

Sports

Remaining WCup tickets to go on sale next week

1.8 million tickets sold in the first two batches of sales

DOHA: The remaining tickets for this year's World Cup in Qatar will be available on a first-come, first-served basis from next week, FIFA said on Wednesday. About 1.8 million tickets were sold in the first two batches of sales, FIFA said, without saying how many are now available. Qatar will host the first World Cup in the Middle East from November 21 to December 18 at eight stadiums in and around the capital, Doha.

The latest tickets will go on sale online from July 5 at 12pm Doha time until 12pm on August 16, FIFA said in a press release. "Huge worldwide interest is anticipated in the new sales period," the world body said. Officials said three million tickets are available in total, including those allocated to sponsors.

Last week, the World Cup's chief organizer Hassan Al-Thawadi said 1.2 million tickets had been sold so far. FIFA president Gianni Infantino said there were five million ticket requests just for the final at the 80,000-seat Lusail stadium. Doha, with a population of about 2.4 million and limited accommodation, is bracing itself for a huge influx of visitors for the 32-team tournament. Last month, Qatar announced scores of daily shuttle flights from neighboring Gulf countries, allowing fans to stay elsewhere and fly in to watch games.

World Cup fans

Meanwhile, Qatar said on Tuesday that World Cup fans have "a lot of options" with more than 100,000 rooms currently available and tens of

thousands more expected by the tournament's kickoff. Some football supporters have expressed concern that they have been unable to find accommodation in line with their budget for the World Cup, which runs from November 21 to December 18. Prices range from 300 Qatari rials (just over \$80) to several thousand dollars per night.

Qatar has so far taken more than 25,000 bookings, said Omar Al-Jaber, the official in charge of accommodation for the tournament's organizing committee, specifying that he was talking about "bookings, not rooms or nights". "If you go through our website, you will find a lot of options," he told reporters on a tour of an available apartment in Doha. "And if you don't find it today, you need to check tomorrow or after tomorrow... because... we add more inventory to this portal."

"More than 100,000 rooms (are) available as of today," he said. "If we go to November, maybe we'll reach more than 130,000 rooms or 140,000 rooms." Supporters normally find accommodation themselves for such tournaments. But Qatar - set to host the most geographically concentrated World Cup in history and with limited hotel capacity - is seeking to channel supporters through an official platform that is reserved for ticket holders and managed by the tournament's organizers.

Eighty-five percent of accommodation - whether permanent or temporary - is now complete and the remainder will be finished by a "deadline" of end-August, according to Jaber.



DOHA: Photo shows a view of a gym facility at the Centara Hotel, which will host fans during the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup. —AFP

The country will be closed to visitors without match tickets during the course of the tournament, Jaber said. As of Tuesday, the US,

Mexico, United Kingdom, Argentina and India accounted for some of the biggest sources of reservations. —AFP

Serena's career at a crossroads after Wimbledon defeat

LONDON: With her 41st birthday just months away and without a Grand Slam title since 2017, Serena Williams faces searching questions over her future after a painful first-round Wimbledon exit. The American was back on Centre Court on Tuesday after a year away from singles tennis but it was a miserable return to the scene of some of her greatest triumphs.

The 23-time major winner was cheered as she entered the court and supported throughout by a crowd desperate to see her recapture former glories against unseeded Harmony Tan of France. But she looked a pale shadow of her former self, making 54 unforced errors in an uncharacteristically sloppy display that ended with a tame forehand dumped into the net. Despite her lack of form and fitness, Serena, who lost 7-5, 1-6, 7-6 (10/7), looked to have the match in her grasp at various points.

She served for victory when 5-4 up in the decider and even in the tie-break raced into a 4-0 lead before her game fell apart. Putting a brave face on her defeat, the American said it was "definitely better than last year", when an ankle injury forced a tearful exit in her first-round match against Aliaksandra Sasnovich. The 40-year-old only returned to tennis last week, teaming up with Ons Jabeur in the doubles at Eastbourne. Asked if she might have played her final Wimbledon, she said she was unsure.

Uncertain future

"I don't know," she said. "Who knows? Who knows where I'll pop up?" Questioned as to whether she would be happy if the defeat by 115th-ranked Tan was her final memory of Wimbledon, she said: "Obviously not. You know me. Definitely not. "But today I gave all I could do. Maybe tomorrow I could have given more. Maybe a week ago I could have given more. But today was what I could do." The former world number one, handed a wildcard to compete at the All England Club, first won Wimbledon way back in 2002.

But despite her bitter disappointment she



WIMBLEDON: US player Serena Williams returns the ball to France's Harmony Tan during their women's singles tennis match on the second day of the 2022 Wimbledon Championships on June 28, 2022. —AFP

sounded motivated to play on, even though she is nearly twice as old as world number one Iga Swiatek. "It definitely makes me want to hit the practice courts because, you know, when you're playing not bad and you're so close," she said. The US Open, which starts in August, is firmly in her sights. Williams's win there in 1999 was her first singles Grand Slam triumph, launching her stellar career in the majors - which has featured periods of near-total dominance.

"When you're at home, the US Open, that being the first place I've won a Grand Slam, is something that's always super special," said Williams, who has won at Flushing Meadows six times. "Your first time is always special. There's definitely lots of motivation to get better and to play at home."

Williams's place in the pantheon of all-time greats is already assured but she remains agonizingly one singles title short of Margaret Court's all-time Grand Slam record of 24.

The American, who has also won multiple major doubles titles with her sister Venus, last won a Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in 2017, giving birth later that year to her daughter, Olympia. Since then she has been in four Grand Slam finals, including two at Wimbledon and two at the US Open, but has come up short each time. Williams, who has won 73 singles titles in her career overall, has plummeted to 1,204th in the world after her year out of the game. It must look a long way back to the top for a once-dominant player as she considers her future in the game. —AFP

Judo coach gets nine years for throwing boy to death

TAIPEI: A Taiwanese judo coach who killed a seven-year-old pupil by repeatedly throwing him to the floor was sentenced to nine years in prison on Wednesday, prompting the boy's parents to demand a harsher punishment. The child, identified only by his family name Huang, was rushed to a hospital in central Taichung city in April last year after he was reportedly thrown 27 times by his coach Ho Tsung-le. He remained in a coma for 70 days with brain haemorrhages, and developed respiratory problems as well as multiple organ failure before his parents decided to take him off life support.

The Taichung district court on Wednesday handed down a nine-year prison sentence, saying Ho forced the boy to obey his instructions and "neglected the possibility that (the instructions) could lead to death". But the boy's parents vowed to appeal the "light" sentencing and said the coach has never shown any remorse. "I think it's too light, it should be a life for a life. His attitude is really terrible. He's never admitted to any wrongdoing and blamed it on my child," the boy's father told reporters.

According to a court statement, Ho instructed the boy to practice throwing with a much more experienced classmate, despite knowing that he was unfamiliar with basic judo movements. After Huang resisted the orders and said "the coach is a big idiot", Ho used multiple throwing techniques on the child, including a shoulder throw. When the boy complained of a bad headache, the coach said he was "faking it" and went on to throw him a dozen more times, causing him to vomit, the statement said.

After getting other pupils to clean the vomit from the floor, Ho continued to throw the child a few more times until he collapsed completely on the floor, it added. The boy's uncle reportedly attended the class but failed to stop the coach. Local media cited the boy's family as saying he was thrown about 27 times. The court statement said his head repeatedly hit the floor but did not specify how many times. "He carried out the extremely inappropriate training measures that caused Huang to sustain injuries and unfortunately die at a young age," the court said. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9
Maternity Hospital	24843100		
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700		
Chest Hospital	24849400	Clinics	
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Kaizen center	25716707
Adan Hospital	23940620	Rawda	22517733
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Adaliya	22517144
		Khaldiya	24848075

Kaifan	24849807	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shamiya	24848913	Shaab	22518752
Shuwaikh	24814507	Qibla	22459381
Abdullah Salem	22549134	Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Nuzha	22526804	Mirqab	22456536
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764	Sharq	22465401
Qadsiya	22515088	Salmiya	25746401
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