

Cagers launch Asiad Campaign

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain tip off their men's five-on-five bid at the 20th Asian Games today against defending champions the Philippines.

The Pool C encounter begins at 7am at the 15,000-capacity Aichi International Arena in Nagoya, Japan, three hours after China and Kazakhstan contest the section's first game.

Slobodan Subotic's side will then face China tomorrow at 10am before completing their preliminary schedule against Kazakhstan at 4am on Monday. All listed times are Bahrain time.

Action in the 12-team tournament began yesterday in Pool



Coach Subotic watches over Asian Games basketball preparations

B, where Qatar defeated Iran 59-53 and Chinese Taipei edged Jordan 83-80.

Pool A also gets under way today, with Indonesia meeting South Korea at 10am before Saudi Arabia take on hosts Japan at 1pm.

For the continental challenge, the kingdom has named a reinforced 12-player line-up featuring nine members of the squad that swept through Group A during the opening round of pre-qualifying for the Fiba Asia Cup 2029 in Dubai last week.

They are Mustafa Hussain, Ahmed Salman, Ahmed Alderazi, Ahmed Bindayneh, Ali Hussain, Ali Jaber, Mohammed Juma'a, Mohammed Buallay and JaKarr Sampson.

Greek-Slovenian coach Sub-

otic has strengthened that core with big men Uros Ilic and Elijah Thomas, along with high-scoring guard-forward Austin Ajukwa.

Once the single round-robin is complete, the top two from each pool and the two best third-placed sides will advance to the quarter-finals on September 16.

The semi-finals follow two days later, setting the stage for the gold and bronze medal games on September 20.

Basketball is among several sports taking place before the opening ceremony, with the Asian Games officially running from September 19 to October 4 across Aichi and Nagoya.



Mustafa Hussain during Bahrain's training session in Japan

Morocco Says 2030 World Cup final will be held at Hassan II Stadium

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Moroccan Football Federation president Fouzi Lekjaa has said the 2030 FIFA World Cup final will be played at the Hassan II Stadium, currently under construction in Ben Slimane province near Casablanca.

Speaking at an event in Bouznika, Lekjaa said the province would have "the honor" of hosting the final and expressed hope that Morocco could face France in the title match.

Morocco lost 2-0 to France in the 2022 World Cup semifinal, and France again defeated Morocco 2-0 in the 2026 quarterfinals.

Morocco will co-host the 2030 tournament with Spain and Portugal, while Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay will host the opening three matches to mark the World Cup's centenary.

However, FIFA has not officially decided the venue for the final. Spain has also expressed interest in hosting the match, while FIFA recently rejected reports that president Gianni Infantino had promised Morocco the final, calling such claims "false and misleading."

The Hassan II Stadium is expected to hold around 115,000 spectators, potentially making it one of the world's largest football stadiums when completed.

The 2030 World Cup will mark 100 years since the first tournament was held in Uruguay in 1930.



Leclerc concedes he 'went too far' in Hamilton Monza incident

Charles Leclerc on Thursday conceded he was at fault when he clashed with Ferrari team-mate Lewis Hamilton during the opening lap at the Italian Grand Prix.

Speaking to reporters at the new Madring, ahead of this weekend's Spanish Grand Prix, the Monegasque driver said the pair had discussed the incident and settled their differences.

The clash saw Hamilton run off into the gravel and lose six places while Leclerc continued, but then crashed out on lap two at last Sunday's Grand Prix in Monza.

Leclerc had initially said "we went too far", a claim that Hamilton disagreed with by stating that "there was no 'we' in it".

"I think it's kind of clear that we never want to see a car of the same team in the grass," Leclerc said in the Spanish capital.

"After reviewing, we spoke with Lewis, I obviously know I went too far in Turn Two and I said it to Lewis and I think it's very clear what we should do



Ferrari drivers Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc had a coming together early at the Italian Grand Prix

or should avoid going forward."

Leclerc added that it was "not acceptable" to see his team-mate in the gravel, but pointed out that more was made of the incident because it occurred at the team's 'home' race.

"We are driving for Ferrari and if there's one race where you don't want that to happen it is Monza and when these things

happen at our home race, then it does a huge mess outside," the 28-year-old added.

Seven-time world champion Hamilton said he also discussed the matter with Ferrari team boss Fred Vasseur and that there was no bad blood.

"That's the positive of where we've got to over the past 15 months," the 41-year-old ex-

plained. "We've got to a place where we have really great communication internally and the same with me and Charles."

"I think it's great that there was no shying away from having a discussion. We sat face to face, just him and me and we talked and we were both open and honest. We squashed it. We can move on."

Messi to buy second Spanish lower league club

AFP | Barcelona, Spain

Argentina icon Lionel Messi has agreed to take over Spanish club Eldense, the second division side confirmed yesterday.

Eldense, based just in-land from Alicante, will become the former Barcelona attacker's second venture into Spanish football ownership having bought fourth-tier Cornella in April.

The 39-year-old plays for Inter Miami and retired from international duty after Argen-

tina's loss to Spain in the World Cup final this summer.

"CD Eldense can confirm that Lionel Messi has reached an agreement in principle with the club's current owners to acquire the shares currently held by Grupo TH Soluciones, which would make him the majority shareholder of CD Eldense," they told AFP.

"At this time, the transaction is pending completion of the final legal and contractual procedures, including the due dil-

igence process, as well as the required authorisation from the Spanish Sports Council (CSD).

"For now, the club is unable to provide details on the financial terms of the transaction or set a definitive date for its completion, as the process has not yet been finalised.

"Once the relevant procedures have been completed and the necessary authorizations obtained, CD Eldense will officially report any developments in

this regard," the club founded in 1921 added.



2030 Winter Olympics chief Grosperon quits



Former French freestyle skier Edgar Grosperon
Decines-Charpieu, France

The head of the organising committee for the 2030 Winter Olympics in the French Alps, Edgar Grosperon, resigned on Thursday following months of tension.

Grosperon's exit is the latest in a series of high-profile departures from the organising committee of the next Winter Games.

"His decision to step down as president is part of a deliberate, organised and fully assumed transition, in the interests of the project and its governance," the CO-JOP organising committee said in a statement.

"It reflects a shared desire with stakeholders to enable the organisation to quickly enter this new operational phase," it added.

Grosperon, 57, who won an Olympic ski gold in the moguls at the 1992 Albertville Games, had been in the job for 18 months.

He said on his LinkedIn page that "after several months of tension within the organising committee, I draw the conclusion that the conditions are not met for me to continue this adventure".

Grosperon also had to contend with political power struggles and tensions with regional stakeholders who resented the efforts of some officials to impose methods used in the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics on the organisation of the Games in the French Alps.