

Bahrain sign off 10th as games close

Kingdom finishes as top-ranked Arab nation as Aichi-Nagoya passes baton to Doha

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain brought the curtain down on a successful Asian Games campaign yesterday as the 20th edition of the continental showpiece concluded with a closing ceremony in Nagoya, Japan.

The kingdom signed off in 10th place in the final medal table, the highest position among Arab nations, after collecting 22 medals, comprising 11 gold, five silver and six bronze.

China topped the standings with 169 gold medals and 341 overall, ahead of hosts Japan, while South Korea completed the top three.

For Bahrain, the 22-medal haul was their third-highest at an Asian Games, behind the 26 won at Hangzhou 2022 and 25 at Jakarta-Palembang 2018.

The campaign nevertheless produced several historic achievements, led by Winfred Yavi's remarkable treble in the women's 5,000 metres, 10,000m and 3,000m steeplechase.

Birhanu Balew added a 5,000m and 10,000m double, while Salwa Eid Naser, Nelly Korir and Shitaye Habte were also among Bahrain's athletics champions.

Away from the track, Mikhail Arkhangelskiy delivered another



Taekwondo athlete Fatema Kalawadh carries Bahrain's flag during the parade of nations

er landmark moment by winning the men's 50m butterfly with an Asian record, while Bahrain's handball team captured their first Asian Games

gold medal.

After 16 days of competition, attention turned to Paloma Mizuho Stadium, where a 90-minute closing ceremony brought

the Games to an end as athletes from across the continent gathered for a final celebration.

The ceremony featured a parade of nations, cultural per-



Performers entertain the crowd during the Asian Games closing ceremony

Final standings					
#	Nation	G	S	B	Total
1	China	169	89	83	341
2	Japan	83	95	91	269
3	South Korea	39	43	68	150
4	India	21	27	37	85
5	Uzbekistan	21	25	24	70
6	Iran	19	18	15	52
7	Thailand	18	13	21	52
8	Kazakhstan	12	24	48	84
9	China	11	19	24	54
10	Bahrain	11	5	6	22

to the formal handover, with Olympic Council of Asia president Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani declaring the Games closed before the Asian Games flag was passed to Qatar, hosts of the next edition in Doha in 2030.

Qatari Olympic high jump champion Mutaz Essa Barshim carried the flag during the handover as attention turned towards the 21st Asian Games.

More than 17,000 athletes and officials took part in Aichi-Nagoya, with 469 gold-medal events contested and more than 50 world records broken during the Games.

Al Najma Rally to Winning Start

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Al Najma recovered from a slow start to defeat Nuwaidrat 97-78 yesterday and open their 2026-2027 Zain Bahrain Basketball League campaign with a convincing victory.

Ahmed Hasan Alderazi led the winners with a game-high 31 points at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam Sports Hall, while American guard Chatton Freeman Jr. added 25.

"Our ambition this season is obviously to compete. That's always my goal, and it's the same for my teammates," Alderazi said. "We have quality players, but we'll take it one game at a time."

Nuwaidrat made the brighter start and raced into a 25-15 advantage by the end of the opening quarter, with Al Najma struggling to contain their opponents early on.

The game swung dramatically in the second period, however, as last season's Golden Square semi-finalists overturned the deficit to lead 44-38 by half-time.

Al Najma continued to pull away after the break. Alderazi struck from long range, while Maitham Jameel also played a prominent role as their advantage grew to a game-high 24 points during the third quarter.

They entered the final period 74-54 ahead and comfortably protected their advantage before Mahdi Esam Hubail's late three-pointer completed



Ahmed Alderazi looks to break past Nuwaidrat's Mohamed Salman Ali

the scoring at 97-78.

Jameel finished with 16 points and eight assists for Al Najma, who forced 20 Nuwaidrat turnovers and scored 23 points off them.

Pape Bocar Sall led Nuwaidrat with a double-double of 22 points and 18 rebounds, while captain Murtadha Salman Ali contributed 19 points and Abbas Jameel Albasri added 14.

Opening-round action continues today with Al Hala facing Isa Town at 6pm before Manama take on Sitra at 8pm.

Defending champions Muharraq begin their pursuit of a third successive league crown tomorrow against Samaheej at 6pm, followed by Al Ettihad against Al Ahli at 8pm.

All matches will take place at Um Al Hassam Sports Hall.

Handball League begins Thursday

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The 2026-2027 Khalid bin Hamad Men's Handball League gets underway on Thursday, with defending champions Barbar taking on neighbours Al Ettifaq in the opening fixture.

Barbar begin their title defence after ending a seven-year wait for the league crown last season, having entered the Golden Square as fourth seeds before producing a superb run to the championship.

They eliminated defending champions Al Najma 2-0 in their best-of-three semi-final series before overcoming Al Ahli 28-26 in the final to claim their seventh league title.

The success capped a remarkable campaign for Barbar, who completed a clean sweep of all nine senior and age-group titles

organised by the Bahrain Handball Association.

Attention now turns to the new campaign, with the preliminary stage running until November 14, when Barbar face Al Ahli.

Before then, Al Ahli and Al Najma will renew one of Bahraini handball's biggest rivalries in a fifth-round clash on October 23.

Al Najma topped last season's regular-season standings and went unbeaten through their opening 19 matches before Al Ahli handed them their only defeat with a 30-29 victory in their final game.

Meanwhile, Bahrain Club are absent from this season's schedule, confirming they will not compete in handball at any age-group level.

They featured in the senior league last season but finished bottom of the standings.



Barbar players celebrate with the Khalid bin Hamad League trophy last season

Spikers chase back-to-back arab crowns

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Bahrain's senior men's volleyball team arrived in Amman, Jordan, yesterday ahead of their title defence at the 24th Arab Men's Volleyball Championship.

The regional competition gets under way tomorrow and runs until October 14 at the Sports Palace in Al-Hussein Youth City.

The Bahrainis return as defending champions after lifting the trophy on home soil in November 2024, when they defeated Qatar in four sets in the final.

That triumph secured the kingdom's third Arab crown,



Bahrain's senior men's volleyball team on arrival in Jordan

adding to previous successes in 1992 and 2008.

This time, the title holders will be led by Montenegrin head coach Ivan Joksimovic, who took charge in April and

has already enjoyed success at the helm.

He guided Bahrain to GCC Games gold in Doha in May without dropping a set before steering his side to fourth place

at the AVC Men's Cup in India.

Joksimovic's men most recently competed at last month's AVC Men's Continental Championship in Japan, where their campaign ended in the pool stage.