

Ten-Man Muharraq Find Winning Touch

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Muharraq secured their first victory of the 2026-27 Nasser bin Hamad Premier League season with a spirited 3-1 win over Manama last night.

Brazilian Edimar Ribeiro da Costa, better known as Juninho, came off the bench to score twice at Khalifa Sports City as the defending champions showed their resolve after compatriot Bruno Santos was sent off in the 13th minute.

At Bahrain National Stadium, Al Khaldiya and Riffa played out a goalless draw in the evening's other fixture.

Muharraq entered their match under caretaker coach Rashed Al Dosari, who stepped in following Isa Al Saadoon's departure after two difficult opening

rounds.

Their task became significantly harder when Santos caught Danilo Sipovac in the face with his hand. Referee Mohammed Ebrahim initially showed a yellow card before upgrading the punishment to a straight red following a VAR review.

Despite the setback, the Red Wolves continued to carry the greater threat and deservedly moved ahead in the 38th minute.

Malian Abdulkarim Diarra delivered a dangerous ball from the right, allowing Arthur Rezende to steer a first-time finish into the far bottom corner.

Manama, led by Bahraini coach Ismaeel Karami, drew level after the interval when Abdulla Al Khalasi was penalised for handball while challenging substitute Abdulrahman Mohamed. French striker Zachary Al Hadji



da Costa Junior celebrates with teammate Diarra

converted from the spot, beating goalkeeper Vladan Dekic with a firmly struck effort.

The champions regained their advantage with just over 20 minutes remaining as Juninho guided Diarra's free-kick into the net with a well-directed header.

Karami's promoted side pushed forward in search of another equaliser during the closing stages. Dekic denied Al

Hadji's close-range half-volley before producing an excellent double save to preserve the lead.

Juninho completed his brace in stoppage time to put the result beyond doubt. Argentine Facundo Tobares released Anderson Leite on the break, allowing the midfielder to advance and square for his compatriot, who rolled into an empty net.

The win provides a timely lift before Muharraq depart for Turkmenistan tomorrow to face FK Arkadag in their AFC Champions League Two opener on Tuesday at 4.45pm, Bahrain time.

Across town, clear openings were scarce in a match billed as an early-season showdown between two title contenders.

Al Khaldiya enjoyed the better of the first half under Croatian Goran Tomic, with Patrick Maswanganyi and Gleison Moreira posing the greatest threat to a Riffa side led by Kuwaiti coach Mohamed Mashaan.

Moreira had the best chance of the game deep into stoppage time after Dominique Mendy helped a corner into his path, but the forward sent his close-range header wide.

The results leave Al Khaldiya and Riffa unbeaten on seven points, with Muharraq moving to four and Manama remaining on one.

Matchweek three continues tonight as A'Ali face Malkiya at Khalifa Sports City and Al Najma meet promoted East Riffa at the National Stadium.

The round concludes tomorrow, when Sitra take on Hidd at Khalifa Sports City and Al Ahli play Al Ettifaq at the National Stadium. All four remaining fixtures kick off at 7pm.

Bahrain Athletics Gear Up For Asiad

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Bahrain's Asian Games athletics preparations move into their next phase, with a training camp in Malaysia running until September 21.

The intensive programme, overseen by the technical staff, will focus on sharpening the athletes' physical and technical readiness for the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

Meanwhile, Salwa Eid Naser and Kemi Adekoya, former world champions outdoors and indoors respectively, will represent the kingdom at the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship 2026, taking place from today until Sunday in Budapest, Hungary.

The Asian Games athletics competition will then run from September 23 to 29 at the 30,000-capacity Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya, which will also stage the opening and closing ceremonies.

Olympic champion and former world champion Winfred Yavi headlines the full-strength, 34-member selection, comprising 17 women and 17 men. Eight members won gold at the previous edition in Hangzhou.

The women's sprint and hurdles contingent features Naser, Adekoya, Zenab Maha-

mat, Edidiong Odiong, Raihanah Garoubah, Aisha Abdulla, Hajar Alkhaldi, Layla Kamal, Sufian Abdulghani and Zainab Ali.

Yavi is joined in the middle and long-distance group by Nelly Jepkosgei, Tigest Mekonen, Eunice Chumba, Shitaye Eshete and Olympic and Asian Games champion Ruth Jebet. Shot putter Noora Jasim completes the female roster.

Among the men, Musa Isah and Abbas Yusuf form part of a sprint section that also includes Abdulraof Rashed, Alaa Sami, Ali Haji, Ebrahim Simon and Salem Bakheet.

Middle-distance runners Abdisamad Hirsi, Hamse Dhabar and Zouhair Aouad have also been selected, alongside long-distance specialists Birhanu Balew, Abdikani Hamid, Albert

Kiptoo, Elhassan Elabbassi and Shumi Gurmu. Shot putter Abdelrahman Mahmoud and high jumper Ahmed Sabri complete the field-event contingent.

Balew heads towards Japan in outstanding form after winning the men's 5,000m at the Diamond League final in Brussels. His time of 12 minutes 45.70 seconds set Asian, Arab and Bahraini records and was also the fastest in the world this year.

The victory earned the 30-year-old his first Diamond Trophy and made him the first Bahraini male athlete to claim a Diamond League title.

Several members also carry distinguished records from Hangzhou. Yavi won the women's 3,000m steeplechase and 1,500m, while the newly

crowned Diamond League champion completed a golden double in the men's 5,000m and 10,000m.

Adekoya collected four titles, prevailing in the women's 400m and 400m hurdles before contributing to victories in both 4x400m relays. Naser, who finished second behind her compatriot in the individual 400m, also featured in the successful women's and mixed quartets.

Mahamat helped secure the women's relay crown, while Isah and Yusuf formed part of the mixed team. Chumba added another gold in the women's marathon.

Those performances helped the kingdom achieve its best Asian Games return, collecting 20 medals, including 12 golds. Athletics supplied 16 medals and 10 victories, making it the country's most productive sport last time out.



Members of Bahrain's athletics delegation before departing for Malaysia yesterday

BFA announces U20 staff departure

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The Bahrain Football Association (BFA) has parted company with the under-20 team's technical and administrative staff by mutual consent.

It thanked both groups for their efforts, commitment and dedication throughout their tenure, while wishing them success in their future careers.

A new technical and administrative set-up will be announced once formally approved by the association's board.

Head coach Ali Aamer also posted a farewell message on Instagram, expressing his appreciation to the staff and players for their commitment and co-operation in representing the kingdom.

He encouraged the squad to continue developing and work towards reaching the senior side, adding that he was proud to have been part of the group.

The decision follows Bahrain's unsuccessful AFC U20

Asian Cup 2027 qualifying campaign on home soil, where they collected three points from as many Group D matches.

Ali Mahran scored a hat-trick in a 3-2 opening victory over Tajikistan before a last-minute goal condemned the young Reds to a 2-1 defeat against Jordan.

Their hopes were then ended by a 3-1 loss to Afghanistan, who had been beaten in both of their previous matches.



Former Bahrain under-20 football coach Ali Aamer

Tough beach soccer draw for Bahrain

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Bahrain have been drawn alongside hosts Thailand, three-time champions Japan and Iraq in Group A of the 2026 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup.

The ceremony took place yesterday at the Asian Football Confederation headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, setting the groups for the 12-team tournament in Thailand from November 18 to 28.

Elsewhere, defending champions Iran were placed with Lebanon, Vietnam and Afghanistan in Group B. Last year's runners-up Oman will meet the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan in Group C.

The top two from each section will reach the quarter-finals.

alongside the two best third-placed sides, completing the eight-team knockout stage.

Several former champions feature in the field. Iran lead the all-time list with four titles (2013, 2017, 2023 and 2025), followed by Japan with three (2009, 2011 and 2019) and the UAE with two (2007 and 2008). Bahrain lifted the inaugural crown in 2006, while Oman triumphed in 2015.

With just over two months until the competition begins, Bahrain's preparations are already under way. They played two friendlies against Saudi Arabia late last month, responding to a 2-1 defeat with a 4-3 victory the next evening.

The 14-player squad featured Mehran Mohammed, Issa Al Dosari, Ali Hassanein, Mohammed Jaafar, Ebrahim Almarzooqi, Hussain Al Dosari, Hesham Yousef, Akbar Saeed, Issa Ghaleb, Mohammed Darwish, Hussain Shaker and former senior football star Sayed Mohammed Adnan.

Goalkeepers Hussain Marhoon and Ahmed Abdulrasool completed the travelling party.



Issa Al Dosari in action during Asian Cup preparations

France withdraws support for Infantino

AFP | Paris, France

France will not support the candidacy of Gianni Infantino, who is running for a new term as FIFA president in March 2027, the French Football Federation (FFF) announced on Thursday.

The FFF is aligning itself with the position of other European federations such as Belgium, Italy, Scotland, Sweden and Wales, who have also publicly withdrawn support for Infantino.

FIFA confirmed last weekend that Infantino will stand for president in an election next March, despite the backlash over his now-abandoned plan to bring private investment into



the men's and women's World Cups.

At this stage, the 56-year-old from Switzerland is the only candidate. However, CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani is widely seen as a likely challenger to the incumbent.

"We believe that the trust placed in the FIFA president has been betrayed, and that the way in which the governance of world football is envisaged no longer reflects us," FFF president Philippe Diallo said in a statement.

"That is why, by a unanimous decision of its members, the French Football Federation has decided to withdraw its support for Gianni Infantino's candidacy for the FIFA presidency."

The move by the French federation, while expected, is likely to sting Infantino.

Diallo added that France "has a historic legitimacy as one of the founding nations of FIFA, and it has the right to intervene when it has the feeling that FIFA and its president are going off course in their governance of world football".

"It also has sporting legitimacy, having been in the top three in the FIFA rankings for the last 10 years."