



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy for Bolthole

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

BOLTHOLE (IRE) galloped to victory to claim the prestigious Group 2 HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy for Thoroughbreds in Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club's (QREC) 42nd Race Meeting at the Al Rayyan Racecourse on Thursday.

Bolthole took his record to a new level with a black-type victory. The 4YO colt powered to victory by almost a length, completing a treble for Wathnan Racing and trainer Alban de Mieuille and even a quadruple for jockey Ronan Thomas.

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani crowned the winners of His Highness's Trophy.

Ali Al Kubaisi received the Trophy on behalf of Wathnan Racing following Bolthole's victory in the day's feature race, in presence of Bader Mohammed Al Darwish, Acting CEO of QREC.

Earlier, Trainer Julian Smart and jockey Jefferson Smith teamed up to complete a double on the day and again in the colours of Khalifa Bin Sheail Al Kuwari with Layeq (QA) winning the Ebraz Cup, having prevailed by almost two lengths in the 2000m open race for 4YO+ Local Purebred Arabians and recording his own second straight win.

Bader Al Balushi saddled an impressive winner in the 1400m Conditions for 4YO+ Local Thoroughbreds as Abdulatif Hussain Al Emadi's home-



H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani crowned the winners of His Highness's Trophy at the Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club's Al Rayyan Racecourse on Thursday.

bred Black Pearl (QA) bolted up by five lengths, to win the Gazwan Cup, get rewarded for his last six placed finishes and give jockey Ronan Thomas a third winner on the day.

Trainer Alban de Mieuille saddled his second winner for Wathnan Racing on the day as Abida (QA) won the Assy Cup, a Conditions for 4YO+ Local Purebred Arabians.

In the hands of jockey Carlos Henrique, the 7YO mare managed to hold off challenges and win the 1400m race by half a length.

The Assy Thoroughbred Filly & Mare Cup went to the impressive Kerindia (IRE)

in the colours of Injaaz Stud. Having been either a winner or placed in 8 of her 9 starts, the 3YO filly won once again for trainer Zuhair Mohsen and jockey Ronan Thomas, their second winner of the day.

Once asked for an effort, she stretched way clear of the field, winning the 1500m contest for 3YO+ by 7 lengths at the line.

Khalifa bin Sheail Al Kuwari's Djalco (FR) came with a powerful run in the closing stages of the 1400m Handicap (70-90) for 4YO+ Purebred Arabians to land the spoils by a quarter of a length and take the Aziz Cup for trainer Julian Smart and jockey

Jefferson Smith.

Hamad bin Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al Attiya's Classic Order (GB) won the Jaafar Thoroughbred Handicap Cup.

Ridden by Soufiane Saadi, the 3YO gelding went one better than last time out, recording a length victory for trainer Zuhair Mohsen in the 1500m race for 3YO+ Thoroughbreds rated 60-80.

Wathnan Racing's Tania (QA) (Al Mamun Monlau x Muhjah) maintained her excellent form as she added her second straight win this month.

The Alban de Mieuille-trained 5YO mare won the 1500m Djendel Novice Cup for 4YO+ Local



Jockey Ronan Thomas guides Bolthole to victory in the Group 2 HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy for Thoroughbreds.

Purebred Arabians by a length under jockey Ronan Thomas.

Trainer Rudy Nerbonne and jockey Lukas Delozier began the day picking up where they left off on Wednesday as they teamed up with the H.E. Sheikh Iman bint Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Thani-owned Haman (FR) to clinch a neck-victory from stablemate Fayq Al Shahania (FR) (Jafer ASF) and win the 2000m Mared Al Sahra Premium Maiden Cup for 4-6YOs.

42nd Race Meeting - HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy
(Horse, Trainer, Jockey)

1 - HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Thani Trophy (Qa Gr2) - Thoroughbreds (Class 1) (Far Bend)

Bolthole, Alban Elie De Mieuille, Ronan Thomas

2 - Ebraz Cup - Local Purebred Arabian Open Race (Far Bend)
Layeq, Julian Colin Smart, Jefferson Smith

3 - Gazwan Cup - Local Thoroughbred Conditions (Far Bend)
Black Pearl, Bader Al Balushi, Ronan Thomas

4 - Assy Cup - Local Purebred Arabian Conditions (Far Bend)
Abida, Alban Elie De Mieuille, Carlos Henrique

5 - Assy Thoroughbred Filly & Mare Cup (Class 2) (Far Bend)
Kerindia, Zuhair Mohsen, Ronan Thomas

6 - Aziz Purebred Arabian Handicap Cup 70-90 (Far Bend)
Djalco, Julian Colin Smart, Jefferson Smith

7 - Jaafar Thoroughbred Handicap Cup 60-80 (Class 4) (Far Bend): Classic Order, Zuhair Mohsen, Soufiane Saadi

8 - Djendel Novice Cup - Local Purebred Arabian (Far Bend)
Tania, Alban Elie De Mieuille, Ronan Thomas

9 - Mared Al Sahra Premium Maiden Cup - Purebred Arabian (Far Bend)
Haman, Rudy Andre Nerbonne, Lukas Delozier.

Al Attiyah and Dabrowski fastest in Qatar International Baja prologue

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
LUSAIL

QATAR'S Nasser Saleh Al-Attayah and Konrad Dabrowski recorded the fastest times in the car and motorcycle classes on the opening 9.08km Prologue stage of the Qatar International Baja on Thursday afternoon.

The customary short opening timed section has been introduced to determine the starting order for the longer second part of the stage through the Qatari deserts on Friday morning and preceded the ceremonial start on Lusail Boulevard on Thursday evening.

Forty-four cars (seven T1+, three T1, three T2, 18 T3 and 13 T4), 47 motorcycles and five quads passed scrutineering checks and were permitted to start the Prologue stage. Santiago Navarro and Henry Kahy were non-starters in the T3 category for lightweight prototype machines. There were also nine cars running in a National event behind the main Baja.

Al Attiyah and his regular co-driver Mathieu Baumel carded a time of 5min 49.5sec in their Toyota Hilux and lead the car section by 4.8 seconds from the Polish duo of Krzysztof Holowczyc and Lukasz Kurzeja in their Mini JCW Rally Plus. Denis Krotov and Konstantin Zhiltsov are third in an Overdrive Racing Toyota.

Kuwait's Meshari Al Thefiri edged out the South Racing Can-Am Team's Otavio Sousa for the early lead in T3 in his new MCE-5 T3M. Brazil's Cristiano de Sousa Batista continued his excellent run of form to top the T4 standings from young Pau Navarro in his FN Speed Team Can-Am.

A time of 6min 20.9sec enabled the defending champion Konrad Dabrowski to claim the early advantage in the motorcycles on a stage where the times are multiplied by a coefficient of eight to ensure tactics and positional musical chairs are discouraged. The Pole has



Krzysztof Holowczyc's car being flagged off as Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) President Abdulrahman Al Mannai looks on during the ceremonial start of Qatar International Baja at Lusail Boulevard on Thursday.



Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah meets local dignitaries at the ceremonial start.



Prologue winner Konrad Dabrowski at Qatar International Baja start.



Qatar's Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah in action, in the borrowed Toyota Hilux flown in from Portugal, during the Prologue stage.

2023 Qatar International Baja - Prologue results (unofficial):

FIA - Cars (Top 15 only)

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|---|---------------|
| 1. Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah (QAT)/Mathieu Baumel (AND) Toyota GR DKR Hilux | 5min 49.5sec* |
| 2. Krzysztof Holowczyc (POL)/Lukasz Kurzeja (POL) Mini JCW Rally Plus | 5min 54.3sec* |
| 3. Denis Krotov (KGZ)/Konstantin Zhiltsov (ISR) Toyota Hilux Overdrive | 6min 02.4sec* |
| 4. Guoyu Zhang (CHN)/Oriol Mena (ESP) Baic ORC BJ40 | 6min 09.8sec* |
| 5. Meshari Al Thefiri (KWT)/Oriol Vidal (ESP) MCE-5 T3M (T3) | 6min 11.0sec* |
| 6. Otavio Sousa (BRA)/João Ferreira (PRT) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3) | 6min 12.3sec* |
| 7. Nasser Al Kuwari (QAT)/François Cazalet (FRA) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3) | 6min 17.1sec* |
| 8. Abdulaziz Al Kuwari (QAT)/Alexei Kuzmich (ARE) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3) | 6min 19.4sec* |
| 9. Ahmed Al Mohannadi (QAT)/Mubarak Al Khelaf (QAT) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3) | 6min 20.8sec* |
| 10. Juan Cruz Yacopini (ARG)/Daniel Oliveras (ESP) Toyota Hilux Overdrive | 6min 23.5sec* |
| 11. Cristiano Batista (BRA)/Fausto Mota (PRT) Can-Am Maverick X3 Turbo (T4) | 6min 23.5sec* |
| 12. Lionel Baud (FRA)/Lucie Baud (FRA) G Rally Team OT3 (T3) | 6min 24.7sec* |
| 13. Pau Navarro (ESP)/Michael Metge (FRA) Can- | |

Am Maverick XRS Turbo (T4)

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|---|---------------|
| 14. Jeremie Warnia (FRA)/Loic Minaudier (FRA) Polaris RZR 1000 R (T4) | 6min 25.6sec* |
| 15. Ronan Chabot (FRA)/Gilles Pillot (FRA) Toyota Hilux Overdrive | 6min 26.6sec* |

FIM - Bikes (top 15 only)

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| 1. Konrad Dabrowski (POL) KTM 450 Rally | 6min 20.9sec |
| 2. Robert Wallace (GBR) KTM 450 RFR | 6min 52.7sec |
| 3. Paulo Lucci (ITA) KTM 450 EXC-F | 6min 54.0sec |
| 4. Jonathan Finn (CAN) Honda CRF 450 RL | 7min 09.0sec |
| 5. Michael Anderson (ZAF) KTM 450 EXC | 7min 05.6sec |
| 6. Alex McInnes (GBR) Husqvarna FE450 | 7min 09.0sec |
| 7. Mohammed Al Balooishi (ARE) KTM 450 Rally Replica | 7min 09.2sec |
| 8. Abdullah Lanjawi (ARE) Husqvarna FE450 | 7min 09.8sec |

9. Simon Marcic (SVN) Husqvarna 450 Rally Replica

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 7min 12.6sec | |
| 10. Martin Chalmers (AUS) Beta 430 RR | 7min 23.7sec |
| 11. Oran O'Kelly (IRL) KTM 450 Rally | 7min 26.3sec |
| 12. Cesare Zacchetti (ITA) KTM EXC 350F | 7min 27.6sec |
| 13. Mirjam Pol (NLD) KTM | 7min 30.1sec |
| 14. Mishal Al Ghuneim (SAU) KTM 450 Rally | 7min 37.1sec |
| 15. Ola Floene (NOR) KTM 450 Rally | 7min 37.8sec |

FIM - Quads

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|--|--------------|
| 1. Abdulaziz Al Ahli (ARE) Yamaha Raptor 700 | 6min 54.8sec |
| 2. Haitham Al Tuwaijri (SAU) Yamaha Raptor 700 | 7min 05.5sec |
| 3. Mansoor Al Suwaidi (ARE) Yamaha YFZ 450R | 7min 21.1sec |
| 4. Amoud Dom (BEL) Suzuki LTR 450 | 7min 35.3sec |
| 5. Hani Al Noumes (SAU) Yamaha Raptor 700 | 7min 57.3sec |

recovered well from a recent appendicitis operation and is targeting a repeat win this season. The KTM rider also topped the Junior category.

Great Britain's Robert Wal-

lace and Italy's Paulo Lucci came home in second and third, with Italian rider Cesare Zacchetti (KTM) leading the Veterans in 12th and Mirjam Pol topping the Women's sec-

tion in 13th.

Emirati Abdulaziz Al Ahli drew first blood in the quad category to lead from Saudi Arabia's Haitham Al Tuwaijri and Mansoor Al Suwaidi.

Saudi Arabia's Mishal Al Ghuneim is one of the more experienced of the motorcycle riders. He finished 14th on the Prologue and said: "I feel good after my ankle injury and have got a couple of riders with me, Andrew (Houlihan) from Australia and Luca from Italy. Luca is a rookie but Andrew is fighting for the Veterans' Championship. Hopefully we all have a good race."

Friday

The second part of leg one runs through the Qatar deserts for 233.87km and is split into three sections of 46.05km, 70.53km and 117.29km on Friday morning by non-competitive transfer zones. The first motorcycle will be on stage at 07.35hrs. Cars will tackle the longer section of 117.29km first and then the two shorter stages with the first vehicle on stage from 08.45hrs.

Infantino re-elected as FIFA president

DPA
BERLIN

GIANNI Infantino was on Thursday re-elected as FIFA president for another four-year term - after suggesting to the congress of football's ruling body that a business CEO would keep his job for life if he produced similarly strong financial figures.

Switzerland's Infantino, 52, was confirmed in office by acclamation at the congress in Kigali, Rwanda, like he was in 2019.

It is officially his first re-election since he initially took over the remaining term of suspended Joseph Blatter in 2016. This means he can seek a final term in 2027 until 2031, according to FIFA statutes.

Infantino has huge backing from the 2011 FIFA members but several European countries including Germany, Norway and Sweden have not been happy with his presidency and said they would not actively support him.

"Let me simply thank all of you," Infantino said after being confirmed by a standing ovation. "Those who love me, you are many, and the few who hate me: I love you all."

"Being FIFA president is a big honour and privilege but also a huge responsibility. You can continue to trust on my commitment ... to unite the world of football," FIFA secretary general Fatma Samoura said "we love you, president," after the acclamation.

Infantino had earlier highlighted that FIFA revenue had risen to \$7.5 billion in the period 2019-2022, \$1 billion more than originally budgeted in a period hit by Covid, and another big rise to \$11 billion, or even more, was expected for the 2023-2026 cycle which includes the first 48-team World Cup in 2026.

He said reserves rose from \$1 billion when he took office in 2016 to almost \$4 billion.

"We had promised to increase our revenues and make FIFA more stable and strong, and attractive for sponsors and broadcasters. You can only do



FIFA President Gianni Infantino gestures during a press conference at the 73rd FIFA Congress in Kigali, Rwanda, on Thursday. (AFP)

Equal pay

In his closing address, Infantino pledged equal bonus payments until the 2027 women's World Cup. He named this the "most difficult" step towards equal pay and said that "the rightsholders and sponsors must do more," citing lower offers from the partners than in the men's game

that if you are strong," he said. "The money of FIFA is your money," he told the delegates.

Infantino said that annual FIFA money for each federation has multiplied by seven from an original \$250,000, noting that "if a CEO told to the stakeholders that the product would be multiplied by seven they would

want to keep this CEO for ever. But I am only here on a four-year term."

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The growing overall investment has made him popular among a vast majority of federations but others have voiced criticism.

"In recent weeks, we have received no or only insufficient information from FIFA on various issues," German Football Federation (DFB) president Bernd Neundorff said in a statement on Wednesday explaining why they were not backing him. Germany - and others -

want a migrant worker fund set up by FIFA to compensate those harmed while building the stadiums for last year's Qatar World Cup and answers as to why a Saudi sponsorship of this year's women's World Cup is being considered, among other issues.

Infantino said that "we took on board our responsibility regarding human rights" as he hailed the Qatar tournament as the best ever in his opening address, while FIFA human rights sub-committee chairman Michael Llamas later said further assessments are needed before a decision on any kind of remedy can be reached.

"We want to build on detailed information and also consult with external experts, given the complexity of the questions," Llamas said, adding: "We are committed to undertake that and produce a public report with an analysis of these matters."

Verstappen's arrival in Saudi delayed due to stomach bug

DPA
JEDDAH

MAX Verstappen has cancelled his media commitments at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix because of a stomach illness.

The double world champion, who dominated Formula One's season-opening race in Bahrain a fortnight ago, said he has been battling with the bug this week.

However, he expects to be in his Red Bull for practice in Jeddah on Friday.

"Feeling fine again, after not being fit for a few days because of a stomach bug," wrote the Dutchman, 25, on Twitter.

"Therefore, I unfortu-

nately had to postpone my flight for a day, so I won't be on the track until Friday." Verstappen's Red Bull team tweeted: "Max has been suffering from a stomach illness over the past few days and, with the agreement of the FIA, will not be present at track today. Feel better, Max."

Verstappen heads into the second round of the season leading the championship following his comprehensive victory in Bahrain.

Verstappen, who is this year bidding for a hat-trick of titles, led home a Red Bull one-two finish at the first race, with team-mate Sergio Perez second and Fernando Alonso third for Aston Martin.

Nepal punch Qualifier ticket after beating UAE by DLS method

ICC.COM

NEPAL pipped Namibia to make it to the third spot of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 after they beat UAE by nine runs (by DLS method).

Nepal overcame UAE by nine runs in a thriller at Tribhuvan University Ground to book their berth for the 2023 Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe. At this event, they will compete with 10 sides for a place in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

The path to Cricket World Cup 2023 The Rhinos needed 42 runs from 36 balls in the game when the umpires decided that the play couldn't continue due to bad light. At the time, Nepal were nine runs ahead of the DLS score and took all two points to pip Namibia (39 points) by a solitary point.

Facing a target of 311 at the start of their innings, Nepal had a horrendous start as they lost Aasif Sheikh (0) and Kushal

Malla (5) within the first nine balls.

Skipper Rohit Paudel tried to bring a semblance of order along with Kushal Bhurtel, but fell in the seventh over to Aayan Khan. At 37/3, the game seemed to be slipping away from Nepal's grasp.

However, Bhim Sarki (67) joined hands with Bhurtel (50) and then Arif Sheikh (52) to lead Nepal's fightback in the middle overs. A charge from 17-year-old Gulsan Jha (50*) in the later overs ensured that Nepal were ahead of the required DLS score when umpires decided to take the players off the field.

Earlier in the day, Muhammad Waseem won the toss for UAE and elected to bat, heaping pressure on the hosts by putting a target on the board. The opener then let his batting do the talking, silencing the heaving Tribhuvan University Ground crowd with a range of boundaries.

Warriors suffer ninth straight road loss despite Curry's 50

DPA
BERLIN

STEPHEN Curry's 50 points were not enough for the Golden State Warriors to avoid a ninth straight road loss going down 134-126 to the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday.

The Warriors' dreadful road record worsened to 7-27 across the season, with Kawhi Leonard top scoring for the Clippers with 30 points at Crypto.com Arena.

Curry piled on 21 points in the third quarter, shooting 20-of-28 from the field and eight-of-14 from three-point range, matching his season-high 50 points from the November 16 loss to the Phoenix Suns.



Stephen Curry #30 (AFP)

The reigning Finals MVP is the only player in the NBA to score 50-plus points in a loss multiple times this season. All other players are 18-2 in 50-point games this season.

Curry, who turned 35 earlier this week, also tied Wilt Chamberlain on seven for the most 50-point games after turning 30-years-old, moving past Michael Jordan (six). Golden State's latest defeat comes in the first game of a five-game road trip which may define their playoffs aspirations, with the Warriors in sixth in the Western Conference at 36-34, while the Clippers are fifth on 37-33.

The Clippers claimed their fourth straight win after an 0-5 start after the All-Star break.

Leonard led the way on 10-of-19 field shooting, while Paul George added 24 points including four triples and seven assists.

Medvedev reaches Indian Wells semis, Tiafoe advances

DPA
INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNI

FIFTH seed Daniil Medvedev brushed off an ankle concern and booked his spot in the Indian Wells Open semi-finals after a straight-sets win over Alejandro Davidovich Fokina on Wednesday.

The 2021 US Open champion triumphed 6-3 7-5 over the Spaniard in one hour and 44 minutes, securing his 18th straight victory.

Medvedev will face Frances Tiafoe in the semi-finals after the American beat Briton Cameron Norrie 6-4 6-4 in the other quarter-final in that half of the draw. The Russian had suffered an ankle injury during



Russia's Daniil Medvedev stretches for a forehand return to Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in their quarterfinal tennis match in Indian Wells, California on Wednesday. (AFP)

Tuesday's last-16 win over Alexander Zverev but played on to clinch a hard-fought three-set win.

But Medvedev alleviated

any injury concerns, although he required treatment on a bloody right thumb in the second set while escaping from 0-40 at 3-4.

No miracles as Real Madrid, Napoli reach CL quarters

DPA
BERLIN

TITLE holders Real Madrid denied Liverpool a comeback miracle when they advanced into the Champions league quarter-finals with a 1-0 victory on Wednesday.

The record 14-time champions Real had handed Liverpool a historic European home defeat three weeks ago at Anfield with a 5-2 triumph from 2-0 down.

They were never really troubled in their 300th Champions League match at the Bernabeu where Karim Benzema's late winner clinched a 6-2 aggregate success.

While Real are a familiar name in the later stages, Italy's Napoli reached the quarters for the first by completing a

comprehensive 5-0 overall win over Europa League champions Eintracht Frankfurt with a 3-0 home victory from Victor Osimhen's brace and Piotr Zielinski.

"We want to enjoy the moment and look ahead. It's a great win, we rewrote the history of this club," Osimhen told Prime Video.

Napoli's success means that Italy have three teams in the final eight for the first time since 2006, the others being AC and Inter Milan.

Serie A clubs have not lifted the trophy since Inter's success in 2010.

England's Manchester City and Chelsea, Germany's Bayern Munich, Portugal's Benfica and Spain's Real are the other teams, with the quarter- and semi-final draw scheduled for Friday.



Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema (left) celebrates scoring his team's goal during the UEFA Champions League football match against Liverpool in Madrid on Wednesday. (AFP)

Goalkeepers Thibaut Courtois of Real and Alisson Becker of Liverpool had not always looked good in the first leg but there was almost no way past them at the Bernabeu - with

especially Courtois frustrating the Reds just like he had in last year's final Real had won 1-0.

Darwin Nunez failed to beat the Belgian after Liverpool took advantage of Real defender An-

tonio Rudiger slipping when trying to control a bad pass.

At the other end Vincius Junior was denied from point-blank range by Alisson who then also managed to tip a long-distance drive from Eduardo Camavinga against the crossbar. Courtois made another save against Nunez' curling shot and also palmed away a cannon from Cody Gakpo as Liverpool tried their best to fight back from the historic first leg defeat.

Federico Valverde was the next player denied by Alisson after the restart, but more lively Real eventually broke the deadlock in the 79th when Benzema slotted into the empty net after Vincius Junior had flicked the ball over to him past Alisson while lying on the ground.

Liverpool left with their an-

them "You'll never walk alone" played in the Bernabeu as manager Jürgen Klopp admitted "that was not a performance for a miracle."

"Real Madrid were the better team. The right team went through. If you want to have a miracle you have to play better or against another team," Klopp said.

The game in Naples was overshadowed by afternoon fan violence in the city centre, according to reports from both camps as hundreds of Frankfurt fans had made their way to Italy despite a blanket stadium ban on Frankfurt residents imposed by the local prefecture over security concerns in connection with violence three weeks ago at the first game in Germany.

LLC Masters Cricket is trending and becoming all the more competitive, says Wasim Akram



Pakistan cricket legend Wasim Akram at the Asian Town International Stadium on Thursday.

VINAY NAYUDU
DOHA

WASIM Akram, an Apex Council member of the Legends League Cricket (LLC) Masters, arrived at the Asian Town International Stadium on Thursday with South African stars Hashim Amla and Jacques Kallis of the World Giants going great guns against the Asia Lions in the final qualifying-league clash, and the former Pakistan captain was mightily pleased with the show.

Waving to fans from the VIP box and with his graceful smile in place, Akram seemed to have taken an instant liking for the new destination of the LLC Masters.

Later speaking about LLC Masters, Akram said, "It's great to be here and as you can see all these legends playing are looking much fitter than they were in the inaugural edition of the league in Muscat last year because they know that this tournament is a regular fixture now – twice a year in associate ICC (International Cricket Council) countries and in India. The idea is to promote cricket, and when fans like now at the stadium here in Doha are there, people get motivated to play the sport."

On the idea of introducing 'Impact Player' in the tournament where a team can nominate a player from outside the playing XI to replace someone during the innings, Akram, who has played over a 100 Test matches and claimed over 400 Test and 500 ODI wickets, said, "This is the beauty of the game now. Things are changing. Like in England they started 'The Hundred' which was a bit complicated for me to start with but it took off greatly, so now you have this new impact player concept. I hope people will like it as it enhances the thrill of the game."

He went on to add, "This edition in Qatar now is trending worldwide. I had been watching in Pakistan before

Former stars delighted and 'thankful' to play in the league



India Maharajas' Harbhajan Singh celebrates one of his four wickets against World Giants during the LLC Masters - Qatar 2023 at the Asian Town International Stadium.

arriving here today, it has been trending on social media the past few days which shows that everyone is watching and that these players still have the passion. The league is becoming more competitive. Last year we had to convince many players to play, but now they are coming in for the league in large numbers."

Indeed, the league looks set to grow. LLC Masters also has Ravi Shastri (former India captain, coach and now back as commentator) as its commissioner who will also be in Doha ahead of the final.

Former captain of the Indian Women's cricket team, Jhulan Goswami, is the Women's Empowerment Ambassador for the league and Bollywood legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan is the Brand Ambassador.

Shoaib Akhtar sees a bright future

Pakistan's former pace bowler Shoaib Akhtar, playing for the Asia Lions, is also delighted with the tournament.

"The LLC is a wonderful tournament. The tournament has become larger than life. The league going forward with the recently-retired players who might join the league in coming seasons, it will only grow."

"I would like to thank Vivek and Raman Raheja (The CEO of the league) for a fantastic job in putting this mega tournament together. It's great fun to play against these guys. The platform is providing me

an opportunity to meet my old friends. It's a burst of memories when we all are playing together," he said.

Akhtar managed to play only a game out of three for the Lions so far. He got injured while playing in his only game. "Unfortunately, I injured myself while diving yesterday and twisted my knee. If I was not injured, I would have definitely bowled my four overs and tried to add value to the team."

Taking wickets at this age is special: Brett Lee

Former Australia speedster, who has excelled with his rare ability to bowl fast along with reverse swing, has been a star with his performances for the World Giants.

"Any wicket that you get at an age of 46 is always special. I have worked pretty hard leading into this mega tournament. I have done some training and bowling in the nets. I am ready to go and I am excited about it," said Lee after a three-wicket haul in one of the games.

"We all are here to have fun and showcase the great game of cricket to our fans around the world. I would like to thank everyone who has brought this league together. I never thought something like this would be possible. It's great fun," he added.

Can't thank LLC Masters enough: Shane Watson
Star former all-rounder with Australia, and at the Indian Pre-

mier League (IPL), Shane Watson said can't thank enough to be playing in LLC Masters.

"I feel very lucky to be playing cricket at my age, and I feel very privileged to be playing alongside some of the greatest players to have played cricket in the last 20 years or so. Further, it is a great experience to be reunited with Jacques Kallis, who is my favourite cricketer of all time. I was fortunate enough to have played with him for the Sydney Thunders in 2016, and to be able to play with him again I feel very lucky. He is my hero."

"To be able to play with Paul Collingwood for the first time, with Hashim Amla and my great friend Brett Lee as starting points, Chris Gayle, and the list goes on and on. Also, for Aaron Finch, being able to bat with him again in the first match was something very special. I can't thank LLC enough for this incredible opportunity. I never thought something like this would be possible. It's great fun," he said.

Harbhajan Singh mixing cricket and fun in fine style

India's legendary off-spin bowler Harbhajan Singh, meanwhile has been excelling both with his bowling and interactions with the fans at the LLC Masters.

"Bhaji", as he is lovingly called, took four wickets against the World Giants on March 11, including three in an over narrowly missing out



Shane Watson of World Giants during his innings vs India Maharajas.



Brett Lee rejoices after taking a wicket with World Giants' Morne van Wyk.



Shoaib Akhtar soaks in the Qatar International Baja in the desert.

on a hat-trick. Incidentally, it was a day when he claimed the famous hat-trick on March 11 in 2011 at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata where India turned the tables on Australia following-on.

Two days later, Harbhajan broke into a dance 'Naato Naato' during the presentation ceremony appreciating India's excellence at the Oscar awards as the spectators cheered.

Thrilling end awaits

And now, as the LLC Masters in Qatar moves into the business end of the tournament – the Eliminator will be played on Saturday (from 5.30pm) and the final on Monday (March 20th) – the excitement is surely guaranteed.

If you happen to be in Qatar and haven't been there as yet, you better head out for the Asian Town International Stadium!

Double delight for Maryam Alsemaitt in Longines Hathab Round 12



It was a double delight for Maryam Ahmed Alsemaitt as she bagged the top two places in the dressage Medium (Level 1) during the 12th round of the Longines Hathab - Qatar Equestrian Tour at Al Shaqab on Thursday. Alsemaitt topped the event with her 15-year-old stallion San Francisco after registering an aggregate score of 66.532. She also finished runner-up with veteran gelding Copain 10 with a score of 64.758. In third place was Maryam Ahmad Al Boinin astride Silvan with a score of 64.355. Earlier, Khalid Sanad Al Nuaimi won the Prelim (Level 2) onboard Medea VD Donkhoeve after the pair scored 68.174. Azade Apa Triolet astride What A Pleasure was second, with al-Nuaimi also coming third with Gop Stop. The annual equestrian series - Longines Hathab - comprises a total of 14 legs after which the overall winners in various categories are decided.

Amla, Kallis show steers World Giants into LLC Masters final

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

WORLD Giants stormed into the final of the Legends League Cricket (LLC) Masters riding on a superb partnership of former South Africa heroes Hashim Amla and Jacques Kallis at the Asian Town International Stadium on Thursday.

The Giants beat Asia Lions by 20 runs and now await the winners of the Eliminator between Asia Lions and India Maharajas to know their opponents in the final – to be played on Monday.

Asked to bat first, the World Giants scored a healthy 150 for 3 in their allotted 20 overs before bowling out Asia Lions for 130 in 19.1 overs on a slow track.

Amla and Kallis combined for the third wicket to share an exciting 105-run stand in 80 balls which produced a cumulative 14 fours and 3 sixes to the thrill of the crowd. While Amla scored 68 (59 balls; 9x4s, 1x6), Kallis remained unbeaten on 56 (43 balls; 5x4s, 2x6s).

Amla, named Man of the Match, said he would rather have Kallis taking the trophy



'Gamechanger of the Match' Chris Mpofu of World Giants receives his prize from Qatar Cricket Association Secretary-General Khaled Saleh Al Rumaihi as former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram looks on at the Asian Town International Stadium on Thursday.

from Wasim Akram – LLC Masters Apex Council Member. "It was Kallis' batting that gave me the confidence on this not so easy wicket to bat on. It was tough initially against the bowling of Mohammed Amir and Sohail Tanvir, but once we settled down it was a delightful partnership," he said.

The start for the Giants was however not a good one as they lost Chris Gayle to a run out after the West Indian landed

on the non-striker's end with Amla having barely moved but since Gayle had crossed and Amla was out of the crease, the West Indian had to depart in the 3rd over with the total being just 8 runs.

Shahid Afridi then picked a fine catch at square leg off a Shane Watson flick in the 6th over and the Giants were 29-2.

It was then that the Amla-Kallis show began. While Amla excelled with a reverse sweep,

cuts, pulls and a slice off a low full toss to fine leg, Kallis was clinical with amazing drives and lofted hits.

Towards the end, Kevin O'Brien another valuable 9 runs off just three balls.

The total seemed par but it wasn't as bowlers reigned. Only Asia Lions' opener Upul Tharanga (37; 28balls; 5x4s, 1x6) and Shahid Afridi (26; 18 balls; 2x4s, 1x6) could get going while seven batsmen couldn't reach double figures.

Tino Best (3-20 off 3.1 over) and Chris Mpofu (3-16 off 4 overs) were the best of Giants' bowlers with Brett Lee and Samit Patel picking one wicket each.

It was a third win off their four league matches for World Giants against Asia Lions' two and a solitary one for the India Maharajas.

On Saturday, Asia Lions will meet India Maharajas to fight for a place in the final.

Scores: World Giants 150-3 (Hashim Amla 68, Jacques Kallis 56 n.o) **beat Asia Lions 130 all out in 19.1 overs** (Tillakaratne Dilshan 37, Shahid Afridi 26, Chris Mpofu 3 for 16, Tino Best 3 for 20) **by 20 runs. Man of the Match:** Hashim Amla.

AMIR CROWNS WINNERS OF PUREBRED ARABIAN CAMEL RACE FESTIVAL



The Amir His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani attended the final four rounds of the annual purebred Arabian camel race festival on His Highness' Sword for the 2022-2023 season at Al Shahaniya racetrack on Thursday. HH the Amir crowned the winners of the final four races for the camels of sheikhs on the golden trophies. HH the Amir also crowned the winners in the final six races of the tribes members' category. HH the Amir honoured the festival sponsor companies. The final day's competitions were attended by a number of sheikhs and accredited ambassadors to the State, community members, and fans of the sport. (QNA)



MINISTER OF INTERIOR MEETS MALDIVIAN COUNTERPART

Minister of Interior HE Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani met with Minister of Home Affairs of Maldives Sheikh Imran Abdulla in Doha on Thursday. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation between the two countries in security fields and the ways to develop them, in addition to discussing several issues of mutual interest. (QNA)



TRANSPORT MINISTER, EL SALVADOR VICE FM DISCUSS TIES



Minister of Transport HE Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti met with Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador Adriana Mira de Pereira in Doha on Thursday. They discussed bilateral relations in the fields of transportation and the ways to enhance them. They also discussed several topics of common interest. Ambassador of El Salvador to Qatar HE Milton Alcides Magana Herrera and the delegation accompanying the vice-minister attended the meeting. (TNN)



Unveiling the perfect match: QA and QT partner to host 9th DWP Congress in Doha

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

QATAR Airways (QA) and Qatar Tourism joined forces to partner with the highly acclaimed Destination Wedding Planners (DWP) Congress 2023, an exclusive event that brought the largest Business-to-Business platform for weddings to Doha. This collaboration underscores the city's growing stature as a key figure in the MICE industry, which continues to attract business travellers from around the world.

The 9th edition of DWP Congress was held from March 14 to 16, to bring together leading wedding planner professionals who provided fresh perspectives on the industry through a series of keynote speeches and DWP masterclasses. Chairman of Qatar Tourism and Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker opened the congress with a speech to spotlight Qatar's offerings as a versatile and captivating wedding destination.

Akbar Al Baker said: "Our continuous effort to promote Qatar as a leading destination that caters to the needs of all travellers has been further strengthened by the recent hosting of the Destination

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Wedding Planners Congress 2023. This event is regarded as the most prestigious B2B gathering in the multi-billion-dollar wedding industry, and we are honoured to have had the best wedding planners and designers in Doha. We eagerly anticipate welcoming them back following an inspiring visit this year, and look forward to seeing their vision for luxurious and elaborate weddings."

Ackash Jain, director of QnA International, organiser of the prestigious DWP Congress, said: "Qatar is one of the most fascinating countries in the world to tie the knot with

its majestic palatial resorts and scenic backdrops. Combining world-class hospitality with cosmopolitan sophistication, it seamlessly opens the door to planning some of the most opulent celebrations. We are proud to bring the world's biggest destination wedding congress to Qatar, which was at a perfect timing right after the FIFA World Cup. With the support of Qatar Tourism, Qatar Airways and other regional and international partners, we were able to showcase the best of Qatar as a wedding destination to leading wedding experts from around the world."

The DWP congress has grown rapidly since its inception in 2014, which took place in Greece, and has successfully made its mark in desirable destinations across the globe from Florence, Phuket, Los Cabos, Dubai and Bali.

This year the congress highlighted Doha, a city that has undergone remarkable developments in hospitality, aviation, service industry and tourist attractions. Last year the country has hosted what is being called the greatest FIFA World Cup, a mega-event which has made the country fully equipped to take on a wider range of global events.

Tasweer Photo Festival Qatar celebrates top imagemakers from Qatar and WANA region

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

THE biennial Tasweer Photo Festival Qatar opened its fifth exhibition, titled 'I Am The Traveler And Also The Road', featuring new works by 12 recipients of Tasweer's annual grant award, which will be on display until May 20 at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art.

Organised by Qatar Museums (QM) and presented as part of Qatar Creates, the year-round national cultural movement that curates, promotes and celebrates the diversity of cultural activities in Qatar, the festival brings together innovative photographers and photographic communities from Qatar and the Western Asia and North Africa (WANA) region. Established under the leadership of Qatar Museums' Chairperson Her Excellency Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Tasweer builds on Qatar's commitment to nurture artistic talent, support creative industries, and further develop the nation's creative economy.

The key elements of Tasweer Photo Festival Qatar are two awards dedicated to Sheikh Saoud Al Thani (1966-2014), one of Qatar's greatest collectors, who largely shaped the Museum of Islamic Art's extraordinary collection. I Am The Traveler And Also The Road is an exhibition featuring the unique photographic approaches of the recipients in 2021 and 2022 of Tasweer's Sheikh Saoud Al Thani Project Award grants who live in the WANA region.

The works of Tasweer's twelve grant award winners will be exhibited from March 16 to May 20, 2023 at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha. I Am The Traveler And Also The Road presents the work of Rula Halawani (Palestine), Mona Hassan (Egypt), Mohammed Elshamy (Qatar), Shaima Al-Tamimi (Qatar), Samar Sayed Baiomy (Egypt), and Hayat Al-Sharif (Yemen),



Fethi Sahroui (Algeria), Salih Basheer (Sudan), Fatema A M Al-Doh (Qatar), Reem Falaknaz (Oman), Mouneb Nassar (Syria), and Abdo Shanan (Algeria). Complementing the presentation at Mathaf, the Qatar National Convention Centre will host a pop-up version of the I Am The Traveler And Also The Road exhibition at QNCC on March 18 and 19, during TEDnArabic, a joint initiative with TED and Qatar Foundation.

Tasweer's Managing Director Khalifa Al Obaidly said, "The Sheikh Saoud Al Thani Awards programmes actively seek out and showcase the most modern, diverse and talented photographers in the region, both established and up-and-coming. We have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to display the exceptional bodies of work produced by our grant award winners from 2021 and 2022 on the walls of the prestigious Mathaf gallery."

I Am The Traveler And Also The Road is a powerful testament to the ability of photography to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers, and connect us all through the shared experiences that make us human. We are proud to be part of a movement that celebrates and promotes the artistic talent of our region, and we look forward to seeing what the future holds for these innovative photographers." For detailed information about Tasweer, visit tasweer.org.qa.

