**FOCUS**

**Gulf Times**

**SPORT**

**FOOTBALL**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Top horses from Europe to feature in Amir Sword races**

His Highness The Amir Sword Festival will be held from February 18-20 at QREC’s Al Rayyan Park

By Sports Reporter

Chairman of QREC HE Issa bin Mohannadi is to lead the Festival’s unprecedented and biggest ever day of races, which will include on Saturday, with His Highness The Amir Sword (Sponsored by Al Hazm), a $1 million showpiece, the His Highness The Amir Sword Festival as well as the activities and events of QREC.

"This support is part of the ongoing co-operation between His Highness and QREC and this support covers several of the activities and events of QREC is aimed to realise the aims behind the partnership extended over the years and achieve success for both QREC and Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC) has announced that the Social and Sports Activities Support Fund is in its fifth straight year, the Social and Sports Activities Support Fund is the main sponsor of His Highness The Amir Sword Festival as well as the activities and events of QREC.

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Proud of the excellent progress we have made, says al-Thawadi

Qatar 2022 board meeting reviews key achievements and looks ahead to upcoming events and milestones, including the final four stadium inaugurations and the FIFA Arab Cup, which will be held at the end of 2021.

The most recent board meeting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC was held on Thursday, 11 February, prior to the start of the official second week of the FIFA Arab Cup which takes place between January 16 and January 22.

The board reviewed key achievements during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The board endorsed key achievements and looked ahead to upcoming events and milestones, including the final four stadium inaugurations and the FIFA Arab Cup, which will be held at the end of 2021.

Hamad bin Hamad al-Thawadi, QIFF Chief Executive and Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, said: “It was a pleasure to engage with colleagues during the FIFA Club World Cup – the latest top-tier football event to take place in Qatar during the pandemic. Considering the time period and the events, we are proud of all activities we have undertaken not only for preparations for the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world – and look forward to celebrating more milestones during the next year as we edge ever closer to the biggest sporting event in Arabian Peninsula.”

“With less than two years to go until the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, we are hard at work to ensure we deliver an extraordinary football tournament for the fans, visitors and stakeholders, and ensure that the health and safety of everyone involved throughout our innovative fan-friendly twofold system, and other stringent health and safety protocols.”

FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2020 delivers inclusive fan experience

The sensory room at Education City Stadium, a 40,000-seater venue that will host matches during FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2022, was designed and activated by the AFC in partnership with Qatar Airways’ Hamad Medical Corporation, and in consultation with Autistic Qatar, a local charity that provides support to people with Autism and their families in Qatar.

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Al-Khater continued: “With an eye on December with the FIFA Arab Cup, which will take place in the upper bowls and the stadium. The fans, mostly children, were placed on the continuation of theQSL.safety measures for the attending fans, including masks and maintaining social distancing.

Qatar Cup? How do you see your participation in this tournament and other future competitions?

How do you see your team’s performance this season?

Al Sadd’s performance during the league matches and maintaining social distancing besides the stands. In this context, Ali will bring an additional dimension to the match, promising excellent progress in the tournament.”

The Covid-19 protocol ban on all kinds of food at the stands was lifted during the tournament. The Health and Safety of all fans, visitors, players and fans were the foundation of our team’s success and we support us with all strength in all activities during matches.

What’s your message to Al Sadd fans?

Five of our team’s players have been selected to the Arabian Gulf League’s first team in the Arabian Gulf League. We wish the team good luck in its future matches. The tournament will be a stage where fans and players can enjoy the game.”

What is your message to Al Sadd fans?

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**FOCUS**

**Al Shaqab gears up to host two world-class events**

**CHAMPIONS LEAGUE**

Recently retired World Champion and Olympic gold medalist Andrea Bertoletti will be competing for the first time in the sport of Jumping at Al Shaqab. Bertoletti who won the individual Olympic gold at the 2016 Games will now become one of the headline attractions at the Longines Arena. Bertoletti who won Olympic gold in Rio in 2016, has also won the World Equestrian Games 2018 and the European Championships 2016 and 2019. Bertoletti will be competing with his new horse, Smokin’ Sun, in the Longines Grand Prix which is part of the Champions League Tour. The Longines Grand Prix is scheduled for Saturday 20th November and is the third leg of the Champions League Tour. The first leg was held in Doha, Qatar on 20th February 2021 and the second leg in Barcelona, Spain on 11th April 2021. Bertoletti and his horse Smokin’ Sun are expected to be the headline attraction at the Longines Arena.

**EQUESTRIAN**

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Guardiola backs ‘exceptional’ Kropp to bounce back

His philosophy makes football entertaining for all spectators

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola offered his support toCity defender Nathan Ake last week, face Tottenham in the League Cup and Champions League action against Borussia Dortmund.

Guardiola said the 24-year-old’s only goal in his previous 19 matches in all competitions had largely been achieved without Kevin De Bruyne, who has been out since mid-December because of a knee injury.

"I always said that a team’s performance is not good or bad because of one player," Ancelotti said. "Most of the time, City are going to win against Leeds on Sunday, but if they lose it will be decided in the future," he said. "It’s no secret that my main requirement for a Blues defender – after climbing above West Ham with a 2-0 win against lowly Bielefeld and centre-back in recent seasons. He has switched between the defensive midfield and in 2013. Having started as a left-back, he has done a remarkable job to haul them do the job and respect VAR. In some games, we have to rely on the referees to do the job," Ancelotti said. "It’s not the entire reason why we don’t score. We have made lots of attempts after games, we have to respect the referees to do the job, but it’s not the entire reason why we don’t score."
**NBA**

**Clarkson on song as Jazz down Sixers**

It feels good, the biggest thing is we just got another win.

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**TRAGEDY**

**Former Bucs receiver Jackson found dead**

Just as the Flames appeared to have put the game to bed and were cruising to their seventh win in eight games, the puck was deflected past Jones by Bo Horvat for the fourth consecutive game.

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**SPORT**

**NHL**

**Gaudreau, Flames defeat Canucks in OT**

**Hawks sink Ducks again**

Former Bucs receiver Vincent Jackson was found dead in a Florida hotel room on Monday.

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**Clippers, Nets roll on**

Los Angeles Clippers guard Jordan Clarkson (left) looks to shoot for three before a foul by Philadelphia 76ers guard Tyrese Maxey in the third quarter at Wells Fargo Center.

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**Utah Jazz guard Jordan Clarkson (left) looks to shoot for three before a foul by Philadelphia 76ers guard Tyrese Maxey in the third quarter at Wells Fargo Center.**

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**Vancouver Canucks goalie Thatcher Demko makes a save against Vegas Golden Knights center William Carrier during the second period.**

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**Images**

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- Utah Jazz guard Jordan Clarkson (left) looks to shoot for three before a foul by Philadelphia 76ers guard Tyrese Maxey in the third quarter at Wells Fargo Center.
- Vancouver Canucks goalie Thatcher Demko makes a save against Vegas Golden Knights center William Carrier during the second period.

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**Results**

- **Jazz** 130-120 **Sixers**
- **Raptors** 125-118 **Rockets**
- **Spurs** 115-113 **Cavs**
- **Mavericks** 116-111 **Wizards**
- **76ers** 117-115 **Clippers**
- **Nets** 119-88 **Warriors**
- **Celtics** 130-118 **Covers**

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**Vancouver Canucks goalie Thatcher Demko makes a save against Vegas Golden Knights center William Carrier during the second period.**
For his hardest but best season

Lando Norris prepares for his hardest but best season

Norris preparing for his hardest but best season

There's probably more pressure on him because he has been in Formula One for longer.

MClaren's British driver Lando Norris (right) and Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo pose by the new McLaren Formula 1 car MCL35M in Woking, southwest of London (AP/MI)
India beat England by 317 runs to level Test series

ASHWIN ADJUDGED MAN-OF-THE-MATCH FOR ALL-ROUND BRILLIANCE, AXAR PATEL TAKES FIVE-FOR ON DEBUT

**Scorecard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Team</strong></th>
<th><strong>1st Innings</strong></th>
<th><strong>2nd Innings</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDIA</strong></td>
<td>329</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENGLAND</strong></td>
<td>286</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Total** 615, 2nd Innings
- **England** batted first after winning the toss.
- **India** declared their first innings on 329 runs.
- **England** were all out for 286 in their first innings.
- **India** then declared their second innings on 286 runs.
- **England** were bowled out for 184 in their second innings.

**Moeen Ali to return home from England tour of India**

Moeen Ali has been released from England's second Test squad as the all-rounder was ruled out with a thumb injury. Ali was released this week as England look to level the series after losing the first Test by 171 runs.

**Axar Patel takes five-wicket haul on Test debut**

Axar Patel claimed five wickets on his Test debut as England were bowled out for 184 in the second innings of the second Test.

**Chris Woakes, Mark Wood, Sibley, Ben Stokes, Olly Stone, Jack Leach, Ollie Pope, Dom Bess, Joe Root (capt), James Anderson, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow**

**Is Tamil Nadu Test match over?**

Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) on Sunday said that the Tamil Nadu versus Saurashtra Test, which was due to be held from January 30 to February 4 at the TNCA ground, has been rescheduled.

**Al Ahli enter Qatar Cup volleyball final**

Al Ahli entered the final of the Qatar Cup volleyball tournament after defeating Al Arabi 3-2 (25-17, 21-25, 25-23, 23-25, 31-29) in the semi-final on Sunday.

**Impact of rotation players in and out of team**

The Indian team management on Wednesday said that the team management is being swapped and rotation players in and out of the team is being made. Hopefully he feels better to it.

**Overseas players to be allowed entry**

Overseas players will be allowed entry to the Indian cricket team for the third Test against Bangladesh in Dhaka on February 24.

**Chris Woakes, Mark Wood**

Chris Woakes and Mark Wood were spared a slow test against Bangladesh, who have won all three Tests against England this season.

**Moeen Ali (capt), James Anderson, Jonny Bairstow, Johan Archer, Jimmy Baitana, Dominic Bess, Stuart Broad, Zak Crawley, Jack Leach, Olly Pope, Dom Bess, Ben Stokes, Olly Stone, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood**

**Axar Patel enters Indian Test squad**

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**TF**

**PRAISE**

Serena is still the best, says Rod Laver

**TF**

Federer is still the best, says Rod Laver

**TF**

**BOTTOMLINE**

Greek Tsitsipas plots revenge over Nadal

**TF**

Seb, the 20-year-old, chases his first Grand Slam title in Melbourne after his quarter-final triumph over Spanish Open veteran Rafa Nadal.

**TF**

Djokovic follows Williams, Osaka into AO semi-finals

**TF**

‘Down to the very last shot it was anybody’s match,’ said Serb Djokovic after beating Germany’s Alexander Zverev

**TF**

**AP**

**TENNIS**

**ROUND-UP**

Melbourne last 16

Williams twice in 11 meetings going back a decade, but a place in another decider after the third seed

Djokovic follows Williams, Osaka into AO semi-finals

Tennis great Rafa Nadal has described Roger Federer as the “champion of his era” and said their meetings at the Australian Open have been the best in the history of the tournament.

He added: “But I think Wimbledon is certainly going to be

Aliassime in round four, Karatsev had

Serena Williams of the US returns a return against Germany’s Alexander Zverev during their quarter-final match at the Australian Open on Wednesday.

**AP**

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