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FOCUS

Mascot 'Washeq' unveiled as GCC Games near kickoff

The 4th edition of the Games represents a continuation of strong sporting cooperation among GCC countries

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar has unveiled the official mascot, "Washeq", as it confirmed full readiness to host the 4th GCC Games - Doha 2026, with all preparations completed ahead of the event scheduled from May 11 to 22.

The announcement was made yesterday during a press conference at Al Wajba Hall at the headquarters of the Qatar Olympic Committee in the presence of senior officials and media representatives.

Speaking at the event, Sheikh Abdullah bin Saud al-Thani, Head of the Marketing and Communications Committee, said the mascot launch marks an important step in building public engagement, particularly among youth, while reflecting the spirit and identity of the Games.

He added that Qatar's hosting of the Games represents a continuation of strong sporting cooperation among GCC countries and highlights the deep-rooted ties that unite the region.

"This edition of the Games provides an important platform to strengthen ties among Gulf youth, promote sporting values, and reinforce the role of sport as a bridge for communication," he said.

Organisers also outlined a comprehensive branding and marketing strategy inspired by Gulf culture and heritage, designed to appeal to a broad audience while delivering a distinctive experience.

In addition, a number of official sponsors and strategic partners have been announced, supporting the event's delivery and enhancing its overall reach and impact.

The organising committee has invited the public to attend the opening ceremony on May 11 at Al Shaqab, where the Games will officially begin with a showcase reflecting Qatar's level of prepara-



The members of the organising committee of the 4th GCC Games - Doha 2026 pose during the press conference at the QOC headquarters yesterday.

tion. With final arrangements in place, organisers will now focus on rolling out the full marketing campaign to ensure strong attendance and a successful edition that reflects the aspirations of GCC nations.

'WASHEQ' - A REFLECTION OF GULF IDENTITY

"Washeq" has been designed to embody the cultural identity and shared values of the Gulf region, according to organisers.

Speaking on the significance of the mascot, Maryam al-Mansoori, Head of Marketing and Sponsorship at the Organising Committee, said the choice was inspired by the desert caracal, a distinctive symbol of the Arabian Peninsula's natural environment.

She explained that the mascot reflects the core principles of the Games, including fair competition, discipline, and the spirit of Gulf unity, aligned with the event's slogan, "One Gulf, One Heart."

"Washeq is closely tied to Gulf identity and represents an important part of the region's wild-



The mascot 'Washeq' reflects the cultural identity and shared values of the Gulf region.

life heritage, historically present across deserts, valleys, and diverse landscapes," she said.

Al-Mansoori noted that the selection highlights the deep cultural and environmental connections shared by GCC countries, reinforcing a collective vision for the

future. The mascot also symbolizes key attributes such as agility, precision, and adaptability—qualities drawn from the resilience of desert life. Its composed and calm character, she added, reflects the professionalism and balance that the Games aim to promote.

carefully selected to represent the country at a competition that serves as an important step in preparation for future international events.

Qatar is set to compete across 19 sports, including handball, athletics, swimming, basketball, volleyball, shooting, and equestrian, among others.

Al-Khayaereen also called on fans to support the national team, stressing that strong public backing plays a vital role in motivating athletes and achieving positive results.

She expressed confidence in Team Qatar's ability to deliver strong performances and contribute to a successful edition that reflects the spirit of Gulf unity.

The fourth edition of the GCC Games will feature competitions in 19 disciplines, including table tennis, squash, padel, fencing, boxing, taekwondo, karate, billiards, snooker, archery, and bowling. Events will be staged across 11 venues in Doha, such as Aspire Dome, Hamad Aquatic Centre, Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex, and Lusail Shooting Range, reflecting the country's extensive sports infrastructure.

The GCC Games were first held in Manama in 2011, bringing together six Gulf nations and around 1,500 athletes competing in 11 sports. Qatar finished third overall with 20 medals.

The second edition took place in Dammam in 2015, where Qatar again secured third place, significantly improving its tally to 59 medals.

In the most recent edition, held in Kuwait City in 2022, Qatar finished fifth with 52 medals in a competition that featured more than 1,500 athletes across 16 sports.

With the upcoming edition set to begin, organisers and officials are hopeful that Team Qatar will build on its past performances and make a strong impact on home soil.

Qatar's 4x400m relay team qualifies for World Athletics 2027



From left to right: Qatar's Ammar Islam Yahia Ibrahim, Youssouf Abdelaziz Djibrine, Baseem Hemeida and Ashraf Hussen Osman celebrate qualifying for the World Athletics Championships - Beijing 2027 after competing in the men's 4x400m relay qualifying round 1 during the Gaborone 26 World Athletics Relays at the National Stadium in Gaborone. In the third heat, which produced the closest finish of the day, Qatar and Belgium could not be separated to the thousandth and were declared joint winners in 2:59.83. Spain finished third in a national record of 3:00.26 but missed out on a World Championships place. (AFP)

SPOTLIGHT

Peshawar Zalmi crowned PSL champs for second time

Aaron Hardie produces superb all-round performance as Babar Azam's team beats Hyderabad Kingsmen

Agencies
Lahore

Peshawar Zalmi secured their second Pakistan Super League title yesterday, defeating debutants Hyderabad Kingsmen by five wickets in a one-sided final at the Gaddafi Stadium.

An exceptional all-round performance by Aaron Hardie ensured Babar Azam's side chased down a modest target of 130 with 28 balls to spare, ending a nine-year trophy drought for the franchise.

After winning the toss and electing to bowl, Zalmi's disciplined attack immediately put the Kingsmen under pressure. Despite a brisk start from Marus Labuschagne (20), the Kingsmen's innings unraveled quickly once Hardie made the first breakthrough.

Hardie's disciplined lines and subtle variations proved lethal as he dismantled the middle order, finishing with remarkable figures of 4 for 24. The Kingsmen collapse was fueled by a combination of clinical bowling and self-inflicted errors. Sufiyan Muqem trapped Usman Khan leg-before with a sharp googly before a disastrous mix-up saw Irfan Khan run out. Nahid Rana added to the misery by bowling Glenn Maxwell for a golden duck. Saim Ayub provided



Peshawar Zalmi's players, along with the support staff, celebrate with the trophy after winning the Pakistan Super League final against Hyderabad Kingsmen at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday. (AFP)

the only significant resistance for the newcomers, scoring a fighting 54 off 50 balls, but he found no support from the other end. The Kingsmen were eventually bundled out for 129 in 18 overs.

HARDIE AND SAMAD STEADY THE CHASE

The chase began with a flicker of hope for the Kingsmen as Mohammad Ali dismissed Mohammad

Haris and Babar early, leaving Zalmi reeling at 7 for 2 in the first over.

When Kusal Mendis and Michael Bracewell also fell cheaply, Zalmi looked vulnerable at 40 for 4.

However, Hardie joined forces with the aggressive Samad to snuff out any chance of an upset. The pair shared a decisive 85-run partnership for the fifth wicket, the highest for Zalmi in a PSL final.

Samad played with character-

istic fearlessness, smashing four sixes in his 48 off 34 balls to shift the momentum back to the yellow storm.

Hardie, meanwhile, anchored the innings with poise. He reached his half-century with a flick to the boundary and remained unbeaten on 56 off 39 balls.

Although Samad fell with the finish line in sight, the youngest member of the squad, Farhan



Peshawar Zalmi captain Babar Azam celebrates after receiving the PSL trophy yesterday. (AFP)

Yousaf, struck a boundary through fine leg to seal the championship.

The Gaddafi Stadium was a sea of yellow as fans celebrated Zalmi's return to the pinnacle of Pakistan's premier T20 tournament.

For the Kingsmen, the defeat ended a fairytale debut season where they reached the final after a poor start to the league.

Ultimately, the night belonged to Zalmi and Hardie, whose Player of the Match performance defined a clinical championship display.

Hardie said yesterday: "It's (his debut season with Zalmi) been great. Everyone involved; all the players, coaching staff, owners, and directors, I couldn't have had a

better start to my PSL journey. I'm super grateful to be part of Zalmi and to get to know everyone. We've had great fun and, obviously, a really successful season."

He added: "I've spent a fair bit of time in the subcontinent but haven't played too much, so to be able to come over here and get a nice run into the finals has been awesome. Thanks to the coaching staff for trusting me with the game time. I've thoroughly enjoyed it."

BRIEF SCORES
Peshawar Zalmi 130 for 5 (Hardie 56*, Samad 48, Ali 3-38) **beat Hyderabad Kingsmen 129** (Ayub 54, Hardie 4-27) **by five wickets**

FOCUS

Holder shines as Gujarat beat Punjab by 4 wickets

AFP
Ahmedabad

Jason Holder stood out with figures of 4-24 in an inspired pace attack to set up a four-wicket win for Gujarat Titans in a thrilling IPL contest against Punjab Kings yesterday.

Pace spearhead Mohammed Siraj set the tone with two wickets in the first over of the match as hosts Gujarat reduced top of the table Punjab to 47-5 before they managed 163-9 in Ahmedabad.

Gujarat also suffered from regular wickets in their chase but opener Sai Sudharsan's 57 and an unbeaten 40 off 23 balls by Washington Sundar guided the team home with one ball to spare.

Needing 11 to win from the last over, Sundar, a left-handed batter, kept his nerve and smacked Marcus Stoinis for a winning six on the penultimate delivery.

Shubman Gill-led Gujarat stay fifth in the 10-team table with four teams on 12 points each.

Punjab, led by Shreyas Iyer, still hold the top spot with 13 points after they went down to just their second defeat in the season.

Top four teams after the league stage will qualify for the playoffs.

Punjab attempted to defend their modest total after impact substitute Vijaykumar Vyshak took 2-30 including Jos Buttler, for 25, and the left-handed Sudharsan in the 15th over.



Gujarat Titans' Jason Holder (right) of the West Indies celebrates after taking the wicket of Punjab Kings' Nehal Wadhwa during the IPL match in Ahmedabad yesterday. (AFP)

Gujarat slowed down in their chase in front of disciplined bowling and good fielding, but Sundar stood firm.

Earlier Siraj rattled Punjab with two wickets in two balls upfront including Cooper Connolly caught behind for a duck.

Siraj's new-ball partner Kagiso Rabada took down Prabhsimran Singh for 15 and West Indies pace bowler Holder came in as the

third seamer to push Punjab to the backfoot.

Holder dismissed Nehal Wadhwa and then Iyer but Marcus Stoinis, who made 40, and Suryansh Hedge, who hit 57, put on a defiant stand of 79 off 44 balls.

Shedje was impressive in his 29-ball blitz laced with three fours and five huge sixes and got good support from Australia's Stoinis.

Marco Jansen contributed with 20 to boost the total but it was not enough to stop Gujarat from winning on their home turf.

BRIEF SCORES
Gujarat Titans 167 for 6 (Sai Sudharsan 57, Washington 40*, Arshdeep 2-24, Vyshak 2-31) **beat Punjab Kings 163 for 9** (Shedje 57, Stoinis 40, Holder 4-24, Rabada 2-22) **by four wickets**

Mumbai coach Jayawardene backs Suryakumar to find his 'rhythm'



CHENNAI: Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene says struggling batter **Suryakumar Yadav** is in a "good space" - and not far from a big knock in the Indian Premier League.

India's World Cup-winning T20 skipper Suryakumar fell for another low score of 21 in his team's defeat to Chennai Super Kings on Saturday.

Suryakumar, a swashbuckling batter with an audacious range of strokes in T20 cricket, has managed just 183 runs in nine outings this season, at an average of 20.33.

"I think if he gets a few scores together, he will find that rhythm," Jayawardene told reporters.

"He batted really well... really took on the bowlers in that phase. I think another couple of overs, he could have been off for a really good score."

Suryakumar hit three fours and one six in his brief stay before he attempted a lofted cut and found Dewald Brevis at deep point. Earlier this week, against Sunrisers Hyderabad, Suryakumar fell

for five - after a mistimed hit got him caught at fine leg.

"I think he is definitely up for it... It's just a matter of time. He himself is disappointed but just have to keep on working hard," former Sri Lanka batting great Jayawardene said.

Suryakumar's batting flop has coincided with five-time champions Mumbai's disappointing season, as they stare at an early exit from the T20 tournament.

Mumbai, led by Hardik Pandya, have suffered seven defeats in nine matches and their chances of moving into the playoff remain slim.

Another defeat could end their hopes.

"We have still got five more games, anything could happen to us, we just need to finish the tournament positively and see what happens," said Jayawardene.

"There is a lot of cricket to be played, I don't think mathematically we are out.

"I am going to fight, and I am sure the rest of the boys will do the same."

BOTTOMLINE

Chakravarthy, Narine help Kolkata stay alive in IPL

AFP
Hyderabad, India

Spinners Varun Chakravarthy and Sunil Narine helped Kolkata Knight Riders to their third straight win in the IPL as they beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven wickets yesterday.

Chakravarthy returned figures of 3-36 and Narine claimed 2-31 to help bowl out hosts Hyderabad for 165 in 19 overs despite opener Travis Head's blistering 61 off 28 balls.

Three-time champions Kolkata chased down their target in 18.2 overs with Angkrish Raghuvanshi,

who hit 59, and skipper Ajinkya Rahane (43) putting together a key stand of 84.

Rahane and Raghuvanshi departed before Rinku Singh, unbeaten on 22, and Cameron Green, three not out, steered the team home to snap Hyderabad's five-match winning streak.

Hyderabad, led by Pat Cummins, are third on the 10-team table with six wins and four defeats from 10 matches.

Kolkata are eighth, but still in the hunt for the playoffs with three wins from nine matches.

Top four teams at the end of the league stage will move into the playoffs.

Kolkata's New Zealand opener

Finn Allen provided the early fireworks in his 13-ball 29 as he took on Australia pace ace Cummins with two sixes and two fours.

Cummins took revenge in the 27-run over when he got Allen caught out on the last ball but the blazing start put Kolkata on course to victory.

Raghuvanshi, a wicketkeeper-batter, and Rahane then put on a defiant stand to close in on victory before the left-handed Rinku hit the winning four.

The bowlers set up victory as pacer Kartik Tyagi took down Abhishek Sharma for 15 after the left-handed opener climbed to the top of the batting chart with 440 runs in 10 matches.

Australia's Head hammered the bowlers in all parts of the ground as he hit nine fours and three sixes before Chakravarthy had him caught at mid-wicket by Green.

Narine dismissed Ishan Kishan for 42 and the Hyderabad batting lost its way in the final 10 overs with the spinners applying the choke. Tyagi took 2-30 and complimented his teams' spinners with his quick bowling.

BRIEF SCORES
Kolkata Knight Riders 169 for 3 (Raghuvanshi 59, Rahane 43, Sakib 1-17) **beat Sunrisers Hyderabad 165** (Head 61, Kishan 42, Varun 3-36, Tyagi 2-30, Narine 2-31) **by 7 wickets**



Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravarthy pats Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head of Australia for his innings after Head's dismissal during the IPL match in Hyderabad yesterday. (AFP)

FORMULA 1

Antonelli clinches Miami GP for third straight victory

Italian teen came home first, 3.264 seconds clear of McLaren's Norris



Mercedes' Italian driver Kimi Antonelli races during the Miami Formula One Grand Prix in Miami Gardens, Florida. (AFP)

AFP
Miami

Teenager Kimi Antonelli extended his lead in the drivers' world championship with an historic victory for Mercedes ahead of McLaren world champion Lando Norris in dramatic Miami Grand Prix.

The 19-year-old Italian became the first F1 driver to claim his first three wins in a row from his first three pole positions, after triumphs in China and Japan had hoisted him to the top of the title race. Driving with determination and elan, Antonelli struggled for ascendancy in the first part of the race before enjoying an "undercut" pit stop to win his duel with Norris in the closing stages.

In the first race following a five-week hiatus due to the conflict in the Middle East, Antonelli came home first 3.264 seconds clear of Norris and his McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri, who finished third 23.828 seconds adrift. Antonelli's Mercedes team-mate George Russell, who began the season as championship favourite and won the opening race in Melbourne, finished fourth ahead of Red Bull's fiery and rejuvenated four-time champion Max Verstappen and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who spun on the penultimate lap.

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton came home seventh in the second Ferrari ahead of Franco Colapinto of Alpine and the two Williams drivers, Carlos Sainz and Alex Albon.

Mercedes had dominated the opening three Grands Prix and arrived in Miami as the only top team without an upgrade package. But despite losing to Norris in Saturday's sprint race showed they remain on top. "What a race, man, woo!" exclaimed Antonelli on team radio after winning, "Oh my god!"



Kimi Antonelli celebrates with the trophy after winning the Miami Grand Prix. (AFP)

He later said: "The team did a great strategy and we had a massive undercut – and I was able to bring it home. It was a tough race. I was a bit lucky when I locked up at the start behind Charles and then I did a mistake with energy management."

Norris described the result as "a mixed bag." "We just got undercut. We should have boxed first, but Kimi did a good job and hats off to him and Mercedes," he said. "A good race. He didn't make any mistakes and I'm gutted not to win, but I didn't have the pace."

The weather was significantly cooler than for Saturday's sprint, but without the forecast rain that had brought forward the start by three hours. Antonelli made a clean start from his third consecutive pole, but was passed on the inside by Leclerc as Verstappen hit a curb

and spun, creating chaos.

Leclerc resisted Antonelli with Norris third until lap five when the teenager passed him, only for Leclerc to regain the lead. "Be patient, Lando, stay with them and let them yo-yo," said Will Joseph, Norris's race engineer, before the luckless Isack Hadjar – who had started from the pit lane – crashed on lap six.

Almost immediately, Pierre Gasly also lost control, half-rolled and hit the wall after a collision with Liam Lawson, and a safety car was deployed. Verstappen, who had fallen back, clashed with Liam Lawson and Carlos Sainz, before pitting on lap nine for hards, returning in 16th. Lawson retired his damaged car, joining Nico Hulkenberg, Gasly and Hadjar in the pits.

Racing resumed on lap 12 with Leclerc resisting Norris until the champion powered by to become the third different leader as light rain arrived. Driving with fury, Verstappen, who had crossed a pit lane exit line and faced a post-race investigation, climbed back to sixth by lap 21 when Russell pitted for hards.

Norris then led Antonelli by 3.2 seconds in the duel to define the race. Leclerc pitted for hards and returned 10th, behind Russell. "Why did we stop then?" asked a frustrated Leclerc. "When is the rain? Next time you make a decision, please speak to me..."

Antonelli then pitted, together with Norris and Hamilton, the champion losing the initiative to the young Italian as Piastri enjoyed a brief spell as leader before pitting. This left the precocious Silver Arrows boy in front, with his team calming his nerves as McLaren's defending champion stalked him.

The pair were separated by less than a second after 40 laps. After the frantic yo-yo passing of the early stages, the field stretched out when Leclerc passed Verstappen, on his long-worn tires, before his late spin gifted Piastri third place.

TENNIS

Sinner dismantles Zverev to win Madrid Open, set record

AFP
Madrid

World number one Jannik Sinner dispatched Alexander Zverev 6-1, 6-2 to win the Madrid Open for the first time. The Italian claimed a record fifth consecutive Masters 1000 title and stretched his winning streak to 23 matches with a superb display in the Spanish capital.

Only greats Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic had managed to win four titles at this level in a row. "I'll never be able to compare myself to Rafa, Novak and Roger, what they've achieved is incredible – over 10 or 15 years," Sinner said. "I'm trying to make my own mark, but I'm doing it for myself, I don't play for the records, I'm just putting myself in a position to succeed."

Sinner said he felt he was playing extremely well, in contrast to his opponent, who struggled to produce his best. "Today I played very, very solid tennis. Sascha didn't play very well today, but if I don't get a break or two right away and stay out in front, his legs get going and he gains a bit of confidence, especially here on this court," he continued. "He's been playing late all tournament, so his

schedule is also a bit off, but I can be happy with what I'm doing."

Sinner has been in impeccable form and broke world number three Zverev's first service game before consolidating for a 3-0 lead. The Italian, who also won the eight prior meetings against Zverev, secured another break and eased into a 5-0 advantage on his serve.

In the sixth game Zverev produced his first hold, but there was nothing the 29-year-old could do about Sinner's powerful serving. The four-time Grand Slam winner has been working on increasing his variety and a drop shot left Zverev scrambling before Sinner clinched the first set with an ace.

World number two Carlos Alcaraz's wrist injury has left Sinner with no realistic rival in the weeks ahead, leading up to Roland Garros. Sinner broke in the third game of the second set to tighten his grip on the title. Zverev, a two-time Madrid winner who thrives at altitude, showed more fight than in the first stanza but could not stop his opponent.

Sinner hammered down a forehand winner for another break to take a 5-2 lead and serve for the championship. The Italian sealed his triumph serving to love to wrap up a sublime fortnight in Madrid where nobody has come close to stopping him.



Italy's Jannik Sinner celebrates with the Madrid Open trophy after winning the final against Germany's Alexander Zverev. (Reuters)

Pogacar ends dominant Tour of Romandie with fourth win

Leysin, Switzerland: Tadej Pogacar surged to the line Sunday for the fourth win in five full stages to complete an emphatic victory in the Tour of Romandie.

After a watchful ride on the closing 178.2-kilometre final stage from Lucens, Pogacar, competing in the Swiss race for the first time, pounced at the finish. When his closest challenger Florian Lipowitz attacked on the final long climb to Leysin, Pogacar clung to the German's wheel and surged clear in the final 400m to win by three seconds. A second Slovenian, Primož Roglič was third at seven seconds.

"It was a tough day," said Pogacar. "Florian attacked first and I did a really good job to survive on his wheel," he said. "Then I went very early on the final and... phew, I finished the job on the line."

The winning time bonus gave Pogacar, who rides for UAE, a final overall margin of 42 seconds over Lipowitz of Red Bull-Bora. Frenchman Lenny Martinez of Bahrain Victorious was third at 2 minutes 44 seconds.

Pogacar also won the points classification, far ahead of French sprinter Dorian Godon who won the prologue and the third sate. Pogacar won the other four.

This was the first stage race of the season for Pogacar, who is beginning his build up to defend his title at the three-week Tour de France, which begins on July 4. The world champion had put on two kilos of muscle as he focused on explosive power for the demands of the one-day spring season when he won four classics in five attempts, failing only at Paris-Roubaix where he was second to Wout van Aert.

WORLD RELAYS

Thompson-Herah shines, Tebogo helps Botswana to victory

AFP
Gaborone, Botswana

Elaine Thompson-Herah ran a stunning anchor leg to hand Jamaica victory in the women's 4x100m event at the world relays, while Letsile Tebogo helped host nation Botswana win the second fastest 4x400m in history.

Thompson-Herah, 33, took the baton from third-leg runner Lavanya Williams and headed into the final straight a couple of metres down on Canada's Donna Ntambue. But the second-fastest woman ever in the 100m, a five-time Olympic champion, turned on the power and reeled in the Canadian.

The Jamaican foursome, also comprising Briana Williams and Jodean Williams, won in 42.00sec, with Canada second in 42.17 and Spain (42.31) rounding out the podium.

There was a dream finish to two days of high-octane action in the Botswanan capital as the country's men's team won the 4x400m relay. Lee Bhekempilo Eppie led the Botswanans out in front of a raucous crowd, before reigning Olympic 200m champion Letsile Tebogo took over.



Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah (center) leads ahead of Canada's Donna Ntambue (left) and Italy's Alessia Pavese in the women's 4x100m relay final during the World Athletics Relays at the National Stadium in Gaborone, Botswana. (AFP)

But the country's first-ever Olympic champion pulled up badly at the end of his lap, handing South Africa's Lythe Pillay

the advantage. It left world 400m bronze medalist Bayapo Ndori a mountain to climb on the third leg. He tracked down

South African Leendert Koekemoer but could not break free.

It was neck-and-neck between Botswana, South Africa and Australia at the final baton handover.

But Botswana's world 400m champion Collen Kebinatshipi came up with the goods to break free from South Africa's Zakithi Nene 40 metres from the line to win in a blistering 2min 54.47sec, just 18 hundredths of a second slower than the world record set by a US quartet featuring Michael Johnson in 1993.

The men's 4x100m saw American anchor leg Pjai Austin hold off a fast-finishing Akani Simbine of South Africa for the win in 37.43sec.

With better-known US runners including Noah Lyles absent, Ronnie Baker, Max Thomas and Lance Lang completed the US team, with places at next year's world championships in Beijing up for grabs, as well as qualification for the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship in Budapest in September.

The men's 4x100m saw American anchor leg Pjai Austin hold off a fast-finishing Akani Simbine of South Africa for the win in 37.43sec. With better-known US runners including Noah Lyles absent, Ronnie Baker, Max Thomas and Lance

Lang completed the US team,

Jamaica set a new world record in the mixed 4x100m, a relatively new addition to the schedule at major championships. Ackeem Blake, Tina Clayton, Kadrian Goldson and Tina's twin sister Tia Clayton raced to victory in a dominant 39.62sec.

The Jamaican quartet had become the first team to dip under 40 seconds when clocking an initial world best of 39.99sec in Saturday's heat.

"It's a great feeling, this event is somewhat new to us, this is my third time running it and all I can say is it was fun running with the guys," said Tia Clayton. "To come out here and execute in the way I did and to do my ultimate best, I'm very grateful. And I finished the race injury-free, so yes, I'm very grateful."

There was a national record for the Jamaicans in the 4x400m mixed relay, but it was only good enough for second place behind the US winners. Bryce Deadmon, Paris Peoples, Jenoah McKiver and Bailey Lear clocked 3:07.47 for victory, with the Jamaicans finishing 0.37sec off their pace.

Henriette Jaeger delivered a top-class final lap to hand Norway's women victory in the 4x400m relay in 3:20.96. Jaeger outspurred Blanca Hervas, who guaranteed Spain second spot ahead of Canada.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Man Utd return to Champions League with Liverpool win

TOTTENHAM OUT OF RELEGATION ZONE AFTER VITAL WIN AT VILLA



Manchester United's Kobbie Mainoo scores their third goal against Liverpool during the Premier League match in Manchester yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP
Manchester

Manchester United beat Liverpool 3-2 to seal a return to the Champions League next season, while Tottenham climbed out of the Premier League relegation zone with a 2-1 win at Aston Villa yesterday.

Kobbie Mainoo's late winner edged a thrilling encounter at Old Trafford in United's favour after Liverpool had battled back from 2-0 down.

Before the match, legendary former United boss Alex Ferguson was taken to hospital as a precaution after falling ill. The Red Devils raced out the blocks to score twice inside the first 15 minutes.

Matheus Cunha's deflected strike from the edge of the box beat third-choice Liverpool goalkeeper Freddie Woodman before Benjamin Sesko bundled in from close range. United could have been even further in front by half-time against an out-of-sorts Liverpool lacking the injured trio of Mohamed Salah, Hugo Ekitike and Alexander Isak.

But the visitors were gifted a route back into the game by United mistakes. Dominik Szoboszlai pounced on Amad Diallo's way-

ward pass to run from inside his own half and cut the arrears two minutes into the second half.

Szoboszlai then teed up Cody Gakpo to equalise after a stray pass from United goalkeeper Senne Lammens.

In the week he signed a new five-year contract, Mainoo was ultimately the hero when he coolly slotted in from outside the box 13 minutes from time.

Victory and the guarantee of Champions League football after a two-year absence further strengthens Michael Carrick's case to remain in charge of United next season.

"I love doing what I'm doing and it's a great position for me to be in," said Carrick.

"It feels pretty natural if I'm totally honest."

Liverpool finished 14 places and 42 points ahead of United last season. Arne Slot's men now trail their old rivals by six points and still have work to do in the final three games to secure a top-five finish themselves.

EMERY EASES SPURS FEARS

Liverpool remain in fourth after a much-changed Villa offered Tottenham a lifeline in the battle for survival.

Spurs had not won for 118 days in the Premier League until last

weekend's scrappy 1-0 victory at already-relegated Wolves.

But they are now back in the driving seat to avoid relegation as West Ham drop into the bottom three with three games remaining.

Villa boss Unai Emery made seven changes with one eye on overturning his side's 1-0 deficit in their Europa League semi-final against Nottingham Forest on Thursday.

Tottenham took full advantage as Conor Gallagher fired in his first goal since joining from Atletico Madrid in January. Richarlison then headed in Mathys Tel's teasing cross to double Tottenham's

lead on 25 minutes. Roberto De Zerbi's men were rarely troubled by an under-par Villa, even after Emery summoned Ollie Watkins from the bench. Emi Buendia pulled a goal back in the dying seconds but Spurs held out to move one point ahead of West Ham.

Villa should still secure Champions League qualification, but Bournemouth closed the gap on the top five to six points with a 3-0 win over Crystal Palace.

A Jefferson Lerma's own goal, Eli Junior Kroupi's penalty and Rayan's late strike extended the Cherries' unbeaten run to 15 games.



Tottenham Hotspur's Richarlison celebrates scoring their second goal against Aston Villa in Birmingham yesterday. (Reuters)

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Ferguson taken to hospital before Man Utd win against Liverpool

Legendary former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson was taken to hospital after falling ill before the Red Devils' 3-2 win over rivals Liverpool yesterday.

Ferguson, 84, is a regular attendee at Old Trafford and was pictured on social media meeting guests at the stadium earlier in the day. United did not comment when contacted by AFP. Reports suggest the Scot, who suffered a

brain haemorrhage in 2018, was taken to hospital as a precaution. Current United boss Michael Carrick, who played under Ferguson, is hoping the result, which secured the club's return to the Champions League next season, will boost his spirits. "I was very affected by it, the news, and then we just hope he's alright," Carrick said in his post-match press conference.

"I don't know the latest, we hope for him to be

in good shape. We wish him all the best and hopefully the result, when he hears about it, gives him a good boost."

Ferguson won 13 Premier League titles and two Champions Leagues during a glittering 27-year reign at United. Since his retirement in 2013, United have not won either competition and Carrick is their seventh manager in the 13 years since.

SERIE A

AC Milan slip as Juventus stumble against Verona

AFP
Rome

Juventus missed a chance to exploit AC Milan's earlier slip and take third place in Serie A as they drew 1-1 at home with relegated Verona yesterday.

The Turin giants did however climb three points clear of Como in the chase for the fourth Champions league qualifying spot with three Serie A games remaining.

AC Milan had relinquished their last, slim, hope of catching Inter at the top as they subsided 2-0 at mid-table Sassuolo.

Inter Milan will clinch a 21st title should they win or draw against Parma in the evening's late game. Should Inter lose, only second-placed Napoli, nine points behind with three rounds of matches left, will have a chance of catching up.

Milan endured a nightmare afternoon in Reggio Emilia.

Following this fourth defeat in their last seven matches, the Rossoneri trail Inter by 12 points.

Juventus remained two points behind Milan after struggling to breach determined defending from Verona who were relegated on Friday. While Juve dominated possession they handed their visitors the opener when Domagoj Bradaric slid in a low cross that Kieron Bowie scuffed home at the near post.

It was one of Verona's only two shots on target. Bowie drilled a long-range shot

straight at Michele de Grigorio in the Juventus goal in the last five minutes.

Juventus, meanwhile, bombarded the visitors' goal, taking 23 shots, six of them on target.

Dusan Vlahovic levelled after 61 minutes with a free kick from 25 metres. His gentle but low, curling and accurate shot skipped inside the post.

Juventus came close in a frantic late assault when Edon Zhorogova's deflected shot hit the inside of a post.

In Sassuolo, it took just five minutes for Sassuolo to take the lead through Domenico Berardi.

Unrecognisable and awkward, Massimiliano Allegri's Milan side played with 10 for most of the match after English defender Fikayo Tomori was sent off in the 24th minute for a second booking. Frenchman Armand Lauriente doubled Sassuolo's lead in the 47th minute and a furious Allegri made a string of changes, but Milan failed to get back into the game.

"I understand our fans' frustration; we all want to secure Champions League qualification as soon as possible," Allegri told broadcaster DAZN.

"In these difficult times, we must keep our heads held high. We have three matches left to play, and with two wins, we'll be in the Champions League."

"There's no point dwelling on our results in the second half of the season or letting stress or anxiety get the better of us. From the next match onwards, we'll lift our heads up."

BUNDESLIGA

Gladbach sink Dortmund, St Pauli edge closer to drop

AFP
Berlin

Haris Tabakovic scored with two minutes remaining to give Borussia Moenchengladbach a 1-0 home win over Borussia Dortmund yesterday, while Mainz pushed St Pauli closer to relegation.

Dortmund, who secured Champions League qualification last week, were harmless in attack against a Gladbach side who needed a win to guarantee top-flight football next season.

In the dying moments, Tabakovic broke through and finished past Dortmund goalie Gregor Kobel to make Gladbach mathematically safe from the drop this season. Despite a third defeat in four games, Dortmund are sure of Champions League football next season and need two points to take second spot behind champions Bayern Munich for the fifth time in the past eight seasons.

"It wasn't good," coach Niko Kovac said to DAZN. "Gladbach were sharp, they had bite - they played like they had a lot at stake, and it looked like we did not. "The defeat was justified."

Nico Elvedi had a strike ruled out for the hosts midway through the opening half for offside.

Tabakovic, Gladbach's most dangerous attacker, then forced

Kobel into a close-range save and fired just off target early in the second period.

With two minutes remaining, Tabakovic put the hosts ahead. His goal, ruled offside by the linesman, was allowed by VAR to give Gladbach their first win over Dortmund since November 2022.

Earlier on Sunday, goals from Phillip Tietz and Philipp Mwene took Mainz to a 2-1 win at St Pauli, pushing the hosts closer to the relegation mire.

St Pauli lost despite a late consolation through Abdoullie Ceesay and sit in the relegation play-off spot, six points from safety with two games remaining.

Winless since February, Pauli are just one point ahead of second-last Wolfsburg who are in the automatic relegation places. Wolfsburg can leapfrog St Pauli by avoiding defeat at Freiburg later on Sunday.

"We've got no time to dwell on these results," St Pauli captain Jackson Irvine told DAZN.

"We've got two matchdays to fight for our life and we've got to try and put a maximum performance in and see what happens."

St Pauli have spent much of their existence in the second and third tiers but were promoted to the top flight Bundesliga in 2024. Mainz's victory means Urs Fischer's side cannot be relegated.

Faris Al Nasiat, Najla Umm Aludham top stallion and mare at Qatar National Arabian Horse Show



Faris Al Nasiat of Al Dana Stud claimed gold in the Senior Stallions Championship class while Najla Umm Aludham, owned by Nasser Mohammed Mesfer al-Hajri, topped the Senior Mares Championship at the three-day 14th Qatar National Arabian Horse Show (for Individual Owners) 2026 which concluded at the indoor arena of Qatar Equestrian Federation on Saturday. The other championship winners included Dandon KL of Kaheel Stud (Junior Colts Championship), Haifa Al Tinhat, owned by Rashid al-Muhhanadi (Junior Fillies Championship), Sayer Al Bahya of Al Mashrab Stud (Yearling Colts Championship), and Nayla Al Jazeel of Al Jazeel Stud (Yearling Fillies Championship). Meanwhile, the 11th Qatar National Peninsula Arabian Horse Show (for Individual Owners) 2026 began yesterday and will continue till Tuesday when the six championship classes will be decided.

