

Arab Club run back on track for Muharraq

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TDT | Manama

Bahrain champions Muharraq returned to winning ways yesterday at the 44th Arab Club Men's Volleyball Championship, sweeping Qatar's Al Shorta SC 3-0 (25-23, 25-22, 25-20) at the Salle de la Cite Sportive in Le Kram, Tunisia. The result comes after back-to-back defeats and keeps Muharraq firmly in contention heading into the final round of the preliminary stage.

The fourth-round clash brought a spirited response from Muharraq, who displayed renewed intensity and composure throughout the contest. After narrowly edging the opening two sets, the Bahrainis delivered their most impressive stretch of volleyball in the third, highlighting the resilience that has defined their tournament campaign.

Muharraq were forced to dig deep in the final set after falling behind 8-2 early. Refusing to let the match slip, they mounted a remarkable comeback, overturning the deficit to surge ahead 20-17. The momentum proved decisive, and a net touch on match point sealed a convincing straight-sets victory for Yaseen Al Meel's side.

The win lifts Muharraq's record to two victories from four matches in Group B, revitalising their hopes of progressing after a challenging start to the competition.

The Red Wolves will conclude their preliminary-round schedule today when they face the Palestinian Military Club at 1pm, with qualification still within reach as the championship continues in Tunisia until January 18.



Muharraq's Mateusz Jozwik, Mohammed Omar, and Jacob Link rise together for a block

Kohli hits 93 as India edge New Zealand in ODI opener



India's Virat Kohli watches the ball after playing a shot

AFP | Vadodara

Virat Kohli hit 93 to help India chase down 301 in a tense four-wicket win over New Zealand in the first one-day international yesterday.

The in-form Kohli struck his 77th ODI half-century as he became the second leading run-scorer in international cricket with a total of 28,068 runs.

With his dismissal, India slipped from 234-2 to 242-5 before they reached their target with six balls to spare in Vadodara.

Skipper Shubman Gill made 56 in a 118-run second wicket stand with Kohli, who shared another strong partnership with Shreyas Iyer, who made 49. Late cameos by Harshit Rana (29) and wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul, who made an unbeaten 29 including the winning six, secured an In-

dian lead in the three-match series 1-0.

New Zealand pace spearhead Kyle Jamieson stood out with figures of 4-41.

Kohli led the chase as he went past Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara (28,016 runs) to move second in the list of leading run-scorers in the international game, behind fellow Indian Sachin Tendulkar (34,357).

"My journey has been nothing short of a dream-come-true for me," Kohli said after being named man of the match.

"I look at my journey with grace and gratitude. With the way I am playing at the moment, I am not looking at milestones. Only thing in my mind was to help the team win."

The 37-year-old Kohli only plays the ODI format after he and fellow stalwart Rohit Sharma, 38, retired from T20 and Test cricket.

Medvedev warms up in style for Australian Open with Brisbane win

AFP | Brisbane

Three-time Australian Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev warmed up for an assault on this year's opening Grand Slam in perfect fashion by winning the Brisbane International final yesterday.

The Russian world number 13 was too strong for American Brandon Nakashima and ran out a 6-2, 7-6 (7/1) winner in 96 minutes on Pat Rafter Arena for his 22nd ATP Tour title.

Medvedev broke a shell-shocked Nakashima twice in the first set and looked on course for a quick victory.

Nakashima rallied in the second to force a tiebreak but the towering Russian raced to a 5-0 lead in the breaker and the match was as good as over.



Daniil Medvedev of Russia hits a return during the men's singles final

"I started pretty strong but then Brandon found his way back, saved some match points then almost got it to a third set," Medvedev said. The Australian Open begins

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DANIIL MEDVEDEV

in Melbourne next Sunday, January 18.

"It's been a great start to the year," said Medvedev, who made the final in Brisbane in 2019.

"I said then that I would try and come back and win it. I came back seven or eight years later and I'm happy to hold the trophy."

Keys draws on happy Adelaide memories before Australian Open defence



Madison Keys in action in Brisbane (file photo)

AFP | Adelaide

Madison Keys was relishing being back on her happy hunting ground in Adelaide yesterday, where a year ago her run to first Grand Slam title all began.

The American swept to the 2025 Adelaide International trophy and it sparked her run to an Australian Open triumph, won in an epic final against Aryna Sabalenka at Melbourne Park.

"It definitely helped a lot," the 30-year-old American told reporters on the eve of the WTA Adelaide event.

Keys also won in 2022 on her only other appearance in the South Australia city, and thinks that is a good omen for her Australian Open preparation.

"Twice before I've played Adelaide and I ended up making the semis of the Australian Open. And then last

year obviously I went deep," said Keys, the world number seven.

The Australian Open is just a week away and Keys is taking only positives from her defeat to Sabalenka at the season-opening Brisbane International last week.

"You want matches at the beginning of the season. You really want to test yourself," said Keys, who has a first-round bye in Adelaide.

"Getting as many good matches as possible helps you figure out what's working, what's not working, where to make some tweaks here or there."

"It also gives you a lot of confidence and momentum."

Keys is now the top seed in Adelaide after fellow American Jessica Pegula pulled out following her run to the semi-final in Brisbane on Saturday.

Comeback kid Hurkacz inspires Poland to first United Cup title

AFP | Sydney

Poland's Hubert Hurkacz capped an emotional injury comeback and earned United Cup redemption as he inspired his country to their first title with victory against Switzerland in Sydney yesterday.

Switzerland took a shock early lead when Belinda Bencic stunned world number two Iga Swiatek 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 in the opening singles of the mixed teams event.

Playing his first tournament in seven months following knee surgery, the 28-year-old Hurkacz withstood a Stan Wawrinka fightback to prevail 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 and send it to a deciding doubles.



Hubert Hurkacz (left) is congratulated by Stan Wawrinka

Katarzyna Kawa and Jan Zielinski then completed a famous victory by beating Bencic and Jakub Paul 6-4, 6-3.

Hurkacz fired 18 aces against the 40-year-old Wawrinka to

erase two heartbreaking near misses in the last two United Cup finals.

In 2024, Hurkacz squandered two championship points before falling to Germany's Alexander Zverev. The USA's Taylor Fritz denied him in a third-set tiebreak last year.

"He's definitely an inspiration," Hurkacz said of Wawrinka, who is playing his final season on tour before retirement.

"I was growing up watching him play, compete and win so much. Obviously his game style is really powerful."

"The shots that he can pull off sometimes, you can really admire them even when you are on the other side of the net."