

Bahrain crash out of FIFA Arab Cup

Kingdom's senior men's national football team dealt disappointing 0-3 loss to Oman in final Group A fixture in Doha

● Al Mandhar Al Alawi, Arshad Al Alawi and Khalid Al Hajri all on target for Omanis against Bahrain

● Bahrainis wrap up Arab Cup campaign with one point from three matches, following two losses and zero goals scored

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Bahrain were sent crashing out of the FIFA Arab Cup 2021 last night following a disappointing 0-3 loss to Oman in their final Group A fixture of the preliminary round, played at Ahmad bin Ali Stadium.

Al Mandhar Al Alawi, Arshad Al Alawi and Khalid Al Hajri were all on target for the Omanis, who claimed their first win of the tournament. Al Mandhar scored in the first half while Arshad and Al Hajri both found the net in the second.

The result officially eliminated the Bahrainis from the competition with their second loss, and it put Oman through to the quarter-final stage.

The Omanis sealed their berth



Bahrain's Ali Madan appears to be fouled by Oman's Amjad Al Harthi

after hosts Qatar crushed Iraq 3-0 in last night's other Group A fixture.

The Qataris had already secured their berth in the next phase heading into yesterday's games. They finished as Group A winners with a maximum nine points following their third win. Oman were second on the table with four points, Iraq finished with two in third and Bahrain were dead last with just one

point from three matches.

The Bahrainis wrapped up their Arab Cup campaign with zero goals scored.

Bahrain kicked off yesterday's affair with a first 11 that included Sayed Mohammed Jaafar in goal; Sayed Mahdi Baqer, Waleed Al Hayam, Sayed Dhiya Saeed and Sayed Redha Isa in defence; Mohammed Hardan Abbas Alasfoor and Komail Alaswad in midfield; and Ali Madan, Mohammed

Marhoon and Mohammed Al Rumaihi in front.

Al Mandhar opened the scoring for the Omanis in the 41st minute, finding the net with a header in the face of goal off an assist by Fawaz Abdullah. That was enough to give their team the lead heading into the break.

In the second half, the national were expected to make a desperate push and fight their way back into the contest, but it never



Bahrain's Komail Alaswad battles for the ball with Oman's Arshad Al Alawi



Tournament hosts Qatar and Oman both secured their berths from Group A in the Arab Cup's knockout stage, where the Qataris will take on the UAE while the Omanis face off with Tunisia

came and the Omanis were able to deflate their spirits with two goals within a nine-minute span.

In the 50th minute, Bahrain carelessly gave away possession and then poor defending allowed Amjad Al Harthi all the time he needed to send in a cross from the right wing and find Arshad Al Alawi, who made no mistake with his uncontested header from close range.

Then, Khalid Alhajri made it 3-0 with a brilliant left-footed strike inside the box following a fine through-pass from Arshad. Alhajri was originally adjudged to be offside by the linesman, but after a VAR check, the goal stood.

Loeb hopes UAE testing can boost Bahrain Raid Xtreme's Dakar bid

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Nine-times World Rally Champion Sebastien Loeb believes that thorough testing in the UAE this week at the wheel of a car powered by a new sustainable fuel can boost his challenge for a first Dakar Rally victory next month.

The world's most successful rally driver and his Bahrain Raid Xtreme (BRX) teammates Nani Roma and Orlando Terranova have been taking part in a second wave of tests in the Emirates at the wheel of the Hunter T1+.

Roma, twice a Dakar winner and 2013 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge champion, put the Hunter T1+ through its paces in the Umm Al Quwain desert last week before Loeb and Argentinian driver Terranova took over yesterday.

"This is extremely valuable testing as we have all the conditions here that we're going to face in the Dakar," said Loeb, accompanied by co-driver Fabian Lurquin.

"Added to that, it's a perfect opportunity for us to work together to concentrate our efforts on navigation which is where the Dakar will be won or lost."

Terranova, partnered by Dani Oliveras, commented: "It's my first time in the new car and it is great to experience it in the same conditions as we will find on the Dakar in four weeks'



Sebastien Loeb during testing in the UAE for Bahrain Raid Xtreme

It's a perfect opportunity for us to work together to concentrate our efforts on navigation which is where the Dakar will be won or lost

SEBASTIEN LOEB

time. Dani and I have been working on our navigation as it will be crucial in Saudi Arabia not to make any mistakes."

Roma and his co-driver, Alex Haro, had previously spent five days in the Umm Al Quwain testing the Hunter T1+, which uses fuel that reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent compared to petrol.

Over two weeks at the Da-

kar, the cars will race 8,500km across the deserts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, starting in Ha'il and finishing in Jeddah, with a mid-event rest day in Riyadh.

T1+ cars run on larger tyres, with increased suspension travel and a wider track. The car now benefits from 37-inch tyres on 17-inch rims, with suspension travel increased from 280mm to 350mm and the body width increased from 2m to 2.3m to accommodate this.

These changes have necessitated a radical redesign of the Hunter, and Prodrive has used this as an opportunity to make further improvements, including a larger windscreen for improved visibility and a refinement of a number of systems throughout the car.

Bahrain drawn in tough group for Asian handball championship

● Bahrainis set to compete in Group A for preliminary round alongside Japan, Hong Kong, Uzbekistan and Vietnam

● A total of 17 nations are taking part, divided into four groups for competition's group stage

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Bahrain have been drawn in a tough Group D for the 2022 Asian Men's Handball Championship, taking place January 18 to 31 in Dammam.

The draw was held yesterday in Saudi Arabia to determine the groupings for the 17 participating nations.

The Bahrainis are set to be alongside Japan, Hong Kong, Uzbekistan and Vietnam for the first round of the competition.

Group A comprises South Korea, Kuwait, Jordan and Singapore; Group B features hosts Saudi, Iran, Australia and India; and Group C consists of defending champions Qatar, the UAE, Iraq and Oman.

Thailand were also set to compete in the tournament, but withdrew prior to the draw.

The 2022 Asian Men's Hand-



Bahrain head coach Aron Kristjansson ... set for Asian challenge (File photo)



The 2022 Asian Men's Handball Championship acts as the continental qualifying event for the world championship in 2023, with five teams earning qualification

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Bahrain currently have a squad of 19 players training under national team head coach Aron Kristjansson for the competition. The list includes Hussain Al Sayyad, Mohammed Abdullhussain, Mohammed Mirza, Ali Mirza, Hassan Samaheji, Mohammed Habib, Mahdi Saad, Mohammed Abdulredha, Ali Abdulqader, Ali Eid, Hassan Madan, Mohammed Al Maqabi, Bilal Basham, Qassim Qamber, Ahmed Jalal, Mohammed Nasser, Hussain Mahfoodh, Hassan Mirza and Hisham Ahmed.

In the previous Asian championship held in January of 2020, the Bahrainis finished fourth overall. Bahrain have never won the title, but were runners-up four times in the last six editions and bronze-medallists once.

ball Championship will be the 20th edition of the tournament, organised by the Asian Handball Federation. It acts as the continental qualifying event for the world championship in