STEWARDS' INQUIRY REGARDING TRAINER DR JABER BITTAR IN RESPECT OF THE POSITIVE SAMPLE FROM ALAQ (AE) FOLLOWING AN OFFICIAL STALL TEST AT ABU DHABI RACECOURSE ON 21 FEBRUARY 2026.

ERA Offices,
Meydan Racecourse

29 September 2026

Stewards: **Mr Samuel Shinsky (Chair)**
Mr Rashid Alblooshi
Mr Manav Vaya

Emirates Racing Authority Stewards conducted an inquiry at the ERA Offices, Meydan Racecourse, on 29 September 2026, in relation to the positive sample obtained from ALAQ (AE) following an official stall test for reinstatement to racing at Abu Dhabi Racecourse on 21 February 2026, and the detection of Acepromazine and 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl) Promazine Sulfoxide.

The Stewards considered the evidence contained in the Brief of Evidence relating to ALAQ (AE), together with evidence and submissions from licensed Trainer, Dr Jaber Bittar, Assistant Trainer, Mr Arif Khan, Al Reef Stable veterinarians, Dr Ahmed and Dr. Gonzalo, ERA Head of Equine and Welfare, Dr David Craig, ERA Head Investigative Stewards, Ms Emily Barron and ERA Investigative Steward Dr Sarah Albalooshi.

During the course of the inquiry, the Stewards established that Mr Khan had, of his own accord and without knowledge or consent of Dr Bittar, administered an oral paste containing Acepromazine to ALAQ (AE) on the day of the official stall test.

The inquiry also established that GAME TIME (USA) had been treated with a blistering product during a period following the conclusion of the 2024/25 season. Further, Mr Khan acknowledged that, without the knowledge or consent of Dr Bittar, he had administered, or caused to be administered, various oral pastes to horses prior to racing and before their transportation to the racecourse. These products include AN Energy Boost by Cavalor, Optima BCAA by Equine Products UK, and Pre-Fuel Gel by Foran.

Having considered the evidence and submissions, the Stewards issued the following charges under the ERA Rules;

TRAINER – DR JABER BITTAR

Charge 1: ERA Rule 31(i)(e)(2)

The details of the charge were that:

Dr Jaber Bittar, a licensed ERA Trainer, failed to lodge a Stable Return with the ERA within 24 hours of ALAQ (AE) and GAME TIME (USA) leaving his registered stable, as required under ERA Rule 31(i)(e).

Plea: Guilty

Charge 2: ERA Rule 31(ii)

The details of the charge were that:

Dr Jaber Bittar, a licensed ERA Trainer, failed to fulfil his responsibilities as a Trainer under ERA Rule 31(i), in that he failed to adequately supervise the conduct of his Assistant Trainer, Mr Arif Khan, whose conduct in the management and operation of Al Reef Stables led to multiple breaches of the ERA Rules.

Plea: Guilty

Charge 3: ERA Rule 31B(iv)

The details of the charge were that:

Dr Jaber Bittar, a licensed ERA Trainer, failed to comply with ERA Rule 31B(iv), in that the administration of an oral paste containing Acepromazine to ALAQ (AE) on 21 February 2026 was not recorded in the horse's medication records.

Plea: Guilty

Charge 4: ERA Rule 95C(i)

The details of the charge were that:

Dr Jaber Bittar, a licensed ERA Trainer, was found to have in his possession at his registered training premises 15 unregistered product in the UAE, which could give rise to an offence under ERA Rule 95B if administered to a horse.

Plea: Guilty

ASSISTANT TRAINER – MR ARIF KHAN

Charge 1: ERA Rule 11(f)

The details of the charge were that:

Mr Arif Khan, a licensed ERA Assistant Trainer at Al Reef Stables, made false and/or misleading statements to the ERA during its investigation into the positive sample obtained from ALAQ (AE) following an official stalls test at Abu Dhabi Racecourse on 21 February 2026, in that:

(a) on 14 March 2026, during an interview with ERA Investigative Stewards, Mr Khan stated that he had no knowledge of Acepromazine, was unaware of how the substance could have been detected in the sample obtained from ALAQ (AE), and was unaware of any product at Al Reef Stables containing Acepromazine; and

(b) on 23 June 2026, in a written statement provided to the ERA, Mr Khan stated that Acepromazine had been administered to ALAQ (AE) by the farrier, by way of an oral paste at a dose of 8ml at approximately 8:10am on 20 February 2026,

when, as subsequently admitted by Mr Khan during the Stewards' inquiry on 29 September 2026, he had personally administered the Acepromazine to ALAQ (AE), using an unregistered Acepromazine product that had been prescribed for a UK-based trainer and horse and subsequently provided to him by a friend.

Plea: Guilty

Charge 2: ERA Rule 95AAA 1(a)

The details of the charge were that:

Mr Arif Khan, a licensed ERA Assistant Trainer at Al Reef Stables, administered Acepromazine, a prohibited substance, by way of an oral paste to ALAQ (AE) prior to the horse undertaking an official stalls test at Abu Dhabi Racecourse on 21 February 2026, for the purpose of affecting the horse's performance in that test.

Plea: Guilty

Charge 3: ERA Rule 95AAA 9(i)

The details of the charge were that:

Mr Arif Khan, a licensed ERA Assistant Trainer at Al Reef Stables, did administer, or cause to be administered, Medication in the form of oral paste treatments to the horses identified in the particulars below, on the respective days on which those horses were engaged to race and prior to them running in their respective races, contrary to ERA Rule 95AAA9(i).

Particulars of the charge are that race-day treatment was administered to the following horses:

#	Horse	Date	Racecourse	Race
1	NAJIH (AE)	13 Dec 2025	Jebel Ali	Race 1 – The Porsche Cup
2	MOONSTONE (FR)	28 Dec 2025	Sharjah	Race 1 – Al Marwan Machinery
3	ERROR (US)	28 Dec 2025	Sharjah	Race 1 – Al Marwan Machinery
4	OOO (US)	28 Dec 2025	Sharjah	Race 2 – Al Marwan Developments
5	NAJIH (AE)	28 Dec 2025	Sharjah	The GCC Cup
6	CHALLENGE JET (AE)	18 Jan 2026	Sharjah	Race 1
7	MALIK AL IZZ (AE)	18 Jan 2026	Sharjah	Race 3
8	GHARRAA AL REEF (AE)	18 Jan 2026	Sharjah	Race 4
9	ERROR (US)	24 Jan 2026	Al Ain	Race 1
10	NAJIH (AE)	24 Jan 2026	Al Ain	Race 2
11	NAUTI BOY (US)	24 Jan 2026	Al Ain	Race 4
12	GHARRAA AL REEF (AE)	25 Jan 2026	Sharjah	Race 1
13	MALIK AL IZZ (AE)	25 Jan 2026	Sharjah	Race 2
14	SEA DAY (US)	8 Feb 2026	Al Ain	Race 3
15	NAJIH (AE)	8 Feb 2026	Al Ain	Race 5
16	BASHASHA AL REEF (AE)	8 Feb 2026	Al Ain	Race 8
17	DOMINANT (AE)	22 Feb 2026	Al Ain	Race 3

#	Horse	Date	Racecourse	Race
18	MALIK AL IZZ (AE)	22 Feb 2026	Al Ain	Race 3
19	OOO (US)	22 Feb 2026	Al Ain	Race 6
20	WHATEVERR (US)	22 Feb 2026	Al Ain	Race 7
21	NAJIH (AE)	14 Mar 2026	Abu Dhabi	Race 1 – Guardians of the Nation Cup
22	GLORY SAND (AE)	14 Mar 2026	Abu Dhabi	Race 3 – Emirates Colts Classic
23	UNLEASHED (US)	14 Mar 2026	Abu Dhabi	Race 4 – Emirates Championship
24	DALMOUJ (AE)	14 Mar 2026	Abu Dhabi	Race 5 – Wathba Stallions Cup

Plea: Guilty

AL REEF STABLE VETERINARIAN – DR MUHAMMAD AHMAD SHAKOOR

Charge 1: ERA Rule 21E(7)(a)

The details of the charge were that:

Dr Muhammad Ahmad Shakoor, a licensed ERA Veterinarian, failed to comply with ERA Rule 21E(7)(a), in that he subjected GAME TIME (USA) to vesiculation (blistering) by applying a blistering product to the horse following the conclusion of the 2024/25 racing season.

Plea: Guilty

Penalty Considerations

In determining the appropriate penalties, the Stewards considered the nature and seriousness of the respective offences, the guilty pleas entered by each person charged, their respective roles and responsibilities, their disciplinary records, the circumstances surrounding each offence, and the evidence and submissions presented during the inquiry.

In respect of Dr Jaber Bittar, the Stewards acknowledged that the evidence established that he had no knowledge of, nor had he authorised, the administration of Acepromazine to ALAQ (AE) or the administration of race-day treatments by Mr Arif Khan. However, as the licensed Trainer responsible for Al Reef Stables, Dr Bittar had an obligation to ensure that the stable was operated in accordance with the ERA Rules and that appropriate supervision, medication records and regulatory controls were maintained. The Stewards considered that the multiple breaches identified during the inquiry demonstrated a significant failure by Dr Bittar to adequately supervise the operation of his stable and the conduct of his Assistant Trainer.

In respect of Mr Arif Khan, the Stewards considered his offending to be particularly serious. Mr Khan held a position of significant responsibility as the licensed Assistant Trainer at Al Reef Stables and exercised substantial day-to-day control over the operation of the stable. Of particular concern was Mr Khan's deliberate administration of Acepromazine to ALAQ (AE) prior to an official stalls test for the purpose of affecting the horse's performance in that test. The Stewards also considered as a significant aggravating factor Mr Khan's conduct during the subsequent ERA investigation, including initially denying knowledge of Acepromazine and later providing an account that the substance had been administered by the farrier, before ultimately admitting during the Stewards' inquiry that he had personally administered the substance. The Stewards further considered the nature of Mr Khan's administration, or direction for the administration, of Medication to horses on race days prior to racing. The conduct involved 24 instances across a number of race meetings and has resulted in the respective horses having to be disqualified from their races.

In respect of Dr Muhammad Ahmad Shakoor, the Stewards considered the prohibition on vesiculation (blistering), his professional responsibilities as a licensed ERA Veterinarian and the circumstances surrounding the application of the blistering product to GAME TIME (USA). The Stewards also took into account his guilty plea.

In determining all penalties, the Stewards also had regard to the principles of specific and general deterrence and the need to protect the integrity, welfare standards and reputation of racing in the UAE.

Penalties Imposed

DR JABER BITTAR

- Charge 1 – AED 5,000 fine
- Charge 2 – AED 20,000 fine
- Charge 3 – AED 5,000 fine
- Charge 4 – AED 5,000 fine

MR ARIF KHAN

- Charge 1 – Two (2) years disqualification
- Charge 2 – One (1) year disqualification
- Charge 3 – Three (3) years disqualification

Pursuant to ERA Rule 3A(ii), the Stewards ordered that the periods of disqualification imposed in respect of Charges 1, 2 and 3 be served concurrently. Accordingly, Mr Arif Khan is disqualified for an effective period of three (3) years, commencing on 29 September 2026 and expiring at midnight on 29 September 2029.

DR MUHAMMAD AHMAD SHAKOOR

- Charge 1 – AED 5,000 fine

Disqualification of Horses – Race-Day Treatment

Pursuant to ERA Rule 95AAA(11), the Stewards disqualified each of the 24 horses identified in the particulars of Mr Khan's Charge 3 from their respective races, having established that each horse had received Medication on race day prior to competing.

Accordingly, the placings in the affected races are to be amended where applicable.

In accordance with ERA Rule 94B, any prize money paid in respect of a horse subsequently disqualified is required to be repaid to the ERA. Al Reef Stables will therefore be required to repay any prize money received in respect of the disqualified horses. Such prize money will subsequently be redistributed to the connections entitled to receive it following amendment of the respective race results.

GAME TIME (USA)

The Stewards considered the eligibility of GAME TIME (USA) pursuant to ERA Rule 21E(7)(b) following the finding that the horse had been subjected to vesiculation (blistering).

Having regard to the period of time that had elapsed since the blistering product was applied to GAME TIME (USA), the Stewards determined that it was not necessary to impose any further period of ineligibility upon the horse. Accordingly, GAME TIME (USA) is not subject to any restriction from participating in trackwork, Official Trials or Races arising from this matter.

ALAQ (AE) – Official Stalls Test

The Stewards also considered the status of the official stalls test undertaken by ALAQ (AE) at Abu Dhabi Racecourse on 21 February 2026.

Pursuant to ERA Rule 95AAA(11), the Stewards may deem a horse to have failed a Test where it is subsequently established that the horse participated in that Test having received Medication. Accordingly, ALAQ (AE) would ordinarily have been deemed to have failed the official stalls test conducted on 21 February 2026 and been required to satisfy the applicable reinstatement requirements.

However, prior to the ERA Stewards being in a position to notify Dr Bittar of the positive sample, ALAQ (AE) raced at Al Ain Racecourse on 5 March 2026. Following that race, ALAQ (AE) was again embargoed from racing due to its barrier manners and was required to satisfactorily complete two official stalls tests and an official barrier trial before being permitted to race again.

Given that ALAQ (AE) was subsequently subject to these more extensive reinstatement requirements, the Stewards determined that no additional requirement arising from the official stalls test conducted on 21 February 2026 was necessary.

Appeal Rights

Dr Bittar, Mr Khan and Dr Shakoor were advised of their respective rights of appeal against the Stewards' decisions.

Mr Khan was further advised of the consequences and restrictions arising from his disqualification under the ERA Rules.

S SHINSKY
Head of Integrity and Regulation