Qatar volleyball teams to face off in Round of 16 at Sanya Games

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: All eyes are on an all-Qatari clash in the Round of 16 of the beach volleyball competition at the Asian Beach Games – Sanya 2026, as Qatar's men's teams meet today at the start of the knockout stage.

The matchup follows the first team of Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan finishing top of Group B after a 2-1 win over Iran yesterday (21-11, 21-23, 15-13), underlining their title credentials. The second team, Mohamed Ehab and Moussa Al-Khair, placed second in their group after a 0-2 loss to hosts China, setting up a direct encounter with their compatriots.

The fixture guarantees Qatar a place in the quarter-finals and highlights the team's strong group-stage performance. Younousse and Tijan opened with wins over the Maldives and Uzbekistan, while Ehab and Al-Khair defeated Saudi Arabia and Macau before their loss to China.


Qatar's Ahmed Tijan (right) celebrates during the match against Iran.

In the women's competition, Haya Abu Issa and Laila Mohammed exited after a 0-2 defeat to China on Saturday.


Qatar's 3x3 basketball team opened their campaign with two wins.

Qatar is represented by four teams—two men's and two women's—reflecting growing participation and the sport's expanding continental presence.

Meanwhile, Qatar's beach handball team faces Thailand today, aiming to secure a place in the semi-finals and continue its title defence. The team enters the match in strong form, having recorded five consecutive wins against Pakistan, Oman, Bangladesh, Mongolia and Jordan to top the group with 10 points. Drawn in a competitive group that also includes the Maldives and Thailand, Qatar has maintained a high level from the outset.

Bright start for Qatar's men's 3x3 basketball team

Qatar's men's 3x3 basketball team opened their Asian Beach Games – Sanya 2026 campaign with two wins, defeating Bahrain 21-11 and Kazakhstan 22-15 to boost their qualification chances.

The team delivered strong performances in both matches, imposing a fast pace and making the most of scoring opportunities through effective teamwork to secure a perfect start. In contrast, the women's team lost their opener 5-21 to China.

Qatar's men are in Group C alongside Bahrain, India and Kazakhstan, while the women compete in Group A with China and Kazakhstan.

The knockout rounds begin on Tuesday, with the competition concluding on Wednesday with the semi-finals and final.

Elsewhere, Qatar's sailing team continues its participation at the Sanya 2026 Asian Beach Games, with Tamim Shams set to compete in the sixth and seventh races of the Optimist class for boys, while Thani Shams will race in the sixth and seventh rounds of the ILCA 4 class.

China extended its lead in the medal standings at the Asian Beach Games – Sanya 2026 after yesterday's events, with 19 medals (9 gold, 8 silver, 2 bronze). Thailand moved into second with eight medals (3 gold), followed by the Philippines in third with six (3 gold). The United Arab Emirates ranked fourth with six medals (2 gold), while Vietnam placed fifth with five medals (2 gold), as competition remains tight heading into the final stages.


Manchester City's Nico Gonzalez (centre) celebrates with teammates after the match.

City beat Southampton to reach FA Cup final

LONDON: Nico Gonzalez's stunning strike fired Manchester City into the FA Cup final as Pep Guardiola's men produced a late fightback to beat Southampton 2-1 yesterday.

The Saints appeared heading towards a first FA Cup final since 2003 when Finn Azaz's brilliant finish put the Championship side in front 11 minutes from time.

However, City avoided the same fate that Arsenal suffered in the quarter-finals to remain on course for a domestic treble.

Jeremy Doku's deflected effort quickly levelled before Gonzalez rifled in from long range three minutes from time.

The defeat ends Southampton's 20-game unbeaten run that has propelled them into contention for an immediate return to the Premier League.

Guardiola made eight changes from the side that went top of the Premier League with a 1-0 victory over Burnley on Wednesday.

Erling Haaland, Bernardo Silva and Doku were among those to miss out and City took 45 minutes to find their feet.

Leo Scienza found the bottom corner early on, but Southampton's joy was cut short by the offside flag.

City came out for the second half a changed team even before Guardiola turned to his bench to unleash the stars he had kept in reserve.

Guardiola also introduced Doku, Savinho and Nico O'Reilly to break down Southampton's mass ranks of well-marshalled defence.

Daniel Peretz repelled Gonzalez's powerful effort before Southampton pounced to take a shock lead on a rare second-half foray forward.

However, Southampton could not hold on as City roared back to become the first club to reach four consecutive FA Cup finals.

Doku's effort from the edge of the box deflected off James Bree to wrong-foot Peretz.

The Southampton goalkeeper was then left helpless as Gonzalez's piledriver completed the comeback. — ***AFP***

End Of Season Cup Day
WINNERS: (Horse, Trainer, Jockey)

End Of Season Cup, Thoroughbreds
Thor's Hammer, Gassim Al Ghazali, Alberto Sanna
Local Purebred Arabian Maiden Plate
Qiltan, Alban de Mieulle, Abdulla Rashid Al-Hajri
Purebred Arabian Graduation Plate
Mamoun De Bozouls, Hamad Al-Jehani, Lukas Delozier
Thoroughbred Handicap (60-80)
Selous, Khalid Abdulaziz Al- Kuwari, Anas Al Seyabi
Local Thoroughbred Handicap (45-70)
Al Deebil, Mohammed Al Ghazali, Salem Alajmi
Al Karana Cup, Purebred Arabian Novice
Spareo, Hamad Ahmed Hassan Al Malki Al Jehani, Pierre Charles Boudot
Thoroughbred Handicap (0-90)
Brotherhood Of Man, Mohammed Al Ghazali, Soufiane Saadi
Thoroughbred Handicap (70-90)
Jungle Monarch, Gassim Al Ghazali, Marco Casamento
Al Utouriya Cup, P.A Open Race
Lueur De Faust, Hamad Al-Jehani, Arnaud de Lepine
Thoroughbred Handicap (75-95)
Just Bring It, Alban de Mieulle, Soufiane Saadi

Thor's Hammer wins End of Season Cup in tight finish

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Thor's Hammer edged past stablemate Aemilianus after a prolonged duel, prevailing by a head to win the End of Season Cup at Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday.

It proved a fitting finale to the season, with Thor's Hammer, ridden by Alberto Sanna, going stride for stride with stablemate Aemilianus, partnered by Marco Casamento. Trained by Gassim Al Ghazali, the pair produced a thrilling contest in the 1600m Thoroughbreds feature, before the five-year-old gelding ultimately prevailed for owners Al Rufaa Racing.

The season-ending meeting comprised 10 races, including three Cup contests.

Guided by Arnaud de Lepine, Hamad Al-Jehani-trained Lueur De Faust landed the Al Utouriya Cup after a 3/4 length victory in the 1600m Purebred Arabian Open Race. The five-year-old bay mare had already shown quality earlier in the season when she won the Purebred Arabian Guineas on her Qatar debut in November. This latest race marked her second victory from six runs this campaign.


Thor's Hammer edges stablemate Aemilianus to win End of Season Cup at Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday. PIC: Juhaim/QREC

During the race, she was not positioned near the front early on, instead settling towards the back of the field. As the race entered the home straight, she began to move forward gradually, building momentum as she closed in on the leaders. Inside the final 200 metres, she made her decisive move, taking control of the race and going on to win the title.

Spareo secured the Al Karana Cup storming to 2½ lengths victory in the Purebred Arabian Novice under Pierre-Charles Boudot. The grey colt, who impressed on his debut, continued his strong start to his career by winning his second race from as many starts. He took control early, moving to the front soon after the break and dictating the pace throughout the race, ultimately winning comfortably.

Meanwhile, jockey Soufiane Saadi secured two wins yesterday, guiding Brotherhood Of Man (Thoroughbred Handicap 0-90) and Just Bring It (Thoroughbred Handicap 75-95) to victories.

Lukas Delozier partnered Mamoun De Bozouls to win the Purebred Arabian Graduation Plate, while Qiltan took Local Purebred Arabian Maiden Plate honours under Abdulla Rashid Al-Hajri. Selous, ridden by Anas Al Seyabi, topped the Thoroughbred Handicap (60-80).

Casamento steered Jungle Monarch to the Thoroughbred Handicap (70-90) title, while Al Deebil, ridden by Salem Alajmi, won the Local Thoroughbred Handicap (45-70).

Arsenal back on top of Premier League; Spurs win

LONDON: Eberechi Eze fired Arsenal back to the top of the Premier League yesterday as relegation-threatened Tottenham won for the first time in 2026 to give themselves renewed hope.

The Gunners were nine points clear of Manchester City just two weeks ago before losing their way, allowing Pep Guardiola's men to overtake them.

Yesterday's home game against Newcastle was a must-win for Arsenal, with City involved in an FA Cup semi-final against Southampton at Wembley, which they won to stay on track for a domestic treble.

Before the Gunners kicked off yesterday, the two teams were locked on 70 points each, with an identical goal difference. City topped the table on goals scored.

Eze took the pressure off with an early goal, arrowing home from outside the box after being teed up by Kai Havertz and the game finished 1-0.

Arsenal are desperate to shed their reputation as perpetual runners-up as they chase their first Premier League title since 2004.


Arsenal's Eberechi Eze (centre) celebrates after scoring against Newcastle United.

But they are up against a City juggernaut aiming for a seventh league title in nine seasons.

Relegation dogfight

Earlier, the focus was on the other end of the table, where Spurs and West Ham are locked in a dramatic relegation battle, with Wolves and Burnley already down. Spurs looked set to escape the bottom three after Joao Palhinha's late goal against Wolves and Everton's equaliser at the London Stadium.

But West Ham substitute Callum Wilson scored a winner in the 92nd minute to restore his side's two-point cushion, with just four games to go.

Roberto De Zerbi celebrated his first win as Tottenham head coach after replacing interim boss Igor Tudor earlier this month.

West Ham manager Nuno Espirito Santo told the *BBC* he expected the relegation battle to go to the wire after his team's 2-1 win. Nottingham Forest hammered Sunderland 5-0 on Friday to ease their relegation fears.

Liverpool beat Crystal Palace 3-1 yesterday, getting the better of their opponents for the first time in four meetings this season to climb into fourth place above Aston Villa, who earlier lost 1-0 at Fulham.

The Reds lost the season-opening Community Shield against Palace on penalties before defeats in the Premier League and League Cup.

Alexander Isak scored his first goal for Liverpool since December and Andy Robertson doubled their lead.

Daniel Munoz halved the deficit in the second half but Florian Wirtz scored a last-gasp third to restore the home side's two-goal cushion.

Mohamed Salah limped off in the second half at Anfield holding his hamstring with less than a month of his glittering career with the Reds remaining.

Arne Slot's men are now near-certainties to qualify for next season's Champions League, which would be some consolation after a miserable title defence. They are level on 58 points with Villa and Manchester United -- with all three teams eight points clear of Brighton. — ***AFP***

Barcelona on brink of La Liga triumph with Getafe win

GETAFE: Fermin Lopez and Marcus Rashford's goals took Barcelona to the brink of the La Liga title with a 2-0 win at Getafe yesterday.

The defending champions moved 11 points clear of second place Real Madrid, who drew at Real Betis on Friday to dent their hopes of finishing the season with a trophy.

Hansi Flick's side can win their second consecutive Spanish title if they overcome Osasuna next weekend and Real Madrid fail to beat Espanyol.

Barcelona were without vital injured wingers Lamine Yamal and Raphinha but still did enough to see off Jose Bordalas's tricky side, sixth, in the Madrid suburbs.

"We were aware of what was going to happen here, we were going to have few chances and I think we played well, competing well defensively and putting away the chances we had," Lopez told *Movistar*.

"We know we've got a big advantage (in the title race) but even so, we can't relax, I know it's a cliche but it's the truth," he added. — ***AFP***

Al Ahli Saudi retain AFC Champions League Elite title



Al-Ahli players celebrate with the trophy.

JEDDAH: Al Ahli Saudi FC became the first club in more than two decades to win back-to-back AFC Champions League Elite titles when they overcame Japan's Machida Zelvia 1-0 in extra time in Jeddah yesterday.

The defending champions, who 12 months ago defeated Kawasaki Frontale to claim a first continental crown, retained the trophy thanks to substitute Feras Al Buraikan's 96th-minute finish in front of 58,984 people at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium - the Saudi Arabians' home ground.

Al Ahli had been reduced to 10 men midway through the second half when defender Zakaria Hawsawi was shown a straight red for violent conduct.

Al Buraikan's goal ensured Al Ahli are the first team to successfully defend Asia's premier club trophy since city rivals Al Ittihad in 2005.

The win sees the Saudi Pro League side qualify for both the FIFA Intercontinental Cup later this year and the 2029 FIFA Club World Cup, the second edition of the expanded competition won last summer by English Premier League side Chelsea.

Al Ahli nearly took the lead against tournament debutants Machida on 13 minutes, when Galeno, the standout player of the knockout stages, raced free of the Japanese defence. However, the Brazilian's shot was saved expertly by goalkeeper Kosei Tani.

Three minutes before half time, Al Ahli defender Merih Demiral had an attempt blocked on the line before sending his rebound against the Machida crossbar.

Al Ahli's bid for successive titles suffered a blow on 68 minutes, when Hawsawi thrust his head into Machida forward Tete Yengi and the referee was left with no option but to issue the straight red.

As tempers frayed, Al Ahli had Mohammed Abdulrahman sent off from the substitute's bench.

Yet Al Ahli still found a way through. Six minutes into extra-time, Riyad Mahrez floated a cross to the back post, Franck Kessie inadvertently cushioned the ball, and Al Buraikan poked home from close range. — *AFP*

QORC begins with exciting Baja 1 round

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The opening round of the Qatar Off-Road Championship (Baja 1) for both motos and cars took place in the Sealine area, delivering an exciting start to the season with strong competition across all categories.

In the motos category, Class 1 saw Alex Mcinnes claim first place, followed by Ethan Lane in second and Michael Anderson in third. Rafic Eid secured victory in both the Veteran and Challenger sub-categories.

In Class 2, Mansour Al Suwaidi took the win, while Hamdan Al Ali finished second and claimed the Challenger category victory. Khalifa Al Bastaki completed the podium in third place. The Veteran category in Class 2 was won by Mohammed Al Shamsi. In the cars category, competing in Class 1 and overall standings, Mohammed Al Marri and co-driver Pierre Delorme secured first place. Camelia Liparoti and Erika Mingozzi finished second, while Ghanem Khaled Al Attiyah and Dmytro Tsyro came third.



QMMF Executive Director Amro Al Hamad along with Clerk of the Course Pedro Almeida honoured the winners.

In Class 2, Rashid Al Mohannadi and Mirko Brun took top honors, followed by Mohammed Al Attiyah and Tamer Hijazeen in second place.

Alexander Whyatt and Baptiste Cerrato finished third. The Class 3 was won by Omar Al Lahim and Faisal Al Suwayh, with Motab Al Shammari and Badr Alhamdan in second, and Hassan Al Blooshi and Ali Obaid in third place.

Trophies were presented to the winners by Executive Director of the Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation Amro Al Hamad along with Clerk of the Course Pedro Almeida.


Bayern Munich's Harry Kane (right) celebrates with a teammate after scoring his team's fourth goal.

Bayern Munich storm back to beat Mainz ahead of PSG clash

BERLIN: Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich stormed back from three goals down to win 4-3 at Mainz yesterday, ahead of their Champions League semi-final first leg at Paris Saint-Germain.

After wrapping up another Bundesliga title last weekend and with an eye on Tuesday's trip to the French capital, Bayern coach Vincent Kompany made sweeping changes to his team.

Mainz took advantage and cut through Bayern to lead 3-0 at half-time thanks to goals from Dominik Kohr, Paul Nebel and Sheraldo Becker.

Bayern introduced Harry Kane and Michael Olise for the second half and then also brought on Jamal Musiala, turning the match on its head.

Nicolas Jackson ignited the comeback before Olise and Musiala struck to bring Bayern level. Kane's 33rd league goal of the season with seven minutes to go won it for the visitors.

With most of the team that started Wednesday's 2-0 German Cup semi-final win over Bayer Leverkusen on the bench, Mainz broke the deadlock when Kohr scored from close range after a scuffed clearance from Bayern goalkeeper Jonas Urbig.

Mainz doubled their lead just before the half-hour mark, Nebel tapping in a rebound. The hosts added a third moments before the break through Becker.

But Kompany's decision to throw on his attacking stars swung the game in Bayern's favour.

Jackson turned in a Konrad Laimer cross and Olise scored with a superb curling effort from the edge of the box to cut the deficit to 3-2.

Olise set up Musiala, with the Germany midfielder then laying one on for Kane to put Bayern ahead and seal a remarkable comeback.

Elsewhere, Patrik Schick bagged a brace as Bayer Leverkusen downed derby rivals Cologne 2-1 away to keep their top-four hopes alive.

The win took Leverkusen a point behind Stuttgart, who play Werder Bremen today. Augsburg drew 1-1 at home to Frankfurt. — *AFP*

Ailing Swiatek retires in Madrid Open third round

MADRID: Iga Swiatek was forced to retire from her Madrid Open clash with Ann Li yesterday due to illness, sending the American 31st seed into the round of 16 of the WTA 1000 tournament.

A champion in the Spanish capital in 2024, Swiatek rebounded from a one-set deficit to level the contest but put an end to proceedings while down 0-3 in the decider.

The Polish six-time Grand Slam champion appeared to be struggling and asked for the doctor after getting broken early in the third set.

Following a conversation with the trainers, Swiatek tried to break Li back but when her opponent held for a 3-0 advantage, the fourth seed realised she was unable to continue the match. — *AFP*

Hyderabad beat Rajasthan in IPL

JAIPUR: Blistering fifties by Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma guided Sunrisers Hyderabad to a five-wicket win yesterday after teen prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi blasted 103 off 37 balls for Rajasthan Royals.

Led by Australian fast bowler Pat Cummins, who made an impressive IPL return after a long injury layoff, Hyderabad chased down a target of 229 with nine balls to spare in Jaipur.

Sooryavanshi hit four consecutive sixes in the opening over to set the tone, and then hit Cummins, bowling the second over, for a six off his first ball that he faced.

Kishan and Abhishek grasped the initiative and raced to 139 in the 10th over, before the latter fell for 57. Kishan followed soon after, out for 74 with Hyderabad at 166-3.

Earlier, KL Rahul's unbeaten 152 went in vain as Punjab Kings completed the highest successful chase in IPL history, beating Delhi Capitals by six wickets. — *AFP*

Cherif shines with Diamond Round win

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: France's Cyrine Cherif delivered a composed performance to win the Diamond Round 150cm class during the eleventh round of the Longines Hathab – Qatar Equestrian Tour held at the main arena of the Qatar Equestrian Federation yesterday.

Cherif guided Triple T Calamando Blue to a faultless finish in 31.48 seconds. Saudi Arabia's Khaled Aleid secured second place aboard Rakker Dmc in 32.11 seconds, while Qatar's Mohammed Saeed Haidan finished third riding Wathnan Stand By Me in 32.36 seconds.

Speaking after her victory, Cherif said: "My horse was a bit slow today so I was cautious and stayed steady and it worked. I'm glad to have won but I would have been happy with any podium finish. My horse had too much to do through the season and the Doha Equestrian Tours. But yes, having won a Grand Prix at DET, even 1.50m now appears smaller when I go into the arena."


Cyrine Cherif guided Triple T Calamando Blue to a faultless finish in 31.48 seconds to win the Diamond Tour class during the 11th round of Hathab.


Judges Irina Makanami and Mariam Al-Jaidah presented the awards to winners of the dressage competitions.

In the Bronze Tour 120cm, Qatar's Hussain Saeed Haidan claimed first place riding D Saucedo in 28.77 seconds. Saudi Arabia's Khaled Al Hadi finished second aboard Carlton de Sauvageonn in 29.33 seconds, while Kuwait's Annaz Al Annaz took third place with Be Bop de Lyons in 29.41 seconds.

In the Bronze Tour Teams event, Marwan Al Shaqab secured first place with a clear round in 61.93 seconds, followed by Ajwad in second place with 72.89 seconds, while Gazal Al Shaqab finished third after incurring four faults in 63.70 seconds.

In the Future Riders 90cm class, Qatar's Salha Khalid Al Obaidli claimed first place riding Violet Van Het Koetshuis in 21.57 seconds. Alqaqaa Tamim Al Thani finished second aboard Bon Suela in 22.34 seconds, while Fahad Talal Al Naimi secured third place with Kroaat Van Orchid's in 23.05 seconds.

Meanwhile, in the first dressage competitions, Sharifa Ahmed Al Ansari was crowned Amateur (Introductory Level) champion in Group 7 with a score of 70.119 points.

Georgina Roy Khan won the Introductory Level 2 title in Group 7 with 72.625 points, while Hamad Nasser Al Marri recorded 71.5 points to top the Junior category for the Introductory Level 2 test. Michelle Grimes also claimed first place in the Dressage Level 1 class in Group 7 with 70.425 points.

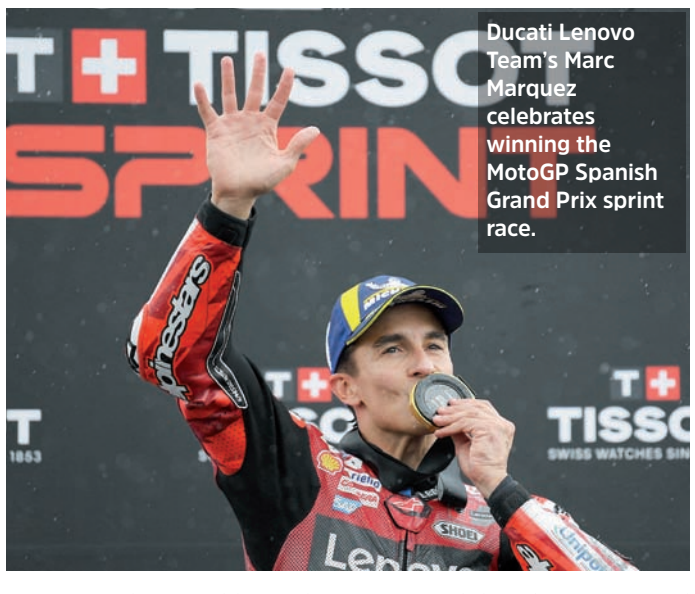
Marquez wins rain-affected Spanish MotoGP sprint

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA: Reigning champion Marc Marquez triumphed in a chaotic and rain-lashed Spanish MotoGP flag-to-flag sprint yesterday in Jerez.

The Spanish Ducati rider, bidding for a record-equalling eighth world title, started on pole and recovered from a crash to finish ahead of teammate Francesco Bagnaia and Franco Morbidelli for his 17th sprint victory.

Overall leader Marco Bezzecchi started poorly and later crashed out, failing to score any points, with Jorge Martin and Pedro Acosta, second and third overall, also not adding to their tallies.

"The truth is that we had a lot of luck," admitted Marc Marquez, who was able to take advantage of his crash to switch to a wet bike. The race started under grey clouds and rain began to fall three laps in, after Martin had already pulled out because of a technical problem with his Aprilia.



Ducati Lenovo Team's Marc Marquez celebrates winning the MotoGP Spanish Grand Prix sprint race.

Marc's brother Alex, who won the Spanish MotoGP last year, had impressed on the dry on Friday and carried his good form in Jerez into the race by taking the lead on the seventh lap.

The rain increased in intensity and riders began to fall, with Toprak Razgatlioglu and Lorenzo Savadori colliding.

Marc Marquez was next to tumble, but had the presence of mind to cut across the grass back to the pit lane and change bikes, while the other race leaders ploughed on. However, they too soon had to change bikes under the downpour.

"We were lucky to crash on the last corner so that the bike didn't stall, that's when I could breathe, I waited for everyone to go past because the whole group was coming, and then I was able to go into the pits, change the bike," explained Marc Marquez.

Alex Marquez came to grief shortly after his older brother's mishap and it was two-time world champion Bagnaia who took the lead.

However, Marc Marquez overtook him with three laps remaining and went on to triumph.

Victory took him up to fourth overall, 24 points off leader Bezzecchi ahead of Sunday's main event. — *AFP*