Al Arabi clinch top honours at Sports and Youth Excellence Award

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Al Arabi Sports Club won top honours in the Sports Clubs category at the fifth edition of the Sports and Youth Excellence Award for the 2025-2026 season, during a distinguished ceremony held under the patronage of Minister of Sports and Youth H E Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Thani.

Organised by the Ministry of Sports and Youth, the event celebrated outstanding achievements across Qatar's sports and youth sectors and highlighted the growing culture of institutional excellence and innovation in the country.

Held under the slogan "Generations' Excellence... Nation's Excellence," the ceremony brought together leaders of sports clubs, youth centers, and prominent institutions active in sports and youth development, reflecting the collective national commitment to empowering future generations and advancing excellence across the sector.

During the event, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Engineer H E Yasser bin Abdullah Al-Jamal honoured the winners across the award's various categories, including Youth Committees, Youth Centers (Girls and General), Specialised Centers, and Sports Clubs. The results reflected a high level of competitiveness, alongside significant progress in institutional performance and innovation among participating organizations.

In his address, H E Sheikh Hamad congratulated all award recipients, commending their exceptional efforts and remarkable achievements, which embodied determination, commitment, and excellence.

The Sports Minister emphasised that the fifth edition of the Sports and Youth Excellence Award marks a significant milestone in strengthening a culture of institutional excellence in the State of Qatar. He noted that the award has evolved beyond an annual recognition program into a comprehensive national framework that motivates institutions and individuals to adopt best practices and elevate performance standards based on quality, sustainability, and innovation.

He further stated that the award's continuous development reflects the dedicated efforts of sports and youth institutions to enhance their programs and initiatives in alignment with Qatar's vision of investing in people and building national capabilities. Through its successive editions, the award has contributed to creating a positive and competitive environment that encourages excellence while reinforcing the principles of leadership, strategic planning, performance measurement, and continuous evaluation.

Since its launch five years ago, the Sports and Youth Excellence Award has become one of the State's most prominent national initiatives aimed at advancing institutional performance and enhancing the quality of programs and services provided to young people. The award aligns with national development priorities and supports the preparation of a conscious, active generation capable of contributing effectively to the nation's progress. It also reflects the Ministry of Sports and Youth's vision of building an integrated culture of excellence founded on professionalism, innovation, and youth empowerment.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Engineer H E Yasser bin Abdullah Al-Jamal poses for a group photo with representatives of award winning clubs.

WINNERS

YOUTH COMMITTEES CATEGORY
First Place: Al Khor Sports Club Youth Committee
Second Place: Al Wakrah Sports Club Youth Team

YOUTH CENTERS CATEGORY (GIRLS AND GENERAL)
First Place: Doha Girls Center
Second Place: Al-Reyada Girls Center

SPECIALISED CENTERS CATEGORY
First Place: Qatar Youth Hostels
Second Place: Qatar Science Club

GENERAL CENTERS CATEGORY
First Place: Al Thakhira Youth Center
Second Place: Al Kaaban Youth Center

SPORTS CLUBS CATEGORY
First Place: Al Arabi Sports Club
Second Place: Al Sadd Sports Club
Third Place: Al Rayyan Sports Club


Qatar's Maytha Al-Binali in action.

Qatar's Abu Sharib, Al-Binali clinch mixed team trap gold

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Saeed Abu Sharib and Maytha Al-Binali struck mixed team trap gold while Qatar's shooting team added another silver, along with the padel team, as hosts continued their fine showing at the GCC Games Doha 2026 yesterday.

Sharib and Al-Binali remained consistent throughout the event, firing 31 targets after topping the qualification round with 139 targets at the Lusail Shooting Range. The UAE side secured the silver medal with 29 targets, while Bahrain settled for the bronze with 22 targets in the event.

"The gold is a result of sheer hard work in our training camp," said Al-Binali.

"It will boost our confidence for the upcoming international events, particularly the 2026 Asian Games in Japan."

"The gold is a result of sheer hard work in our training camp. It will boost our confidence for the upcoming international events, particularly the 2026 Asian Games in Japan."
Maytha Al-Binali

Abu Sharib expressed his delight at the victory.

"The competitions were highly competitive and we are happy to emerge as winners from this tough event. The atmosphere among GCC athletes has been outstanding," he said.

In the 10m air pistol mixed team event, Qatar claimed the silver medal with a combined score of 459.7 points. The home side, comprising Doaa Habib (233.7 points) and Khalid Al Shaiba (226.0 points), were edged by the UAE team, who won the gold medal with a total of 461.0 points. Oman ended up in third place with 397.7 points.

Following two more medals in the discipline yesterday, Qatar's shooting team topped the table with nine gold, six silver and five bronze medals.

Qatar, meanwhile, also consolidated their top spot in the overall standings with 44 gold, 46 silver and 32 bronze medals. Saudi Arabia sit second with 26 gold, 21 silver and 19 bronze, followed by Bahrain, who have clinched 62 medals so far including 24 gold, 22 silver and 16 bronze medals.

The Lusail Shooting Range will now host the finals of the archery events today.

Qatar settle for silver medal in padel after injury to Nawaf

At Aspire Dome, Qatar suffered a 2-1 defeat in the men's padel final against the UAE, bringing an end to an outstanding performance by the home side following an injury to Rashid Nawaf.

After Qatar's Issa Shanan and Rayan Al Jefairi fell 0-6, 2-6 in the opener, Mohammed Saadoun and Hassan Wali launched the team's fightback, winning the second match 6-2, 6-4.

It was a thrilling decider, with Qatar's Rashid Nawaf and Mishari Nawaf drawing level 6-7, 7-5. The final set was tied at 3-3 before Nawaf suffered an injury and was unable to continue, as the UAE emerged gold medallists in the event. Kuwait took bronze.

Qatar had defeated Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain earlier in the competition.

The women's padel event saw Kuwait emerge champions, with Saudi Arabia taking the silver medal and the UAE securing bronze.



Qatar's Saeed Abu Sharib and Maytha Al-Binali celebrate on the podium after winning the mixed team trap gold.
RIGHT: Qatar's Khalid Al Shaiba and Doaa Habib won the silver medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.


The men's padel winners were crowned by First Vice President of the Qatar Olympic Committee Mohammed bin Yousuf Al Mana and President of the Asian Padel Federation and Secretary-General of the Qatar Tennis, Squash, Padel and Badminton Federation Tareq Zainal.

دورة الألعاب الخليجية الرابعة 4TH GCC GAMES DOHA 2026

MEDAL TALLY

1	Qatar	44	46	32	122
2	Saudi Arabia	26	21	19	66
3	Bahrain	24	22	16	62
4	Kuwait	12	16	25	53
5	UAE	10	14	26	50
6	Oman	10	4	16	30


Qatar's Khalid Saadoun Al Kuwari (left) and Mohammed Saadoun Al Kuwari celebrate with the medals.

Xhaka to lead Switzerland at World Cup

LAUSANNE: Veteran midfielder Granit Xhaka will take part in his seventh successive major international tournament after he was named in Switzerland's World Cup squad yesterday.

The 33-year-old national team captain is one of five players contracted to English Premier League clubs in coach Murat Yakin's 26-man squad.

Amongst those is Burnley forward Zeki Amdouni, the only real surprise inclusion in the squad, who has played just 45 minutes of football this season in three brief substitute appearances as he works his way back from a ruptured cruciate knee ligament.

"He's not yet at 100 percent but he knows how we play, he knows the systems, the moves, his role," said Yakin.

Switzerland have reached the last 16 of the last three World Cup tournaments and the quarter-finals of the last two European Championships.

They will play warm-up matches against Jordan (May 31) and Australia (June 6), before beginning their Group B campaign against Qatar in San Francisco on June 13.

They will also play against Bosnia-Herzegovina on June 18 and Canada on June 24.

SWITZERLAND SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Gregor Kobel (Borussia Dortmund/GER), Marvin Keller (Young Boys/SUI), Yvon Mvogo (Lorient/FRA)
Defenders: Ricardo Rodriguez (Real Betis/ESP), Silvan Widmer (Mainz/GER), Manuel Akanji (Inter Milan/ITA), Miro Muheim (Hamburg/GER), Nico Elvedi (Borussia Moenchengladbach/GER), Aurele Amenda (Eintracht Frankfurt/GER), Luca Jaquez (Stuttgart/GER), Eray Comert (Valencia/ESP)
Midfielders: Johan Manzambi (Freiburg/GER), Granit Xhaka (Sunderland/ENG), Remo Freuler (Bologna/ITA), Denis Zakaria (Monaco/FRA), Ardon Jashari (AC Milan/ITA), Michel Aebischer (Pisa/ITA), Djibril Sow (Sevilla/ESP), Christian Fassnacht (Young Boys/SUI), Fabian Rieder (Augsburg/GER)
Forwards: Noah Okafor (Leeds/ENG), Dan Ndoye (Nottingham Forest/ENG), Zeki Amdouni (Burnley/ENG), Breel Embolo (Rennes/FRA), Ruben Vargas (Sevilla/ESP), Cedric Itten (Fortuna Duesseldorf/GER). — *AFP*


Granit Xhaka will take part in his seventh successive major international tournament.

Aston Villa win Europa League to end trophy drought

ISTANBUL: Aston Villa ended their 30-year trophy drought in style as spectacular goals from Youri Tielemans and Emiliano Buendia inspired a 3-0 win against Freiburg in the Europa League final yesterday.

Unai Emery's side took the lead late in the first half in Istanbul through Tielemans' thunderous volley.

Buendia increased Villa's advantage with a sublime curler seconds before the interval.

Morgan Rodgers' second-half goal finished off the outclassed Germans, sealing Villa's first silverware since the 1996 League Cup and their first major European prize for 44 years.

That famous European Cup final upset of Bayern Munich in 1982, secured by Peter Withe's goal in Rotterdam, has stood as the most iconic moment in Villa's 152-year history.



Aston Villa's John McGinn lifts the trophy as his teammates celebrate after winning the UEFA Europa League title.

But Villa's current stars were determined to follow in the footsteps of the club's golden generation.

Now Tielemans, Buendia, John McGinn and company can share the rarified air previously reserved for Withe, Tony Morley, Dennis Mortimer, Nigel Spink and the rest of the Class of '82.

Fittingly, with Withe and Mortimer watching from the stands, Villa crushed Freiburg while wearing white shirts instead of their traditional claret and blue kit -- just as they did against Bayern.

Villa's long-awaited continental conquest was the latest Europa League masterclass for Emery, who has now won the tournament five times after victories with Sevilla in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and Villarreal in 2021.

Emery said this week that he didn't feel like the "king" of the Europa League, but his team's coronation got the royal seal of approval from Villa fan Prince William, who was celebrating along with around 20,000 ecstatic supporters in the Besiktas Stadium.

Hollywood actor Tom Hanks, another famous Villa fan, joined the party, sending a good luck message to the team before kick-off.

It has been a memorable finish to the campaign for Villa, who sealed qualification for next season's Champions League with a win against Liverpool last week.

Villa's success over the last six days would have been impossible to imagine when they started the season with a run of six matches without a win, scoring just twice in that dismal streak. — ***AFP***

UEFA unveils new two-tier World Cup qualifying format for 2030

LAUSANNE: UEFA yesterday said it would create a two-tier qualifying system for the 2030 World Cup that will be similar to the format used in the Champions League.

The top league will comprise 36 countries - determined by the restructured 2028/29 UEFA Nations League - and be divided into three groups of 12 teams. Every team will play six home-or-away matches against six different opponents - two from each pot, mirroring the current format used in UEFA club competitions.

The best-ranked nations from the three League 1 groups will qualify for the World Cup, with the remaining places decided via play-offs. The other 18, lower-ranked countries will compete in League 2 and would also have a chance to qualify.

UEFA also announced the Nations League would shift from four leagues to three divisions of 18 teams. Each league will be composed of three groups of six teams.

They will play six matches against five different opponents - home or away against teams from different pots, with home-and-away fixtures against the opponent of their same pot. The latter stages will remain the same with quarter-finals and the Final Four, as well as promotion/relegation play-offs. — ***AFP***

Gunners in dawn celebrations after winning Premier League

LONDON: Arsenal players were pictured celebrating with fans at 5:00 am at Emirates Stadium yesterday after they clinched the Premier League title for the first time in 22 years.

Declan Rice, Bukayo Saka and Jurrien Timber were pictured in the early hours in an Instagram post by their teammate Eberechi Eze.

Thousands of fans had gathered outside the stadium while Manchester City, needing a win to keep the title race alive, played at Bournemouth.

The crowd grew as Bournemouth took the lead and although City equalised in injury time, the draw meant the title was heading to North London.



Arsenal players celebrate with a mock up of the Premier League trophy.

Some supporters marked the occasion by lighting fireworks and flares. The players held a party at their London Colney training ground with coach Mikel Arteta and then took the celebrations to the Emirates Stadium. Many of the players said the title win was especially sweet as they had finished runners-up for the past three seasons.

Saka said Arsenal's critics were "not laughing at us anymore".

"Let me tell you something. Twenty-two years, 22 years. There was laughing, there was joking, they're not laughing anymore," the England international added.

Arsenal fans thronged around the stadium, hanging out of car windows and waving flags.

Arsene Wenger, the French coach who was in charge when Arsenal won their last title in 2004, addressed the players in a video on the club's social media channels.

"You did it! Champions go on when others stop. This is your time. Now, go on and enjoy every moment," Wenger said.

Ian Wright, the striker who scored 185 times for Arsenal and was a member of the side that clinched the domestic double in 1998, was mobbed by fans as he celebrated outside the Emirates.

Arteta's side will formally be presented with the trophy on Sunday after their final match of the season at Crystal Palace. Then they will turn their attention to winning a Champions League title for the first time when they face PSG in the final in Budapest on May 30. — ***AFP***



Arsenal fans celebrate their team's Premier League victory outside the Emirates Stadium in London.

RECENT PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

2025/26	Arsenal
2024/25	Liverpool
2023/24	Manchester City
2022/23	Manchester City
2021/22	Manchester City
2020/21	Manchester City
2019/20	Liverpool
2018/19	Manchester City
2017/18	Manchester City
2016/17	Chelsea
2015/16	Leicester City
2014/15	Chelsea
2013/14	Manchester City
2012/13	Manchester United
2011/12	Manchester City
2010/11	Manchester United
2009/10	Chelsea
2008/09	Manchester United
2007/08	Manchester United
2006/07	Manchester United
2005/06	Chelsea
2004/05	Chelsea
2003/04	Arsenal
2002/03	Manchester United
2001/02	Arsenal
2000/01	Manchester United

Djokovic trying to hold back time at French Open

PARIS: Novak Djokovic arrives at Roland Garros this year facing a familiar opponent, but one that cannot be outmanoeuvred even by the record 24-time Grand Slam champion: time.

The Serbian, who turns 39 this week, is no longer the immovable presence he once was, his famed durability now increasingly a concern in a sport shaped by younger, physically explosive rivals.

The question is not simply whether he can win another French Open, but how he continues to adjust his game and mindset to defy the natural erosion that comes with advancing years.

While his scheduling is more selective and his approach more pragmatic, Djokovic conceded he would have liked more time on clay before coming to Paris.

He has played in just three tournaments in 2026, and lost his only match on clay to Croatian qualifier Dino Prizmic at this month's Italian Open.

Djokovic pulled out of tournaments in Miami, Monte Carlo and Madrid while dealing with a shoulder injury -- with strapping visible during his brief stay in Rome.

"It's not an ideal preparation, to be honest," said Djokovic, who will be seeded third at Roland Garros.

"I don't recall the last time I had in the last couple of years a preparation where I didn't have any kind of physical issues or health issues coming into the tournament. There's always something. Kind of a new reality that I have to deal with."

It is a candid admission from a player who has built his career on meticulous planning and physical resilience, but who is confronting the realities of an ageing body.

Djokovic's record at Roland Garros underlines why he cannot be discounted. The absence of defending two-time champion Carlos Alcaraz is another factor in his favour.

A three-time French Open champion and one of the few players to consistently trouble Rafael Nadal on the surface, Djokovic has reached the quarter-finals or better at each edition since a third-round loss in 2009.



But the physical demands of clay are unforgiving, and Djokovic is acutely aware of the marginal losses that come with age.

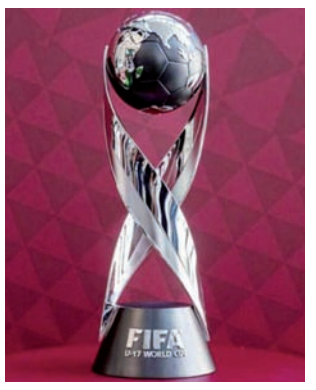
"I see what I'm missing," he said. "Late half a step. I'm not definitely where I want to be for the highest level and to compete at the highest level and to be able to get far." Recent seasons have also shown the growing challenge of sustaining peak performance over the two-week grind of a Grand Slam. Matches that once tilted towards him now demand sustained excellence from first point to last.

His preparation, as he openly acknowledges, has limits. "I train hard. I train as much as the body allows me to," he said. "Then how it turns out on the court, that's really unpredictable."

However, Djokovic is one of just two men to beat red-hot title favourite Jannik Sinner this season, having ended his Australian Open reign.

Djokovic delivered what he called one of his best performances in a decade to outlast the Italian in five sets in the semi-finals in January, fired up by those who had written him off.

"I never stopped doubting. I never stopped believing in myself," said the former world number one at the time. — ***AFP***



FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026 draw today

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The official draw for the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026 will take place at FIFA's Zurich headquarters today.

The Qatar 2026 draw, along with the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Morocco, will be live-streamed on FIFA+, TikTok and YouTube from 4:00pm Qatar time.

This will be the second year in a row in which these now annual U-17 showpiece events will be staged in Qatar and Morocco, which will host the competitions up until the 2029 instalments inclusive.

The FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026, which will be the 21st edition of the tournament, is set to be contested between November 19 and December 13, with 48 teams poised to compete for the global crown. Portugal took the trophy home at last year's event, which was the inaugural edition under the expanded format.

For the draw, the 48 qualified nations will be placed into four pots of 12 teams each, with hosts Qatar assigned to pot 1 and the remaining sides allocated according to the FIFA ranking system. This system is based on the total number of points obtained over the last five editions of the FIFA U-17 World Cup, held in 2025, 2023, 2019, 2017 and 2015.

The top teams in the ranking will be allotted to pot 1 alongside Qatar, with the remaining sides placed into pots 2, 3 and 4 accordingly. The 12 tournament groups will each consist of four teams, with one drawn from each pot.

As two of CAF's qualified teams will only be confirmed after the draw, the seeding for the tournament has yet to be finalised. For the purposes of the draw, placeholders featuring the confederation name will be used for these two teams. CAF has been allocated ten slots in total.

The 10th edition of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will be staged in Morocco from October 17 to November 7.

THE QUALIFIED TEAMS FOR QATAR 2026

AFC: Qatar (hosts), Australia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam.

Concacaf: Costa Rica, Cuba, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, USA

CONMEBOL: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay, Venezuela

OFC: Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand

UEFA: Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Serbia, Spain

Tennis players to limit French Open media duties in pay dispute

PARIS: Tennis stars will protest against perceived low pay by limiting their media duties in the build-up to the French Open, a source yesterday.

Certain players, whose names have not been announced, will only speak to the press for 15 minutes on media day at Roland Garros and will then refuse to undertake interviews with the Grand Slam tournament's TV rights holders, according to a source, corroborating reports in French daily L'Equipe.

Jannik Sinner earlier this month called for the Slam events to show "respect" to players in a row over prize money.

Players have claimed they are currently only paid 15 percent of the current revenue from the Grand Slams, asking for 22 percent instead.

The French tennis federation said yesterday that the players' decision to cut short media duties "penalises all stakeholders in the tournament - the media, broadcasters, the federation's staff, and the entire tennis family who enthusiastically follow each edition of Roland Garros". — ***AFP***

QMMF unveils Team Qatar line-up and livery ahead of historic 24 Hours of Le Mans debut

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Team Qatar will make its debut at the iconic 24 Hours of Le Mans from 10 to 14 June, marking a landmark moment for Qatari motorsport as the nation takes its place on the grid of one of the world's most prestigious and demanding races.

The programme is delivered through a strategic partnership between Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and Iron Lynx, alongside a collaboration with Mercedes-AMG Motorsport, with Team Qatar set to compete in the LMGT3 category aboard the Mercedes-AMG Motorsport LMGT3.

Taking place from 13 to 14 June at Circuit de la Sarthe in Le Mans, France, the 24 Hours of Le Mans stands as the pinnacle event of endurance racing and the centerpiece of the FIA World Endurance Championship calendar. First held in 1923, the race tests drivers, teams, and manufacturers across an uninterrupted 24 hour contest where speed, reliability, strategy, and endurance determine success.

Team Qatar will arrive at Le Mans following a rapid rise in international endurance racing competition. In a short period, the programme has established itself through a series of standout performances across leading endurance championships and events.

Recent milestones include securing the 2025 24H Series Overall championship with victories in the 992 AM Drivers Championship, 992 AM Teams Championship and Overall 992 Teams Championship. Team Qatar also claimed victory in the 24 Hours of Dubai in the 992 AM category and continued its momentum into 2026 with category wins at the 6 Hours of Abu Dhabi and the 12 Hours of Mugello.

The team has also delivered strong performances in the European Le Mans Series campaign with pole positions in Barcelona and Paul Ricard in the LMGT3 category. At the season opener in Barcelona, Abdulla Al Khelaifi earned Most Valuable Driver honours after leading the race for more than seventy percent of the event before Team Qatar ultimately secured fourth position.

The Team Qatar lineup for Le Mans brings together Qatari driver Abdulla Al Khelaifi alongside Julian Hanses and Giuliano Alesi, combining international endurance racing experience with local talent on motorsport's biggest stage.

President of Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and Lusail International Circuit (LIC) Abdulrahman bin Abdullatif Al Mannai, said: "Team Qatar's participation in the 24 Hours of Le Mans is an important moment for Qatari motorsport and reflects the country's growing presence on the international stage. The achievements and the participation of Team Qatar represents the fruition of the long term investment and vision of QMMF, and its continuous goal to inspire future generations, and creating a pathway for them to compete at the highest level of motorsport. Through our partnership with Iron Lynx and collaboration with Mercedes-AMG Motorsport, we are creating opportunities to learn, grow, and establish a stronger foundation for Qatar in global endurance racing. We are proud to see Team Qatar compete at one of motorsport's most iconic events and look forward to what this journey can achieve."



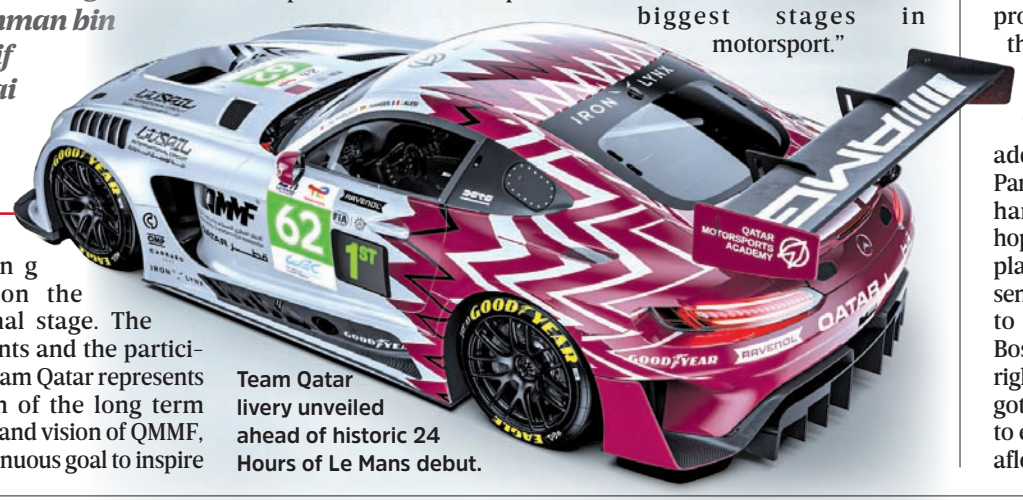
President of Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and Lusail International Circuit (LIC) Abdulrahman bin Abdullatif Al Mannai, QMMF CEO Amro Al-Hamad and LIC CEO Abdulaziz Ali Al-Mohannadi pose with Team Qatar drivers Julian Hanses (left), Abdulla Al Khelaifi (second left) and Giuliano Alesi (second right), and Iron Lynx Team Principal and CEO Andrea Piccini (right) during the unveiling event at LIC yesterday.

> *Team Qatar's participation in the 24 Hours of Le Mans is an important moment for Qatari motorsport and reflects the country's growing presence on the international stage.*
> ***Abdulrahman bin Abdullatif Al Mannai*** *QMMF and LIC President*

Iron Lynx Team Principal and CEO Andrea Piccini said: "We are proud to have joined forces with QMMF, especially for this landmark moment, the first entry in the world's most legendary race. Working with such a brilliant and dynamic federation is an important step for our team and we really appreciate the trust that they put into us."

He also added, "The QMMF achieved outstanding results in a really short time and we will give our maximum effort to help it continue its rise. We are confident in the potential of our lineup for this race and we will give our one hundred percent to deliver the best results possible."

Qatari driver Al Khelaifi said: "For all of us at Team Qatar, competing at Le Mans is a proud and exciting moment. This race represents the highest level of endurance racing and being part of it is an incredible opportunity for our team. We arrive with great respect for the challenge ahead and with a strong desire to learn from the experience, continue developing as a team, and represent Qatar in the best possible way. We are excited for the opportunity ahead and hope to make our mark on one of the biggest stages in motorsport."



Team Qatar livery unveiled ahead of historic 24 Hours of Le Mans debut.

Kolkata see off Mumbai to keep IPL playoff hopes alive

KOLKATA: A clinical bowling display, followed by a decisive stand between Manish Pandey and Rovman Powell, kept Kolkata Knight Riders in the hunt for a place in the IPL playoffs after a comfortable four-wicket win over already-eliminated Mumbai Indians yesterday.

Put in by Ajinkya Rahane on a tricky, two-paced surface of uneven bounce, five-time former champions Mumbai were blown away by pacers Saurabh Dubey and Cameron Green, who took two wickets apiece in their respective first spells, and limped to 147-8 at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

West Indian spinner Sunil Narine choked the middle order, conceding just 13 runs in four overs, and it wasn't until Corbin Bosch lashed two sixes in the final over from Kartik Tyagi did Mumbai flirt with respectability.

Mumbai lost at least three wickets in the powerplay, slumping to 46-4 after six overs, and even though skipper Hardik Pandya, back in action after missing the last three games with back spasms, and Tilak Varma put on 43, they took 49 deliveries in doing so. Coming into the game with four wins in their last five games, Kolkata lost prolific opener Finn Allen in the first over, bowled by Deepak Chahar.

Rahane and Green both fell to Bosch for the addition of just six runs. But Pandey and Powell then joined hands to thwart Mumbai's hopes of a consolation victory, playing with great common sense and maturity. Powell fell to a spectacular catch by Bosch, diving full length to his right at point, but Rinku Singh got the job done without fuss to ensure that Kolkata stayed afloat, if only just. — ***AFP***



The podium winners of the third round pose with officials.

QKC: Rizkallah edges Litaudon in 3rd round as Hassiba retains QKC lead

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Karim Rizkallah claimed a dramatic victory in Round 3 of the 2026 Qatar Karting Championship (QKC) after edging Victor Litaudon by a razor-thin margin of just 0.031 seconds in the Grand Final at Lusail International Circuit on Tuesday night.

Competing on the 1.124km Lusail track, Rizkallah completed the 12-lap race in 12 minutes 49.943 seconds, narrowly holding off Litaudon in one of the closest finishes of the season. Rizkallah also clocked the fastest lap of the race at 1:02.886.

Litaudon stayed glued to the leader throughout the race and crossed the line only fractions behind in 12:49.974, while Alfie McElroy secured third place after finishing 5.320 seconds off the pace.

Felice Carena delivered another consistent performance to finish fourth, with championship leader Tameem Hassiba rounding off the top five after a solid drive that helped him strengthen his position in the standings. Following three rounds, Hassiba continues to lead the championship with 60 points, having collected 25 points in Round 2 and 10 in Round 3 after his opening-round tally.

Litaudon sits second overall on 54 points, while Round 3 winner Rizkallah moved closer to the top after climbing to third with 52 points.

Danish Quereshi remains fourth in the standings on 44 points, while Arkadiusz Barski completes the top five with 27 points despite failing to finish in Round 3.

Al Shaqab League strengthens status with launch of third season at Longines Arena

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Al Shaqab League continues to strengthen its position as one of Qatar's leading show jumping championships, with the launch of its third season in a professional sporting atmosphere hosted at the Longines Indoor Arena at Al Shaqab. The league brings together talented riders of different levels in a fully integrated sporting experience that celebrates the spirit of competition, equestrian excellence, and passion for show jumping.

The league is organised as part of Al Shaqab's, a member of Qatar Foundation, commitment to supporting and developing equestrian sport in Qatar by providing a high-level competitive platform that contributes to refining riders' skills, discovering emerging talent, and promoting equestrian culture across different communities.

Al Shaqab League stands out as more than just a sporting competition, combining athletic challenge with world-class organization in a professional environment that allows participants to gain experience and further develop their abilities, while also offering exceptional experience for spectators and equestrian enthusiasts alike. This reflects Qatar's growing position on the international equestrian stage.



A file photo of action during an earlier edition of Al Shaqab League.

The season continues through two highly anticipated upcoming rounds, beginning with "Al Shaqab League 2" on 29-30 May 2026, and concluding with Al Shaqab League Finals from 4-6 June 2026.

The upcoming rounds are expected to witness strong competition and distinguished participation from riders, supported by the integrated organizational environment provided by Al Shaqab, which continues to establish the championship as a prominent sporting destination for show jumping enthusiasts in Qatar and the region.

Al Shaqab invites the public and equestrian fans to attend the league competitions, enjoy the atmosphere of excitement and thrill, and watch top riders compete for the season title in a championship that embodies the values of excellence, passion, and authentic horsemanship.

Taijul takes six to lead Bangladesh to Pakistan Test series sweep

SYLHET: Spinner Taijul Islam **(pictured)** took six wickets to lead Bangladesh to a 78-run win over Pakistan in the second Test and clinch a famous 2-0 series win yesterday.

Pakistan, who started the fifth day on 316-7 chasing a record 437, were bowled out for 328 in the first session in Sylhet after Mohammad Rizwan hit a valiant 94.

It was Bangladesh's first Test series win at home against Pakistan and a second successive sweep after their 2-0 triumph on Pakistani soil in 2024.

The win marked another major milestone for Bangladesh, who secured four successive Test series victories for the first time in their history.

"It's difficult to explain the emotions of that final hour because Pakistan were batting really well and we were under pressure," Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said.

"But compared to previous matches, we controlled our emotions better and avoided panic.

"Every player and member of the support staff contributed, and as captain I feel very proud of the team's work ethic."

Wicketkeeper Rizwan kept Pakistan in the hunt for an unlikely win with a 166-ball stay after the visitors had slumped to 162-5 on day four.

Rizwan put on an eighth-wicket partnership of 54 with overnight partner Sajid Khan, who made 28.



Taijul broke through to dismiss Sajid for his 18th Test five-wicket haul and pace bowler Shoriful Islam had Rizwan caught in the next over to end Pakistan's resistance.

"It's never good to lose games," said Pakistan skipper Shan Masood.

"In both matches we had significant chances, but we need to reflect on where we lost the game in batting, bowling and fielding if we want to move forward as a side."

Taijul took the final wicket of Khurram Shahzad to return second-innings figures of 6-120 and trigger the Bangladesh celebrations.

Taijul's four wickets on Tuesday had left Pakistan in deep trouble.

Former captain Babar Azam counter-attacked with 47 before wicketkeeper Litton Das produced a stunning catch off Taijul.

Captain Masood made 71, while Salman Ali Agha added 71 in a crucial 134-run sixth-wicket stand with Rizwan before Taijul broke through.

Taijul, a left-arm spinner also took 3-67 during Pakistan's first innings 232.

Litton, who was named player of the match, scored 126 in Bangladesh's first-innings 278.

Veteran batsman Mushfiqur Rahim scored 137 in the second to guide Bangladesh to 390, with contributions from Mahmudul Hasan Joy (52) and Litton (69).

The 39-year-old Mushfiqur was named player of the series for his 253 runs in two matches.

Bangladesh won the opening Test by 104 runs. — ***AFP***