

Bahrain's 3x3 teams eye strong Asia Cup showing in Singapore

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TDT | Manama

Bahrain's men's and women's national 3x3 basketball teams are in Singapore today to compete in the FIBA 3x3 Asia Cup 2026, which runs from April 1-5 at The Kallang. The tournament marks the fifth consecutive year it will be staged in Singapore, one of the sport's premier continental hosts. Both teams aim to make an impact in the Asia Cup while keeping an eye on qualification for the 2026 FIBA 3x3 World Cup in Warsaw, Poland, from June 1-7.

The men's team, coached by Murtadha Mohammed, features Naser Almusawi, Isa Jassim, Mohammed Ghazwan, Al Wathiq Ali, and Salman Al Kaabi. Almusawi's journey is as compelling as his game: a cancer survivor, he returns as a dynamic scoring option capable of sparking momentum shifts with quick bursts of offense. Drawn into Group D of the qualifying stage, Bahrain will face Kazakhstan first, then Hong Kong, and finish against India. With 24 men's teams competing, early performances will be critical for advancing to the main draw and keeping their pathway to Warsaw alive.

The women's team, also led by coach



Bahrain's men's 3x3 team during training in Singapore

Murtadha Mohammed with team administrator Ahmed Elias, includes standout player Bayan Salman, Shereen Abdulrahman, Noor Najaf, and Nouf Abdullah. Competing in Group C, Bahrain opens against Chinese Taipei, then

faces Hong Kong, before concluding the first day against Saudi Arabia. With 22 teams competing in the women's tournament, Bayan Salman's energy and competitiveness will be central as the team seeks to reinforce Bahrain's



Bahrain's women's 3x3 team ahead of the Asia Cup

growing presence in continental 3x3 basketball.

This year's Asia Cup features both established powers and rising squads, with Australia entering as the reigning champion in both men's and women's

competitions. On the men's side, Mongolia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and Qatar are the key challengers, while in the women's tournament, China, Mongolia, Japan, and New Zealand will be looking to dethrone the champions.



Bahrain men's 3x3 player Naser Almusawi is a cancer survivor

Calls grow for 15-year-old Suryavanshi to make India bow

● Suryavanshi hits 52 off 17 balls in IPL

● Hit 35-ball century in 2025 IPL debut

AFP | New Delhi

There were growing calls yesterday for teenager Vaibhav Suryavanshi to be fast-tracked into India's senior national team after slamming a 17-ball 52 to launch his IPL season.

The batsman turned 15 last week, making him eligible to represent India under International Cricket Council rules, having already starred for his country at youth level.

On Monday he smacked four fours and five sixes as Rajasthan Royals chased down a target of 128 with 7.5 overs to spare against Chennai Super Kings in Guwahati.

The teenager made history in last year's IPL in a dazzling debut season highlighted by a 35-ball century, the second fastest in the history of the T20 tournament.

Spin bowling great Anil Kumble compared Suryavanshi to batting legend Sachin Tendulkar, who made his full international debut aged 16.



Rajasthan Royals' Indian cricket player Vaibhav Suryavanshi plays a shot

"Yes, absolutely. If a player shows this level of consistency, he should be fast-tracked, just like Sachin Tendulkar," Kumble said on JioHotstar.

Suryavanshi has already made his mark at youth international level, hammering 175 off just 80 balls as India beat England in the Under-19 World Cup final in February.

Former India batter Ambati Rayudu described Suryavanshi as "a cut above a lot of young-

"If a player shows this level of consistency, he should be fast-tracked, just like Sachin Tendulkar"

ANIL KUMBLE

sters in the country". "He's a talent that will defi-



nity do wonders for Indian cricket," Rayudu said on ESPN-cricinfo.

"I don't know when, but definitely in the future."

Inside the Rajasthan Royals camp, the leadership group has been focused on shielding the prodigy from the pressures of early fame.

"What I tell him is that you're going to play 14 games (in this season's IPL) and regardless of what goes on in the game, it shouldn't bother you," captain Riyan Parag said.

"What goes around in the media shouldn't bother you."

He added following Monday's latest eye-catching display: "Like everyone in the stands, we also had this feeling of 'wow', wondering how he is able to do this."

"He is a talent and I am very glad that he is in our team, and not the opponent's," he said.

Chelsea's Cucurella laments 'instability' caused by Maresca exit



Former Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca

AFP | London

Chelsea's Marc Cucurella believes former manager Enzo Maresca's departure and the club's policy of signing young players is behind the London side's recent struggles.

Maresca left Stamford Bridge by mutual consent on New Year's Day after just 18 months in charge following a breakdown in his relationship with the London side's hierarchy.

Chelsea were then fifth in the Premier League table -- 15

points adrift of leaders Arsenal.

The Italian was initially replaced by Under-21s coach Calum McFarlane before current manager Liam Rosenior arrived from Strasbourg -- a club also owned by Blues supremo Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital.

Chelsea, however, have won only four of their last 12 matches, suffering a humiliating 8-2 aggregate defeat by holders Paris Saint-Germain as they crashed out of the Champions League and slipping to sixth in the Premier League.