

# Bahrain deny Turkmenistan

Hessa Al Isa scores dramatic 95th-minute equaliser in rain-soaked thriller in Yangon

- **Bahrain score stoppage-time equaliser**
- **Heavy rain affects both teams**
- **Bangladesh qualify to Australia 2026**

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Played under pouring rain, Turkmenistan and Bahrain played out a chaotic 2-2 draw in Group C of the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers with four goals shared in the final ten minutes. Hessa Al Isa's last-gasp equaliser sealed a dramatic point for Bahrain in a game that nearly slipped away.

### Missed Chances, Rising Tensions

The first half saw both teams struggle with the wet conditions. Turkmenistan had a golden chance to score early but a one-on-one effort sailed over the bar. Bahrain's brightest spark, Hessa Al Isa, created multiple openings but her side failed to register a shot on target in the opening 45 minutes.

After the break the energy ramped up. Turkmenistan piled pressure on Bahrain's backline and came close on multiple occasions, including a bizarre moment where a looping cross struck the crossbar.

Bahrain responded with a big chance of their own as Alanood Al Mannaei fired goalward from



Bahrain's Leleya Sabkar (R) challenges Turkmenistan's Lale Haipova (L)

a tight angle only to be denied by Aysha Amanberdiyeva in the Turkmen goal.

The turning point seemed to come in the 80th minute. Bahrain struck the post from a corner and seconds later Hessa Al Ali was brought down in the box but penalty appeals were waved away. The decision enraged Bahrain's players and bench who surrounded the referee in protest.

### Final Ten Deliver Fireworks

The breakthrough finally came in the 84th minute. Turkmenistan's Mariya Charyyeva pounced on a failed clearance and met the bouncing ball with a clean half-volley from just inside the area. The ball cannoned in off the bar to spark jubilation on

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The match featured three lead changes in the dying minutes - the most in any AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifier since 2018 - with all four goals coming after the 84th minute in torrential rain

the Turkmen bench. But Bahrain immediately

replied. Amira Sowar broke through the backline and attempted to poke the ball into the far corner. It seemed to be rolling wide until Leleya Sabkar slid in to force it over the line. She paid for her bravery with a heavy knock but gave her side a vital goal.

There was barely time to settle before Turkmenistan struck again. Exploiting Bahrain's high line, Alymjanova Lachyn latched onto a long ball and coolly lifted her finish over Khulood Adam to make it 2-1.

As the clock struck 95 minutes, two minutes beyond the three announced, Hessa Al Isa finally got her reward. Released by a beautiful pass from Leleya Sabkar, she broke through the middle and coolly placed her



Hessa Al Isa (L) in action yesterday

shot into the far corner. The equaliser triggered euphoric celebrations from the Bahraini bench, with head coach Mohamed Adnan making a deliberate show of celebration toward the officials after a game filled with controversy.

### Post-match Reaction

Speaking after the game, Bahrain's Hessa Al Ali shared her thoughts:

"I don't know how I feel. It's mixed emotions. It was a 50-50 game. We came in wanting to win and there were ups and downs. The most important thing is we didn't lose. We tried our best. The weather and environment affected our concentration. Thank you to Myanmar

for hosting a great tournament."

### Group C Context

Bahrain currently sit third in Group C on 1 point, with Turkmenistan in fourth also on 1 point but behind on goal difference. Bahrain lost 7-0 to Bangladesh in their opener, while Turkmenistan were beaten 8-0 by Myanmar.

Bangladesh top Group C with 6 points after beating Bahrain 7-0 and Myanmar 2-1. Myanmar sit second with 3 points, while Bahrain and Turkmenistan have 1 point each. Only the group winner advances to the AFC Women's Asian Cup. With one matchday left, Bangladesh have already qualified due to their head-to-head win over Myanmar.

## All-local Seef squad ready for global 3x3 challenge

Bahrain's all-local 3x3 team prepares for first-ever FIBA World Tour

- **Training camp set in Serbia**
- **First appearance in France**
- **Follow-up event in Hong Kong**

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Formed earlier this year, Seef becomes the second Bahraini team to compete on the 3x3 circuit, following Riffa. Unlike Riffa, which includes international players, Seef's roster is entirely local, which is a strategic move by the Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) to invest in homegrown talent and raise Bahrain's profile in the fast-evolving 3x3 format.

The squad features Sadiq Shukrallah, Sayed Mohammed Hameed, Hassan Fahad, Nasser Al Mousawi and Mortadha Salman — all set for selection in the final four-man team that will travel.

The team is currently training under Serbian head coach



Nasser Al Mousawi in training

Bogdan Dragovic and Bahraini assistant Mortadha Mohammed. Preparations include a focused local camp, followed by a training stint in Belgrade from July 5 to 10.

Seef will make their official

debut at the FIBA 3x3 World Tour Challenger in Orléans, France, on July 11-12. The event is a qualifier for the elite Shenzhen Masters in China, which is one of the most competitive events on the calendar.

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Seef is Bahrain's first fully local 3x3 team to compete on the FIBA World Tour, debuting at the Challenger in France and quickly stepping up to a Masters event in Hong Kong

With 16 international teams, including world-ranked sides from Serbia, Austria, China, and Puerto Rico, the Orléans stop will be a tough introduction.

### Eyes on the Masters in Hong Kong

From France, Seef will head to Hong Kong for their first appearance in a Masters-level event, taking place on July 19-20. Seef's journey continues toward the season finale, set to be held in Bahrain this November.

## Gulf swim meet returns to Bahrain



Organising committee during a meeting

### Bahrain hosts GCC Swimming Championships in July

### Event returns after 13 years

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Bahrain is set to host the 2025 GCC Swimming Championships on July 11-12 at Khalifa Sports City Complex. This is the first time the kingdom has staged the event since 2012, bringing a premier Gulf aquatic competition back to home waters after more

than a decade. Bahrain Looks to Impress Organised by the Bahrain Swimming Association, the event highlights Bahrain's growing role in regional water sports. Under the leadership of president Abdullah Atiya, the championship aims to show the kingdom's ability to deliver a high-standard competition environment.

The GCC Swimming Championships provide a key platform for regional swimmers to compete at a high level and gain vital experience. The event is designed to foster emerging talent and sharpen competitive skills across Gulf nations.