

## Ahli clinch volleyball league bronze medals

TDT | Manama

Ahli last night clinched the bronze medals in the 2022/2023 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League.

Ahli secured their place on the podium after sweeping past Muharraq 3-0 (25-22, 25-20, 25-15) in the game for third place, held at the Isa bin Rashid Arena at the Bahrain Volleyball Association headquarters at Isa Sports City in Riffa.

Ahli were the aggressors from the first serve and never wavered throughout the contest. They were spearheaded by the likes of Canadian professional Jerome Cross, and local stars Naser Anan, Mohammed Anan, Abbas Al Khabbaz, Ali Al-sairafi, Sayed Mohammed Alabbar and Mahmood Abdulhussain, among others.

Muharraq were led by Nigerian Samuel Anthony Ogwuche, Abbas Ehsan, Hussain Khalifa, Hassan Al Haddad and Sayed Ali Mohammed in the loss.

# Ahli through to Khalifa bin Salman Cup semis

Three-time defending champions keep hopes alive for historic "four-peat" in prestigious basketball tournament

● Subah Hussain scores 30 to lead three Ahli players with over 20 points

● Ahli next to face winner of quarter-final between Manama and Bahrain Club

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Three-time defending champions Al Ahli punched their tickets to the semi-finals of the 2022/2023

Khalifa bin Salman Cup last night following a resounding 105-82 victory over Al Ettihad.

The game was played at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam and the result kept Ahli's hopes alive of securing an historic "four-peat" in the prestigious annual basketball tournament.

Ahli built a big lead early on and never looked back, going up by as many as 30 points the rest of the way.

Ahli are now through to the final four where they will play the winner of the other quarter-final game between league champions Manama and Bahrain Club.

Ahli join Sitra as the two teams



Al Ettihad's Sayed Kadhem Majed is guarded by Al Ahli's Subah Hussain during their game last night

who have already qualified for the semis. Sitra await their opponents who will emerge from the round-of-eight clash between Muharraq and Al Hala.

Three players scored over 20 points for Ahli in their big win yesterday. Subah Hussain was their top man with 30. He also took down nine rebounds.

American professional Dakari Johnson added 24 points, 18 rebounds and six assists, while Hesham Sarhan chipped in with 23 points, including five three-pointers. Maitham Jameel also had a double-double for Ahli, contributing 14 points and 10 rebounds while also registering four steals.

## Man City thrash Liverpool but Jesus keeps Arsenal eight points clear

AFP | London

Manchester City thrashed Liverpool 4-1 yesterday but remain eight points adrift of Arsenal at the top of the Premier League after Gabriel Jesus scored twice in the Gunners 4-1 win over Leeds.

In the clash between the two sides that have dominated English football over the past five years, City were a class apart despite the absence of Erling Haaland due to injury.

Liverpool went in front through Mohamed Salah's 23rd goal of the season but were blown away in the second half after Julian Alvarez brought City level before the break.

Pep Guardiola's men needed less than a minute in the second period to go in front as Kevin De Bruyne tapped home Riyad Mahrez's cross.

Ilkay Gundogan slammed home the third before Jack Grealish rounded off his best performance in a City shirt with a fine finish for the fourth.

"Now it's the Jack we thought. Aston Villa fans know this Jack," said Guardiola of Grealish, who joined for a Premier League re-



Manchester City's English midfielder Jack Grealish (R) celebrates with teammates after scoring their fourth goal

cord £100 million in 2021.

"Nothing changed, it's just a question of believing I am part of that, and I can be here."

A sobering defeat is another blow to Liverpool's hopes of a top-four finish as the Reds slip to eighth in the table.

### Seventh heaven for Arsenal

Arsenal did not feel the pressure of City briefly cutting the gap before kick-off at the Emirates as Jesus marked his first

league start since November with a double.

Bukayo Saka was handed a rare rest by Mikel Arteta and Jesus took responsibility from the penalty spot in his absence to open the scoring 10 minutes before half-time.

Jesus was sidelined for three months after picking up a knee injury at the World Cup but the former City forward's return for the run-in could deny his old club a fifth title in six years.



Now it's the Jack we thought. Aston Villa fans know this Jack

PEP GUARDIOLA

The Brazilian fired home his second goal of the game after Ben White doubled Arsenal's lead early in the second half.

Rasmus Kristensen pulled a goal back for Leeds, but Granit Xhaka rounded off the scoring as Arsenal made it seven consecutive league wins for the first time under Arteta.

Brighton and Brentford shared the points after a thrilling 3-3 draw.

Three times Brentford led at the Amex through Pontus Jansson, Ivan Toney and Ethan Pinnock.

But the Seagulls grabbed a deserved point thanks to Alexis Mac Allister's late penalty after Kaoru Mitoma and Danny Welbeck also equalised in the first half.

A point apiece sees both sides edge above Liverpool and with in six points of the top four.

## Rajapaksa helps Punjab bag opening IPL win over Kolkata



Punjab Kings' Shikhar Dhawan (L) and Bhanuka Rajapaksa run between the wickets

AFP | New Delhi

Sri Lanka's Bhanuka Rajapaksa smashed 50 to set up a seven-run win for Punjab Kings in their rain-hit opening Indian Premier League match against Kolkata Knight Riders yesterday.

The left-handed Rajapaksa's 32-ball knock and a late charge by big-buy Sam Curran, who hit an unbeaten 26, powered Punjab to 191-5 after being invited to bat first in Mohali.

Left-arm quick Arshdeep Singh led the bowling charge with three wickets to restrict two-time champions Kolkata to 146-7 in 16 overs when rain stopped play and Punjab won by the DLS method.

Rajapaksa set the tone for the team's domination with skipper Shikhar Dhawan, who made 40, in an 86-run second-wicket stand before the Sri Lankan big-hitter departed.

Curran, a left-handed all-rounder who became the most expensive IPL player when Punjab paid \$2.23 million in the December auc-



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tion, proved his worth with a 17-ball blitz including two sixes.

Punjab replaced Rajapaksa with fast bowler Rishi Dhawan under the new "impact player" rule among other innovations in the T20 tournament.

The impact player, who can only be an Indian unless the team has fewer than four overseas players in their XI, is chosen from one of five substitutes listed with the team.

## Madrid's Ancelotti confirms 'exciting' Brazil interest

AFP | Madrid

Carlo Ancelotti confirmed the interest of the Brazilian national team in hiring him and his excitement at the prospect, but said yesterday he wanted to fulfil his contract with Real Madrid.

The Italian said the Brazilian Football Federation (CBF) want him to replace Tite, after the coach stepped down following the Selecao's World Cup 2022 surprise quarter-final exit, with Ramon Menezes currently in



Carlo Ancelotti

charge on an interim basis.

Ancelotti's contract with Real Madrid ends in June 2024 and the veteran Italian, 63, says he will respect his deal with the

Spanish champions.

"Yes, the reality is that the Brazilian national team want me, I love that and it excites me," Ancelotti told a news conference.

"After that, you have to respect the contract, a contract that I want to see out."

Ancelotti said he is happy at Real Madrid in his second spell at the club, but that nobody knows what could happen in the future.

"Everyone can say what they want, and then there's the real-

ity," added Ancelotti.

"In my case, it's quite simple. I have a contract and I want to see it out, because I like Real Madrid, I like this club and anything that can happen after that is in the future, and nobody knows the future."

Madrid are currently second in La Liga, trailing leaders Barcelona by 12 points.

Ancelotti's side host Real Valladolid on Sunday in the top flight before facing Barcelona in the Copa del Rey semi-final second leg on Wednesday.