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# Qatar defeat Saudi Arabia to top group in Asian Olympic qualifiers



Qatar's high jump star and world champion Mutaz Essa Barshim greets the Qatar handball players during their match against Saudi Arabia at Duhail Sports Hall on Monday.



Jassim Rashid al Buenain, Secretary-General, Qatar Olympic Committee, Dr Thani bin Abdulrahman al Kuwari, the Second Vice-President of QOC, and International Handball Federation (IHF) Vice-President Bader al Theyab watch the action at the Duhail Sports Hall on Monday.

**TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK**  
 DOHA

QATAR scored a rollicking 29-20 win over Saudi Arabia to finish their preliminary stage of Asian men's handball Tokyo 2020 Olympics qualification unbeaten at the Duhail Sports Hall on Monday.

The win saw Qatar, who had already qualified for the semi-finals, top Group A with six points from three wins.

Saudi Arabia finished second with two victories over Hong Kong and India, and a loss to Qatar.

The tournament sees eight teams competing for a single ticket to the Tokyo Games.

It was a superb show from the home side which led 13-9 at half time.

Besides the top sports officials of Qatar Olympic Committee and International Handball Federation (IHF) Vice-President Bader al Theyab, the team was also egged on by Qatar's high jump world champion Mutaz Essa Barshim, who recently won gold at the IAAF World Athletics Championships in Doha.

Qatar had defeated India 40-10 on Saturday, and handed a 49-14 defeat to



A Saudi Arabia defender tries to stop a Qatari player.

Hong Kong in the opening match last Thursday.

The three-time Asian champions and 2015 World Championships runners-up will play the semi-final either against Iran or South Korea on October 24.

Team Qatar were drawn in Group A alongside Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and India while the second group in-

cludes Bahrain, South Korea, Iran, and Kuwait.

While the champions of the tournament will receive a direct qualification for Olympics, the second-placed team will have to compete in the play-offs next April.

It is the second time in a row that Qatar is hosting the Asian Men's Handball Qualifiers for the Olympic Games.



A Qatar player breaks past Saudi Arabia defence to score during their Asian men's handball Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games qualifying tournament Group A match at the Duhail Sports Hall on Monday. Qatar won 29-20.

## Short-handed Al Sadd bullish about chances against Al Hilal

**AFC/TNN**  
 RIYADH

BUOYED by their 4-1 away win in the reverse fixture, complacency might be Al Hilal's biggest obstacle as they host Al Sadd at the King Saud University Stadium in the second leg of the 2019 AFC Champions League semi-final on Tuesday.

Three weeks earlier, Al Hilal had come from a goal down to record a famous 4-1 win in Doha.

Bafetimbi Gomis had converted into his own net 15 minutes in, but made amends in perfect style, bagging a brace, while Ali Al Bulayhi and Mohammed al Shalhoub netted too to put the Saudi side in a comfortable position ahead of Tuesday's return leg.

And if turning a three-goal home disadvantage was already a complicated task for Xavi's Al Sadd, they will have to do so without their star striker Baghdad Bounedjah and 2018 AFC Player of the Year Abdelkarim Hassan. Both players are suspended for Tuesday's match.

"The ball is still on the pitch. We will have chances

**Facing an uphill task, the Wolves will be sans suspended duo of Hassan and Bounedjah in the ACL semis 2nd leg**

and we will compete until the last breath. I know the result looks difficult to achieve, but we will do everything we can to achieve our goal especially since we are missing Hassan and Bounedjah. But we are one team and we will work as

a group," Xavi said on Monday.

"The team is ready to play, there is nothing impossible in football. We reached the semi-finals because of our performance so far and we will work to put on the best

we have in tomorrow's game."

Remarkably, this is not the first time in the 2019 AFC Champions League that Al Hilal went into a home second leg having scored four past their opponents.

Al Sadd, meanwhile, have

been in poor form in their recent travels to Saudi Arabia. Their most recent trip to the Kingdom saw them fall to a 2-1 defeat at the hands of Al Nassr in the quarter-finals first leg. Prior to that, they had also lost to Al Ahli 2-0 in the group stage.

Xavi's men have not featured in the QNB Stars League since October 5 when they were beaten by arch-rivals Al

Rayyan 4-2 in the derby, a result that left them fifth in the table with 12 points from five matches. Though, they have two matches pending.

"Al Hilal is not the reason for the loss of Al Rayyan in the league, but we lost due to the mistakes we made," Xavi said when asked about Al Sadd's recent struggles. Everyone remembers only the result, but this is the case in football

at all levels. We have to think about the future and not stop to develop and achieve the goals of the team."

The reigning Qatar champions are staring at a second consecutive semi-final exit, having been eliminated at the same stage by Persepolis last year. They remain, however, the last West Asian side to lift the trophy back in 2011.

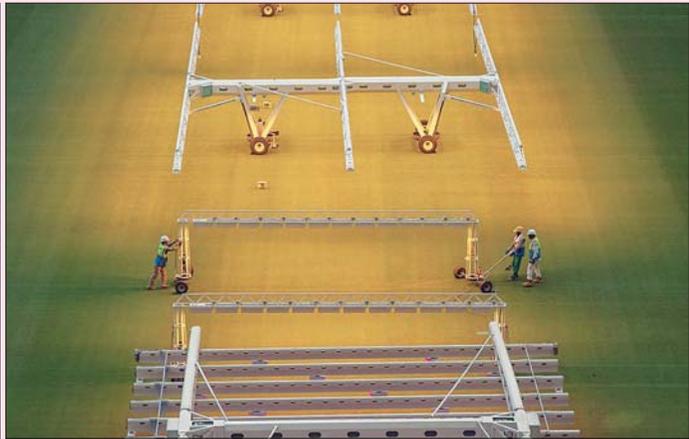
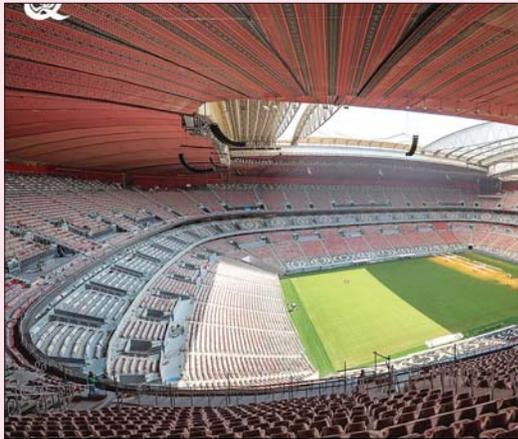


Al Sadd coach Xavi Hernandez speaks to journalists in Riyadh on Monday ahead of their AFC Champions League semi-final second leg match against Al Hilal.



Action from the semi-final first leg played at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha on October 1.

Road to 2022: Al Bayt Stadium almost complete



The Al Bayt Stadium, one of the eight venues for FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar, is almost ready and is being given the final touches. The Supreme Committee for Legacy & Delivery tweeted pictures highlighting the near completion.

# Criticism 'bothers me' says Zidane ahead of crunch Galatasaray game

**Madrid head to Turkey in desperate need of a victory after one point taken from two games in the Champions League**

AFP  
ISTANBUL

ZINEDINE Zidane has admitted he feels irritated by the criticism of him as Real Madrid coach as his side prepares for their crunch Champions League game away at Galatasaray on Tuesday.

Madrid head to Turkey in desperate need of a victory after one point taken from two games has left them sitting bottom of Group A and facing a fight to make the last 16.

A surprise league defeat by newly-promoted Real Mallorca on Saturday has put the pressure back on Zidane, who led Madrid to three consecutive Champions League triumphs in his first spell in charge at the club.

"Football forgets what you've done in the past, that's life," Zidane said at a press conference in Istanbul on Monday.

"And for me it's the same, it's all about the present. The past is the past."

"I'm not going to tell you that what they say doesn't bother me because it bothers me but I can't prevent people giving their opinions. This is a big game in a big stadium and we know the situation."

Eden Hazard is available again after missing the game against Mallorca following the birth of his fourth child and Toni Kroos is also in the squad after recovering from injury.

But Gareth Bale and Luka Modric have not travelled as they are still suffering from calf and thigh problems respectively.

Some reports in Spain have even suggested Zidane could be sacked if Madrid fail to deliver on Tuesday.

"I don't know, you have to ask other people about that," Zidane said. "I want to be here forever but the situation can change."

Despite their bumpy start, Madrid's loss to Mallorca was their first in La Liga this season as they sit second in the table, one point behind Barcelona.

"Everyone knows that the squad is with Zidane to the death, no matter what," said captain Sergio Ramos.

"We have to show we are a united team and one that continues to trust its coach. Madrid always respects and the way to do it is respecting."

Jose Mourinho has again been mentioned as a potential



Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane attends a training session ahead of the match against Galatasaray at the TT All Sports Complex in Istanbul on Monday. (AFP)

successor to Zidane.

"We only think about winning tomorrow, nothing else and not what certain people claim," Ramos said. "It is true the measuring stick is sometimes different depending on what it measures."

Ramos added: "It would be easy to say Zidane will stay until the end of the season and there would be no arguments. I know that rumours are interesting for the press but talking about possible coaches is tedious."

Zidane said nothing surpris-

es him about the pressure he is under. "It's always like that," he said. "I've spent 18 years here and the same thing happened to me as a player."

"I know where we are and that there is going to be pressure. The only thing is to prepare for the game but whatever happens tomorrow is not going to change anything."

Galatasaray also have one point in the group after they drew away at Club Brugge and lost at home to Paris Saint-Germain.

## Arab Gulf Cup draw to be held on Wednesday

QNA  
DOHA

THE competition committee of the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation met in Doha on Monday and approved that Khalifa International Stadium will host the 24th edition of the championship which starts November 27.

At its meeting, the committee also adopted the university stadiums to hold team trainings and said that a reserve stadium next to Khalifa International Stadium will be selected soon.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Humaid al Shaibani and attended by the committee's members Ahmed al Harami from Qatar, Hamid bin Sulaiman al Jabri (Oman), Shihab Ahmed Jabara (Iraq) and Ali Hussein al Mutairi (Kuwait).

The meeting stressed on contacting the local organizing committee of the Gulf 24 of the Qatar Football Association (QFA), which is chaired by QFA Vice President Saud al Mohannadi.

It also affirmed the holding of the tournament with the participation of five teams, the adoption of the mechanism of work of the committee during the course of the tournament and the presentation of the mechanism of the tournament draw. The draw will be held on Wednesday morning in Doha.

## CR7 happy with 'more attacking' Juve

JUVENTUS forward Cristiano Ronaldo gave coach Maurizio Sarri a vote of confidence on Monday when he said he was happy with the "more attacking" approach the club had adopted since Sarri came on board in the summer.

"I think the team is getting better," said Ronaldo on the eve of Juve's Champions League Group D meeting with Lokomotiv Moscow. "We are getting more and more confident. We are playing a different brand of football, more attacking. I like the way he (Sarri) wants the team to play. We are creating more opportunities, we have more confidence in ourselves, I'm happy with these changes. Maybe we could score a little more but I'm proud of what we are doing."

So far this season, Ronaldo has scored five goals in nine games and was on target at the weekend when Juventus beat Bologna 2-1 to consolidate top spot in Serie A.

"My role hasn't changed, perhaps I have a bit more freedom," he said. "I am happy because, bit by bit, we are getting to where Juventus ought to be. We have a different style, a different system, new players. We changed in order to improve." (AFP)



## BEING FIT

### Mbappe set for bit-part role for PSG against Club Brugge

BRUGES: Still fighting for full fitness France World Cup winner Kylian Mbappe will feature for Paris Saint-Germain in their Champions League group game at Club Brugge on Tuesday, but will not play 90 minutes according to coach Thomas Tuchel.

The lightning quick 20-year-old forward has been suffering from a thigh strain since early August but came off the bench to score against Nice at the weekend. "It's too early for him to play 90 minutes so we need to work out whether we want him to start the match or finish it," said Tuchel on Monday. "It's the same with Edi," he said referring to Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani, who has had a nagging hip complaint.

Mbappe has tried out his thigh three times in his bid for fitness with cameo appearances at Bordeaux and Galatasaray. "They have been out for a long time and while others have seized their chance we are stronger now they are back," said Tuchel. (AFP)

# Fit Tiger Woods hints he'll pick himself for the Presidents Cup

AFP  
NARASHINO, JAPAN

TIGER Woods said on Monday his fitness was ahead of schedule after arthroscopic knee surgery, and dropped a heavy clue he might use one of his four Presidents Cup captain's picks on himself.

"I'm probably a week early. My season had ended a little bit earlier than I had expected it," the 43-year-old major winner told reporters at Accordia Golf, Narashino Country Club near Tokyo before coming through an exhibition match unscathed.

"I had the procedure a little bit early and got ahead of it," he added.

Woods is in Japan this week to play in the US PGA Tour's inaugural Zozo Championship, the second \$9.75 million tournament of an all-\$30 million three-event Asian swing.

He intends to end his year by playing in the Hero World Challenge beginning Decem-



Tiger Woods (right) and Hideki Matsuyama prepare at the first hole tee at a "Japan Skins" pre-match ahead of the 2020 Championship in Inza on Monday. (AFP)

ber 4, before going to Australia to captain Team USA in the Presidents Cup a week later.

Woods, who completed a remarkable return from years of injury and personal problems to win the US Masters in April, said his knee had been giving him more pain as the year wore on.

"It progressively got worse and got to the point where it was affecting even reading putts," the 43-year-old Woods said.

Woods has a large depth of talent from which to make his four captains picks ahead of the match against Ernie Els's international team at Royal Melbourne.

"I've been pretty consumed

## Man City still not clinical enough to win Champions League: Guardiola

AFP  
MANCHESTER

MANCHESTER City manager Pep Guardiola believes the English champions are still not strong enough at either end of the field to count themselves as realistic contenders to win the Champions League for the first time.

"City are the bookmakers' favourite to finally win the biggest prize in European football after more than a decade of huge investment from the club's owners and in Guardiola's fourth season in charge."

However, the Catalan, who has won the Champions League twice as a manager and once as a player at Barcelona, thinks City will be punished in the latter stages of the competition if they continue the inconsistent form they have shown so far in the Premier League this season.

"We miss a lot of chances in the final third and we have to do that, to be clinical. When the people say about the Champions League being the target, we are still not ready," said Guardiola, whose side host Atlanta at the Etihad on Tuesday.



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola. (AFP)

"In this competition you have to be strong in the boxes and this season we are not incredibly strong in the boxes. Of course we have time."

City have been beset by injuries in defence and suffered shock defeats to Norwich and Wolves this season.

"When you play good, you defend less. When our build-up is bad, when you don't play good, you concede a lot," he added. "What happens when we make our incredible, fluid game from the build-up? We concede few (chances). When our build-up is wrong, we make mistakes in the first pass, we are nervous like what happened against Wolves...we concede a lot."

Professional Boxing



Sheikh Fahad bin Khalid bin Jassim Al Thani being declared the winner after he knocked out Romanian Marius Petre Sorin in the third round in Spain on Saturday.

## Qatar's Sheikh Fahad knocks out Sorin in Spain

QNA MADRID

QATAR'S professional boxer Sheikh Fahad bin Khalid bin Jassim Al Thani continued his winning spree defeating Romanian veteran Marius Petre Sorin on Saturday.

The first Qatari professional boxer notched up his 13th straight successive victory. The super welterweight boxer was 300-odd km east of the Spanish capital, going up against Romanian veteran Marius Petre Sorin.

A month after celebrating his 32nd birthday with a victory in Madrid, the super welterweight boxer won by a knockout in the third round to stay unbeaten in his pro career and pick up his second victory against hosts Kuwait.

In July, Sheikh Fahad had beaten Sorin via a technical knockout in Leon, Spain.

It was also his third victory with Frank Botec as his head coach. Botec, who has the Qatari boxer's longtime trainer, took over from Cuban coach Ismael Salas.

# Fencing bronze for Qatar at GCC Women's Games in Kuwait

## Basketball team beats Bahrain

QNA KUWAIT

QATAR'S women fencing team clinched the bronze medal at the prestigious sixth edition of GCC Women's Games 2019 which got underway in Kuwait on Sunday.

Team Qatar opened the campaign with a bronze medal in the foil class (individual) secured by fencer Ameerah Abo Jobara, while her teammate, Lina al Boainin reached the last eight stage.

On the same track of victory, Team Qatar defeated Bahraini counterparts 74-64 in the basketball event on Sunday.

Qatari duo, Doha and Zikryat Rashid Al Abdullah alongside sisters Sara and Haya Fadi Diyab were due to compete in the Epee and Sabre classes. While Qatar's handball team will lock horns against hosts Kuwait.

The ten-day games are bringing together six GCC nations competing in 11 events.

Team Qatar delegation to the games is chaired by Lowla al Marri, President of Qatar Women's Sport Committee, accompanied by 132 athletes, administrators and technical staff members.



Qatar's Ameerah Abo Jobara in action in the individual foil class of the fencing event in Kuwait which she won to claim the bronze medal on Sunday.



Ameerah Abo Jobara with her bronze medal and the Qatar fencing team.



The Qatar women's basketball team in action against Bahrain. Qatar won the match 74-64.

# WorldSBK set for Qatar closer

Rea vs Bautista, the final face-off of 2019: Who will master Losail International Circuit?

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK DOHA

AFTER 34 races, 12 rounds, visits to ten countries across five continents, unbelievable comebacks, shattered records, public rivalries, controversy, the occasional inclement weather, laughs, tears and, most importantly, some phenomenal racing, it has arrived at the final destination – The MOTUL FIM Superbike World Championship lands in Qatar where fireworks are sure to fly once again between the top contenders, as they have done nonstop for the past eight months.

The fierce back-and-forth between Jonathan Rea (Kawasaki Racing Team WorldSBK) and Alvaro Bautista (Aruba.it Racing – Ducati) promises to continue for several years to come, but for now this will be the final time they face off in their current colours. Bautista will serve the new HRC squad from 2020 onwards, closing a brief yet intense chapter in red (whilst perhaps creating one of the biggest 'what ifs' in WorldSBK history).

While pure dominance led Rea to at least three of his previous four world titles, this one has undoubtedly been marked by his consistency, even in defeat. Yet the Northern Irishman still has a chance to match his total number of victories from 2018 – albeit in 37 races rather than 25 – and trump his nemesis in the process. Rea has won 14 races, Bautista 16; the rest is self-explanatory.

It remains to be seen which bike takes best to the Losail International Circuit, 5.360km-long and with a kil-

ometre-plus start-finish straight, one would think it would suit the Borgo Panigale rocket and therefore Bautista; but Rea, let's not forget, is undefeated here since 2017.

Their respective teammates will also be looking to end the season on a high. Chaz Davies (Aruba.it Racing – Ducati) will be sat on the V4 R next year and seems to be coming to terms with the package – what better way to solidify your claim as a title contender for next year than to win the closing races? It wouldn't be the first time the Welsh-

man sits atop of the Losail podium; nor would it be for Leon Haslam (Kawasaki Racing Team WorldSBK), who ended his previous full-time stint in WorldSBK with a victory in Qatar. Instrumental to KRT retaining the Teams Championship, a first win in green would be a fine finale to his Kawasaki comeback.

Honour is always on the line in the final showdown of the year, but for many riders the stakes are much, much higher than that. Just six points separate three riders in the battle for bronze: current Pata Yamaha duo Alex Lowes

and Michael van der Mark, and future Pata Yamaha star Toprak Razgatlioglu (Turkish Pucetti Racing).

Two of them have won races this season; the other remains ahead in the standings. The two men in blue hold 15 podium finishes between them; Razgatlioglu has claimed 13 alone yet still trails them on points. It's been a stand-out season for all three – but there's only room for one on the highlight reel.

Early 2019 saw the birth of several new projects in WorldSBK: Round 13, accordingly, will be the moment to evaluate where they stand one year on. For Tom Sykes (BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team), his first year after trading the green and black leathers for white ones can only be deemed a success. A win under the floodlights would cap off this first season quite nicely.

This has also been the first year of the triple-pronged Moriwaki-Althea-Honda project. A season somewhat marred by injuries and disappointing results has taken an upturn in the last couple of rounds thanks to Leon Camier, who has managed to close the gap with the leading machines. More top ten results are on the cards for the Englishman.

The final Round of 2019 is waiting for you! Race 1 will take place on Friday, 25th October at 8pm, with Saturday 26th hosting the Tissot Superspole Race 4pm and Race 2 8pm.

All tickets have access to the Pad-dock and Pit Walk on Friday and Saturday. Children under 11 years old have free entrance when accompanied by an adult. Tickets at www.lsc.qa

## CRICKET CORNER

# India on brink of series sweep, Elgar suffers concussion

AFF RANCHI

PAGE duo Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav had India on the brink of a series whitewash after South Africa crumpled while following-on in the third Test, as batsman Dean Elgar was diagnosed with concussion after suffering a wincing blow to the helmet.

At the end of the third day the tourists were on 132-8, trailing India by 203 runs, with replacement batsman Theunis de Bruyn on 30 and Anrich Nortje, on five.

De Bruyn came in under the new concussion sub rule after opener Elgar took a nasty hit on the helmet from a short Yadav delivery and had to retire hurt on 16. The impact left the opener shaken as he lay on the ground getting physio assistance.

South Africa said late Monday that Elgar was "assessed by the team's medical staff and diagnosed with concussion". Events did not improve for South Africa, however, with Nortje claiming three wickets, including South Africa skipper Faf du Plessis for four, while Yadav struck twice.

Zabiyar Hamza, top scorer in

## SCOREBOARD

**INDIA (1ST INNINGS): 497-0 DEC**  
SOUTH AFRICA (1ST INNINGS): OVERWHELMED 0-21  
D. Elgar c Shami b Shami 0, G. du Kooi c Shami b Yadav 4, Z. Hamza b Jadhav 62, E. du Plessis b Yadav 1, T. Bavuma c Shami b Naidoo 32, H. Klaasen b Jadhav 6, S. Lindse b Pant b Naidoo 21, D. Pretz b Shami 4, K. Rabada run out (Naidoo) 0, A. Nortje bow to Naidoo 4, L. Ngidi not out 0, **Extras:** (06, 05, 01) 122 (04) not out 562 (over 852)  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-4 (Elgar), 2-8 (du Kooi), 3-16 (du Plessis), 4-107 (Hamza), 5-107 (Bavuma), 6-119 (Klaasen), 7-129 (Pretz), 8-130 (Rabada), 9-162 (Lindse)  
**Bowling:** Shami 10-4-22-2, Yadav 9-1-40-3, Naidoo 11-2-22-2 (not), Jadhav 14-3-19-2, Ashwin 12-1-48-0.  
**SOUTH AFRICA (2ND INNINGS): FOLLOWING ON**  
D. de Kock b Nortje 16, E. du Bruyn on 30 and Anrich Nortje, on five.  
**De Bruyn came in under the new concussion sub rule after opener Elgar took a nasty hit on the helmet from a short Yadav delivery and had to retire hurt on 16. The impact left the opener shaken as he lay on the ground getting physio assistance.**  
**South Africa said late Monday that Elgar was "assessed by the team's medical staff and diagnosed with concussion".**  
Events did not improve for South Africa, however, with Nortje claiming three wickets, including South Africa skipper Faf du Plessis for four, while Yadav struck twice.  
**Zabiyar Hamza, top scorer in**

South Africa's first innings, indicated that his teammates had concentrated too much on India's spin threat and been taken by surprise by the fast bowlers. South Africa's first innings ended in 162 after which they chased India's 497-0 declared.

## India tour in doubt as Bangladesh players go on strike

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh's professional cricketers – including several members of the national squad – went on strike Monday to call for better pay and benefits. The protest, announced by national Test and Twenty20 captain Shakil Al Hasan, could also put next month's tour of India in jeopardy.

"Unless our demands are met we will not get involved in any cricketing activities," said Al Hasan, flanked by former and current national players, at a press conference in Dhaka. "It includes everything – first-class cricket, national team preparations, (and) international cricket." The industrial action is significant in cricket-mad Bangladesh, where national players are idolised. (AFP)

## Pakistan drop Sarfraz, Malik from Australia tour

**LAHORE:** Pakistan dropped former skipper Sarfraz Ahmed from the T20 and Test squads for their upcoming Australian tour while Shoaib Malik and Mohd Hafeez were also given the axe in the shorter format. **Squads:** T20: Babar Azam (captain), Asif Ali, Fakhr Zaman, Haris Sohail, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Imran-ul-Haq, Khushi Shah, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Irfan, Mohammad Rizwan (wicketkeeper), Nussa Khan, Waheed Riaz, Shadab Khan, Usman Qadir. **Tests:** Azhar Ali (captain), Abid Ali, Asad Shafiq, Babar Azam, Haris Sohail, Imran-ul-Haq, Imran Khan senior, Iftikhar Ahmed, Kashid Bhatti, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wicketkeeper), Nussa Khan, Nasseem Shah, Shaheer Shah, Afridi, Shan Masood, Yasir Shah.



The Losail International Circuit which will host the final leg of The MOTUL FIM Superbike World Championship in Qatar from October 24 to 26.