

## BFA set HM the King's Cup final for Thursday

TDI | Manama

The Bahrain Football Association (BFA) announced yesterday that the final of this year's His Majesty the King's Cup between Riffa and Al Ahli will be played on Thursday night.

The match will take place at the National Stadium in Riffa and it is scheduled for a 6.15pm kick-off.

Riffa qualified for the title-decider after defeating East Riffa 2-1 in the semi-finals while Ahli ousted last year's losing finalists Hidd 5-3 in a penalty shootout.

Riffa will be out to claim their seventh King's Cup title, having previously triumphed in 2019, which was also the last time they played in the championship match.

Ahli, on the other hand, will



be gunning for their ninth crown in the history of the competition. Their last win was in 2003.

HM the King's Cup is the richest competition in Bahrain football.

Last year's winners were Muharraq, but they were unable to make it past the quarter-final stage this season. Muharraq also hold the record for King's Cup titles.

## Late Tadic penalty keeps Ajax in control of title race

AFP | Amsterdam

Dusan Tadic netted an injury-time penalty to secure Ajax a 1-1 draw at second-placed PSV Eindhoven to stay six points clear at the top of the Eredivisie.

The Amsterdam giants went into the match on an 11-game winning streak after beating Lille in the Europa League in midweek, but a point was an excellent result for Erik ten Hag's side, who also have a game in hand.

PSV, without a win over their rivals since September 2018, took the lead six minutes before half-time through Eran Zahavi's excellent free-kick.

Olivier Boscagli and Philipp Max both wasted opportunities to double the hosts' advantage, while PSV sub-



Action from the match

stitute Yorbe Vertessen had a goal ruled out by VAR with 12 minutes remaining for handball.

Full-back Denzel Dumfries was penalised for handling in added time and Tadic stepped up to score his 16th goal of the season.

Ajax are bidding for a second straight league title after their triumph in 2019, with last season ended early and no trophy awarded due to the coronavirus pandemic.

# Dar Kulaib clinch volleyball league bronze medals

Three-set sweep earns victors third place for second successive season, at expense of Al Najma



Dar Kulaib players with officials during the awarding

● **Slovakian Martin Pavleka leads Dar Kulaib along with Bahrainis Ali Ebrahim, Mahmood Hassan, Ayman Isa, Hassan Abbas and Mahmood Abdulwahid, among others**

● **Game two of best-of-three finals between Al Ahli and defending champions Muharraq scheduled for tonight, with Ahli leading the series 1-0**

TDI | Manama

Dar Kulaib clinched the bronze medals last night in the 2020/2021 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain First Division Volleyball League following a 3-0 (26-24, 25-18, 25-15) victory

over Al Najma.

It is the second straight year that Dar Kulaib are ranked third overall. They had also defeated Najma last season in this same classification contest.

The match was held at the Bahrain Volleyball Association (BVA) arena at Isa Sports City in Riffa between this season's two losing semi-finalists. Following action, Dar Kulaib were presented their medals in an awarding ceremony attended by BVA president Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa alongside BVA and team officials.

After a hotly contested opening set, Dar Kulaib were able to cruise in the next two en route to securing the impressive result.

The victors were spearheaded in the match by Slovakian professional Martin Pavleka, who received plenty of help from Bahraini standouts Ali Ebrahim, Mahmood Hassan, Ayman Isa, Hassan Abbas,



Action from last night's match for third place



**Last season, Dar Kulaib had also defeated Al Najma to claim the league's bronze medals in the match for third place**

Mahmood Abdulwahid and libero Hussain Abdulla, among others.

Najma tried hard to put in a good fight behind the strong play of Brazilian import Lailson Costa, and local talents Ahmed Mushraf, Hassan Jaffar, Ahmed Sadeq, Ali Abdunabi, Ahmed Isaan Hussain Matrook, to name a few.

Dar Kulaib had lost to Al Ahli

in their best-of-three final four series, while Najma bowed to defending champions Muharraq, who had a twice-to-beat advantage in their semi-final head-to-head.

Meanwhile, the second game of the best-of-three championship series between Ahli and Muharraq is scheduled for tonight.

After winning the first game with a stunning three-set sweep, Ahli will be looking to secure the title tonight, but Muharraq will be determined to extend the finals to a decisive third game, which would be played on Friday, if needed.

Ahli are hoping to claim their third league crown this year. Their last championship was in the 2017/2018 season. Muharraq, on the other hand, are gunning for back-to-back titles and a record 15th in the history of the league.

The game is scheduled for a 6.15pm start and it will be played at the same venue.

## Arsenal hit back to beat Leicester, Bale stars for Spurs

AFP | London

Arsenal delivered a hammer blow to Leicester's faint hopes of winning the Premier League with an impressive 3-1 win, while the revitalised Gareth Bale struck twice in Tottenham's 4-0 rout of Burnley yesterday.

Mikel Arteta's side fell behind to Youri Tielemans' early goal at the King Power Stadium, but David Luiz equalised and Alexandre Lacazette's penalty gave Arsenal the lead.

Nicolas Pepe's second half goal sealed the Gunners' second win in their last six league games and their first success at a team in the Premier League's top three since 2015.

Leicester remain in third place and trail leaders Manchester City by 13 points with 12 games remaining.

After Thursday's shock Europa League exit against Slavia Prague, it was a week to forget for Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers.

With Arsenal stuck in mid-table, Arteta has prioritised win-



Tottenham Hotspur's Gareth Bale shoots to score

ning the Europa League as his side's only hope of qualifying for next season's Champions League.

Having picked his best team for the come-from-behind win against Benfica in the last 32 second leg on Thursday, Arteta left Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Bukayo Saka on the bench after the long trip back from the neutral venue in Greece.

Leicester opened the scoring in the seventh minute when

Tielemans broke into the Arsenal area before drilling a low strike into the far corner.

**Willian redemption**

Arsenal drew level in the 39th minute as Willian's out-swinging free-kick arrowed towards Luiz and the defender stooped to head home from 10 yards.

They were ahead in stoppage-time when Pepe's cross hit Wilfred Ndidi's out-stretched arm and VAR ruled the block had

“It would be very nice for me now to say that I handled the situation amazingly well but I'm not that kind of guy”

JOSE MOURINHO

taken place just inside the area.

Lacazette stepped up to slam the penalty past Schmeichel for his 11th goal of the season.

Arsenal landed the knockout punch in the 52nd minute as Willian's cutback was perfectly placed for Pepe to tap into the empty net.

“Coming into this game I was concerned. We've played a lot of games. But let's not talk about fatigue. We just got on with it,” Arteta said.

“They're one of the most dangerous teams in the league to play once you go behind against them. The reaction was terrific, the team looked really mature. We played some excellent stuff.”

Harvey Barnes joined Leicester's growing injury list in the second half and Rodgers revealed the midfielder needs a knee operation that will keep him out for six weeks.

After five defeats in their previous six league games, Tottenham eased the pressure on Jose Mourinho with a significant contribution from Bale, who made just his third league start of the season.

The Wales forward's most impressive display since his season-long loan move from Real Madrid gave him four goals in his last four appearances.

Bale, who had clashed with Tottenham boss Mourinho over his fitness earlier in February, took just 68 seconds to showcase his quality.

The 31-year-old met Son Heung-min's cross with a clinical close-range finish.

In the 15th minute, Bale's superb long pass picked out Harry Kane's run and the England captain's shot deflected off James Tarkowski for his 22nd goal of the season.

## Goffin ends three-year wait for fifth title after 'difficult days'

AFP | Montpellier

Belgium's David Goffin captured his fifth ATP title but first in more than three years with victory over Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut in the Montpellier final yesterday.

Goffin, the 30-year-old world number 15, saw off top seed and 13th-ranked Bautista Agut 5-7, 6-4, 6-2.

“I gave it my all today. In a final you have to seize your opportunities and that's what I did,” said Goffin who fired 13 aces past his 32-year-old opponent.

“I have been through difficult days and weeks so I'm glad I got back to this level.”

It was Goffin's first title since Tokyo in October 2017 and a welcome boost after suffering a first round exit to Alexei Popyrin at the Australian Open.