nerves with a textbook drive off Scott Boland to bank the first four of the series.

But just as he was getting going, Starc pounced again, trapping him lbw for 21 to leave England tottering on 33-2.

That brought Root to the crease in his latest campaign for an elusive first century in Australia. He only lasted seven balls, edging a seaming delivery into the safe hands of Labuschagne at third slip.

Pope survived the furnace and was composed before Green came on and he was out lbw, leaving the visitors on 105-4 at lunch. Brook hit Scott Boland for a six in the first over after the break before Starc again worked his magic, taking out Stokes's stumps with an inswinger when the captain was on six.

A fearless Brook raced to his 14th Test half-century before feathering a short ball to Carey, earning Doggett his maiden Test wicket on debut.

Starc removed Gus Atkinson cheaply to give him the 17th five-wicket haul of his career and with Doggett they ruthlessly cleaned up the tail.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 123 for 9 (Stokes 5-23) **trail England 172** (Brook 52, Pope 46, Starc 7-58) **by 49 runs.**

PREVIEW

Injured Gill out of must-win second South Africa Test

AFP
Guwahati

India skipper Shubman Gill will miss the must-win second Test against South Africa today because of the neck injury he sustained in the opening match.

The hosts will be led by wicketkeeper and deputy Rishabh Pant in Guwahati as they attempt to rescue the two-Test series. "He is doing fine, he is getting better," Pant said yesterday of Gill. "He was keen on playing this Test match but his body didn't allow it."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India said Gill "will head to Mumbai for further assessment of his injury".

Batsman Gill suffered neck spasms in the first innings of the opening Test and pulled out of the remainder of the match, spending a night in hospital. He travelled with the team to Guwahati but was forced out as the medical staff believed playing him would risk aggravating the injury. "From a captaincy point of view, when you see his resilience that even when your body is not supporting, but



India's Rishabh Pant speaks during a press conference at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati yesterday. *(AFP)*

you want to push it for your team, that's the kind of mindset we want to inculcate and he did it from the front," said Pant. Top-order batter Sai Sudharsan is expected to replace Gill in the team, which will be announced at the toss. India lost a low-scoring opener after they were bundled out for 93 in a chase of 124 at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

It was India's fourth Test defeat in six matches at home after New Zealand registered a rare 3-0 whitewash on Indian soil last year.

"It's been a tough Test match, the last one, and coming out of it we just want to do whatever is required to win this Test match," said Pant. A flamboyant left-hand batter, Pant returned to India's squad for the South Africa Tests after missing the home series against the West Indies last month as he recovered from a foot fracture.

The deputy captain said: "One-off matches is not the best scenario as a captain... but whenever you are leading your country it is the proudest moment especially in Test cricket.

"At the same time I don't want to think about it too much. I do not want to take that undue pressure of captaincy in my mind."

The Kolkata pitch drew criticism - it had turn and inconsistent bounce, the Test ending inside three days. The best individual score was South African skipper Temba Bavuma's unbeaten 55 in the second innings. "This wicket will play better. Definitely it is a better wicket to bat on," said Pant.

"Obviously it will eventually turn after a few days but it is going to be a good contest."

South Africa are chasing a first series win on Indian soil since Hansie Cronje's team triumphed there in 2000.

Rabada out of second India Test but South Africa 'buoyant'

South Africa skipper **Temba Bavuma** struck a confident tone despite seeing fast bowler Kagiso Rabada ruled out of the second and final Test against India yesterday in Guwahati because of injury. The World Test champions won the first match and are chasing a first series win on Indian soil since Hansie Cronje's team triumphed there in 2000.

They must again do without Rabada, who also missed the victory in Kolkata with a rib injury.

"Lungi Ngidi has been added. In terms of starting XI we will finalise that tomorrow once we take one last look at the wicket," Bavuma said yesterday. The tourists won a low-scoring opener at Eden Gardens inside three days after they bundled out India for 93 while chasing 124. "The mood is buoyant amongst the boys," Bavuma said. "We're excited to try and replicate our performances as we did in the first Test." He added: "Everyone is looking forward to it, looking at where the series is at, the whole narrative around it all. We'll just try and make sure that we lock in for the next five days."

South Africa beat India at their own game of spin in Kolkata on a turning pitch with uneven bounce. Pundits slammed the track, where South African spinner Simon Harmer returned match figures of 8-51. Bavuma made a best individual score of 55. "I think it will be a more traditional sub-continent wicket," Bavuma said of the Guwahati strip. "Good for batting the first two days and then day three the spinners should come into play. "So I think all the fundamentals that come with playing in the sub-continent, first innings becomes crucial from a batting point of view to really set the game up."

South Africa beat Australia to win the World Test Championship final in June at Lord's and recently drew 1-1 in Pakistan. Bavuma said a two-match series is not ideal in a bilateral contest. "Look, however way the series goes, 1-1, 2-0, you know, it would be nice for a three-four match series against a formidable team like India," said Bavuma. "We woke up this morning to watch the Ashes and we watched with a little bit of jealousy knowing that they were 5-5 Tests, they'll be going at each other." Bavuma has an unbeaten record as Test captain in 11 outings, winning 10 and drawing one.



RISING STARS ASIA CUP

Pakistan Shaheens survive scare to edge Sri Lanka A and reach final

Agencies
Doha

Pakistan Shaheens booked their place in the Asia Cup Rising Stars 2025 final after defending 153 in a tense five-run win over Sri Lanka A at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium.

A disciplined middle-overs spell from their spinners, followed by composed death bowling, proved the difference in a match where both sides endured collapses.

Pakistan's innings fluctuated between bursts of acceleration and clusters of wickets. Maaz Sadaqat's 23 off 11 and Mohammad Naeem's 16 off 15 powered them to 30 in under four overs, but three quick strikes left them 58 for 5 inside eight overs. Wicketkeeper Ghazi Ghori held the innings together with an unbeaten 39 off 36, anchoring vital partnerships through the middle.

The decisive surge came from No 9 Ahmed Daniyal, who launched three sixes in a rapid 22 off 8, lifting Pakistan to 153/9. Sri Lanka's attack was led by Pramod Madushan, who claimed 4 for 29, while Traveen Mathew delivered an equally impactful 3 for 22.

Sri Lanka A's chase mirrored Pakistan's pattern—fast start, heavy collapse, lone resistance. Lasith Croospulle exploded with a blistering 27 off 7, hitting three sixes and taking 27 off the opening 1.3 overs.

However, the innings unravelled quickly as Sufiyan Muqeem (3 for 12) and Saad Masood (3 for 18) ripped through the top and middle order. Seven wickets fell inside nine overs, leaving Sri Lanka reeling at 90 for 7.

Milan Rathnayake staged a spirited counterattack with 40 off 32, keeping the chase alive until the final over. But with 13 needed from six balls, Pakistan held their nerve. Rathnayake fell at 146/9, and the remaining batters couldn't force a miracle, bowled out for 148 on the final delivery.

Pakistan Shaheens advance to the final after a controlled bowling performance that overcame Sri Lanka A's early power hitting and late fightback.

Bangladesh edge India in dramatic Super Over

Bangladesh A clinched a tense semi-final in Doha after an extraordinary Super Over in which neither side managed to score a run off the bat, eventually progressing to the final after India failed to chase a single run.

The match finished level at 194 each in regulation play, but Bangladesh's solitary run from a wide in the Super Over proved enough.

Bangladesh's innings was built around a commanding 65 off 46 from Habibur Rahman, who mixed controlled stroke play with five sixes. He found support from opener Jishan Alam's rapid 26 off 14, giving Bangladesh early momentum at 43 for 1 inside five overs.

The innings dipped briefly as wickets fell regularly through the middle, but SM Meherob produced the standout knock of the match — an electrifying 48 off 18, including six sixes. His late assault carried Bangladesh from 130/6 to a formidable 194/6. India's spinners were the only ones to exert control, with Suyash Sharma delivering a crucial 1 for 17 from four overs.

India responded with equal aggression. Vaibhav Suryavanshi's explosive 38 off 15 and Priyansh Arya's 44 off 23 kept India exactly on the required rate. Captain Jitesh Sharma added 33 off 23, while Nehal Wadhera anchored the chase with an unbeaten 32.

India needed 16 off the final over and managed to level the scores at 194/6, pushing the game into a Super Over after Ashutosh Sharma's late six kept them alive.

The Super Over, however, went decisively in Bangladesh's favour. Ripon Mondol quickly removed Jitesh Sharma and Ashutosh Sharma, leaving India scoreless in the one-over shootout.

The absence of Vaibhav Suryavanshi, India's in-form opener, in the Super Over raised eyebrows and left India without momentum.

Chasing just one run, Bangladesh lost Yasir Ali Chowdhury after he holed out to Ramandeep Singh at long-on, but they still managed to complete the chase comfortably, aided by a wide conceded by Suyash Sharma.

Ripon Mondol and Rakibul Hasan stood out with the ball for Bangladesh, executing crucial dismissals under pressure. For India, Suryavanshi's and Arya's chipped in with standout performances, but they were unable to capitalise on the key moments.



Pakistan Shaheens celebrate their victory over Sri Lanka A in the Asia Cup Rising Stars semi-final in Doha yesterday.

FOCUS

CISM World Military Parachuting Championships wraps up today

By Sports Reporter
Doha



In the women's individual freestyle jumping event, France's Lucidy Oliver (centre) won gold, China's Yu Li (left) took silver, and Germany's Natalie Hanser secured bronze during the 47th CISM World Military Parachuting Championships .



Action from the 47th CISM World Military Parachuting Championships.







The curtain falls tonight on the 47th CISM World Military Parachuting Championships Qatar 2025, organised by the Qatar Air Sports Committee and which began on November 15.

A total of 320 male and female skydivers representing 30 countries competed over the past week in the skies above Umm Shakhout Airport, upholding the CISM motto: 'Friendship Through Sport'. The individual events in accuracy landing and style — across junior boys, junior girls, women's and men's categories — were decided yesterday.

The medal ceremony was attended by Brigadier General Mohammed Zayed al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Qatar Air Sports Committee and Commander of the Joint Special Forces; Colonel Nilton Gomez, President of the International Military Sports Council; Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Saeed al-Mansouri, Vice-Chairman of the Qatar Air Sports Committee; Captain Hazza al-Atiba, Secretary-General of the committee; along with delegation heads, officers, and committee members.

The Qatar Air Sports Committee earned widespread praise from CISM and all participating teams for its warm hospitality, world-class facilities, and organisational excellence, which contributed to the strong technical performances throughout the championship.

German dominance on the podium

Germany enjoyed a standout day, winning nine medals across accuracy and style events — three gold, three silver, and three bronze. France collected four medals (two gold, one silver, one bronze), while China won three (one gold, one silver, one bronze). Austria secured one silver medal, while the Czech Republic claimed a bronze in the men's style category.

France's Louise Ball captured the junior girls' individual accuracy landing title after a composed and consistent display, with compatriot Nathalie Hanser finishing just behind her. Germany's Zoe Stohl completed the podium with a strong third-place performance.

In the women's accuracy landing competition, China's Yong Miao delivered a standout jump to secure the gold medal, followed by France's Ludissie Oliver, while China added another podium finish through Li Juhong, who took bronze.

Germany dominated the junior girls' style event, where Nathalie Hanser claimed the top honours, ahead of teammate Zoe Stohl. France's Louise Ball, fresh from her accuracy landing triumph, earned third place in this discipline. The junior boys' freefall style competition saw Germany's Elias rise above the field to win the category with an excellent technical routine.

In the women's individual freestyle jumping event, France's Lucidy Oliver produced a commanding performance to win the gold, adding to the silver she collected earlier in the accuracy landing contest. China's Yu Li finished second, while Germany's Natalie Hanser secured third place.

Germany continued its strong showing in the men's freestyle jumping competition, where Robin Giesmar clinched the title with an impressive display.

His compatriot Alescha Weber followed in second, while the Czech Republic's Oldeš surf finished third to take home the bronze.

Skydivers delivered outstanding formations: Al-Mansouri

Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah al-Mansouri, Vice Chairman of the Qatar Air Sports Committee, praised the high level of competition, noting the "spectacular formations" displayed over Doha. He congratulated the medal winners and commended the athletes' spirit, adding: "We are proud of the success of this championship and the praise received from CISM and all delegations. It is a badge of honour added to Qatar's distinguished record in hosting major international sporting events with excellence and professionalism."

Captain Hazza Hamad al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the committee, highlighted the technical brilliance displayed throughout the tournament, describing the event as a global platform that united people through one of the most captivating air sports. He praised the sportsmanship shown during the award ceremonies, calling it a testament to the event's unique atmosphere.

Lieutenant Abdulrahim al-Emadi commended the efforts of the young staff members of the Qatar Air Sports Committee, saying they had "presented the bright and civilised image of Qatar" through exceptional service to all delegations. He thanked the volunteers and organisers for their professionalism and noted that their dedication left a lasting impression on visiting teams.

Championship Concludes Today

The World Military Parachuting Championships will officially conclude today at 5:30pm at Umm Shakhout Airport, when the champions of the Men's Accuracy Landing and remaining events will be crowned. The ceremony will be attended by Brigadier General Mohammed bin Zayed al-Otaibi, Colonel Nilton Gomez, and other dignitaries. After the medals are awarded, the CISM flag will be lowered and handed over to the next host of the 48th World Military Parachuting Championships.

FORMULA 1

Rules will resolve cost cap engine loophole, says FIA

'So we think it's a weakness in the current set of regulations, where there's no power unit cost cap, but we think it gets resolved completely next year'



Oracle Red Bull Racing's Team Principal Laurent Mekies and driver Max Verstappen talk in the garage during practice ahead of the F1 Grand Prix of Las Vegas. *(AFP)*

Reuters
Las Vegas

Formula One's governing body says next year's rules revamp will fix a loophole that has allowed teams to exceed a driver's engine allocation without the new power unit being included in cost cap calculations.

Four-times world champion Max Verstappen started in the pitlane and finished on the podium in Brazil this month after Red Bull replaced the Honda engine in his car with a brand new one.

Rivals McLaren subsequently asked the International Automobile Federation (FIA) whether the engine would be part of Red Bull's cost cap spending, something of a grey area at present. McLaren's Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri are one-two in the drivers standings with three rounds remaining but Verstappen remains a threat in third place and 49 points off the lead.

"If the engine was changed for performance reasons, it should go in the cost cap," McLaren principal Andrea Stella said at the time. Engine changes for reliability reasons fall outside the cap, however.

FIA LACKS EXPERTISE TO ARGUE THE CASE

Nikolas Tombazis, the FIA's single-seater director, acknowledged the governing body was currently reluctant to argue with a team or power unit manufacturer over what might be a reliability issue.

"We don't feel we have the expertise to argue with them whether it's really a reliability or strategic change," he told reporters after opening practice at the Las Vegas Grand Prix. "This has been a weakness in the current regulations - the combination of financial plus technical and sporting - and it's been an area where we've adopted this approach where we accept these changes without getting into discussion about the impact on the cost cap."

Tombazis said a cost cap for power unit manufacturers from next year would solve the problem because such a strategic change would cost them roughly $1mn - the price tag on an engine - each time.

"So we think it's a weakness in the current set of regulations, where there's no PU (power unit) cost cap, but we think it gets resolved completely next year. It will stop being a topic of discussion."

Formula One is entering a new engine era next year coupled with sweeping technical changes that constitute one of the biggest overhauls in decades.

The sport will also have two new engine manufacturers, with Audi taking over the Sauber team and Red Bull making their own power unit in partnership with Ford while Honda move to Aston Martin. Mercedes and Ferrari will supply the remaining seven teams between them. Some drivers have expressed fears that the new cars will be considerably slower, closer to Formula Two pace, but Tombazis rejected that.

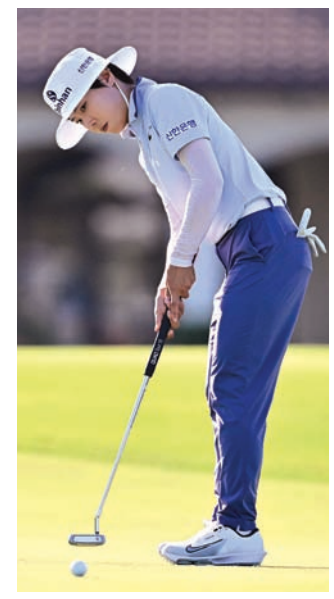
"I think comments about Formula Two pace are way off the mark," he said.

"I think it's natural that the cars are a bit slower but I don't think we are anywhere near the 'it's not a Formula One' discussion in any way or shape."

GOLF

So-mi grabs LPGA Tour Championship lead

AFP
Miami



Lee So-mi of South Korea putts for eagle on the 17th green during the first round of the LPGA Tour Championship 2025 at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida. *(AFP)*

South Korea's Lee So-mi fired an eight-under par 64 to seize a two-stroke lead over American Allisen Corpuz after Thursday's opening round of the LPGA Tour Championship. Lee birdied seven of the first 15 holes and eagled the par-five 17th before a closing bogey at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida.

"My tee shot and putter were the things I was focusing on and I really practised them a lot. I think that was the foundation to my success today," Lee said through a translator.

The $11mn event features 60 players who qualified during the season chasing the LPGA's biggest prize of $4mn. Top-ranked defending champion Jeeno Thitikul of Thailand shared third on 67 with Japan's Nasa Hataoka and South Koreans Kim Sei-young and Im Jin-hee.

World number 50 Lee, a 26-year-old from Wando, won her first LPGA title in June at the Dow Championship pairs event alongside Im and shook off the nerves of her first Tour Championship.

"It's an honour playing my first Tour Championship and I don't think I was necessarily in a position to be nervous about anything," Lee said.

"I thought to myself, whatever the score is or how I play, let's just prepare for next year's season. I think that kind of alleviated the stress in today's round to be able to get a better score."

Lee made back-to-back birdies at the third and fourth holes and again to close the front nine. She birdied 11 and another two in a row at the par-five 14th and par-four 15th before her eagle-bogey close.

"Mind control is probably the most important factor going into the remaining rounds," Lee said.

"I wanted to play 18 better. Whether my golf game is good or bad I know that's not the end of my golf career, so I want to do my best."

Corpuz answered her lone bogey at the third hole with birdies on the next four, another to begin the back nine and two more at the par-three 16th and par-five 17th.

Golovkin set to be named World Boxing president as sole candidate

Former world champion Gennady Golovkin is set to be appointed president of World Boxing after he was named as sole candidate to replace Boris van der Vorst, the organisation said yesterday.

Van der Vorst said in September that he would not seek re-election at the body's third annual Congress this month, citing the relentless demands of leading the breakaway organisation and years of global travel as his reasons for stepping down. World Boxing said an independent vetting panel reviewed several applications of men and women who had put themselves forward for election last month and only Golovkin made the cut. "In accordance with World Boxing's current statutes ... Unanimous acclamation from Congress can be accepted if there is only one candidate for any office bearing position," World Boxing said in a statement. "Gennady Golovkin will become President of World Boxing by acclamation at the Congress on Sunday 23 November 2025 when he will assume the mantle from the incumbent President, Boris van der Vorst."

Golovkin, once considered the best pound-for-pound boxer in the world and the winner of a silver medal at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, was appointed president of Kazakhstan's National Olympic Committee in 2024.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Blow for Arsenal as Gabriel out for weeks

Tottenham's Frank wants organised chaos in North London derby against Arsenal

Reuters
London

Arsenal centre back Gabriel Magalhaes faces weeks on the sidelines after sustaining a thigh injury while on international duty with Brazil, manager Mikel Arteta said ahead of tomorrow's North London derby against Tottenham Hotspur.

The 27-year-old has been a cornerstone of Arsenal's defence this season, forming a formidable partnership with Frenchman William Saliba.

Their pairing has seen the Gunners concede just five goals in 11 Premier League matches and helped to propel them to the top of the table, four points clear of second-placed Manchester City.

Gabriel's absence is a setback, particularly given his aerial threat from set-pieces, but Arsenal have several options to cover, including close-season signings Cristhian Mosquera and Piero Hincapie. "Gabi unfortunately picked up an injury with the national team. He will be out for weeks," Arteta told reporters.

"We need to have another scan next Wednesday. We will have the timeline much more clearly than we have at the moment. It's clearly a blow. It's our leader in our backline. To miss him is never a positive thing. The good thing is we have some very good options. They need to stand up now."

Defender Riccardo Calafiori has yet to train, having withdrawn from the Italy squad with a hip problem. Arteta remained tight-lipped about the 23-year-old's availability for the clash at the Emirates.

"He missed the (Italy) games. He wasn't available. He's been carrying a few things. We had to bring him back. He hasn't trained yet. We have another session tomorrow. Let's see," the Spaniard said.

Arteta did not say whether any other players that have been out injured - including Martin Odegaard, Kai Havertz, Gabriel Martinelli, Noni Madueke and Gabriel Jesus - would return against Spurs.

"We put a lot of energy in the international break with the medical staff to try to bring them back as quickly as possible ... I'm hopeful we can make a step tomorrow. But certainly? I cannot tell you," Arteta said. "I think they're going to be with us soon. But I don't know if Sunday is too soon."



Arsenal have several options to cover Gabriel Magalhaes' absence, including summer signings Cristhian Mosquera (left) and Piero Hincapie.

Spurs sit fifth with 18 points, eight fewer than Arsenal, a significant improvement from their 17th-place finish last season. Tottenham Hotspur manager Thomas Frank hopes his team can cause some chaos to knock Arsenal out of their efficient stride.

Frank admitted that Spurs are a little way behind their arch-rivals but believes they can disrupt Arteta's side at The Emirates.

"The interesting thing is that probably both Mikel and I would like a little bit more of a controlled game, but it will probably end up absolutely madhouse," Frank, who will be getting his first taste of the fixture, told reporters. "I expect a difficult (match), but a game that can go anywhere."

Frank is regarded as a far more pragmatic coach than Ange Postecoglou, the man he replaced in the close season, with an emphasis on set-pieces and data that served him so well at Brentford. While not exactly setting the league alight with their style so far this season, Tottenham have been far more organised and efficient than under Australian Postecoglou.

However, that is not to say Frank will be telling his side just to try and grind out a point against Arsenal. "Definitely embrace controlled chaos, or chaos we like to create if that makes sense, because chaos can be good," Frank said. "Chaos can be transitions, high-pressure and set-piece second phases and all those areas are of course areas we would like to exploit if we can. By the way, we will never go for a 0-0. It maybe will end 0-0 but we will always try to win. Always, always, always."

Tottenham have not won at The Emirates since a League Cup clash in 2018 and their last Premier League victory away to their neighbours was a 3-2 win 15 years ago. Frank's side have been impressive away from home this season though, taking 13 points from five games and the Dane said that will give them confidence ahead of tomorrow's showdown.

LIGUE 1

Pogba still has qualities: Monaco coach Pocognoli

AFP
Monaco

Paul Pogba has lost none of his "vision and technique" despite not playing for more than two years, his Monaco coach Sebastien Pocognoli said, as he weighs up whether to hand the 2018 World Cup winner his club debut.

The 32-year-old is widely expected to make his first appearance on a football pitch since September 2023, when Monaco travel to Rennes today. Pogba failed a drugs test in August 2023 after a Juve match and was handed a four-year ban, which was subsequently reduced to 18 months.

He subsequently left the club but signed for Monaco in June, and the club have been cautious in their approach to preparing Pogba for a return to competitive action. "For Paul, there is another training session today and we will assess the group after that session," said Pocognoli, adding that Pogba could be part of the squad "if everything goes well".

Pogba was initially expected to make his comeback in October but a series of injuries, including a



sprained ankle, set him back. "He's had a series of training sessions, there has been positive feedback," said Pocognoli. "We've had a bit more time in this international break to work on different tactical aspects and match situations. He took part, these are good signs."

The Belgian added: "He has the qualities to adapt to what we want to do in midfield. He hasn't lost his vision and technique. We have to see it in a match context but that's the same for every player coming back from injury."

LA LIGA

Yamal and Raphinha fit as Barcelona return to Camp Nou

Reuters
Barcelona

Barcelona winger Lamine Yamal, who missed Spain's World Cup qualifiers this month with a groin injury, is fit ahead of the club's La Liga clash with Athletic Bilbao at the Camp Nou today, manager Hansi Flick told reporters.

Yamal, sidelined three times with groin issues since September, is set for a comeback as Barca return to their home ground after two-and-a-half years, with the club reopening the partially renovated Camp Nou with a reduced capacity. "He worked very hard these two weeks and I'm really happy (with) what I see," Flick said on Friday about the 18-year-old Yamal, who was released from Spain's squad on November 11.

Raphinha, out since September with a hamstring injury, is also set to be back, but fellow forward Marcus Rashford is a doubt for Saturday after coming down with a fever, Flick added. The Barcelona team are happy to return to the Camp Nou for the first time since May 2023, the German coach said.

The Catalans played their home matches over the last two seasons at the Olympic Stadium, where Flick led them to the league title in his debut campaign in 2024-25. The squad held an open training session at the Camp Nou on November 7.

"I think we prefer to play in Camp Nou... when we were at the training and I went up the stairs and reached the pitch it was an unbelievable feeling," Flick said. "It can give us a really big push in the


Raphinha, out since September with a hamstring injury, trains yesterday.

match because it's very close and the fans... know exactly when the team needs this push."

Second-placed Barca are three points behind Real Madrid in the Spanish top-flight and stand 11th in the Champions League, where they visit Chelsea on Tuesday. "Game-by-game, this is what we want to do. I know that it's a long, long way till the end of May... we never have doubts about what we want to do, how we want to play and reach our goals," Flick said.

"Last season was the same... we have to look into ourselves and we have to give our best performance in every match."

Bayern winger Diaz banned for three games after red card in win over PSG

Zurich: Bayern Munich's Luis Diaz has received a three-match ban for serious rough play after he was sent off in their 2-1 Champions League victory over holders Paris St Germain earlier this month, UEFA said.

Diaz scored both goals in Paris but was sent off for a violent tackle on PSG's Achraf Hakimi on the stroke of halftime. PSG confirmed a day later that Hakimi had severely sprained his left ankle and the Moroccan full back has not played for the Ligue 1 club since.

Hakimi picked up the African Footballer of the Year award on Wednesday by limping on to the stage while using a scooter to move around. Bayern boss Vincent Kompany expected Diaz to miss only the trip to Arsenal on Wednesday, but the Colombian winger will also sit out home games against Sporting on December 9 and Union St Gilloise on January 21.

Bayern sit top of the Champions League standings with 12 points from four games, one of three teams with a perfect record along with their next opponents Arsenal and Inter Milan.

DR CONGO TO PLAY IN GUADALAJARA, IRAQ IN MONTERREY IN WORLD CUP PLAYOFF TOURNAMENT

FIFA confirmed the schedule for March's inter-confederation World Cup playoff tournament, with Iraq, Bolivia and Suriname playing in Monterrey, while Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), New Caledonia and Jamaica will play in Guadalajara.

With two spots at the finals in North America up for grabs, Guadalajara's Stadium will host the bracket where New Caledonia face Jamaica in the semi-final, with the winner advancing to meet DRC.

BBVA Stadium in Monterrey will stage the Bolivia-Suriname semi-final, with Iraq awaiting the winner. Both semis will be played on March 26, with the two finals set for March 31.

The single-leg knockout format ensures high-stakes ties as teams chase the last berths at the first-ever 48-team World Cup, which will be held in the United States, Mexico and Canada next year. Local organisers said the playoffs would also serve as key operational tests, helping trial logistics, security and fan-movement plans with state and municipal authorities. Monterrey and Guadalajara will each host four matches at the June 11-July 19 World Cup.

"FIFA SERIES' FOR SMALLER NATIONS TO EXPAND IN 2026 AND ADD WOMEN'S EDITION

The second "FIFA Series", sponsored biennial tournaments for mainly lower-ranked and lesser-financed nations, will expand in 2026 and launch a new women's edition, the global governing body said. Though some games in the first 24-nation series in 2024 were sparsely attended, others did spark big fan interest, with more than 85,000 turning up for Egypt's tournament finale against Croatia in Cairo which they lost 4-2.

Host nations for the larger 2026 men's series are Australia, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Puerto Rico, Rwanda and Uzbekistan, FIFA said, with the final lineup of participants to be given early in the year. The women's series will debut in Brazil, Ivory Coast and Thailand. The aim is to benefit national teams lacking opportunities to play teams from other continents.

Al-Barai, al-Hadi and al-Buainain shine in the seventh round of Hathab

Doha: Ismail Osama al-Barai clinched top honours in the 140cm Gold Tour after posting a winning time of 54.69 seconds aboard Kadoudi during the seventh round of the ninth Longines Hathab Qatar Equestrian Tour at Al Shaqab.

Khalid al-Hadi secured second place in 55.30 seconds with Capion, while Khalid Mohammed al-Emadi finished third in 55.71 seconds riding Capella.

In the team event of the same category, Team Wathnan claimed victory with a combined time of 115.99 seconds. Team Ajwad followed in 118.74 seconds, and Team Lekhwiya placed third with a total of 120.13 seconds.

In the Future Riders Tour, Mohammed Sami al-Buainain took first place after clocking 49.47 seconds with Ready to Rock. Salman Faisal al-Marri finished second in 51.36 seconds on Gilding, while Hessa Ali al-Jaber placed third in 48.33 seconds riding Violet.

In the Open Round, Khalid al-Hadi added another win, topping the standings in 52.79 seconds on Carlton. Yaqoub Nasser al-Mas secured both second and third places with times of 52.84 and 54.87 seconds aboard Equinox and Hammond, respectively.

In the Junior category, Ali Omar al-Ansari claimed first place after finishing in 56.46 seconds with Nikita. Mohammed Issa al-Bukhari was second in 57.99 seconds on Kanaw, followed by Mohammed Faisal al-Marri in third with a time of 61.49 seconds on Herlfents.

The seventh round will conclude today with competitions in the Diamond and Bronze Tours, for both individuals and teams, in addition to the Future Riders Tour.



