Countdown to 2022 continues after Qatar successfully hosts Club World Cup

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FOCUS

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"We are excited to continue like we promised to do for the biggest tournament of all in under two years’ time," the former FIFA Stars League veteran said.

Al-Khater said Qatar will now begin focusing on the FIFA Arab Cup, an international tournament which will take place from December 1 to January 11, exactly two years before the World Cup.

"We are looking forward to hosting an iconic event that will bring fans, players and our country together," he added.

Organising Committee CEO and WMO President Mohammed Al-Kharaitiyat said Qatar will now continue with the preparations for the next big event.

"In recent months Qatar has been a world victim of Covid-19. The country was one of the first to take effective measures to contain the spread of the virus, and preparations for the 2019 FIFA World Cup Qatar 2020 Local Organising Committee, in close coordination with the relevant national authorities, to deliver a safe and successful FIFA Club World Cup for fans, players and officials."

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Al-Khater said Qatar has shown its capability to handle the challenge and will continue working to support the continuation of top-level CWC football, including the AFC Champions League, Joint Cup final and FIFA Club World Cup. Our next challenge will be the FIFA Arab Cup, which will be our big test and bubble test go head-to-head in Qatar. We have the know-how to handle every part of our infrastructure and preparations for 2022."

SPORT

By Sports Reporter

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“Our most game is against Al Ain and you know we won the first game 7-1, but the latest was 1-1 against Al Duhail, so I think we have done well, we have good team and a good coach, and we are having a very good season. I think they are not in the best moment now, because they started very well and lost some games. They are a strong team and good players, and they have a strong character, especially the coach, who is doing very well, so I cannot really say how we have to win."

"Of course, we have a big advantage, but we have to maintain the good levels and win the title as soon as we can."

"We were mixing the competition, after two weeks without games. We are restarting and we are excited to continue like we promised to do for the biggest tournament of all in under two years’ time."

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Bayern coach Flick savours World Cup double

EVEN for a successful club like Bayern, this was the most successful season ever.

By winning the FIFA Club World Cup in Qatar, Bayern have secured a historic 1-0 win in the final, concluding a remarkable year. The victory is a huge achievement for the club, having started the season with a 7-1 victory over Sampdoria in the UEFA Super Cup, and even more so for coach Hansi Flick, who has established a harmonious duo from the outset, and proved himself to be an empathetic and even-handed man-manager.

Pep Guardiola was withdrawn in the 64th minute for his team in the final phase of the Champions League, thus he could enter the field of play.

Bayern's win is the result of a team effort, with players like Joshua Kimmich and Leon Goretzka making crucial contributions.

Neymar's latest injury

He may have cost Barcelona €222 million when he signed for the club in 2017, but Neymar has never been able to fulfill expectations in the Catalans. The Brazilian forward has been plagued by injuries throughout his career, and his latest one seems to be a real concern.

Neymar has been ruled out for PSG's Ligue 1 game at home to Nice. "We have played nine comeback games and Neymar will not be able to inject some much-needed tenacity," said Flick at the time.

Setback

Qatar Airways congratulates Club WC champs Bayern

Bayern Munich have completed a remarkable year by winning the FIFA Club World Cup in Qatar. The German side lifted the trophy with a 1-0 win against Mexico's Tigres, concluding a successful season that saw them win the Bundesliga, DFB Cup, German Supercup, UEFA Super Cup, and now the FIFA Club World Cup.

Flick and the team will now turn their attention to the upcoming UEFA Champions League season, where they will look to defend their title.

Bayern Munich captain Manuel Neuer tips the FIFA Club World Cup trophy to his teammates at the Education City Stadium.

Qatar Airways has long been a supporter of football, sponsoring some of the biggest clubs and tournaments around the world. The airline's support for Bayern Munich is just one example of its commitment to the sport.

Flick's@ facebook

Bayern Munich coach Hans- Flick said: "Congratulations to my team, we dominated and deserved the World Cup toppership.

Bayern Munich have set a new record by winning six titles in a row, surpassing their previous record of six in a row which they achieved between 2014 and 2017. This achievement is a testament to the team's hard work and determination, led by the likes of Joshua Kimmich and Leon Goretzka.

Neymar's injury

The Brazilian star was ruled out for the remainder of the season after a rough challenge by Steeve Yabola during a Ligue 2 game.

The last-16 tie at his former club Barcelona on Tuesday.

Neymar said: "It was not a deliberate challenge. I just made a normal tackle, but sometimes situations can get out of hand and sometimes you need to cool down. The injury was also to blame.

The Brazilian's provocative attitude was also to blame.

"He complains of taking kicks to his feet because he is an artist," said Flick at the time.

The German side said: “It was not a deliberate challenge. It was a normal tackle, but sometimes situations can get out of hand and sometimes you need to cool down.”

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**GuARDIOLA DEMANDS MAN CITY DO NOT EASE UP**

As defending Liverpool face a tricky trip to Leicester hoping to benefit from a week off work.

**FOOTBALL**

**Premier League**

Chelsea, Southampton secure FA Cup quarter-final berths

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Inter and Juventus resume title pursuit**

**SERIE A**

**FP**

The treble of Serie A titles is very much in play for both Inter and Juve, with the European champions set to face each other next weekend for the second time this season, following the 2-0 victory at the San Siro in September. The two teams have been in top form in recent weeks, with Inter maintaining their unbeaten run in Serie A and Juve winning their last four league matches.

Inter coach Antonio Conte appeared to give a glimpse of his team's future plans, saying: "We want to continue our good form and we'll have to be at our best against Juve."

Juventus, on the other hand, have been struggling to find their rhythm, but Conte feels they are getting closer to their best form. "We have to keep improving and we'll have to be at our best against Juve," he added.

The match on Sunday will be a crucial one for both teams, with Inter leading the title race by two points and Juve in second place, three points behind. A win for Inter would see them move 12 points clear of their rivals, while a win for Juve would keep them in the title race with Inter.

**FIGURES (ALL TIMES GMT)**

Today

- Liverpool v Chelsea (1945)
- Crystal Palace v Burnley (1300)
- Brighton & Hove Albion v West Ham (1630)

**FP Today**

- Chelsea, Southampton secure FA Cup quarter-final berths

**STORY 1**

**Chelsea, Southampton secure FA Cup quarter-final berths**

Chelsea and Southampton have booked their places in the FA Cup quarter-finals after clean-sheet wins over Everton and West Brom.

Chelsea, who were coming off a 7-2 win over Wolves in the Premier League, made light work of a tricky trip to West Brom with a 2-0 victory, courtesy of goals from Christian Pulisic and Mason Mount.

Southampton, on the other hand, had to work harder to secure their place in the last eight, edging past West Brom with a 1-0 win, thanks to a 79th-minute goal from Che Adams.

**STORY 2**

**Inter and Juventus resume title pursuit**

Inter and Juventus will meet in a derby clash on Sunday, with both teams looking to boost their chances of winning the Serie A title.

Inter are currently top of the table with 50 points, five clear of second-placed Juventus. The two teams have already met twice this season, with Inter winning both games.

Inter coach Antonio Conte is hoping for a repeat of their 2-0 victory at the San Siro in September, saying: "We want to continue our good form and we'll have to be at our best against Juve."
It is disappointing not to get the hundred. I have been working hard on my batting...
Champions League: Real Madrid overcome Besiktas in Istanbul

Real Madrid reached the Champions League final for the 16th time on Wednesday night when they defeated Besiktas 3-1 in Istanbul.

The game was a tight affair, with both sides creating chances early on. However, it was Real Madrid who took the lead in the 13th minute through Karim Benzema, who smashed home from close range after good work from Vinicius Junior.

Besiktas tried hard to level the score, but Real held firm and added a second goal just before the break through a deflected shot from Luka Modric.

In the second half, Besiktas pushed for a goal, but Real’s goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois made several crucial saves to keep their lead intact.

With seconds remaining, Karim Benzema sealed the victory with a well-taken goal from a cross.

Real Madrid will now face Manchester City in the Champions League final on May 28, with the winners set to face Chelsea or Manchester United in the Europa League final.
After a two-hour meeting, Tokyo 2020 organisers said they will form a committee with a 50-50 gender mix to select Mori’s replacement.

Mori, 83, claimed last week that women didn’t have the “physical strength” to cope with the pressures of the job. His comments have caused a lot of chaos. I would like to express my sincere apologies, he said as he stepped down, adding immediately: “My inappropriate statement has caused a lot of chaos. I would like to express my sincere apologies.”

The International Olympic Committee that women have a “different mentality” had already expressed concern about the remarks, with sportswomen and activists calling for action. Yesterday Mori said he does not speak to women much. “I think it’s very difficult speaking concisely, which is something he frequently turned down the job.

The controversy has caused a lot of chaos. I would like to express my sincere apologies, he said as he stepped down, adding immediately: “My inappropriate statement has caused a lot of chaos. I would like to express my sincere apologies.”

The Tokyo Olympics chief Yokohama-born to bewailed the issues, receiving a leader- nesses, the Italian who fin- ished third in the giant slalom, said course setters had erred, rightly, on the side of caution. "More of the same," he said of his approach at the eighth bouncing round in what are expected to be difficult to estimate about what we can ex-pect.

The Tokyo 2020 organising committee president Yosuke Mori (44) announced his resignation after a meeting with executive board members in Tokyo. (AFP)

The new co-feature, action star Adam Lopez will defend his favoured successor. The controversy has caused a lot of chaos. I would like to express my sincere apologies, he said as he stepped down, adding immediately: “My inappropriate statement has caused a lot of chaos. I would like to express my sincere apologies.”

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Jones opts for a familiar formula against Italy

He has performed major pack surgery in a bid to counter threat from England's scrum

ENGLAND'S rugby team

Jones was unimpressed at the back against Italy in Europe's first Six Nations encounter since the best-of-three format was introduced, with the result only a 50-10 win due to a late surge and utter lack of commitment from the visitors.

The World Cup holders, who face Scotland tomorrow, have made just one personnel change from their 22 launched against the Azzurri, with lock Geoff Parling replaced by Lewis Ludlam.

Jones, however, insisted the England team, which has been hit by several injury concerns and will have to rely on the reserves for the February 26 clash, had a point to prove.

"We want to make a statement about the way we play and the way we want to be perceived," said Jones.

"We want to play a style that's easy on the eye and will keep the ball in play for as long as possible."...

Italia

Italy

Jones, the former Saracens skipper, said: "The capacity to be the story at the end of the day."... The only man in the team to have scored a try was the 22-year-old, who is also a try scorer in Rome, yet to beat England, have not en-

France need for us to run, I can guarantee you that there will be competition for the ball.

"We need to get our heads down and focus on the process, not the result."...

"We're not going to be able to make all the changes we need to make because we've got a lot of injuries to deal with."...

"We've got to be patient and work hard to get England back on track."...

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"We've got to be patient and work hard to get England back on track."...
**New lockdown ordered as Djokovic wins a thriller**

Fans barred from tournament for five days after new virus outbreak reported at an airport hotel in Melbourne

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**SPOTLIGHT**

**UNHAPPY**

Fritz critical of fans being ordered to leave tournament

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**BOTTOMLINE**

Seiten Novak Djokovic (celebrates after beating Taylor Fritz of the US at the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday)

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**GULF TIMES**

**SPOTLIGHT**

New lockdown ordered as Djokovic wins a thriller

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**A**

n a news brief that Melbourne would head into a snap lockdown for a third straight time after reports of a new coronavirus strain from London, Serena Williams was already on court at the Australian Open, playing her last match in front of crowds at the tournament.

The American was not due to play again until the last-16 match against Canada’s Leylah Fernandez on Sunday, as the tournament is due to finish on February 21.

But Williams said she was “fit as a fiddle” and didn’t believe the virus outbreak would affect her. She was among the first players in the women’s draw to lose in the Melbourne Park, falling to Victoria Azarenka in the third round.

However, the two-time Grand Slam winner Azarenka was also one of the first women to lose in the tournament, falling to Dayana Yastremska in the first round.

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**TOP IMAGE**

Taylor Fritz of the US in action during his third round match against Seinet Novak Djokovic yesterday.

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**FOCUS**

Hsieh happy to avoid a bagel

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**BARRY**

Barty withdraws from doubles competition

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