

To subscribe
GULF TIMES
Newspaper
Please call
444 666 35



CRICKET | Page 2
Stoinis sinks Pakistan as Australia win T20 series 3-0



MOTORSPORT | Page 4
Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East is set to thrill fans at Lusail

To advertise here,
PLEASE CALL
444 666 21

Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Jumada I 17, 1446 AH

GULF TIMES

SPORT

TENNIS
Retiring Nadal insists focus is on Davis Cup

Page 3

FIFA 2026 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Confident Qatar eye away win against arch-rivals UAE

'The win against Uzbekistan was a huge morale boost for us and will help in this crucial game against UAE'



The match starts at 7:00pm

Qatar coach Marquez Lopez leads a team training session yesterday, on the eve of their 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying Group A match against United Arab Emirates at Al Nahyan Stadium in Abu Dhabi.

By Sports Reporter
Abu Dhabi, UAE

Buoyed by their fighting 3-2 victory over Uzbekistan last Thursday, Asian champions Qatar will be looking to maintain their winning momentum going into today's 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying clash against hosts UAE at Al Nahyan Stadium.

Qatar coach Marquez Lopez yesterday said the hard-fought win over Uzbekistan had lifted the mood in Al Annabi camp.

Four days ago, Lucas Mendes' goal deep into added time secured Qatar a 3-2 win against Uzbekistan and head coach Marquez Lopez is confident that thrilling win would steer his side past UAE, who won the reverse fixture 3-1 in September.

"The win against Uzbekistan was a huge morale boost for us and will help in this crucial game against the UAE. Rising in the

Our complete focus is on securing a win, which is pivotal for our qualifying campaign.

— Akram Afif

standings is very important for us," Lopez, from Spain, said during a news conference yesterday.

"We had limited preparation time, but we are physically ready for the challenge," the Asian Cup winning coach added.

Lopez, who was Al Wakrah coach until December last year when he was offered to manage the Qatar team, yesterday said Qatar-UAE rivalry may see a different contest today.

"The UAE are an excellent team, but the match will be different from our previous encounter. We controlled the game in the first half but conceded goals in the second half due to counter attacks. Maintaining 100 percent focus will be key to securing victory," Lopez warned.

Qatar's mercurial play-maker Akram Afif struck a confident note during the pre-match press conference yesterday.

"Our complete focus is on se-

curing a win, which is pivotal for our qualifying campaign. Collecting three points is crucial, and we will give our all to achieve the goal," Afif said.

"The fans mean a lot to us, as they provide immense motivation. We promise to do our best to make them proud and happy," the newly-minted Asian Player of the Year added.

UAE Coach Paulo Bento said yesterday: "Qatar are a tough side with quality and experienced players. They've won two Asian Cup titles and also competed in the World Cup. It's going to be a difficult match.

He added: "This is an important game for us. We succeeded in winning the away fixture against Qatar and now aim to deliver our best performance and earn the desired result. We trust in our capabilities.

"Each match is different, and this one won't be the same as our last meeting. It's difficult to replicate results in football, but we must draw lessons from the previous match and other games to craft a winning strategy."

UAE Right-Back Khaled al-Dhanhani said: "This match is vital for both teams. We are determined to secure three points in front of our home fans, whose support provides a massive morale boost."

Meanwhile former Qatari national team player Adel Khamis said Qatar's win against Uzbekistan was 'important'.

"The last win helped Qatar to correct its course and restore full chances to remain in the competition cycle to qualify directly for the next World Cup finals and not wait and turn to the Asian play-off," Khamis said.

He added that the national team came out with many gains last Thursday. He, however, added that the technical staff must make sure there are 'less mistakes' than the ones seen against Uzbekistan in the second half last Thursday.

"There should be less mistakes since the match against the Emirati national team will be very important because victory in it will make us take an important step towards getting closer to the first and second places," he added.



Qatar coach Marquez Lopez and player Akram Afif address a news conference in Abu Dhabi yesterday.



UAE coach Paulo Bento addressing the media yesterday. Right: UAE players during a training session ahead of their match against Qatar.

CRICKET

Stoinis shines as Australia crush Pakistan 3-0

'IT'S BEEN A GREAT WEEK, WE HAD A LOT OF FUN AS A GROUP'

Reuters
Hobart, Australia

Marcus Stoinis blasted 61 not out off 27 balls as Australia steam-rollered Pakistan by seven wickets in the third T20 International to complete a 3-0 series sweep yesterday.

Stoinis smacked five sixes and as many fours in his blistering knock as Australia chased down the 118-run victory target with 8.4 overs to spare at the Bellerive Oval.

Electing to bat, Pakistan were cruising at 61-1 in the seventh over before wheels came off their innings and they were bundled out for 117 in 18.1 overs.

Adam Zampa dismissed Haseebullah Khan (24) in the seventh over to trigger a collapse and Pakistan could add 56 runs before losing their remaining nine wickets.

Zampa also claimed the crucial wicket of Babar Azam (41), who stepped out against the leg-spinner and would have been stumped if he was not bowled by a delivery that sneaked through his gate.

For Australia, Aaron Hardie claimed 3-21, while Spencer Johnson grabbed two wickets and also ran out Irfan Khan with a direct throw from midwicket.

Australia lost both their openers, Matthew Short and Jake Fraser-McGurk, inside four overs but Stoinis counter-attacked in spectacular fashion dashing Pakistan's hopes of any collapse.

Stoinis plundered 22 runs, which included two sixes and two fours, off a Haris Rauf over to effectively kill off the contest.

Player-of-the-match Stoinis raced to a 23-ball half-century reaching the 50-mark with a monster six off Shaheen Afridi.

He levelled the score with another six, this time off Abbas Afridi, but the winning run came via a no-ball after Abbas hurled a chest-high full toss.



Australia players celebrate with the trophy after the third Twenty20 against Pakistan at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart yesterday. Australia won the match by seven wickets to take the three-match series 3-0. (AFP)



Australian batsman Marcus Stoinis hits a six during the third Twenty20 against Pakistan yesterday. (AFP)

"It's been a great week, we had a lot of fun as a group," said Josh Inglis, who led a second-string Australia squad in absence of, among others, T20 captain

Mitchell Marsh. "It's really nice to get another win tonight and go three-nil up."

Inglis, who made 27, heaped praise on Stoinis, who tore into

the Pakistan attack. "When he's going like that, it's really hard to stop him and that six over the roof was one of the biggest I've ever seen," he said.

Pakistan's stand-in captain Agha Salman said they should have done better after their strong start with the bat.

"I think in the middle overs, we didn't capitalise on the start," he said. "It's obviously a big achievement winning the ODI series but we could have done much better in the T20Is."

Pakistan won the preceding one-day series 2-1. Pakistan now travel to Zimbabwe for another white-ball series.

BRIEF SCORES

Australia 118 for 3 (Stoinis 61*, Inglis 27, Afridi 1-14) **beat Pakistan 117 all out** (Babar 41, Hardie 3-21, Zampa 2-11) **by 7 wickets**

SPOTLIGHT

Pakistan appoint Aaqib interim white-ball coach

AFP
Karachi

Pakistan yesterday again changed its coaching line-up, appointing former fast bowler **Aaqib Javed** as interim head coach for the white ball team.

In the past two years Pakistan cricket has ploughed through five coaches, three board heads, three captains and numerous formats of the domestic competition, whilst suffering a string of humiliating defeats.

Javed will replace Australian Jason Gillespie who oversaw the limited over series which ended in Pakistan's 3-0 defeat against Australia in Hobart in a Twenty20 international series.

Gillespie, Pakistan's red-ball head coach, had replaced former South African Gary Kirsten who resigned over differences with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) last month.

"Aaqib Javed, a former international fast bowler, is appointed as the interim head coach of the Pakistan men's cricket team until the ICC Champions Trophy 2025," said a PCB release.

It refuted reports Gillespie will be removed, announcing he will remain red-ball head coach for the two-match Test series in South Africa next month.

Javed is also a member of Pakistan's senior selection committee which has been repeatedly reshuffled since Pakistan's Interior min-



ister Mohsin Naqvi took over as PCB chairman in February.

A permanent head coach will be appointed after the Champions Trophy which Pakistan is due to host in February-March - subject to India's participation.

India last week threw the competition into question by refusing to send their team to Pakistan on security fears and proposed their matches be played at a neutral venue.

The PCB said it will not accept a hybrid model and insisted the whole tournament should be staged in Pakistan.

Javed's first assignment will be three ODIs and three T20Is in Zimbabwe (24 November-5 December) and as many white-ball matches in South Africa (10-22 December).

In the lead up to the Champions Trophy 2025, Pakistan will host New Zealand and South Africa for an ODI triangular series from 8-14 February.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Sri Lanka's Mendis out of third New Zealand ODI

AFP
Colombo

Sri Lanka's in-form batsman **Kusal Mendis** and three others have been given a break from the third one-day international against New Zealand, the country's cricket board said yesterday.

The hosts, with an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series, eye a sweep in the final match in Pallekele to be played today.

Mendis, a wicketkeeper-batsman, has played a starring role with scores of 143 and an unbeaten 74 in the two previous rain-shortened matches.

Kamindu Mendis, Asitha Fern-



ando, and Pathum Nissanka have also been released from the squad.

"The decision was taken by the selectors to give the above players adequate time to recover and prepare for the upcoming Test series in South Africa," Sri Lanka Cricket said in a release.

In their absence, top-order batters Nuwanidu Fernando and Lahiru Udara have been called up as cover, along with fast bowler Esahan Malinga.

FOCUS

Heavy rain wipes out England's final T20 against West Indies in St Lucia



Ground staff cover the field during a rain delay of the 5th T20I cricket match between England and West Indies and at Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, on Sunday. (AFP)

AFP
Gros-Islet, Saint Lucia

England's fifth and final T20 international of their series in the Caribbean was rained off on Sunday, leaving the tourists with a 3-1 series win.

West Indies were 44 without loss after five overs with Shai Hope on 14 and Evin Lewis on 29 when the heavens opened.

England had won the opening three games of the series before West Indies enjoyed a morale-boosting five-wicket win on Saturday with Hope and Lewis both making half-centuries as the home side chased down a target of 219.

"We're delighted with the series win. We've played some brilliant cricket and we've got the winning

habit back," said England skipper Jos Buttler. West Indies captain Rovman Powell said his team had not been able to produce enough consistently good cricket.

"It was a tough series, a lot of credit to Jos and his team. We played good cricket in patches but not for long enough periods," he said. "We have a template to work with as Caribbean cricketers. We wander off and play in different leagues. We have to keep our communication and make sure we're ready to go."

Buttler highlighted the exceptional performance of Saqib Mahmood, whose nine wickets across four matches led to him being named Player of the Series. This is a testament to his resilience, considering the injury setbacks he has faced over the past two years. "It's a great piece of work," Buttler

said. "Having just gone through an injury recently - nothing as serious as Saqi - you realise how much hard work it is. It's an eye-opener for how much resilience and hard work and all the rehab that the guys who have had these back injuries and long-term injuries must go through."

"More than anything he showed great skill with the ball and he got the results he deserved."

"I don't know exactly but I've enjoyed it," Buttler said, when asked if he will give up the gloves for good. "It's been good for me to take one less thing off my plate. Tres has been great at doing that as well, he's really led the side and really helped me and pushed me towards those kinds of things. Change is good sometimes. I've enjoyed being closer to the bowlers."

Aspire Zone Foundation finalises readiness to host 'Sky Grace 2024'



DOHA: Aspire Zone Foundation has completed its final preparations for the launch of the International Rhythmic Gymnastics Championship 'Sky Grace 2024,' organised in collaboration with the Sky Grace Academy.

The event will take place from November 20 to 22, at the Aspire Dome indoor track, from 8:00am to 8:30pm.

Work teams have been seen adding the finishing touches to the venue, which will host the opening ceremony and the five main performances: hoop, ball, clubs, ribbon, and rope. These spectacular displays will showcase the competitors' skills, managed by a dedicated team of experts in sports and entertainment event management from the foundation, officials said.

The team works around the clock following world-class

standards to ensure the best audience experience. In this context, since Thursday morning, Aspire Zone has been welcoming delegations and guests participating in the championship upon their arrival at Hamad International Airport.

Number of teams doubles

The number of teams has doubled this year, representing 25 countries, including Qatar, Russia, Mexico, Cuba, Belarus, Philippines, Guatemala, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, the UAE, India, Venezuela, Bulgaria, Serbia, China, the Netherlands, Egypt, Syria, Germany, Colombia, Slovakia, Madagascar, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. The opening ceremony will feature an exciting promotional display for Sky Grace Academy, inspired by major sports films, to highlight the tournament's

moments and key highlights. The ceremony will include striking footage from previous Sky Grace events between 2021 and 2023 in cities like Moscow, Sochi, and Beijing, along with appearances by Olympic champions, officials, and gymnastics stars.

The 'Sky Grace' championship is exclusively for women's competitions, where participants will present rhythmic routines that blend artistic beauty and physical grace to music, using rhythmic gymnastics apparatus. Each routine lasts between 60 and 90 seconds, during which participants demonstrate high levels of flexibility, strength, and balance.

For more information about the championship and to book tickets, please visit the website: <http://www.aspirezone.qa/skygrace>

SPOTLIGHT

Sinner, the atypical Italian star on top of tennis world

AFP
Turin, Italy

Jannik Sinner's reserved public persona belies his status as Italy's biggest sporting star and the new dominant force in men's tennis, his convincing victory at the ATP Finals confirming his rise to the top of the game.

An eighth tournament win of the season came in a near perfect year for Sinner who started 2024 by winning his first Grand Slam at the Australian Open and never looked back from there.

Long considered Italian tennis' great red-haired hope, few could have imagined this year's sudden burst to the top of the world rankings ahead of Spain's golden boy Carlos Alcaraz, himself a four-time Slam champion at the age of 21.

The 23-year-old is set to be Alcaraz's main rival in the years to come, the pair stepping up as Rafael Nadal retires and Novak Djokovic ends a year without an ATP Tour title for the first time since 2006.

"Jannik hits a faster ball than Novak. He doesn't let you breathe. With Novak you can play rallies... and not be terrified of Novak ripping, like, a bomb down the line or cross-court," said Casper Ruud

after being destroyed by Sinner in the semi-finals on Saturday.

"Everything in his game improved. I mean, this year it seems like he stepped up with every aspect."

However Sinner's status as national hero was in doubt as recently as this time last year, his origins in the German-speaking areas of the South Tyrol and residence in Monaco casting doubt on whether he was Italian at all.

Sinner was born in Innichen, or San Candido, which is a stone's throw from the Austrian border, his attachment to his home nation has been frequently questioned by former Italian tennis players and local media.

The criticism of a perceived lack of patriotism reached a crescendo in September last year when he dropped out of Davis Cup matches played in Bologna, saying that he didn't have time to recover from tournaments played in North America.

But those doubts were magically swept aside when he surged to the final of the 2023 ATP Finals - where he fell to Djokovic after beating the 24-time Grand Slam champion in the group stage - and was then key to Italy eventually winning the Davis Cup for the first time since 1976.

Now Sinner's face can be seen almost everywhere in Italy, where



he is universally lauded and is almost omnipresent in advertising for products ranging from broadband internet to coffee brand Lavazza and fashion house Gucci.

However he is far from the more outgoing stars of Italian sport like

motorcycling legend Valentino Rossi, World Cup-winning footballer Alessandro Del Piero or alpine skiing star Sofia Goggia.

Sinner is quiet and reserved and keeps his personal life away from the spotlight as much as possible,

saying very little about his relationship with fellow tennis player Anna Kalinskaya even after her former boyfriend Nick Kyrgios disparagingly referred to her as "second serve".

"You know that I don't like to

talk much about my private life. I'm with Anna, but we keep everything very private. I won't say more about it," Sinner said in August.

A career in professional tennis was not a given for Sinner as he was a champion skier as a youngster and still enjoys the sport in the off-season.

He was also a keen footballer, playing for local team AFC Seston as an attacker until he decided to commit to tennis while still a boy.

"Whenever he had the ball he left people with their mouths wide open. No one could understand how a child could have so much quality," his former football coach Helmut Villgrater told the Gazzetta Dello Sport in January.

But he quickly took to tennis and at 13 years old he moved some 600 kilometres away from his family to Bordighera on the Italian Riviera in order to start his long march to the elite levels of the game.

However Sinner's year has not quite been perfect.

He has been dogged by controversy after twice testing positive for traces of the steroid clostebol in March.

Hanging over his head for next season is the World Anti-Doping Agency's appeal against his initial exoneration, the global body asking for Sinner to be banned for up to two years.

TENNIS

Retiring Nadal insists focus on Davis Cup

'I am not here for retiring. I'm here to try to help the team'

AFP
Málaga, Spain

Rafael Nadal hopes to save his emotions over his retirement until the end of the Davis Cup competition and says the focus remains on Spain's upcoming quarter-final tie against the Netherlands.

Ahead of the final professional tournament of his career, Nadal and his Spanish teammates spoke to the media in anticipation of the hosts' clash against the Dutch in Malaga today.

"I am not here for retiring. I'm here to try to help the team," Nadal said yesterday.

"It's of course going to be my last week on the professional tour, but at the end, we are here in a teams competition."

"The most important thing here is to stay all focused on what we have to do, that is play tennis and to do it very well. Because the rival is going to be difficult, and the conditions are difficult too."

"So then the emotions are going to be for the end."

Nadal, who will draw the curtains on a record-breaking career that has spanned nearly 23 years, has not competed in an official singles match since his second-round exit at the Olympics in July.

The former world number one has worked hard for the past six weeks to be ready for the Davis Cup but said it will ultimately be the decision of Spain captain David Ferrer on whether he will be playing in singles or doubles against the Netherlands.

"Of course when you are not competing very often, it's a little bit more difficult to hold the level on a constant basis, I've had good moments and more difficult moments. I think the improvement is there every day, but, I mean, we



Spain's Rafael Nadal trains ahead of the Davis Cup finals at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin Carpena in Malaga yesterday. (AFP)

have a great team on Spain," said Nadal. "All these players on the tour are playing very well, having great seasons. It's the work of the captain to decide what he feels is better for the team."

Ferrer says he hasn't decided on his lineup for the quarter-finals and will reveal his selections on Tuesday ahead of the tie.

Nadal, who owns a 29-1 win-loss record in Davis Cup singles matches and an 8-4 record in doubles, has not competed in the inter-nation team competition since 2019, when he helped Spain win a sixth Davis Cup title.

He is joined by reigning Roland Garros and Wimbledon champion

Carlos Alcaraz, Roberto Bautista Agut, Pedro Martinez, and Marcel Granollers on Spain's squad this week.

Nadal's body has been ravaged by injuries throughout his career, but particularly during the past two years, which has led him to make the decision to hang up his racquet, admitting he is unable to sustain a competitive level on tour.

"I achieved the most important thing for me, because I arrived to this day and I am in peace that I gave all that I had," said Nadal.

"I'm going to leave this professional tour with the calm and with the personal satisfaction that I

gave my best almost in every single moment."

Nadal said he is "not worried" about the next chapter of his life and that he must "accept the process" of experiencing this significant change.

Novak Djokovic, Nadal's fiercest rival, has said he plans on being in Malaga for the Spaniard's final tournament. Asked if Roger Federer will be making an appearance, Nadal said: "I didn't talk to Roger. I think Roger has a busy schedule."

"This is going to be my last week on the professional tour, but I don't think it's going to be my last goodbye. So there's going to be other chances to do something."

Belgium's Van Riel clinches first men's T100 world title in Dubai

Belgian Marten Van Riel overcome the challenge provided by German Rico Bogen to secure the inaugural men's T100 triathlon world championship title yesterday in Dubai.

Van Riel, 31, entered the final event under significant pressure, having already claimed two wins and a runner-up finish in the season's series.

His strong swim, composed cycling, and clinical running performance ensured his victory and the first-ever T100 world title.

"It was tough wearing that number one bib," Van Riel said.

"In my head, I knew a podium finish was near, but I focused on winning on the day."

Bogen, the reigning Ironman 70.3 World Champion, kept pace with Van Riel for the majority of the 18km run but could not maintain his momentum in the final kilometres. His second-place finish in Dubai, coupled with a bronze in San Francisco, elevated him to third in the overall rankings.

"I wanted to prove to the world that I can handle both cold and heat," Bogen said. "Now I know I can do it." Britain's Alistair Brownlee, battling injuries and penalties throughout the

season, clinched his first T100 podium with a bronze, overtaking New Zealand's Kyle Smith despite a slip on gravel during the run.

"Very rarely do things go perfectly, but today the stars aligned," Brownlee said. "I'm thrilled to reach the podium at last."

The victory marks a significant comeback for Van Riel, whose disappointing 22nd place at the Paris 2024 Olympics left him determined to succeed in middle-distance events.

American Taylor Knibb, took the inaugural women's T100 Triathlon World Championship title on Saturday.

CANADIAN GP AGREES TO CARBON-REDUCING DATE CHANGE FROM 2026

Formula One's Canadian Grand Prix will be held in May instead of June from 2026 onwards to help reduce the sport's carbon footprint and consolidate the European season into one consecutive period. Formula One said in a statement yesterday that the rescheduling to the third or fourth weekend of May would remove an additional transatlantic crossing from the current 24-race calendar.

This year's race at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve was held on June 9, after Monaco and before Spain, and is scheduled for June 15 next year - after Spain and before Austria. Miami's round was on May 5 and is likely to be paired with Canada in future.

Temperatures in Montreal in May are much cooler than in June and the race there has not previously been held earlier than June 2, in 1991. Monaco Grand Prix organisers have already agreed to move their showcase race from the end of May, and a regular clash with the Indianapolis 500, to the first full weekend of June from 2026. Races elsewhere have also been re-aligned to make the calendar flow from region to region, cutting the distances travelled by teams and air freight which is a major source of carbon emissions.

Formula One CEO Stefano Domenicali thanked Canadian government stakeholders for their co-operation. "The change will make the future flow of our calendar not only more sustainable, but logistically more sensible for our teams and personnel," he said. "Our Net Zero by 2030 commitment continues to be a priority for us as a sport and it is thanks to changes like this that we are on track to hitting our goal."

Jean-Philippe Paradis, CEO of promoter Octane Racing Group, said the change reflected the commitment to a more sustainable future for Formula One. "We are determined to offer our fans, our communities, and our loyal audience a unique and enriched experience, in addition to extending the summer season for Montreal."

FOCUS

Britain dump out Canada to reach BJK Cup semi-finals

AFP
Málaga

Britain knocked out defending Billie Jean King Cup champions Canada as singles wins for Emma Raducanu and Katie Boulter completed a 2-0 victory in Malaga on Sunday.

Former US Open champion Raducanu powered through the first set of the opening rubber against Rebecca Marino and held off the Canadian in the second set to wrap up a 6-0, 7-5 win. Raducanu saved seven break points as Marino tried to force a third set, eventually earning a break of her own in the 11th game before closing out the match.

"I'm really pleased with how I managed to step up on those big points, big moments," said the 58th-ranked Raducanu.

"I think I just need to keep reminding myself those clutch situations is where I really kind of thrive and I really enjoy them for the most part."

World number 24 Boulter then brushed aside Leylah Fernandez 6-2, 6-4 to send Britain through to a semi-final against Slovakia. "I'm really happy with me level today," said Boulter, who produced another assured display after dropping only three games in her first-round match against Germany.

"I just want to say, firstly, Emma makes it very easy to come out here and have a swing a 1-0 up, so full credit to her for starting us off well. "Really proud of my perform-



ance today. I just wanted to come out here and really go at the defending champs."

Britain will attempt to reach the final for the first time since 1981. Slovakia, the 2002 champions, overcame Australia 2-0 earlier in the day to make the last four of the competition for the first time in 11 years.

Viktoria Hruncakova and Rebecca Sramkova both won their singles ties as Slovakia backed up their victory over the United States in the first round.

"It's another big country which we beat, and I'm so proud for the girls, for our team members, for (our) country, because we are a small country," said Slovakia captain Matej Liptak.

"For us, it really means so much." World number 241 Hruncakova emerged victorious against Kimberly Birrell 7-5, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 after over two-and-a-half hours on court to give the central European country the lead over Australia. Sramkova then needed just over an hour to win 6-1, 6-2 against former world number 32 Ajla Tomljanovic, who injured her knee in the third game of the first set.

MOTORSPORT

Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East is set to thrill fans as part of Qatar Airways Qatar GP 2024

Just when excitement levels ahead of next month's Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2024 couldn't get any higher, Lusail International Circuit (LIC) has announced that the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East will complete the trio of support races for next month's Formula 1 spectacular.

Taking place from November 29-December 1, the one-make series will line up alongside the F1 Academy and FIA Formula 2 championship for the penultimate date in the Formula 1 2024 season, in what promises to be one of the most high-octane weekends of the year.

The iconic Porsche 911 GT3 cars deliver thrilling sprints and wheel-to-wheel duels across one practice session, one qualification round, and two high-intensity races. With a grid of approximately 15 cars featuring identical technical specifications, pure skill, talent, and teamwork determine who reaches the podium.

Local fans will have plenty to cheer for as three Qatari talents



take to the grid: Abdullah al-Khulaifi, Ghanim al-Maadeed, and Ibrahim al-Abdulghani will represent the host nation in what promises to be an exciting showcase of regional motorsport talent.

They'll be joining series standout Janne Stiak, the 17-year-old winner of the opening race at Bahrain International Circuit, as drivers take on the 16 turns and vari-

ous straights of LIC's world-class 5.419km circuit.

The Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East will join an exciting roster of support races including F1 Academy - a highly competitive all-female racing series designed to nurture and propel young female drivers towards higher echelons of competition. It not only showcases the exceptional talent

and skill of these athletes but also highlights the fierce competition they bring to the track, adding an extra layer of excitement to the event. This will be followed by the FIA Formula 2 Championship, a thrilling one-make single-seater race with 22 identical cars, which allows drivers to showcase their prowess in front of a Formula 1 audience. As well as the Formula



1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2024 which takes place on the final day of the racing weekend, the nail-biting Formula 1 Sprint Race will also make a welcome return to LIC.

The high-voltage three-day celebration of motorsport begins on November 29. Global superstars Maroon 5 and regional sensation Myriam Fares will headline

the entertainment lineup, completing an unforgettable weekend of racing and music.

Fans wanting to be a part of the action for the Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2024 need to be quick to secure their tickets. Standard day and weekend tickets to this once-in-a-lifetime event are still available to buy now at <https://tickets.lcsc.qa>

FOOTBALL

Kane has no plan to retire after 2026 World Cup

'I THINK WE NEED TO WIN A MAJOR TOURNAMENT'

AFP
London

England captain Harry Kane says he is performing at his highest ever level as he dismissed suggestions the 2026 World Cup should be his international swansong.

Thomas Tuchel will take over as England manager in January with his first matches not until World Cup qualifiers start in March's international break.

Interim boss Lee Carsley guided the Three Lions to promotion from the second tier of the Nations League with five wins from his six games in charge. That included a 3-0 win away at Greece last week, where Carsley took dropped Kane to the bench.

The 31-year-old striker admitted he had been shocked by that call, but scored in Sunday's 5-0 thrashing of the Republic of Ireland on his return to the starting line-up.

At Euro 2024 last summer, Kane often looked laboured and was substituted in all four knockout games as England reached the final. But the Bayern Munich striker has scored 20 times for club and country in 21 appearances this season.

"I think there's a perception when you get to your thirties that you're coming to an end but for me I'm performing at the highest level I've ever performed and feel as good as I've ever felt," Kane told the Press Association.

I don't like to look too far ahead



England's striker Harry Kane (left) celebrates scoring a goal during the UEFA Nations League match against Ireland at Wembley Stadium in London. (AFP)

and in my career I never have, the World Cup is going to be exciting.

"In America it will be an incredible occasion and ultimately it's about trying to win that, looking at where you are, where to improve and it will be no different in a couple of years."

Kane was speaking at the unveiling of a statue of him at the home of his former youth team Ridgeway Rovers in east London.

Already England's all-time record goalscorer with 69 goals

in 102 games, Kane could easily also surpass Peter Shilton's record of 125 caps.

But he believes he must help end his nation's wait for a major tournament victory since 1966 to emulate World Cup winning captain Bobby Moore and be honoured with a statue at Wembley.

Kane previously worked with Tuchel at Bayern and is positive about the impact the German can make when he becomes the third

foreign manager to take charge of England.

"I think we need to win a major tournament," he added. "We've come close on a couple of occasions and the next step is for me and the other boys to win."

"We have a new coach coming in March. He'll be great for us, he has vast experience in the big competitions, he'll bring a great energy to the team and he'll put his own stamp and identity on the way we play tactically."

CRICKET

T20 WC Asia Sub Regional Qualifiers in Doha from today

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The highly awaited ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia Sub Regional Qualifier B will kick-off at the refurbished ground of West End Park International Cricket Stadium in Doha today with hosts Qatar taking on Thailand in the opening match at 9am.

Later at 12.15pm, Bhutan will meet United Arab Emirates at the UDST Cricket Ground while Bahrain will play Saudi Arabia at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium. The qualifiers which have a total of seven teams are taking part - Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, Bahrain, Thailand, UAE and Cambodia - will see two matches being played each day from November 19-28.

A total of 21 games will be played during ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia Sub-regional Qualifier B.

This tournament will serve as a qualification scenario for the teams participating in the event.

The teams that finish in the top 2 after all of the matches will qualify for the Regional Final, where they will be joined by Nepal, Oman, and Papua New Guinea.

At the event launch yesterday evening, Qatar Cricket Association's (QCA) Secretary-General Khalid Saleh al-Rumaihi welcomed the teams, officials and the media.

"We are looking forward to exciting cricket from players of the seven teams over the next ten days. We know that all the seven teams are eager to qualify for the Regional Final and we wish all of them the very best."

QCA's CEO Khaled al-Suwaidi was also present on the occasion and said, "We have all prepara-

tions in place with recently-laid seven pitches and international standard grounds which will surely be liked by all participants.

"We also for the first time have teams from Bhutan and Cambodia in the tournament, and who will also be playing against Qatar for the first time. The Qatar fans would be eager to see their contests as well."

Of all the teams, UAE, Bahrain and hosts Qatar have the strongest chance to finish in the top 2 of the competition.

THE FIXTURES

November 19: Qatar vs Thailand (West End Park Stadium); Bhutan vs United Arab Emirates (UDST Cricket Ground, Doha); Bahrain vs Saudi Arabia (West End Park Stadium)

November 20: Cambodia vs Thailand (West End Park); Qatar vs Bhutan (UDST Cricket Ground); Saudi Arabia vs UAE (West End Park)

November 22: Cambodia vs UAE (West End Park); Bahrain vs Thailand (UDST Cricket Ground); Bhutan vs Saudi Arabia (UDST Cricket Ground)

November 23: Bahrain vs Bhutan (West End Park); Thailand vs UAE (UDST Cricket Ground); Qatar vs Cambodia (UDST Cricket Ground)

November 25: Qatar vs Bahrain (West End Park); Cambodia vs Saudi Arabia (UDST Cricket Ground); Bhutan vs Thailand (West End Park)

November 26: Saudi Arabia vs Thailand (West End Park); Bahrain vs Cambodia (UDST Cricket Ground); Qatar vs UAE (West End Park)

November 28: Bhutan vs Cambodia (West End Park); Qatar vs Saudi Arabia (UDST Cricket Ground); Bahrain vs UAE (UDST Cricket Ground).



Qatar Cricket Association (QCA) Secretary-General Khalid Saleh al-Rumaihi, QCA CEO Khaled al-Suwaidi and ICC officials during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia Sub Regional Qualifier B trophy unveiling in Doha yesterday.



Captains of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, Bahrain, Thailand, the UAE and Cambodia pose with the trophy yesterday.

QSL participates in annual meet of World Leagues Association

The Qatar Stars League (QSL) participated in the annual meeting of World Leagues Association held in Egyptian capital Cairo over two days and hosted by the Egyptian Pro League with the participation of 37 professional leagues, including Premier League, Spanish League, Italian League, Portuguese League and other representatives of the leagues that are members of the global forum in addition to the presence of a delegation representing FIFA and a number of international sports figures. QSL was represented in the meeting by Dr Ahmed Khelili Abbassi, Executive Director of Competitions and Football Development, who held a number of meetings and discussions with



officials and representatives of the participating leagues with the aim of exchanging experience and reviewing the latest programmes related to competitions and development process. A number of issues on the agenda were reviewed, most notably co-ordinating the relationship between professional leagues in addition to

launching the League Development Programme - a tailored audit, benchmarking and strategic planning process to help leagues of all sizes and ambitions with their development. Workshops were also held to enhance co-operation between leagues from various continents and discuss the expanding international calendar,

which puts pressure on some players and professional clubs. It may be noted that QSL's participation in the meeting on a regular basis comes in line with its keenness to strengthen relations with various professional leagues across the world, exchange experiences and learn about the latest developments in issues related to football.