



AL RAYYAN AND AL ARABI SET UP AMIR CUP HANDBALL FINAL CLASH



Al Rayyan made it to the final of HH Amir Cup Handball prevailing over Al Wakrah 28-25 in the semi-finals played at the Duhail Handball Sports Hall on Thursday. Al Arabi qualified for the final defeating Al Ahli in a close contest 34-33. The final will be played on Saturday, May 27. (TNN)

U23 ASIAN CUP QATAR 2024 QUALIFIERS								
GROUP A			GROUP B			GROUP C		
A1 JORDAN (H)	B1 KOREA REPUBLIC (H)	C1 VIETNAM (H)	A2 SYRIA	B2 MYANMAR	C2 SINGAPORE	A3 OMAN	B3 KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	C3 YEMEN
A4 BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	B4 QATAR	C4 GUAM						
GROUP D			GROUP E			GROUP F		
D1 JAPAN	E1 UZBEKISTAN (H)	F1 IRAQ	D2 SAUDI ARABIA (H)	E2 IRAN	F2 KUWAIT (H)	D3 PALESTINE	E3 HONG KONG, CHINA	F3 TIMOR-LESTE
D4 PAKISTAN	E4 AFGHANISTAN	F4 MACAU						
GROUP G			GROUP H			GROUP I		
G1 UAE	H1 THAILAND (H)	I1 AUSTRALIA	G2 INDIA	H2 MALAYSIA	I2 TAJIKISTAN (H)	G3 MALDIVES	H3 BANGLADESH	I3 LAOS
G4 CHINA PR (H)	H4 PHILIPPINES	I4 DPR KOREA						
GROUP J			GROUP K					
J1 SAUDI ARABIA (H)	K1 TURKMENISTAN		J2 CAMBODIA	K2 INDONESIA (H)		J3 LEBANON	K3 CHINESE TAIPEI	
J4 MONGOLIA								

Groups finalised for AFC U23 Qatar 2024 Qualifiers

AFC
KUALA LUMPUR

THE draw for the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024 Qualifiers was finalised at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday.

The hopefuls were divided into 11 groups – 10 groups of four teams each, with the last group containing three. Qatar, meanwhile, will play in the Qualifiers for exposure with their matches classified as friendlies.

To be played from September 4 to 12 this year, Group A of the Qualifiers will have hosts Jordan, Syria, Oman and Brunei Darussalam vying for the sole automatic ticket to the Finals.

Group B will see 2020 champions Korea Republic (H), Myanmar, Kyrgyz Republic and Qatar contesting with Vietnam (H), Singapore, Yemen and Guam the Group C cast.

Japan, the 2016 champions, are the top seeds in Group

D with Bahrain (H), Palestine and Pakistan their challengers while 2018 champions Uzbekistan (H), Islamic Republic of Iran, Hong Kong, China and Afghanistan were drawn in Group E.

Group F will see 2013 winners Iraq, Kuwait (H), Timor-Leste and Macau doing battle with United Arab Emirates, India, Maldives and hosts China PR the Group G teams.

Hosts Thailand lead Group H with Malaysia, Bangladesh and Philippines also aiming for a place in the Finals while Group I will see Australia, Tajikistan (H), Laos and DPR Korea locking horns.

Defending champions Saudi Arabia (H), Cambodia, Lebanon and Mongolia were drawn in Group J while the three-team Group K will be a tussle between Turkmenistan, Indonesia (H) and Chinese Taipei.

The AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024 Finals are scheduled for April 15 to May 3, 2024.

Qatar team runners-up at Arab Billiards & Snooker



The Qatar national team finished as runners-up in the Arab Billiards and Snooker Championship, underway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Wednesday. Qatar comprising the trio of Ahmed Saif, Muhanna Al Obaidly and Bashir Hussein fell against Iraq 1-2 after a thrilling battle in the final. Qatar team finished the group stage on top after beating two Saudi Arabia sides and Kuwait. They defeated Jordan in the semi-finals. Meanwhile, the third day of the tournament saw the Saudi national team player Khaled Al Ghamdi win the gold medal in the 10-ball billiards competition for juniors. The championship participated among 12 countries will conclude on May 29.

Samba back with a bang at Italian Savona Forum, qualifies for Worlds

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

QATAR'S 400m hurdler Abderrahman Samba qualified for this year's World Athletics Championships in Budapest after achieving the qualifying mark en route to his win at the Memorial Ottolia in Savona, Italy on Wednesday.

Samba – a world bronze medalist in 2019 – set a meet record of 48.56 secs to win the event in Italy, which is a World Athletics Continental Tour Challenger meeting. The qualification mark for the World Championship is 48.70 secs.

Home favourite and Olympic finalist Alessandro Sibillo, who was competing after two years, gave Samba a good fight but had to settle for second place in 48.72 secs. Another Qatari hurdler Bassemi Hemeida finished third after his season's best of 49.98 secs.

The victory in Italy is a significant moment for Samba, who has been struggling with injury post the Tokyo Olympics. The 28-year-old was supposed to begin the season at the Diamond League opener in Doha last month, but was conspicuous by his absence.

In the 400m hurdles, an event that is increasingly making headlines thanks to Norway's world record holder



Qatar's 400m hurdles star Abdurrahman Samba has returned to action after an absence of two years due to injury.

Karsten Warholm. Samba is the Qatari national record holder with a best of 46.98, the fifth-fastest time ever.

Samba, who finished fifth at the Tokyo Games, was unable to compete in 2022 after injuring his hamstring during warm-up

for the Doha event in May. Following surgery and a lengthy period of rehabilitation, he has trained well over the winter under the guidance of his new coach, Massimo Matrone.

"I was in good shape this time last year and I was disap-

pointed to miss out on the World Championships, but I've had a consistent block of training and I'm healthy and ready to race. The 400m hurdles is one of the most exciting events and I want to be back in the mix," Samba had said recently.

HALIMA AL SHAHANIYA WINS FEDORA AWARD FOR PUREBRED ARABIAN HORSES IN FRANCE



Filly Halima Al Shahaniya, owned by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Thani, won the Fedora Award for purebred Arabian females, age 3, for a distance of 1600 meters, after she achieved first place in the race that was held on Wednesday evening at Toulouse Racecourse in France. Halima Al Shahaniya achieved victory under the supervision of trainer Xavier Thomas Dumot. (QNA)



Quick read

Hamilton expects to sign new Mercedes deal soon amid Ferrari rumours

Monaco: Lewis Hamilton denied he has been offered a contract by Ferrari and expects to sign a new Mercedes deal "in the coming weeks." Hamilton's future in the sport is under the spotlight with just six months to run on his current deal. It was reported the build-up to this week's Monaco Grand Prix that Ferrari are preparing a bid to land Hamilton in a blockbuster transfer. But when asked on Thursday if the Italian giants had been in touch, Hamilton replied: "No. When you are in contract negotiations there is always going to be speculation, and unless you hear it from me that is all it is. My team is working closely behind the scenes with [Mercedes team principal] Toto [Wolff], and we are almost at the end of having a contract ready. "This is the first time that I have not been negotiating myself. I have a great team in the background that does the work and I focus on the job on hand. I say what I want and that is what we are working towards so hopefully in the coming weeks [it will be decided]." Hamilton, 38, will get his first taste of a major Mercedes upgrade in practice on Friday which the seven-time world champion hopes will haul him up the grid. Hamilton qualified 13th at the last race in Miami before driving well to finish sixth, but he is already 63 points behind Red Bull's Max Verstappen in the championship standings. (PA MEDIA/DPA)

Enciso stunner earns Brighton thrilling draw against Man City



Brighton's Paraguayan striker Julio Enciso (C) shoots and scores his team first goal during the English Premier League match against Manchester City at the American Express Community Stadium in Brighton on Wednesday. (AFP)

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

JULIO Enciso's stunning leveler cemented Brighton's place in next season's Europa League as Manchester City's Premier League winning run was halted at 12 games by a thrilling 1-1 draw.

The 19-year-old Paraguay forward unleashed a thunderous, swerving effort into the top right corner from 25 yards seven minutes before the break to mathematically guarantee Albion a sixth-placed finish.

Phil Foden put the newly-crowned champions ahead at the Amex Stadium with his fifth goal in as many starts against the Seagulls.

But, despite bringing back a host of big names, Pep Guardiola saw his formidable side drop

points for the first time since February 18 after Erling Haaland's 79th-minute header was disallowed due to VAR spotting a shirt pull on Levi Colwill.

City boss Guardiola was angered by that decision and later shown a yellow card by referee Simon Hooper for his ongoing protestations. Haaland had wasted two fine first-half chances, while Brighton's Danny Welbeck rattled the crossbar from a free-kick and had a goal disallowed for offside, in addition to a Kaoru Mitoma effort being chalked off for handball.

The pulsating encounter was a fitting final home game of an unforgettable campaign for the record-breaking Seagulls and banished the remote chance of them slipping into the Europa Conference League on the final day at seventh-placed Aston

Villa. City were given a guard of honour by their hosts, four days on from securing their fifth title success in six seasons thanks to second-placed Arsenal's defeat at Nottingham Forest.

Guardiola brought back Haaland and Kevin De Bruyne as part of six changes from Sunday's celebratory 1-0 win over Chelsea, while Brighton captain Lewis Dunk began on bench just hours after his England recall due to ongoing calf and back issues. Haaland - seeking to add to his 36 top-flight goals - should have put City ahead inside six minutes but wastefully headed over unmarked following Foden's inviting delivery from the left. Guardiola hailed rival manager Roberto De Zerbi as one of the most influential managers of the last 20 years in the build-up to the clash.

Yet City were guilty of causing their own problems in the opening exchanges with some risky passes out from the back.

The visitors were fortunate to escape Brighton's high press on a handful of occasions before surviving in the 20th minute when Welbeck's thumping free-kick cannoned back off the bar.

Haaland then overran the ball and saw it smothered by Seagulls goalkeeper Jason Steele after being slipped in by Foden before making amends by assisting the 25th-minute opener.

Riyad Mahrez's superb through ball split Albion's defence and Haaland raced clear to draw Steele and square for Foden, who slotted home to continue his fine scoring record against the Seagulls despite the best efforts of Jan Paul van Hecke on the line.

Dortmund's Terzic on decider: 'Ball is just as round as last week'

DPA
DORTMUND

BORUSSIA Dortmund coach Edin Terzic is trying to treat this week like every other - even though his side are on the cusp of a first Bundesliga title since 2012.

The hosts will be crowned champions if they beat Mainz in Saturday's season finale, or if they match second-placed Bayern Munich's result at Cologne. Bayern have won the last 10 titles.

"Of course it is a very special week for us. But still, the key is not to do anything special. It's not about demanding extraordinary things," Terzic told a news conference on Thursday.

"We must not let it get to us too much. The pitch is just as big as last week. And the ball is just as round as last week."

Dortmund, whose last of eight Bundesliga triumphs came under Jürgen Klopp, have a two-point lead over Bayern as Terzic eyes the title in his very first season as a permanent head coach.

"We are not there yet, but we are ready. As a team, as a club, as a city. We want to crown our journey with a win on Saturday," he said.

Dortmund midfielder Jude Bellingham has a chance of being fit.

The 19-year-old England international missed last weekend's 3-0 win at Augsburg with a knee blister but has returned to team training ahead of the season finale, which could be his last game in Black and Yellow as big European clubs circle.

"There is still a question mark over Jude," Terzic said. "He was able to intensify his training programme. It looks quite good. We will decide at short notice." Against Augsburg, Terzic replaced Bellingham with Portugal's Raphaël Guerreiro, nominally a left back.

Club captain Marco Reus has been forced to come off the bench in recent matches.

Mid-table Mainz have nothing to play for but Terzic is not expecting an easy game, despite being backed by 80,000 home fans and the famed "Yellow Wall".

"Mainz's strengths are clearly recognizable. They are one of the fittest teams in the league and play in a very mature way," he said.

Mainz coach Bo Svensson is a protégé of former Mainz boss Thomas Tuchel, now in charge of Bayern.

Asked if he wanted to help his mentor by beating Tuchel's ex-side Dortmund, Svensson shrugged: "It doesn't matter. It's about helping ourselves."



Dortmund's headcoach Edin Terzic in Augsburg recently. (AFP)

Cologne coach tells Bayern who they will face in season finale

DPA
COLOGNE

COLOGNE coach Steffen Baumgart has told Bayern Munich his expected line-up for Saturday's season finale in the Bundesliga. Second-placed Bayern must beat Cologne and hope Borussia Dortmund slip up at home to Mainz to lift an 11th straight title.

There is no love lost between Dortmund and Cologne. They are from the same state and the transfer of Anthony Modeste from the Billy Goats to the Black and Yellows in August caused ructions in Cologne. However, Baumgart says this has nothing to do with why he is naming his team so early.

"Davie Selke will come back in, that will be the only change



(L-R) Bayern Munich's Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt, Bayern Munich's midfielder Joshua Kimmich and Bayern Munich's striker Thomas Müller during a Bundesliga match in Munich recently. (AFP)

in terms of names. Otherwise the guys who have been doing well recently will play," Baumgart told a news conference on Thursday.

"And before anyone says I

am leaking the team, I am not leaking anything. It is obvious." Forward Selke was on the bench with a knock during last weekend's 1-1 draw with former side Werder Bremen.

His replacement Steffen Tigges is now injured. The last time Baumgart named his 11, his side thrashed Bremen 7-1 in January in the reverse fixture.

His announcement ahead of the Bayern game means goalkeeper Timo Horn will leave the club after 21 years without starting his goodbye match. Baumgart said this was out of respect to Dortmund.

"I've always said that we shouldn't mess around when it comes to the title. Timo is number two and therefore Marvin Schwäbe will stay in goal," he said.

Similarly, former Germany defender Jonas Hector is retiring after Saturday's game but Baumgart is not planning on substituting him in order to gain applause.

Quick read

Spain world champion Iniesta to leave Vissel

TOKYO: Spain's 2010 World Cup-winning hero Andrés Iniesta will leave Japan's Vissel Kobe at the start of July.

"We say a heartfelt thank you for the five years he has spent here," the J-League leaders said in a statement on Thursday.

Whether the 39-year-old former Barcelona midfielder will retire is unknown.

"It's a very emotional day after so many years," Iniesta told a news conference. "I tried to give my best on and off the pitch. I am very proud of that." He has mainly been a substitute at Kobe since the start of the year. (DPA)



La Liga: Rodrygo scores in 89th minute as Real beat Rayo 2-1

STATS PERFORM/DPA

VINICIUS Junior watched on from the stands as his fellow Brazilian Rodrygo sealed a 2-1 victory for Real Madrid against Rayo Vallecano in La Liga.

Madrid winger Vinicius was racially abused by Valencia supporters during Los Blancos' defeat at Mestalla Stadium on Sunday, with the winger then sent off.

With that red card rescinded, injury kept Vinicius from featuring against Rayo on Wednesday, though Karim Benzema's finish had seemingly set Madrid on their way to a comfortable victory.

Raul de Tomas' excellent strike pegged Madrid back, but Rodrygo lashed home in the 89th minute to lift Los Blancos, temporarily at least, into second place.

Rayo were the more

threatening in the opening exchanges - Alvaro Garcia heading over between Unai Lopez and Santi Comesaña forcing Thibaut Courtois into action.

Yet Madrid went ahead just after the half-hour mark as Rayo were caught napping at a drop-ball, which was taken quickly by Toni Kroos.

Federico Valverde and Benzema combined brilliantly to put the latter through and, after coolly rounding Stole Dimitrievski, he tucked home.

Moments after an untimely slip from Rodrygo saw a golden chance go begging for Madrid, Dimitrievski brilliantly denied Benzema a second, instinctively sticking out a hand to keep a close-range shot out.

Dani Carvajal volleyed wide from Luka Modric's chip as Madrid looked to put



Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Rodrygo celebrates scoring his team's second goal during the Spanish league football match against Rayo Vallecano de Madrid in Madrid on Wednesday. (AFP)

the game to bed, a wise decision given their record of two defeats from their previous four meetings with Rayo.

Madrid's failure to add to their lead looked to have cost them with six minutes

remaining, substitute De Tomas thumping in a brilliant equaliser.

But Rodrygo had the last laugh with his powerful last-gasp strike, with the 22-year-old raising his right fist in a

celebration synonymous with the "black power" salute.

What does it mean? Fans unite behind Vinicius While Madrid will be eager to snatch second place ahead of rivals Atletico Madrid, Wednesday's match was always going to be overshadowed by the treatment of Vinicius during that clash with Valencia, and over the course of the season in general.

The Santiago Bernabeu was fully behind him, though. Prior to kick-off, fans at one end of the stadium held up a banner reading: "We're all Vinicius. Enough already." During the match, Vinicius received a round of applause at the 20-minute mark.

LaLiga president Javier Tebas has also now apologised to the Brazil international, who will be looking for action, not words, from the authorities.

After an outstanding 2021-22 campaign, Benzema has not quite managed to scale the same heights this term.

But even when not at his very best, the forward is such a stellar finisher that he has still managed 30 goals across all competitions.

Benzema has now netted at least 30 goals in each of the last three campaigns, after hitting that landmark tally only twice in his previous 11 seasons with Madrid.

Milestone up for Don Carlo Ancelotti has now coached Madrid in 150 league matches, with his record standing at 106 wins, 21 draws and 23 defeats.

He is the fourth coach in Madrid's history to reach 150 LaLiga games, after Miguel Munoz (424), Zinedine Zidane (183) and Vicente del Bosque (153).

Djokovic could face Alcaraz in semi-finals after French Open draw



File photographs of Serbia's Novak Djokovic (L) and Spain's Carlos Alcaraz. (AFP)

PA MEDIA/DPA
PARIS

NOVAK Djokovic is on a collision course with world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the French Open semi-finals.

At the draw in Paris, Djokovic, seeded third, was pulled out in the same half as the US Open champion from Spain, meaning they could meet in a blockbuster last-four showdown.

Alcaraz won their only other previous meeting, in Madrid last year.

Twice-winner Djokovic, looking for a men's record 23rd grand slam title, faces Ameri-

can Aleksandar Kovacevic in the first round. Alcaraz, 20, and second seed Daniil Medvedev will begin their campaigns against qualifiers. British number one Cameron Norrie takes on unpredict-

able Frenchman Benoit Paire, and he could run into Alcaraz in the fourth round.

They are the only three British players in the main draw at Roland Garros after Kyle Edmund, who has been beset by knee problems for the past two years, withdrew due to a wrist injury.

Andy Murray and Emma Raducanu pulled out earlier this month, while six British women lost in the qualifying rounds.

In the women's draw, 2022 champion Iga Swiatek will begin her title defence against Spanish world number 67 Cristina Bucsa.

The world number one could face Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, seeded fourth, in the semi-finals.

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka will face Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk in the opening round.

Last year's runner-up Coco Gauff starts against former French Open junior champion Rebeka Masarova of Spain.

Third seed Jessica Pegula and last year's Australian Open runner-up Danielle Collins meet in an all-American clash, and twice grand slam winner Victoria Azarenka takes on 2019 US Open champion Bianca Andreescu.

Gujarat Titans to face Mumbai Indians at home for a spot in final against CSK



Mumbai Indians' Suryakumar Yadav plays a shot during the Indian Premier League Eliminator against Lucknow Super Giants at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Wednesday. (AFP)

ANI
AHMEDABAD

ONLY two teams in Indian Premier League (IPL) history have won the title two times in a row. While one of those teams -- Chennai Super Kings -- has already reached the summit clash, the Mumbai Indians (MI) will face Gujarat Titans (GT) on Friday in Qualifier 2 of the IPL 2023.

Gujarat Titans' hunt to reach the summit clash now heads to Ahmedabad, where they will face Rohit Sharma's Mumbai Indians on Friday.

The top team from the league stage didn't exactly play like it against Chennai Super Kings, and it now appears like they aren't fully certain of their best XI. Getting that wrong during the playoffs is generally costly.

Titans have proven bowling performances, including the season's top two wicket-takers. However, the Titans' batting, at least for the time being, lacks the clarity that their bowling does. They must determine whether Dasun Shanaka's of-

Orange cap

Titans have been in stellar form with the bat barring the last match, especially Shubman Gill, who is within touching distance of the Orange Cap for this edition.

Rashid Khan and Mohammad Shami have accounted for over 50 wickets between themselves, while Noor Ahmad and Mohit Sharma have been equally pivotal in the bowling attack, especially in the middle overs.

Mumbai Indians registered a thumping win against Lucknow Super Giants in Chennai to book their berth in Qualifier 2. Their batting department has been in good form and in the last couple of matches, they have bowled well in the slog overs. There was good cricket on display when we faced them on two occasions this year and one can expect a good game of cricket.

Mumbai Indians, on the other hand, are peaking at the appropriate time. They had one of their most comprehensive performances in the Eliminator, in addition to four wins in their last five group stage games. From a batting standpoint, everyone has unlocked their most dangerous form, while among bowlers, Piyush Chawla and Jason Behrendorff

are doing enough for Akash Madhwal to flourish at the finish.

Gujarat Titans Squad: Wriddhiman Saha(w), Shubman Gill, Hardik Pandya(c), Vijay Shankar, David Miller, Dasun Shanaka, Rahul Tewatia, Rashid Khan, Darshan Nalkande, Noor Ahmad, Mohammad Shami, Mohit Sharma, Sai Sudharsan, Srikanth Bharat, Jayant Yadav, Shivam Mavi, Joshua Little, Pradeep Sangwan, Matthew Wade, Abhinav Manohar, Odean Smith, Alzarri Joseph, Ravishrinivasan Sai Kishore, Urvil Patel and Yash Dayal.

Mumbai Indians Squad: Ishan Kishan(w), Rohit Sharma(c), Cameron Green, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Tim David, Chris Jordan, Hrithik Shokeen, Piyush Chawla, Akash Madhwal, Jason Behrendorff, Nehal Wadhwa, Vishnu Vinod, Ramandeep Singh, Sandeep Warrier, Kumar Kartikeya, Riley Meredith, Shams Mulani, Arjun Tendulkar, Duan Jansen, Arshad Khan, Tristan Stubbs, Dewald Brevis and Raghav Goyal.

Jason Roy ends England deal to play in America's Major League

AGENCIES

JASON Roy has become the first England player to end his national contract in order to play franchise cricket.

Opener Roy has opted to cancel his incremental England deal - worth £60,000-£70,000 - to play in the American Major League Cricket, where he could earn £150,000 for one season.

The 32-year-old will still be available for national selection.

Roy said: "To be very clear, my priority is England cricket, especially with a World Cup soon upon us." Writing on social media, he added: "It is for me, and for any player, the greatest honour to receive a cap to play for their country."

"I wanted to clarify that I am not and never will walk away from England." An England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) statement said: "Jason Roy has informed the England and Wales Cricket Board that he wishes to take up an agreement with Major League Cricket in the USA later this summer."

"The ECB have agreed for him to play in the competition on the proviso that he gives up the remainder of his ECB incremental contract, which both parties have agreed to."

"The ECB wish to clarify that this decision will not affect Jason's selection for England teams going forward. We have absolute confidence and faith that Jason is committed to England cricket."

Roy has been a key component of England's dominance of the global white-ball game, a regular in the side that was crowned 50-over world champions in 2019.

However, a loss of form saw him dropped from the squad that won the T20 World Cup last year and, in October, he saw his central contract downgraded to an incremental deal.

With Major League Cricket taking place between the T20 Blast and The Hundred, Roy might have been ordered to rest

by England, especially with the defence of the 50-over World Cup on the horizon in India in October and November.

Instead, Roy will end his England deal, forgo the rest of his salary up to its expiry at the end of September.

"Representing my country continues to be my proudest moment as a professional cricketer," added Roy.

"I hope to play for England for many more years. That remains my priority."

"I've had clear and supportive conversations with the ECB about participating in Major League Cricket. The ECB were happy with me to play in the competition as long as they didn't have to pay me for the remainder of the contractual year."

"As a single-format player with no central contract I wanted to take the opportunity to play this competition as there are currently no scheduling conflicts with England. It benefits me as an England player to play as much competitive cricket as possible."

Writing on Twitter for former England captain Michael Vaughan wrote: "I don't get the big issue about Jason Roy. He hasn't got any England games and has been offered a nice contract in the States so he has taken it. It is inevitable that we will see more of this in the future. And I have no problem with it."

Though there is some overlap with the Blast, it is understood Roy will remain with his county Surrey if they reach finals day, before returning to play for Oval Invincibles in The Hundred in August.

Roy has played five Tests, 116 one-day internationals and 64 T20s for England, scoring almost 6,000 international runs.

His decision is the latest in a fast-changing landscape of global cricket, with the money on offer to players in franchise leagues challenging the primacy of international matches.



A file pic of England's Jason Roy celebrating his century against Pakistan at Trent Bridge, Nottingham. (ANI)

Sainz shuts down rumours of missing Monaco F1 GP due to injury scare

ANI
MONTE CARLO

FERRARI driver Carlos Sainz has cleared the confusion among fans of an injury ahead of the Monaco GP this Sunday. Sainz, his teammate Charles Leclerc, and fellow Aston Martin driver, Fernando Alonso took part in an annual Monaco football charity match.

The game took place on Tuesday to celebrate the Monaco GP that will be held from Friday. After the match, a pho-

to was doing rounds on social media in which Sainz was sitting on the bench with a bandage around his right thigh.

However, the extent of the injury was unknown, leading to many rumours among fans. Sainz is ranked fifth in the driver's championship ranking while his team Ferrari is ranked fourth in the constructor championship 2023.

Ferrari has had a very rough start to the season so far with only a single podium this season. To narrow the gap be-

tween their rivals Ferrari needs both drivers in prime conditions as they are in desperate need of podiums.

Amid the assumptions, Sainz took to his Twitter to clear the air about the image and confirm that he is, in fact, injury free and ready to race this weekend.

"Hi everyone. Just wanted to let you know that I am well and completely ready to race this weekend in Monaco. What happened yesterday was simply a contact during the traditional

charity football match, but it was not an injury. I enjoyed playing football as I always do and now I am really looking forward to the weekend." Sainz tweeted.

will be looking to repeat last year's performance as he finished second on the podium along with Red Bull's Sergio Perez and Max Verstappen in the Sainz e Monaco GP 2022.

On the other hand, his teammate Leclerc has his own desire to win in front of his home crowd.

GU-Q students share their research projects and passion of museums with Sheikha Al Mayassa

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

CHAIRPERSON of Qatar Museums HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani engaged students and graduates of Qatar Foundation partner Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) in a vibrant discussion about their vital role as key stakeholders in the continued growth and success of Qatar Museums through their rigorous research and study of politics, economics, history and culture.

In a conversation moderated by Dean of GU-Q Dr Safwan Mastri and held in the university's library, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa commended the dean for his efforts in integrating museums into the university's curriculum, particularly highlighting a collaborative class with Qatar Museums titled 'Theorizing Art in



Qatar', which took place at different museums in Qatar each week.

Alumni and students shared their research projects about cultural diplomacy and art history and were encouraged by HE Sheikha Al Mayassa to share their findings and participate

in connecting the dots between cultural institutions, society, the private sector and educational institutions in order to fully transform Qatar into a knowledge society.

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa also discussed the purpose and vision behind the evolution of Qatar's museums, spanning three distinct phases over the past 25 years. She noted that the first phase focused on heritage and identity, with the establishment of the Museum of Islamic Art, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, and the National Museum of Qatar.



The second phase concentrated on social development, marked by the recent inauguration of the Sports Museum and the upcoming launch of the DADU Children's Museum. Finally, the third and final phase will highlight global outreach, featuring the Lusail Museum, the Qatar Auto Museum, and other institutions.

In her concluding words, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa encouraged students to think of museums as hubs of learning not just about Qatar, but the world and its interconnections through art, artifacts and the human experiences they invoke.



QU, MoECC sign agreement for cooperation in research

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

QATAR University (QU) and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate in the field of environmental research and projects, in the presence of Minister of Environment and Climate Change HE Sheikh Dr Faleh bin Nasser Al Thani and President of QU Dr Hassan Al Derham, on the university's campus.

The agreement was signed by Assistant Undersecretary for Protection and Natural Reserves Affairs at the MoECC Dr Ibrahim Abdullatif Al Maslamani and QU's Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies Prof Mariam Al Maadeed.

In his statement following the signing of the agreement, Dr Maslamani said that the ministry is working to benefit from the scientific expertise of the university, which will enable MoECC decision-makers to take appropriate evidence-based decisions.

This cooperation is one way of implementing the national strategy where it concerns environmental sustainability, he explained.

He said, "I am confident that the work that Qatar University carries out will cover the three areas of the



Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, which includes protection of natural reserves, protecting the environment, and the field of climate change and sustainability, which includes ensuring capacity building through training."

In her statement on the occasion, Prof Maadeed said QU looks forward to cooperation with various institutions and bodies in the country to achieve the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, with the aim of tackling various environmental challenges.

The two parties aim to confront challenges facing the Qatari environment and its innate and biological diversity, believing in the vital role played by scientific research in serving community issues.

The agreement also includes

cooperation in the field of exchanging experiences in various fields, including statistics and data, as well as holding meetings and trainings between experts and specialists, forming working committees to develop joint plans, and holding consultative meetings.

The agreement covers areas of common interest such as biodiversity and wildlife and their environmental status; management, development and rehabilitation of natural reserves; the impact of hunting operations on the environment and fungal organisms inside and outside natural reserves; the state of the environment, air quality, soil quality, water quality, noise, chemicals and hazardous waste; social and economic impacts resulting from human activity; studies in the field of climate change and others.

NCQAA chairman outlines committee's objectives at first introductory meeting



TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

THE National Committee for Qualifications and Academic Accreditation (NCQAA), in collaboration with Qatar University (QU), organised the first introductory meeting in the presence of QU president, deputy presidents, college deans and several officials from higher education institutions in the country.

In his speech, Dr Mazen Hasna, chairman of the NCQAA, said, "The National Committee for Qualifications and Academic Accreditation was established by Cabinet Decision No. 12 of 2022. The committee's responsibilities were defined by the Cabinet Decision, which include overall supervision of the national qualifications framework and its periodic update in accordance with the state's general policies."

Furthermore, the committee is responsible for accrediting qualifications (certificates and academic degrees) awarded by higher education institutions in the country to ensure their alignment with the national qualification framework. The committee will also contribute to the development of higher education institutions and enhance high-quality educational opportunities by establishing quality assurance standards and promoting compliance with them. Through the academic accreditation system, the committee ensures that higher education institutions adhere to the standards set by the committee.

He pointed out that academic accreditation is the process of evaluating the quality of higher education institutions or a specific educational programme to recognise that the institution or programme has achieved specific and accredited quality standards. Dr Mazen added, "The committee reports directly to the Minister of Education and Higher Education, granting it independence. Despite its independence, the committee works closely with the higher education sector in the country."

He also provided an overview of the institutional accreditation standards that the committee has been working on in recent months, which include five criteria: the institution's mission and organisation; the availability of institutional resources; institutional planning and effectiveness; the achievement of the mission; and the institution's impact and alignment with the partners' aspirations.

On the efforts of the committee in managing the national qualifications framework, the committee's chairman mentioned that visits for academic accreditation of universities will commence during the upcoming academic year 2023-2024. This will involve collaborating with two local higher education institutions to prepare the self-study, which will be the focus of the accreditation process.

Additionally, the committee will open the nomination process to prepare programme evaluators from within the country, with the aim of training and qualifying them to participate in the assessment committees for higher education institutions during accreditation visits.

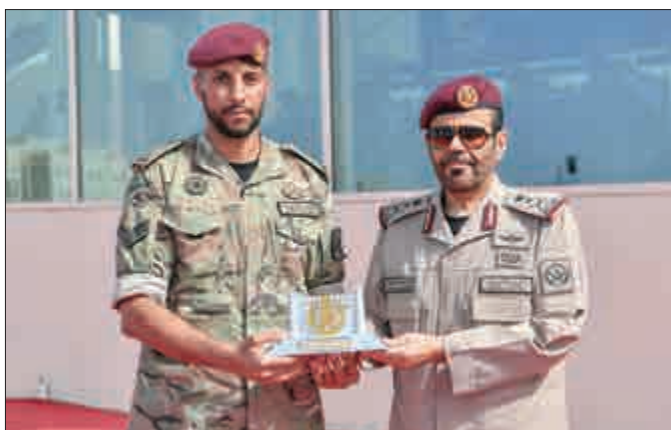
Amiri Guard celebrates security, personal protection course graduation

QNA
DOHA

THE Amiri Guard School celebrated the graduation of the Security and Protection of joint constituent personalities course No 91 and the conclusion of the first semester of the diploma in Security and Personal Protection No 2, in the presence of Amiri Guard Commander Lieutenant-General staff Hazza bin Khalil Al Shahwani in the 'Lahsaniya' camp on Thursday.

In his speech, Acting Commander of the Amiri Guard School Captain Mohammed Rashid Al Nuaimi said the school had developed a modern strategy to develop training methods in the field of security and protection to bring the personnel of the courses to the highest levels of combat readiness and provide the Amiri Guard with trained competencies capable of performing tasks and duties efficiently and competently.

He stressed the importance of the security and protection course as it contributes to the development of the com-



bat skills of the trainees and enhances their capabilities to deal with any dangers in vari-

ous emergencies, praising the distinguished level shown by the course participants during

the closing presentation, which reflects their experiences and combat skills. The trainees pre-

sented several performances on the field, which included a set of hypothetical scenarios, which began with presenting self defence movements and the combat and defensive methods that embodied the high physical fitness levels.

The trainees also performed a shooting show with various weapons, where they demonstrated distinguished levels and great skill in hitting targets with dexterity and accuracy. The show also included the implementation of field formations for car convoys for

the security and protection of personalities.

After the show, the general report of the session was reviewed and then the Commander of the Amiri Guard honoured the first graduates.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the deputy commander of the Amiri Guard, the inspector general, assistants to the commander of the Amiri Guard, several leaders and officers of departments and groups in the Amiri Guard, and officers from the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya).