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# GULF TIMES SPORT



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Aneed Al Shahania wins feature as Basalt soars to Ebraz Cup victory

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QATAR STARS LEAGUE

# Sadd seek response against Rayyan as title race intensifies

High-profile clash at Ahmed bin Ali Stadium will also mark the debut of Rayyan's new coach Moreno

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

Defending champions Al Sadd will look to tighten their grip on the summit and respond to recent setbacks when they take on Al Rayyan in the standout fixture of Week 20 of the Qatar Stars League this weekend.

Al Sadd, who lead the standings with 38 points, come into the traditional rivalry under pressure after suffering two consecutive defeats, while fourth-placed Al Rayyan, on 31 points, will be eager to extend their winning momentum following a 2-1 victory over Al Wakrah in the previous round.

The high-profile encounter at Ahmed bin Ali Stadium will also mark the debut of Al Rayyan's new Spanish coach Vicente Moreno, adding further intrigue to a clash that could have significant implications in the race for the title and top-four positions. Moreno expressed his happiness with the positive attitude shown by the players since his arrival at the club, stressing that this aspect is very important to him. Regarding the team's preparations for the match against Sadd, the Spanish coach said that the time available for work had been short, but the team is looking forward to a very important game this week, with the clear objective of securing all three points.

Responding to a question about the team's chances of winning the three available titles, he said: "Relax, we will try to win some titles."

Elsewhere tomorrow, second-placed Al Shamal will be aiming to close the gap on leaders Al Sadd when they face Umm Salal at Al Khor Stadium. Al Shamal, who have collected 34 points and still hold a game in hand, remain firmly in the title conversation and will look to capitalise against ninth-placed Umm Salal, who sit on 20 points and are seeking consistency in the closing stages of the season.

Another major fixture will see Al Duhail take on Al Gharafa at Abdullah bin Khalifa



Defending champions Al Sadd, who hold a four-point lead at the top, are under pressure after suffering two consecutive defeats.

Stadium in a contest expected to be closely fought. Al Duhail, last season's runners-up, have climbed to seventh place with 27 points after securing back-to-back wins and will be determined to maintain their resurgence. Third-placed Al Gharafa, level on 34 points, will be keen to bounce back strongly following their heavy defeat to Al Ahli in the previous round as they aim to keep their title ambitions alive.

The round will kick off today with Al Shahania hosting Al Arabi at Al Khor Sta-

dium. Al Shahania occupy the bottom spot with 17 points and are under mounting pressure after a narrow 3-2 loss to Al Saliya, while sixth-placed Al Arabi, on 28 points with a game in hand, will be confident after their impressive victory over league leaders Al Sadd.

Al Arabi coach Cosmin Contra stressed the importance of focus ahead of the encounter. "We are entering the Al Shahaniya match aiming to secure the three points to strengthen our position in the standings. It



Al Rayyan's new Spanish coach Vicente Moreno speaks at a press conference.

will be a tough encounter as we face an opponent fighting to avoid relegation, which necessitates that we approach the match with utmost seriousness and maintain high mental focus throughout the 90 minutes," Contra said.

In another fixture today, Qatar SC will meet Al Wakrah at Suhaim bin Hamad Stadium, with both sides seeking a return to winning ways. Qatar SC sit fifth with 28 points and have a match in hand, while Al Wakrah, currently eighth on 23 points, are determined to improve their league standing.

Al Wakrah coach Jose Luis Sierra expressed confidence in his squad ahead of the encounter, highlighting the positive atmosphere within the team since his arrival. "The enthusiasm I have witnessed within the team and the fantastic atmosphere surrounding the group have significantly boosted our confidence and optimism about achieving the desired results, particularly in this match," Sierra said.

In another crucial contest near the bottom of the table, Al Ahli will face Al Saliya at Khalifa International Stadium, with both teams desperate to secure valuable points in their fight to move away from the relegation zone.

The relegation battle is equally intense, with Al Shahaniya, Al Saliya and Al Ahli separated by just two points, ensuring a tense and competitive weekend across the league.

FIXTURES

**Today:** 6.30pm: Al Shahania vs Al Arabi (at Khalifa International Stadium); Qatar SC vs Al Wakrah at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium; 8.30pm: Al Ahli vs Al Saliya (at Al Thumama Stadium)  
**Tomorrow:** 6.30pm: Al Shamal vs Umm Salal (at Al Bayt Stadium); Al Rayyan vs Al Sadd (at Ahmed Bin Ali Stadium); 8.30pm: Al Duhail vs Al Gharafa (at Khalifa International Stadium)

QATAR OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

## Sanders takes 2-shot lead after first round

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

England's Andrew Sanders fired an opening round of 72 to take the first-round lead at the 40th Qatar Open Golf Championship, which got underway at Doha Golf Club yesterday.

In a field of 90 players competing over three days, Sanders set the early pace in the singles stroke-play format, finishing level par to hold a two-shot advantage over Slovakia's Jakub Hrinda, who carded a 74. Australia's Andrew Extremas was a further two shots back in third.

Britain's Dean Morris finished fourth after posting a five-over-par round, tied alongside Australia's Cam Craner and England's Callum Fitzgerald in a closely contested chasing group.

Among the home contingent, Qatar's defending champion Saleh Al-Kaabi led the way, finishing seventh on 79, seven strokes over par, tied with Ireland's Scott Holland Flynn and South Africa's Franco Rabbi. Fellow Qatari Waqas Al-Balushi rounded out the top 10 with a score of 80.

Rising prospect Daniel Sokolov placed 14th after an opening round of 82, while Abdulaziz Al-Buainain and Fahad Mir shared 23rd position on 86. Jaham Al-Kuwari



Qatar's defending champion Saleh Al-Kaabi was in seventh place with 7-over 79.

finished 29th, tied with Abdulaziz Al-Shahrani and Kamil Bourqia.

The tournament continues today with the second round, after which the top 50 players will progress to the final day. The championship winner will secure a coveted place in the Qatar Masters, adding further incentive in one of Qatar's leading amateur events.

QATAR EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION CUP

## Vanderveen clinches CSI5\* 150cm class

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

American rider Kristen Vanderveen opened the Qatar Equestrian Federation Cup in style, claiming victory in the CSI5\* 150cm Faults & Time class on the opening day of the competition, part of the Doha Equestrian Tour at Al Shaqab.

Riding Starbucks 27, Vanderveen delivered a flawless round to finish in 71.31 seconds and secure top honours ahead of Austria's Gerfried Puck on Equitron Naxcel V, who clocked 72.95 seconds, while Jordan's Nasouh Kayali on Kamacho P.S. took third place in 77.24 seconds. The four-day event has attracted more than 170 riders representing 21 countries, competing across one- to five-star categories with a total prize purse of €784,000.

In the CSI5\* Two Phases 140cm class, Qatar's Rashid Towaim Ali al-Marri riding Navaronne secured first place with a clear round in 29.97 seconds. Kuwait's Annaz al-Annaz on Carlsson 69 finished second in 32.11 seconds, while Sheikh Fahad Jassim al-Thani on Lavesther placed third in 32.20 seconds.

Kuwait's Madhy Alkhamis topped the CSI2\* 125cm Faults & Time class riding Caheelah de Beaufour, completing the course in 56.24 seconds. Qatar's Ahmad Jassim al-Suwaidi on Mona Lansia M finished second in 59.54 seconds, while Abdul Aziz Jassim al-Thani on Steve Jobs secured third place in 60.54 seconds.

In the CSI2\* Special Two Phase 110cm class, Saudi Arabia's Khalid al-Hadi riding DSP Cessy claimed first place with a time of 25.85 seconds. Qatar's Abdulla Ahmad al-Musafri on Celia Z finished second in 27.03 seconds, while Mohammad al-Ghazali on Palmer - V took third place in 27.16 seconds.

Commenting on the start of the tourna-



American rider Kristen Vanderveen, astride Starbucks 27, is delighted after winning the CSI5\* 150cm Faults & Time class at the Qatar Equestrian Federation Cup.

ment, tournament deputy director Mohammed Jaber al-Khayarin affirmed that the event continues to solidify its position as one of the highlights of the Doha Equestrian Tour 2026, given the wide participation of elite riders, including several internationally ranked riders, reflecting the growing confidence in tournaments hosted by the State of Qatar.

He said: "Holding this championship comes at a time when some countries are experiencing a pause in sporting events, which highlights Qatar's readiness, the continuity of its organisational system, and its ability to organise and host major events according to the highest international standards, ensuring a safe and competitive environment for all participants."



In the CSI5\* Two Phases 140cm class, Qatar's Rashid Towaim Ali al-Marri riding Navaronne secured first place.

PSL

# Shadab shines as Islamabad beat Quetta

**Shadab Khan of Islamabad United in action against Quetta Gladiators in Lahore yesterday.**



**Agencies**  
Lahore

**S**ameer Minhas's unbeaten 82 and Shadab Khan's 69 not out with the bat and three for 23 with the ball helped Islamabad United cruise past Quetta Gladiators by eight wickets as they chased the 184-run target with 10 balls to spare in the first game of the third double-header of Pakistan Super League yesterday.

Islamabad moved up to fourth in the table with three points, just behind third-placed Peshawar Zalmi who edge them on net run rate.

With United 61 for two in 6.5 overs after Abrar struck to remove Devon Conway (18, 19b, 2x4s, 1x6) and Andries Gous (2, 4b) in his successive overs, Shadab stitched an unbeaten match-winning 128-run partnership for the third wicket with Sameer to take their side

home.

The duo took some time to settle in before striking 22 off Tom Curran in the 12th over. Sameer bagged a boundary off the first ball while Shadab hit two fours and a six.

At 113 for two after 13 overs, Shadab and Sameer ran riot, producing 76 runs off the next 5.2 overs, taking their side home comfortably.

Shadab struck Usman Tariq for a six in the 14th over that gained 12 runs before hitting another six and a boundary off Ahmed Daniyal in the next, an over that gained 16 runs.

The duo thumped another six and a boundary off Usman in the 13-run 16th over, before doing the same to Abrar in the next one, getting 14 runs.

Sameer brought an end to the contest in style as he hit Ahmed for a six over fine leg in the 19th over. Sameer shone with 82 off 48 balls; his highest maiden half-century in all competitive cricket, aided by

eight fours and three sixes.

Shadab backed his bowling performance as he struck five fours and four sixes in his 39-ball 69 not out.

Earlier, Quetta Gladiators had recovered from a precarious position courtesy an unbeaten 90-run partnership between Hasan Nawaz and Tom Curran to post 183 for five.

With Quetta 93 for five after 11.5 overs, top-scorer Hasan Nawaz and Tom Curran rebuilt the innings with a steady rotation of strike as the duo gathered 16 runs off the next three overs.

The pair then broke the shackles, plundering 21 runs off the 16th over of the innings bowled by Imad Wasim, with Hasan and Curran striking a four and a six each.

The two then ransacked 20 runs off the penultimate over, before scoring another 11 off the last to lift their side to a fighting total.

Batting first, captain Saud Sha-keel and Shmyl Hussain provided

an explosive start, racing to 50 in 26 balls. Shmyl fell for 21 off 15 in the fifth over, caught off Salman Irshad's back-of-a-length delivery.

Saud continued fluently, striking three fours and three sixes in a classy 42 off 26 before Shadab had him caught at backward point via a leading edge.

Shadab then brought his side back into the contest as he clean-bowled Ben McDermott and followed it up next ball by having debutant Bevon Jacobs caught and bowled for a golden duck.

Khawaja Mohammad Nafay had already fallen to Imad Wasim moments earlier and in the space of 14 balls, Quetta had crumbled from 71 for two to 93 for five.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**Islamabad United 189 for 2** (Minhas 82\*, Shadab 69\*, Abrar 2-29) **beat Quetta Gladiators 183 for 5** (Hasan Nawaz 66\*, Shakeen 42, Shadab 3-23) **by eight wickets**

IPL

# Head, Abhishek help Hyderabad thump Kolkata

NITISH KUMAR REDDY, WHO MADE 39, PICKED UP 2 WICKETS

AFP

Kolkata

**E**xplosive knocks by openers Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma led Sunrisers Hyderabad to their first win of the IPL season with a 65-run thrashing of Kolkata Knight Riders yesterday.

Australian opener Head hit 46 off 21 balls and along with Abhishek, who clobbered a 21-ball 48, lay the foundations for Hyderabad's 226-8 at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

Hyderabad then bowled out three-time winners Kolkata for 161 in 16 overs to register their first points after losing their opener to Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Head and Abhishek put on 82 runs for the first wicket as the two tore into the opposition attack and hit 10 fours and seven sixes between them.

South Africa's Heinrich Klaasen top-scored with 52 after Kolkata lost three quick wickets including skipper Ishan Kishan, for 14, and Abhishek in one over from Blessing Muzarabani, who finished with 4-41.

Klaasen and Nitish Kumar Reddy, who made 39, put on 82 for the fifth wicket to help Hyderabad finish on a high.

Both teams came into the match after a defeat in their open-



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Nitish Kumar Reddy plays a shot during the 2026 IPL match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday. (AFP)

ing outings but 2016 winners Hyderabad executed their plans to perfection.

Kolkata's New Zealand import Finn Allen struck three fours and two sixes off David Payne in the first over of the chase to get them off to a blistering start.

But after a seven-ball 28, Al-

len departed in the second over and despite wicketkeeper-batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi's 52, the Kolkata chase fizzled out.

Left-arm quick Jaydev Unadkat took three wickets, including two in two balls, to bowl out Kolkata with four overs left unused as Hyderabad bounced back.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**Sunrisers Hyderabad 226 for 8** (Klaasen 52, Abhishek 48, Head 46, Muzarabani 4-41) **beat Kolkata Knight Riders 161** (Raghuvanshi 52, Unadkat 3-21, Malinga 2-14, Nitish 2-17) **by 65 runs**  
**Man of the Match:** Nitish Reddy

## AZAM KHAN POWERS KINGS



Azam Khan of Karachi Kings celebrates his half century against Rawalpindiz during their PSL match in Lahore yesterday. Batting first, Rawalpindiz scored 197/6 in their 20 overs. Daryl Mitchell (65) and Sam Billings (58) were the top scores. In reply, Kings scored 199/5 in 19.2 to win the match by five wickets. Khan scored 74 off 34 deliveries with six 4s and six 6s. David Warner scored 50 for Kings.

FOCUS

## Dwarshuis eyes regular Australia spot after Starc exit opens door

Reuters

Bengaluru

**F**ast bowler Ben Dwarshuis says the competition will be fierce to fill the void left by Mitchell Starc's retirement from Twenty20 internationals, as a clutch of Australian pacers jostle for a rare opening in the national team's attack.

Starc, Australia's third-highest wicket-taker with 759 wickets across all formats, behind only Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath, retired from T20 internationals in September last year.

His departure has offered up a place in an Australian fast-bowling group long dominated by Starc alongside fellow pacers Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood.

Dwarshuis, who made his international debut in 2022, has featured in only six one-day internationals and 15 T20Is, competing for selection with fellow pace bowlers such as Nathan Ellis, Xavier Bartlett and Spencer Johnson.

"There's a whole heap of Australian bowlers who have sort of sat behind Mitch Starc, Hazlewood and Cummins, who have just done amazing things for Australian cricket and haven't really opened the door for anyone else to sort of take their spot," Dwarshuis told Reuters.

"Mitch retiring obviously opens up a spot. There's a whole handful of guys that are trying to get into that spot. Competition's fierce, but knowing that there is a spot available means a potential avenue there if you perform."

Dwarshuis, who was signed by Indian Premier League side Punjab Kings for a whopping \$472,462, said franchise leagues have become an increasingly important shop window for players chasing international selection.

The 31-year-old is the second-highest wicket-taker in the history

of the Big Bash League with 164. "Anytime you take the field and have an opportunity to perform, there's always going to be eyes watching, whether it's from Australia or other leagues," Dwarshuis said.

"With the viewership these competitions get, it's very easy to have a couple of good years and everyone's talking about you."

"But then if you're not performing well, that sort of viewership leads to maybe less opportunities there."

Punjab, currently fifth in the IPL standings, opened their campaign with a three-wicket win over Gujarat Titans, a match in which Dwarshuis was not selected.

**Australia to play three ODIs in Zimbabwe in September**

Australia will tour Zimbabwe for three One-Day Internationals in September, the first time they have played in the African nation since 2014.

Zimbabwe are to co-host the 2027 50-over World Cup with South Africa and Namibia, and this year's tour provides the Australians with a chance to familiarise themselves with conditions.

All three ODI fixtures will be played at the Harare Sports Club between September 15-20.

"We are delighted to welcome Australia back to Zimbabwe for what promises to be a highly competitive ODI series," Zimbabwe Cricket Managing Director Give-more Makoni said in a statement yesterday.

"Fixtures of this calibre are vital for our growth as a team."

Zimbabwe defeated Australia by 23 runs in February at the T20 World Cup in a fixture played in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

**Fixtures (all Harare Sports Club):**  
**First ODI:** September 15  
**Second ODI:** September 18  
**Third ODI:** September 20

COMMENT

## Former England swing bowler Anderson says he 'hated every minute' of The Hundred last year

Reuters

London

**E**ngland's all-time leading Test wicket-taker James Anderson said he "hated every minute" of his brief stint in The Hundred last summer and that he planned to be on holiday when the competition takes place this year.

The 43-year-old, who retired from international cricket in 2024, was selected with a wildcard pick by the Manchester Originals in the 2025 season of the 100-ball format but took only two wickets in three games.

The fast bowler was not part of the auction for the 2026 season, opting instead to focus on county cricket with Lancashire, who he will captain this year.

Asked why he did not return to The Hundred, Anderson told the *Independent* in an interview published on Wednesday: "It was a mixture of hating every minute of The Hundred last year, if I can say that, and especially being (Lancashire) captain this year. "I think it's really important that I

focus on being as fit as I can be for the four-day stuff.

"When The Hundred's on I'm hopefully going to be on holiday somewhere," added Anderson, who took 704 wickets in 188 Tests for England.

He added that he was determined to guide second-tier side Lancashire back to Division One and did not rule out extending his career further if they earned promotion, despite his age and fitness issues.

"I think there are times throughout the winter where I maybe thought about what if we get promoted and we've got a chance to push for the championship next year," he said in the interview.

"Would I want to be involved in that? And of course I would," Anderson said.

"And then there are other times when I wake up and I struggle to walk to the toilet in the morning and think maybe I can't get another year out of my body."

The Hundred will be held from July 21 to August 16, while the County Championship begins today.



Lancashire's James Anderson in the nets ahead of the new county season at Old Trafford, Manchester, yesterday. (@lancsccricket)

## QOC ATHLETICS COMMISSION HOLDS GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

DOHA: The Athletes Commission of the Qatar Olympic Committee held its Ordinary General Assembly meeting 2026 yesterday at Al Wajba Hall, located at the QOC's building. The meeting was chaired by Mutaz Essa Barshim, Secretary-General of the Commission, in the presence of Nada Mohamed Wafa, Assistant Secretary-General of the Athletes Commission, along with members of the General Assembly and a representative of the Qatar Olympic Committee. During the meeting, members approved the minutes of the previous session and reviewed the Board of Directors' report on its activities over the past year. Discussions also covered the objectives for the coming year

and future action plans. The final accounts for the previous financial year were approved in line with the auditor's report, and the proposed budget was reviewed and endorsed. Committee members also exchanged a range of development-focused proposals aimed at enhancing the technical performance of athletes and addressing the challenges they face on both personal and administrative levels. Emphasis was placed on the importance of organizing workshops and awareness programs to strengthen sports culture, while creating an ideal environment that supports athletes' presence and development, enabling them to achieve further success at both continental and international levels.



### SPOTLIGHT

# Judge allows Woods to leave US for treatment

The American will not captain the 2027 US Ryder Cup team

AFP  
Miami

A Florida judge ruled yesterday that Tiger Woods can leave the United States to seek "comprehensive inpatient treatment" after his arrest on suspicion of driving under the influence.

Woods's attorney, Douglas Duncan, submitted the motion to travel in Martin County Court, citing the 50-year-old golfer's urgent need for an "intensive, highly individualized and medically integrated program" as well as privacy from media and public scrutiny.

Judge Darren Steele granted the motion after a teleconference on the matter.

Woods's decision to "step away" from his golf-related activities in the wake of a rollover car accident on Friday means he will not captain the 2027 US Ryder Cup team, the PGA of America confirmed on Wednesday.

Woods pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to misdemeanor charges of DUI with property damage and refusing to submit to a lawful test.

A breathalyzer test showed no alcohol in his system at the time of the crash, but Woods refused a urine analysis.

In requesting approval for Woods to leave the country, Duncan said Woods's doctor had recommended the specific treatment facility "based upon the Defendant's complex clinical presentation and the urgent need for a level of care that cannot safely or effectively be done within the United States, as his privacy has been repeatedly compromised."

"Ongoing medical scrutiny and public exposure create significant barriers to his care and would result in setbacks and an inability to fully engage in treatment."

Woods has battled through numerous injuries in his career, including multiple back surgeries. In 2017 he was arrested on sus-



Tiger Woods of the US acknowledges the crowd on the green on the 18th hole after completing his final round at the Masters, Augusta National Golf Club, Augusta, Georgia, on April 14, 2024. (Reuters)

picion of DUI after police found him asleep at the wheel of his damaged car, with the engine running.

Woods said he had taken a mix of painkillers, eventually pleading guilty to reckless driving and entering a treatment facility to seek help with managing prescription drugs.

In February of 2021 Woods underwent emergency surgery for multiple compound fractures in his right leg and a shattered ankle after a rollover crash in California.

According to the accident report from the Martin County Sheriff's Office, Woods told officers he had had seven back surgeries and over 20 operations on his leg, advising them he has a limp and that one ankle seizes while walking.

Woods told officers he was "looking down at his cell phone and changing the radio station and did not notice the vehicle in

front of him had slowed down," according to the report.

But Sheriff's deputies described his movements as "lethargic and slow," noting his eyes were "bloodshot and glassy."

Police said in the report that Woods was found with two hydrocodone pills, an opioid painkiller, and appeared unable to safely drive a vehicle when he was apprehended.

Woods said in a statement posted to his social media accounts on Tuesday that he was "stepping away for a period of time to seek treatment and focus on my health."

"This is necessary in order for me to prioritize my well-being and work toward lasting recovery," he said.

Woods, who had surgery for a ruptured Achilles tendon in March of 2025 and a further back surgery in October, hasn't competed in a top-level golf event since the 2024 British Open.

But he has been playing a key role as chair of the PGA Tour's Future Competition Committee created to help shape a new-look tour, and he confirmed in February he was contemplating accepting the role of Ryder Cup captain.

"We commend Tiger for prioritizing his long-term health and deeply respect the courage it takes to make such a personal decision," the PGA of America said in their statement saying he had "shared with us" that he will not serve as captain.

PGA Tour chief executive Brian Rolapp and Fred Ridley, chairman of Augusta National, offered equally supportive statements.

Ridley said Augusta National and the Masters Tournament "fully support Tiger Woods as he focuses on his well-being."

"Although Tiger will not be joining us in person next week, his presence will be felt here in Augusta," Ridley said of the five-time Masters champion.

### BOXING

## Philippines' Pacquiao says Mayweather fight 'not an exhibition'

AFP  
Manila

Manny Pacquiao's planned September fight with Floyd Mayweather will not be an exhibition, the Philippine boxing legend said yesterday, days after his fellow hall of famer said their bout would be strictly entertainment.

Netflix last month announced a long-awaited rematch of the highest-grossing clash in boxing history, with Pacquiao and Mayweather - now both in their late forties - set to clash at the Sphere in Las Vegas on September 19.

But Mayweather this week stunned the boxing world by suggesting the rivals, whose 2015 bout drove 4.6 million pay-per-view buys, would only be entering the squared circle for show this time around.

"It's an exhibition, so we're both winners," Mayweather said in an interview with Vegas Sports Today. "We just want to go out there

and entertain the people and put on a good show."

On Friday, Pacquiao begged to differ.

"I want to be very clear that the contract we signed is for a professional boxing match. This is not an exhibition; it is a real fight," he said in a statement sent to AFP.

"I wish to clear up any misinformation regarding my upcoming bout against Floyd Mayweather. From the beginning, my intention has been to give the fans what they truly want to see. A high-level, competitive sanctioned fight," he said.

He added that Netflix's February announcement of the rematch had "reflected the exact terms of our agreement" and that his team expected the "original terms of the agreement to be honored."

On Wednesday, Jas Mathur, CEO of Manny Pacquiao Promotions, blasted Mayweather's comments in an interview with ESPN, insisting the fight would take place.

"Floyd Mayweather is officially in breach of his contract," he told the US-based sports outlet.

### TENNIS

## Swiatek hires Roig after split with coach Fissette

Reuters  
London

Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek has hired Francisco Roig, who was part of Rafael Nadal's team and later coached Emma Raducanu, after the Polish world number four ended her coaching partnership with Wim Fissette last month.

The six-time Grand Slam winner split with Fissette after a 17-month stint following a shock early exit at the Miami Open with a loss to world number 50 Magda Linette.

"Welcome to the team, Francisco! Very excited for this new chapter," Swiatek wrote in an Instagram story yesterday.

Spaniard Roig was part of Nadal's team for 16 Grand Slam wins, but his stint as Raducanu's coach lasted only six months as the Briton struggled to regain her form.

Swiatek has also struggled this year, facing quarter-final exits from the Australian Open, Qatar Open and Indian Wells before the loss in Miami.

The 24-year-old Polish star will be gunning for her fifth French Open title when the second Grand Slam of the year starts in Paris next month.

## Hideki Matsuyama in action at Texas Open



Hideki Matsuyama watches his shot on the 10th hole during the first round of the Valero Texas Open golf tournament in San Antonio, Texas, USA. The Valero Texas Open once again occupies the week before the Masters on the tour schedule, and Englishman Tommy Fleetwood will headline the field that teed off at TPC San Antonio. (Daniel Dunn-Imagn Images)

## Body camera video released from Woods arrest

Miami: Authorities in Florida released the body camera video of Tiger Woods being arrested on Thursday following a rollover car crash last week that led to him stepping away from golf to seek treatment.

In the footage released by the Martin County Sheriff's Office, Woods tells authorities he was looking at his phone when he struck the trailer of another vehicle.

"I looked down at my phone and all of a sudden, boom," Woods said.

The 50-year-old winner of 15 major titles and a PGA Tour record-tying 82 events is shown taking a sobriety test and being handcuffed after that.

"At this time, I do believe your normal faculties are impaired," a deputy told Woods. "And you're under an unknown substance, so at this time you are under arrest for DUI."

Police found two hydrocodone painkiller pills on Woods when he was arrested.

Woods told deputies he had taken "a few" prescription medications earlier in the day and told authorities he had undergone seven back



A screenshot of the police arrest video of Tiger Woods released by the authorities in Miami yesterday.

operations and more than 20 surgeries on his right leg, according to the arrest report. Woods has pleaded not guilty to driving under the influence. He was also charged with refusing to take a urinalysis test.

Woods, who had been hoping to play in next week's Masters, said he planned to step away

from golf and was granted permission to leave the United States in order to undergo treatment. "I know and understand the seriousness of the situation I find myself in," Woods said in a statement. "I am stepping away for a period of time to seek treatment on focus on my health. This is necessary in order for me to prioritize my well-being and work toward lasting recovery."

The PGA of America has announced Woods will not serve as captain of the 2027 US Ryder Cup team.

The Masters, PGA of America and PGA Tour all issued statements supporting Woods and his decision to seek treatment.

Woods suffered severe injuries in a 2021 car crash in California but returned to competition at the 2022 Masters and finished 47th despite struggling to walk 72 holes at Augusta National.

## HORSE RACING

# Aneed Al Shahania sparkles as Basalt soars to victory

Trainer-jockey duo al-Ghazali and Casamento won four races yesterday at Al Rayyan Racecourse

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

**A**need Al Shahania clinched the HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy while Basalt emerged the Ebraz Cup winner to light up the Al Rayyan Racecourse, which hosted major races last evening.

Competing in the Local Purebred Arabians, Aneed Al Shahania returned to winning form for Sheikhha Reem bint Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Thani following two runner-up finishes. The 6-year-old grey horse raced towards the rear and midfield before producing a sustained late challenge, moving into contention inside the final 200m to seize the lead and then drawing clear to score by 3 3/4 lengths. Under the care of Rudy Nerbonne, he was partnered by Lukas Delozier.

In the second feature of the HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy Day, Basalt made it back-to-back wins in the QA Group 2 contest for Thoroughbreds over 1400m for HE Mansoor bin Ibrahim al-Mahmoud. The 4-year-old grey colt enhanced his excellent record with a fifth win from just seven starts this campaign. He travelled with cover behind the early leaders before engaging in a sustained duel with Dumonet in the concluding stages and getting the better of the battle on the line to prevail by a head. Gassim al-Ghazali saddled the winner, with Marco Casamento in the saddle. The trainer-jockey duo won four races yesterday after earning a treble on Wednesday.

Later, Al Ryan Park, carrying the colours of Al Eida Racing, quickly bounced back to winning ways after finishing runner-up last time, sealing the Aziz Purebred Arabian Handicap Cup triumph. Drawn wide in stall 13 in the 1400m race, the 5-year-old bay horse came with a powerful run approaching the home turn to engage in a heated duel with Hamas La Gloire, with the pair battling all the way to the line before Al Ryan Park edged ahead to prevail by a short head for another win of the day for trainer al-Ghazali and Casamento.

In the Assy Thoroughbred Filly & Mare Cup, September Leaves claimed victory by a quarter of a length, quickly adding a fourth win of the day for al-Ghazali and Casamento.



Lukas Delozier guides Aneed Al Shahania to comfortable win at the HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy. PICTURES: Juhaim



Connections of Aneed Al Shahania celebrate after the victory.

Evergreen captured the Ebraz Thoroughbred Handicap Cup with a commanding victory. Trained by Hamad Al-Jehani, he was ridden by Arnaud de Lepine.

The coveted Mared Al Sahara Cup went to Arman, who regained the winning thread in the 1400m Local Purebred Arabian Conditions for Wathnan Racing, following a 1 1/4 lengths win. Under the care of Alban de Mieulle, he was partnered by Soufiane

Saadi.

Hamad al-Jehani-trained Maysara capped the eventful day, winning the Gazwan Cup after prevailing by quarter of a length in the 1400m Local Thoroughbred Conditions under Pierre Charles Boudot.

The nine-race meet started with Kendah Al Shahania winning the Djendel Novice Cup, followed by a victory for Ghanem in the Mared Al Sahara Purebred Arabian



Marco Casamento leads Basalt to Ebraz Cup win at Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday.



Trainer Gassim al-Ghazali and jockey Marco Casamento celebrate after Basalt's victory.

Handicap Cup, as al-Ghazali and Casamento celebrated their first win of the day.

## 62ND AL RAYYAN RACE MEETING - HH SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN KHALIFA AL THANI TROPHY

### WINNERS: (Horse, Trainer, Jockey)

- 1 - HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy, Local Purebred Arabians Aneed Al Shahania, Rudy Nerbonne, Lukas Delozier
- 2 - Ebraz Cup, Thoroughbred, QA-Gr2 Basalt, Gassim al-Ghazali, Marco Casamento
- 3 - Aziz Purebred Arabian Handicap Cup (70-90) Al Ryan Park, Gassim al-Ghazali, Marco Casamento
- 4 - Assy Thoroughbred Filly & Mare Cup September Leaves, Gassim al-Ghazali,

Marco Casamento

5 - Ebraz Thoroughbred Handicap Cup (70-90) Evergreen, Hamad Al-Jehani, Arnaud de Lepine

6 - Mared Al Sahara Cup, Local Purebred Arabian Conditions Arman, Alban de Mieulle, Soufiane Saadi

7 - Gazwan Cup, Local Thoroughbred Conditions Maysara, Hamad al-Jehani, Pierre Charles Boudot

8 - Djendel Novice Cup, Local Purebred Arabian Novice Cup Kendah al-Shahania, Rudy Nerbonne, Alberto Sanna

9 - Mared Al Sahara Purebred Arabian Handicap Cup Ghanem, Gassim al-Ghazali, Marco Casamento

## Al Arabi crowned Qatar Basketball League champions



Al Arabi clinched the Qatar Basketball League title for the 2025-2026 season, securing their third consecutive championship after defeating rivals Al Rayyan 91-79 in the second game of the best-of-three finals at Al Gharafa Hall. The victory reinforced Al Arabi's dominance in recent years and added another chapter to their storied record. Abdulrahman Saad led Al Arabi with 24 points, six rebounds, and five assists. Elmedin Kikanovic recorded a double-double with 16 points, 13 rebounds, and six assists, while Abdelrahman Abdelhaleem added 14 points and eight rebounds. Sindou Ismael Diallo contributed 11 points. For Al Rayyan, Rion Cortez Brown posted 18 points and 14 rebounds, and Malik Romero Curry scored 17 points with eight assists. Mohammed bin Saad al-Mughassib, President of the Qatar Basketball Federation, honoured the winners. Al Arabi received QR1mn in prize money, Al Rayyan took QR750,000, and Al Sadd, who defeated Al Ahli 80-73 in the third-place playoff last Monday, earned QR500,000.

## FOCUS

## Captain Lewandowski hints at Poland exit

Reuters  
Gdansk

**P**oland captain Robert Lewandowski has hinted at his international retirement following the country's failure to qualify for the 2026 World Cup, marking the potential end for the national team's all-time leading goalscorer. The 37-year-old cut a dejected figure as the final whistle confirmed Poland's absence from the world stage following the 3-2 defeat by Sweden in Tuesday's qualification playoff final.

Hours after the loss in Stockholm, Lewandowski posted a photo of himself on social media leaving the pitch, accompanied by Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli's song "Time to Say Goodbye".

The failure to secure a spot in North America leaves the Barcelona striker facing the end of a

record-breaking career without the grand finale he had sought after returning to the squad in August following a fallout with former coach Michal Probiez.

However, in comments after the match, he played down the significance of his post, indicating that a final decision had not yet been made. "I am not in a position to make any declarations. I will return to my club; I still have some matches to play. I will have to answer the question marks in the back of my head for myself," he told Polish media.

With the next World Cup four years away, the recent exit marks a bitter chapter for the Warsaw-born forward who has anchored the national side since his 2008 debut.

Lewandowski has captained the team since 2014 and remains Poland's record holder for both goals and appearances, with a career tally of 89 goals in 165 international matches.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Italy's football chief resigns after another World Cup disaster

AFP  
Milan, Italy

**T**he head of Italy's football federation (FIGC) resigned yesterday, falling on his sword after the men's national team failed to qualify for the World Cup for a third consecutive time.

Gabriele Gravina revealed he would step down as the country's top football official following a meeting held at the FIGC's headquarters in Rome. His announcement came a day after Sport Minister Andrea Abodi called on him to resign.

Four-time World Cup winners Italy fell at the play-offs again on Tuesday, this time after a penalty shoot-out against Bosnia and Herzegovina, and will miss this summer's finals in the United States,



Canada and Mexico.

The shock waves of the latest humiliation for one of the world's most successful football nations forced Gravina, 72, to go back on his initial plans to wait until a FIGC board meeting next week to announce a decision on his future. The FIGC said in a statement that a vote for a new president would be held on June 22.

Giovanni Malago, the former long-time head of the Italian Olympic Committee who was president of the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics organisation committee, is reportedly one of the names in the hat. Before then, head coach Gennaro Gattuso is expected to also step down, while general manager Gianluigi Buffon, the former Italy goalkeeper, announced his resignation.

Italy's failure to reach the first ever 48-team World Cup - which will feature the likes of Cape Verde and Curacao - led Abodi to release a statement saying: "It's clear that Italian football needs to be rebuilt from the ground up and that starts with changes at the top of the FIGC."

That came a day after Gravina had hit

out at politicians "who have only pushed for resignations", while also admitting Italian football "is in a profound crisis".

Gravina was elected FIGC president in October 2018, becoming the permanent replacement for Carlo Tavecchio, who stepped down following Italy's first World Cup play-off defeat to Sweden the previous year.

The highlight of his reign was Italy's thrilling triumph at Euro 2020, when an Azzurri team under Roberto Mancini, which went unbeaten for 37 matches, beat England at Wembley to be crowned kings of the continent for the second time.

But two World Cup qualification failures and a dismal defence of the European title left Gravina with little choice but to resign as Italy's football woes deepen. And those do not just relate to diminishing performances by the national team and Se-

rie A clubs - none of whom have won the Champions League since 2010.

Italy are due to co-host Euro 2032 with Turkey but, UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin hit out at the state of Italy's stadiums, warning the country could be stripped of hosting rights. "I just hope that the infrastructure (in Italy) will be ready. If that's not the case, the tournament will not be held in Italy," Ceferin said in an interview with the *Gazzetta Dello Sport*.

Italy's football malaise contrasts sharply with its success in other sports. Italy claimed a record 30 medals at the recent Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, including 10 golds, and left the 2024 Summer Games in Paris with 40 medals.

The Mediterranean nation also has top performers in a wide variety of other sports, such as tennis star Jannik Sinner, a four-time Grand Slam winner.