

Qatar to send 243 athletes to Asian Games, eye strong show

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar will send 243 athletes to the Asian Games in Japan with the national contingent aiming for strong performances at the continent's biggest multi-sport event, which will be held from September 19 to October 4.

Officially known as the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, the 20th edition will be held across Aichi Prefecture and the city of Nagoya, with athletes from 45 countries and regions under the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) set to compete.

The Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) yesterday held a press conference to announce details of Qatar's participation and preparations for the multi-sporting event.

The Qatari contingent, comprising 184 male and 59 female athletes, marks a significant increase from the country's participation at the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, which were delayed due to COVID-19. Qatar had more than 180 athletes at the previous edition, where it won 14 medals, including five gold, six silver and three bronze.

Qatar will once again have several of its leading athletes in the line-up including high jump legend Mutaz Barshim, hurdler Abderrahman Samba and beach volleyball duo Cherif Younousse



FROM LEFT: Head of the Media Delegation Abdullah Mohammed Al-Marri, Head of Qatar's Administrative Delegation Ahmed Yousef Al-Darwish, Deputy Head of Qatar's Administrative Delegation Iman Al-Emadi and Member of the Administrative Delegation Najji Al-Omari during a press conference in Doha yesterday.

and Ahmed Tijan returning after all four struck gold in Hangzhou.

The contingent is also strengthened by former Olympic medal-winning shooter Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah – also a rally legend – star weightlifters Fares Ibrahim and Ouisal Ikhlef, and shooting duo Rashid Saleh Al Athba and Reem Al Sharshani, alongside a number of other talented athletes.

Qatar will compete in 26 sports and 32 disciplines, represented by 18 national sports federations. The sports include athletics, football, basketball, 3x3 basketball, handball, volleyball, beach volleyball, squash, padel, taekwondo, judo, artistic gymnastics, golf, shooting, swimming, jiu-jitsu, esports, sailing, equestrian sports, karate, fencing, archery, wrestling, boxing, weightlifting and table tennis.

The Aichi-Nagoya Games will also provide an important competitive platform for Qatari athletes ahead of major future events, particularly the Doha 2030 Asian Games, which Qatar is preparing to host.

Head of Qatar's Administrative Delegation Ahmed Yousef Al-Darwish said preparations for the Games had been underway since the conclusion of the previous edition in China.

Qatar's contingent includes leading athletes such as Mutaz Barshim and Abderrahman Samba.



"Preparations have been carried out as required, with a large working group coordinating with the sports federations to ensure the best conditions for our athletes and delegations. Our main goal is to represent Qatar with honour," he said.

"With the Games ending, our focus will shift to Doha, which will host the Asian Games in 2030. Aichi-Nagoya 2026 is therefore an important milestone, both competitively and in preparing for the next edition," he added.

Al-Darwish said the

participation of 59 female athletes was a positive indicator of the growing presence of Qatari women across sport.

Deputy Head of Qatar's Administrative Delegation Iman Al-Emadi said the mission had completed its preparations for the Games.

"We have coordinated with all participating sports federations and completed the necessary logistical arrangements and equipment. We hope our delegation will represent Qatar in the best possible light," she said.

"Women's participation is

also important, and I hope our female athletes will play a key role and contribute to winning medals and raising Qatar's flag high," she added.

Member of the Administrative Delegation Najji Al-Omari said Aichi-Nagoya 2026 was an important milestone for Qatari sport and an opportunity to reflect its development.

"We have completed the necessary preparations, including hotels, transportation and other logistical arrangements, to ensure the delegation is fully ready. Our aim is to provide athletes with the right conditions to focus on their competitions, perform at their best and achieve the desired results," he said.

Head of the Media Delegation Abdullah Mohammed Al-Marri also spoke at the press conference, outlining the arrangements.

Meanwhile, the Mirqab platform has been launched as an integrated hub for following Qatar's participation at Aichi-Nagoya 2026, providing news, updates and key information on the Qatari delegation.

A Qatari guest house has also been established to serve as a permanent venue throughout the Games, showcasing and promoting Qatari culture.

Qatar to meet Bahrain in U19 handball final

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DOHA: Qatar will face Bahrain today in the final of the 11th Asian Youth U19 Handball Championship in Amman, Jordan with the young Al Annabi aiming to cap an unbeaten campaign by lifting the continental title.

Qatar booked their place in the final with a 32-28 victory over Republic of Korea in the semi-finals, while Bahrain secured their place after defeating Iran 26-23.

Qatar maintained a perfect record throughout the tournament, finishing top of Group B with eight points after victories over Saudi Arabia (30-22), Kuwait (30-19), Iran (24-22) and Syria (42-29).

They continued their impressive run in the knockout stage, defeating hosts Jordan 33-13 in the quarter-finals before overcoming South Korea in the last four.

Qatar will now look to complete their campaign with the title, having already secured qualification for the 2027 Junior World Handball Championship for the seventh time in their history.

Mas wins Vuelta 9th stage to extend lead

AITANA: Spaniard Enric Mas extended his Vuelta a Espana lead, a day after previous red jersey wearer Tadej Pogacar crashed out of the race, by winning yesterday's mountainous ninth stage.

Mas beat Briton Oscar Onley in an uphill two-man sprint to claim the win and extend his lead over four-time former winner Primoz Roglic, who finished third at 12 seconds.

The Slovenian trails Spaniard Mas by 1min 18sec, with Austrian Felix Gall, who shipped 18sec in finishing fourth, third overall at 1min 39sec.

Onley, who leads the best young rider category, moved up a place to fourth at 2min 20sec as former winner Sepp Kuss tumbled three places to seventh overall after coming home 1min 44sec behind Mas.

Five-time Tour de France winner Pogacar had been dominating the race until he crashed heavily on Saturday, breaking his collarbone.

He was leading Mas by 3min 50sec when he fell as he also suffered a concussion. He is due to undergo surgery on his broken collarbone.

"Now I understand Tadej -- the red jersey gives you wings," smiled Mas, who said that he felt in the form of his life. — AFP

Paris FC thump Nice in Ligue 1

PARIS: Former Chelsea boss Lionel Rosenior led his new charges Paris FC to a 3-0 home thumping of Nice in Ligue 1 yesterday.

Newly-recruited Malian striker Lassine Sinayoko broke the deadlock from the penalty-spot on 20 minutes, Samir Chergui doubled that after a blistering counter-attack after 51 minutes, while Vincent Marchetti pounced on a loose ball late on to make it 3-0.

Former Strasbourg boss Rosenior was brought back to France following his torrid experience at Chelsea by the multi-billionaire Arnault family, owners of the Louis Vuitton brand and Paris FC.

After opening the season with a draw at Troyes, the win lifted PFC top of Ligue 1 ahead of later matches. — AFP

Wathnan Racing's Leading Change stays unbeaten with Travers Stakes triumph

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DOHA: Leading Change, the unbeaten three-year-old colt, took another major step forward by winning the Gr.1 Travers Stakes over 2000m on dirt at Saratoga yesterday.

Trained by Brad H Cox, ridden by Manuel Franco, and owned by Wathnan Racing, Leading Change maintained his perfect record with a very determined performance at the highest level.

The colt came into the race unbeaten after only two career starts.

Leading Change broke sharply and went straight to the front in the early stages before allowing Napoleon Solo to take over after around two furlongs.



Manuel Franco then settled the colt in a prominent position, travelling close to the leader as the field made its way down the back

straight. Around three furlongs from home, Leading Change was pushed along and briefly looked outpaced as Napoleon

Solo continued to travel strongly in front. However, the colt responded well to his jockey and began to make progress again approaching the final two furlongs.

Napoleon Solo still held the advantage entering the final furlong, but Leading Change continued to close under pressure. He hung slightly to his left inside the final 110 yards, but kept finding more and gradually reduced the gap.

In the final strides, Leading Change got the better of Napoleon Solo to regain the lead and score by half a length. Napoleon Solo finished second, with Golden Tempo staying on to take third.

In-form Marquez storms to Aragon MotoGP victory

ALCANIZ: Marc Marquez claimed a dominant victory at the Aragon MotoGP to put himself firmly in the title hunt yesterday, with Pedro Acosta finishing second and Marco Bezzecchi third.

Seven-time MotoGP champion Marquez has a strong record at the MotorLand circuit and climbed to second in the overall standings behind Jorge Martin, who came fifth.

Last year's winner Marquez trails his Spanish compatriot by just 19 points, knocking Italian Bezzecchi down to third, 24 points behind Martin.

It was Marquez's fourth win of the season, all of those



coming within the last six races as he reigned his title bid in spectacular fashion, and a sixth victory from six races for Ducati

in Aragon between sprints and Grands Prix.

"Once I got the lead I put my foot down and turned up the

pressure and opened the gap so that there would be no doubt about victory," said home favourite Marquez, who finished 1.754 seconds clear of the field.

Aprilia riders Bezzecchi and Martin started well and took a 1-2 but Marquez quickly repassed Martin to move into second.

The Spaniard admitted he made a "huge mistake" by forgetting to turn off his rear ride height device after Turn 1 at the start, allowing Bezzecchi and Martin to usurp him.

Bezzecchi built an advantage of eight-tenths but Marquez snatched the lead on lap six at Turn 15, the pair

brushing wheels out of the corner, allowing KTM rider Acosta in to snatch second.

"We were going 330 or 340 (kilometres per hour), and it's incredible with these bikes because there was a moment when we were side by side, I wanted to pull away, he wanted to pull away and couldn't. The bikes were locked together," explained Marquez.

Bezzecchi said his rival had more power to help him capitalise in that crucial moment.

"I heard Marc Marquez's engine when we were side by side on the straight, but with his experience and the extra power of his bike he was able to get the

better of me," said Bezzecchi.

Francesco Bagnaia and Franco Morbidelli both crashed out, while Raul Fernandez retired to the garage.

Marquez extended his advantage to more than a second on lap 14 and continued to pull away from Acosta, stretching it to 1.4sec by lap 16 and finishing nearly 1.8sec ahead.

Marc's brother Alex Marquez came in fourth, ahead of Martin, Fermin Aldeguer and Fabio Di Giannantonio, who is fourth overall. Injured Japanese rider Ai Ogura did not compete and dropped to fifth in the standings. — AFP

Qatar GP: Formula 1 Paddock Club sells out as ticket demand surges

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The F1 Paddock Club for the Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2026 has officially sold out, reflecting the strong demand building ahead of the penultimate round of the FIA Formula 1 World Championship.

The Qatar Grand Prix taking place from 27 to 29 November, will be the penultimate race of the 2026 season, which has delivered thrilling wheel-to-wheel racing throughout.

As the season enters its second half, five different drivers from three teams have already stood on the podium, ensuring there is still everything to play for as the championship battle intensifies.

With Paddock Club now fully booked, fans are encouraged to act quickly across the remaining ticket categories, several of which are already selling out.

The Qatar GP taking place from 27 to 29 November, will be the penultimate race of the 2026 season.



Tickets remain available across a full range of three-day categories for the race weekend, from grandstand seating around the circuit to general admission access at Lusail Hill, though quantity is limited, with one section of the Main Grandstand

already sold out. Every ticket includes entry to the Fanzone, food court, post-race concerts, and merchandise outlets, along with complimentary shuttle service, free parking, and a dedicated taxi pick up and drop off zone.

Tickets for the remaining Main Grandstand sections are available for QR2,000, while North Grandstand tickets are priced at QR1,500.

Tickets for the Turn 2, Turn 3, and Turn 16 Grandstands are available for QR1,000 each, while General Admission tickets for Lusail Hill are available for QR600.

For fans still seeking a premium experience, LIC's Premiere Hospitality offering remains open, including Lusail Hill Lounge, F1 Experiences Champions Club, and the newly added Novikov Doha experience, featuring the restaurant's signature Pan Asian and Italian menu.

Tickets and hospitality packages are available exclusively through the official LIC website at tickets.lcsc.qa.

Serie A: Como spoil Allegri's Napoli home debut

NAPLES: Como pulled off their latest feat of Serie A giant-killing yesterday as a 2-1 win at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona ruined Napoli head coach Massimiliano Allegri's home debut.

Martin Baturina fired Cesc Fabregas' enterprising side into a deserved lead in the 17th minute as chances fell at both ends in soaring temperatures in Naples.

Rasmus Hojlund's brilliant strike drew the hosts level on the half-hour mark, but his good work was quickly undone when a defensive mix-up led to Anastasios Douvikas scoring for the second game in a row.

Kevin De Bruyne, who inspired Napoli to an opening win over Genoa with a goal and assist from the bench, was unable to turn the tide after coming on early in the second half.

Como survived late pressure to hold on as Stanislav Lobotka's stoppage-time leveller was ruled out for offside.

Fabregas' side upset the established order in Italian football last season by qualifying for the Champions League for the first time, where they were drawn against the likes of Paris Saint-Germain, Barcelona and Manchester United last week.

Como, who were held by Udinese in their opener, move up to four points in the Serie A table, two behind early frontrunners AC Milan and Juventus, while last season's runners-up Napoli remain on three points. — **AFP**

Fernandes treble inspires Man United rout; Chelsea beat Brighton in thriller

LONDON: Bruno Fernandes starred with a hat-trick in Manchester United's 5-2 rout of Ipswich, while Chelsea extended Xabi Alonso's perfect start with a thrilling 4-3 win against Brighton yesterday.

Fernandes' dynamic display ensured United bounced back from their humiliating 2-0 defeat at Hull on the opening weekend of the Premier League season.

Michael Carrick's side were in danger of another embarrassing loss to a promoted club when Leif Davis put Ipswich ahead at Old Trafford with a 29th minute strike that cannoned in off the crossbar. But the Fernandes show started in the 40th minute after Marcelino Nunez's slip allowed Matheus Cunha to pick out the United captain for a sumptuous finish.

United went in front in the 56th minute through Jacob Greaves' own goal.

Greaves deflected Harry Maguire's shot into his own net, with Ipswich's appeals for handball against the United defender snubbed by VAR.

Completing a miserable five minutes for Greaves, the Ipswich defender conceded a penalty with his foul on Cunha and United captain Fernandes stepped up to slot home from the spot.

Fernandes sealed his treble in the 68th minute, sweeping in from close-range after Kobbie Mainoo and Bryan Mbeumo had shots blocked. Fernandes was not finished and Bryan Mbeumo scored from his pass with a lob that clipped the bar and dropped over the line in the 82nd minute.

Chuba Akpom's stoppage-time tap-in was little



Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes (centre) takes a penalty kick to score the team's third goal yesterday.

PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

Chelsea 4 (Lavia 4, Neto 14, Pedro 32, Palmer 74) **Brighton 3** (Yalcouye 35, Pedro 63-og, Gross 90+6)
Leeds 1 (Calvert-Lewin 79)
Brentford 1 (Schade 41)
Manchester United 5 (Fernandes 40, 61-pen, 68, Greaves 56-og, Mbeumo 82) **Ipswich 2** (Davis 29)
Sunderland 1 (Isidor 75) **Fulham 0**

consolation for out-classed Ipswich. Joao Pedro, Morgan Rogers and Cole Palmer all scored when Alonso's reign as Chelsea boss kicked off with a 3-2 win at Fulham on Monday.

And Pedro and Palmer were back on target, while Rogers teed up Chelsea's second goal, scored by Pedro Neto, as the Blues held off a rally from Brighton at Stamford Bridge.

Emiliano Martinez made his Chelsea debut in goal just hours after sealing his move from Aston Villa.

Brighton were 4-0 up inside 31 minutes against Villa last weekend, but this time found themselves three goals down in just over half an hour.

Romeo Lavia profited from a

mix-up between Bart Verbruggen and Mats Wieffer to prod in the opening goal from a corner. Neto then turned in Rogers's cross before Pedro rounded off a Chelsea counter-attack that began inside their own box.

Martinez was beaten moments later by a blistering volley from Malick Yalcouye.

Pedro turned Pascal Gross's cross into his own net just after the hour mark. A moment of genius from Palmer sparked wild celebrations from Alonso as he curled into the bottom corner from outside the box after a solo run across the Brighton defence.

Gross headed in a stoppage-time consolation for Brighton.

Brentford were on course to also maintain their perfect start when Kevin Schade's audacious flick opened the scoring away to Leeds. But Dominic Calvert-Lewin turned in Lukas Nmecha's driven cross to salvage a point and Leeds' unbeaten start to the campaign.

Sunderland got off the mark with a 1-0 victory over Fulham thanks to Wilson Isidor's winner 15 minutes from time. — **AFP**



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe (left) and Malaga's Carlos Puga fight for the ball.

Bellingham and Mbappe fire as Real Madrid ease to Malaga win

MADRID: Jude Bellingham and Kylian Mbappe both struck as Real Madrid's perfect start to La Liga under Jose Mourinho continued in a 4-0 cruise against Malaga yesterday.

Los Blancos scored three times in just over 10 minutes in the first half to open up a comfortable lead over the Andalusian visitors to the Santiago Bernabeu.

Sandwiched between Bellingham and Mbappe's strikes was an own goal by Malaga goalkeeper Alfonso Herrero, while Arda Guler tapped in a fourth late on.

After two victories in their opening two games and with superstar trio Mbappe, Bellingham and Vinicius Junior starting the season well, Madrid's confidence was high.

Mourinho rotated, making five changes to the team that started their opening matches, giving Trent Alexander-Arnold and Marc Cucurella among others their first starts this season.

Bellingham opened the scoring after 19 minutes with an excellent solo goal, beating two defenders before drilling through Herrero's legs. Bellingham forced the second goal seven minutes later, after Herrero denied Mbappe.

The England international headed the rebound towards goal and defender Carlos Puga desperately tried to clear off the line, with the ball bouncing in off the unfortunate stopper Herrero.

Mbappe rattled home the third with a volley from Alexander-Arnold's cross for his fourth goal of the campaign, leaving him top of Spain's scoring charts.

Promoted side Malaga threatened just before half-time, with Rafa Rodriguez striking the post after a corner was played to him, and Chupe hitting the side netting.

Madrid cruised through the second half and only extended their lead late on, when Vinicius teed up Guler to finish from point-blank range. — **AFP**

Messi's fantastic four as Miami snap winless streak

MIAMI: Lionel Messi (pictured) scored four goals as Inter Miami snapped their five-game winless streak with a 7-1 thrashing of struggling Montreal in Major League Soccer on Saturday.

Miami have endured a rocky spell since the resumption of play following the World Cup finals, losing four of their previous five games heading into Saturday's clash in Florida.

But the reigning MLS Cup champions got back to winning ways with a confident performance against Montreal, who are languishing second from bottom in the Eastern Conference.

Brazil international Casemiro bagged his first goal for the champions with a 20th minute header at the Nu Stadium. Montreal though hit back with a 37th-minute goal from Fabian Herbers.

But Miami did not have to wait long to regain the lead, and went 2-1 up when a low curling free-kick from Messi somehow bamboozled Montreal goalkeeper Thomas Gillier in the 40th minute.

Messi then extended Miami's lead shortly after half-time. He played a key role in



Miami's fourth, laying on a superbly flighted pass to send former Barcelona team-mate Luis Suarez bearing down on goal. Suarez made no mistake with the finish to seal an emphatic win.

Messi secured his hat-trick on 83 minutes when he latched on to a Rodrigo De Paul pass in the 83rd minute and delicately dinked over the advancing Gillier to make it 5-1.

Alex Shaw added a sixth goal in the 89th minute, rifling home a low shot from outside the area. But there was still time for Messi to score a fourth, the veteran curling in a trademark free kick from the edge of the area in the dying minutes of stoppage time. — **AFP**

Pegula shakes off nerves, Ruse in US Open win

NEW YORK: World number three Jessica Pegula conquered US Open first-round nerves to dispatch Elena-Gabriela Ruse yesterday, kicking off the action on Arthur Ashe Stadium yesterday.

Pegula broke Romania's Ruse twice in each set on the way to a 6-3, 6-2 triumph, but it was less straightforward than the score indicated as the 32-year-old veteran felt the weight of playing first on the cavernous show court.

"Oh yeah, I was so nervous today, always the first round of a slam," said Pegula, the 32-year-old who is the highest ranked American either the men's or women's draw in the final Grand Slam of the year.

"It's an amazing honor," she said of being given the first match on Ashe.

"It's an honor to hold that title, walking out onto Ashe



Jessica Pegula returns against Elena-Gabriela Ruse during their first-round match yesterday.

opening day, first match, it's amazing."

Pegula is chasing her first Grand Slam title. She came closest with a runner-up finish to Aryna Sabalenka at the 2024 US Open, and she fell to the Belarusian in the semi-finals last year.

Pegula saved the only break point she faced, but her nerves showed as she converted just two of her 14 break point chances in the opening set.

That was enough, and she was an efficient two-for-four on break opportunities in the

second. She gave herself triple match point with a crisp forehand winner to the corner and after Ruse saved two with booming serves secured the win when the Romanian put a forehand into the net.

With the first round now spread over three days, Pegula was looking forward to a couple of days off with a confidence-boosting win under her belt.

"I got to sit around the site and watch everybody else freak out for the next two days," she said. — **AFP**

England wrap up Pakistan series win

LONDON: Ollie Robinson led the way once more as England clinched a series win over Pakistan with a thumping 194-run win in the second Test at Lord's yesterday despite Saud Shakeel's fine 97.

Pakistan were dismissed for 194 on the fourth day, having been set an improbable victory target of 389, to drive England an unbeatable 2-0 lead in a three-match series.

This was England's first multi-match Test series win since a 2-1 success in New Zealand more than a year ago.

Player-of-the-match Robinson finished with overall figures of 8-35 in 26 overs, his 4-24 yesterday following the seamer's sensational 4-11 during Pakistan's meagre first-innings 110.

For Joe Root, it was another dominant win at the start of his second spell as England's permanent Test captain after Ben Stokes's shock international retirement, with yesterday's



England's Ollie Robinson appeals successfully for a LBW decision against Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan yesterday.

success following an innings and 103-run rout of Pakistan at the skipper's Headingley home ground last week.

"It feels good and the way we have done it as well has been pretty convincing," said Root.

"Then to have three guys (Jofra Archer, Josh Tongue, Gus Atkinson) who can bowl 90 mph (145 kmh) and Ollie

Robinson looks horrendous (to face) in these conditions," he added, with England looking to complete a whitewash in next month's third Test at Edgbaston.

Earlier, Mohammad Abbas finally achieved a coveted place on the Lord's honours boards with a five-wicket haul as England were dismissed for 208. — **AFP**