

Muharraq chase ACL Two momentum

Bahrain's champions face Esteghlal as Khaldiya host Arkadag

● Muharraq meet Esteghlal away

● Khaldiya host Arkadag in Riffa

● Both seek Group Stage boost

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's representatives in the 2025–26 AFC Champions League Two are in action tonight, with Muharraq facing Iran's Esteghlal in Tehran and Khaldiya hosting Arkadag of Turkmenistan in Riffa. Both fixtures are part of the second round of the group stage.

ACL Two is a restructured competition featuring 32 teams from 22 member associations. It sits below the AFC Champions League Elite and above the AFC Challenge League.

Muharraq in Tehran

Muharraq take on Esteghlal



Muharraq's Omar Saber (L) and Elliot Simoes (R) training in the Iranian capital



Muharraq won the AFC Cup in 2008 and 2021, before ACL Two replaced it

at Shahr-e-Qods Stadium at 7pm Bahrain time. The 2008 and 2021 AFC Cup winners are competing in ACL Two for the first time under its new format. They opened strongly with a 4–0 home victory over Jordan's Al Wehdat and sit second in Group A with three points, level with UAE's Al Wasl, who lead on goal difference. Esteghlal and Al Wehdat remain without points.

Head coach Fernando San-

tos has named a 25-man squad for the campaign, including goalkeepers Sayed Jaffar, Ebrahim Lutfalla, and Ashraf Waheed. The outfield options feature Hussain Jameel, Waleed Al-Hayyam, Amine Bennadi, Lucas Morellato, Mohamed Al-Hardan, Facundo Tobares, Abdulwahab Al-Malood, Soufine Mahrouq, Omar Saber, Lazar Djordjevic, Abdulwahab Hanan, Ahmad Rabeea, Hussain Abdulkarim, Mohamed Al-Banna, Abdulla Al-Khalasi, Juninho, Arthur Rezende, Bruno Santos, Elliot Simoes, Gervasio Olivera, and Abdulkarim Diarra.

Khaldiya at Home

Khaldiya are back for their second consecutive campaign and host Arkadag at the Bahrain National Stadium tonight at 9:15pm. The team moved into a closed camp at Wyndham Grand Hotel after training in Riffa. They began their campaign with a goalless draw away to Qatar's Al Ahli SC, leaving them third in Group B with a single point.

Pakistan name spin-heavy squad for home South Africa Tests



Pakistan's Zahid Mahmood (L), Sajid Khan (C) and Noman Ali attend a practice session (file photo)

AFP | Karachi

Pakistan yesterday included five spinners and recalled paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi in an 18-man squad for the two-match Test series at home to South Africa.

Besides the deadly spin duo of Noman Ali and Sajid Khan, Pakistan named Abrar Ahmed, Faisal Akram and veteran Asif Afridi for the series starting in Lahore on October 12.

Shan Masood will captain a squad which also sees the return of fast bowler Shaheen after a year-long gap from the longest format.

“There are two newcomers in the spin department to supplement Sajid and Noman, with 38-year-old Afridi who is very experienced and the talented Akram,” said a Pakistan Cricket Board statement.

Pakistan used industrial-sized fans, along with patio heaters, to dry out and make spin-friendly pitches to beat England 2-1 at home last year.

Pakistan lost the first Test by an innings before they employed a spin-heavy attack



Pakistan previously used industrial fans and patio heaters to prepare spin-friendly pitches, a tactic that helped them beat England 2-1 in their last home series

with Noman taking 20 and Sajid 19 wickets in the last two Tests.

Also included yesterday was uncapped wicketkeeper Rohail Nazir as back-up for regular Mohammad Rizwan.

The second Test will be played in Rawalpindi from October 20 in the series, the first for both teams in the fourth cycle of the World Test Championship (WTC).

South Africa won the WTC (2023-2025) while Pakistan finished ninth and last.

Bahrain's Manama take on Kuwaiti giants

Do-or-die Round of 16 for Bahrainis in Arab Cup

● Manama seek to end losing streak

● Qadsia top Group B challengers

● Ahmed Salman remains key performer

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Manama Club will face Kuwait's Qadsia today at 3pm at Rashid Bin Hamdan Hall, Al-Nasr Club in Dubai, in the Round of 16 of the 37th Arab Basketball Clubs Championship.

Manama finished fourth in Group B with three points after losing all three preliminary matches: 79–73 to Lebanon's Antonine, 103–78 to Libya's Al Ahly Tripoli, and 76–65 to Kuwait SC.

Against Kuwait SC, Manama led 33–32 at halftime, but Ku-



Star player Ahmed Salman in action during Manama's previous outing



All 16 teams from the preliminary round advance to the Round of 16

wait dominated the third quarter 28–16 and extended their lead to as many as 15 points early in the final period. Manama reduced the deficit to six late on but could not recover. Ahmed Salman led Manama with 22 points, supported by Carl Jones (12) and Hasan Nowrooz (11).

Qadsia finished their group with five points from two wins and one loss. All Round of 16 games are knockouts, meaning that the losing side will be eliminated.

Saliba signs new long-term deal at Arsenal

AFP | London

William Saliba has signed a new long-term contract with Arsenal, the Premier League club announced yesterday.

The France defender has reportedly put pen to paper on a five-year deal, which will keep him at the club until 2030. His previous contract had been due to run until 2027.

Saliba, 24, had been expected to extend his stay at the Emirates despite earlier reported interest from Real Madrid.

The centre-back joined the Gun-

ners in 2019 but had a number of loan spells before establishing himself as a regular in Mikel Arteta's team during the 2022/23 season.

Since then Saliba has been at the heart of an Arsenal side that has finished second in each of the past three seasons in the Premier League.

“I feel at home. We have a good team, we have a good squad, we have good staff. The coach is perfect for me, so it's the best place to be,” said Saliba.

“I enjoy every day when I have the chance to wear this shirt. I try

to give everything, and now I'll give even more to this club and to the fans.”

Manager Arteta said: “William is loved by all the players and staff, and that speaks volumes about his character, commitment and attitude every day.

“Since joining us, William has grown so much, embraced responsibility, and has created a strong connection with our supporters and everyone at the club.”

William Saliba

