

Qatar to Use Iran's Kish Island for World Cup 2022



The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Qatar Football Association (QFA) on Thursday.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Qatari Football Federation officials are planning to visit Iran's Kish Island to prepare the grounds for the Persian Gulf resort's hosting of Qatar 2022 World Cup teams.

Iranian Football Federation officials have invited president of the Qatar Football Association, Sheikh Hamad al-Thani, to visit Kish Island in southern Iran to see the possibilities of setting up camps for 2022 World Cup teams.

Sheikh Hamad has welcomed the proposal, but due to a lack of direct flights from Qatar to the island, the Qatari official may travel to Kish with a dedicated flight or a ship from Doha.

As soon as the dates for 2022 World Cup are confirmed, Iran would be informed about the details, the Iran's domestic sports news reported.

Sheikh Hamad al-Thani also

promised to send a high-level delegation representing the 2022 World Cup executive committee to visit Kish Island in a bid to take care of any possible lack of facilities.

Mehdi Taj, president of the Iranian Football Federation and his deputy Ali Kaffashian on Thursday made a trip to Qatar. During the visit, two MoUs were signed between Iran's Football Federation and Qatari Football Association.

Based on one of these MoUs, Kish Island could be a tourist destination for the 2022 World Cup spectators. At the same time, it seems that a direct flight from Doha to Kish will be provided so that the island could accommodate spectators.

The Qatari side also agreed to provide Iran's men and women national teams at all levels with special facilities and equipped academies.

Mayweather-McGregor Fight Second Richest Ever

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor's cross-combat superfight has been the second richest boxing bout in history, long-awaited final figures revealed.

A statement from Showtime sports said the August fight between boxing star Mayweather and mixed martial arts king McGregor generated 4.3 million pay-per-view buys in North America.

Only one other fight -- Mayweather's 2015 bout with Manny Pacquiao -- has ever drawn more, racking up 4.6 million buys to earn around \$600 million.

The Mayweather-McGregor pay-per-

view had exceeded \$600 million.

"The pairing of Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor brought together two very significant and distinct global fan bases in one truly unprecedented event," Showtime Sports chief Stephen Espinoza told ESPN.

"The remarkable results are all the more impressive considering that the planning, marketing and execution took place across a span of just 72 days from the initial announcement to fight night."

The Mayweather-McGregor fight was widely dismissed as a circus before the bout, which was eventually won by



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view total is almost double the third biggest fight of all time, Oscar De La Hoya's 2007 fight with Mayweather, which had 2.48 million buys.

Showtime said in a statement that global revenues, including ticket sales, sponsorship and international distribution, Mayweather and McGregor

Mayweather -- returning from a two-year retirement -- with a 10th round knockout.

Meanwhile Philippine boxing hero Pacquiao said last week he too was seeking his own showdown with McGregor, confirming he had opened talks with the Irishman to possibly fight in April.

UEFA Rejects AC Milan Plea to Waive FFP Rules

MILAN (Reuters) - European soccer's governing body UEFA has rejected a request by AC Milan to waive the Financial Fair Play (FFP) rules, citing uncertainties in the Italian soccer club's financial situation, it said.

Under UEFA regulations, any European soccer club that spends more than its generated revenue faces possible sanctions, including, in certain circumstances, a ban from playing.

However, a club can ask for a waiver to the FFP under a so-called 'voluntary agreement' scheme.

Milan had asked UEFA to be able to exercise its right to waive the FFP rules after Chinese entrepreneur Li Yonghong bought the club from Italian holding company Fininvest. "There are still uncertainties in relation to the financing of the loans to be paid back in October 2018 and the financial guarantees provided by the main shareholder," UEFA said in a statement.

"AC Milan will continue to be subject to the ongoing monitoring process and the situation will be assessed again in the first months of 2018," it added.

Celtics' Gordon Hayward Says Open to Returning This Season



Celtics guard Gordon Hayward

BOSTON (AP) — Celtics guard Gordon Hayward says he is open to playing this season, but says it will depend on how fast he is able to heal and show progress as he works his way back from a broken left ankle.

Hayward was at TD Garden for Boston's matchup with the Utah Jazz, the team he left this past summer in free agency after seven seasons to sign a four-year, \$128 million contract with the Celtics. He was injured in Boston's season

opener at Cleveland.

Wednesday marked a milestone in Hayward's recovery process, when he was able to shed the walking boot he's been using since his surgery in October. He will continue to wear a protective brace during the rehab process.

He said he doesn't know how long he will have to wear the brace. But he said he is now allowed to do some shooting and begin working more on mobility.

Williams Put Off Driver Announcement to New Year



LONDON (Reuters) - Formula One team Williams have put off until the New Year an announcement on who will partner Canadian teenager Lance Stroll next season.

A team spokeswoman confirmed no driver news was planned before January, with the 21-race 2018 season due to start in Australia on March 25.

Russian Sergey Sirotkin appears favorite for the drive, the only remaining vacancy on the starting grid, rather than Poland's comeback hopeful Robert Kubica.

Williams have said their decision would be based on performance and have given few hints about who is likely to succeed now

retired Brazilian Felipe Massa at the former champions.

Sirotkin, a 22-year-old development driver for the Renault team this year, has been backed by Russian billionaire Boris Rotenberg and his SMP Racing.

Rotenberg's brother Arkady is a close ally and former judo partner of President Vladimir Putin.

Leaving aside his significant backing, the Russian impressed in post-season testing in Abu Dhabi after he was passed over by Renault when that team were looking to replace Britain's Jolyon Palmer.

Both he and Kubica, 33, were at the factory last week for debriefs and further assessment, with media reports suggesting Russian Daniil Kvyat was also in the frame after being dropped by Red Bull and Toro Rosso.

Russia, which pays handsomely for the right to host a grand prix in Sochi, currently has no Formula One driver contracted to race next year.

Svindal Storms to Another Downhill Win



Alpine Skiing - FIS Alpine Skiing World Cup - Men's Alpine Downhill - Selva di Val Gardena, Italy - December 16, 2017 Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal in action during the Men's Alpine Downhill.

VAL GARDENA, Italy (Dispatches) - Norwegian Aksel Lund Svindal stormed to his second World Cup downhill win of the season after destroying the field at Val Gardena on Saturday.

Svindal, starting 13th, charged down the course in one minute 57 seconds to win by 0.59 seconds from his compatriot Kjetil Jansrud while Austria's Max Franz was third.

The 34-year-old, overall World Cup champion in 2007 and 2009, finished third in Lake Louise and won in Beaver Creek in this season's previous downhills despite suffering the after-effects of major knee surgery in January.

Svindal said his knee was still restricting the amount of training he could do.

"It was a good run and I'm getting better all the time... I was just trying not to think about it and

concentrate on the race," he told Swiss television. "On Monday and Tuesday, I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to race."

Lindsey Vonn Takes WCup super-G Race

And also, Lindsey Vonn sped to an emotional win in a World Cup super-G race on Saturday.

It was her first win of a difficult season so far, one marred by a crash and a recent back injury, and it brought both of them to tears.

Alan Kildow, wearing a white ski hat with the name of the French resort written on it, was tearful as his daughter won 12 years after clinching a downhill win here - the third win of the record 78 she cherishes.

The 33-year-old American ski star has seven wins and 10 podiums at Val d'Isere, but her father missed the others.

Crystal Palace Beat Leicester City 3-0



Wilfried Zaha celebrates scoring Crystal Palace's second goal of the game with Christian Benteke.

London (dispatches) - Christian Benteke ended a 13-game goal drought for Crystal Palace in a 3-0 victory at Leicester in the Premier League on Saturday. The Belgium striker headed in Andros Townsend's cross in the 19th minute to score his first goal since the penultimate game of last season in May. It came a week after Benteke defied team orders by taking, and missing, a penalty in a draw with Bournemouth.

Benteke made further amends

by setting up Wilfried Zaha for Palace's second in the 40th minute. Vicente Iborra had a goal disallowed for Leicester, which had won four in a row. Leicester lost Wilfred Ndidi, who was dismissed in the 61st minute after being booked twice within 10 minutes on his 21st birthday.

Bakary Sako added a third goal in stoppage time as Roy Hodgson's Palace extended its unbeaten run to seven games.