

Gulf Games Begin with Dazzling Opening Ceremony

TDT | Manama

Bahrain reaffirmed its commitment to regional sporting excellence and Gulf unity through its participation in the opening ceremony of the 4th GCC Games, held yesterday at the Al Shaqab Indoor Arena in Doha.

The ceremony officially launched the Games, hosted by Qatar until May 22. It featured a large-scale artistic showcase celebrating Gulf and Qatari heritage, culminating in an operetta titled "One Gulf... One Heart." Athletes from across the GCC gathered in a unified celebration of sport, culture, and shared ambition.

Leading Bahrain's delegation during the parade of nations was His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Vice President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee.

The national flag was carried by athletes Rashed Sanad and Bayan Salman, symbolising Bahrain's sporting pride and competitive spirit.

Bahrain fields a strong contingent across 18 sports, underscoring its continued rise as one of the region's leading sporting nations. The delegation competes in disciplines including athletics, swimming, shooting, volleyball, padel, boxing, fencing, karate, taekwondo, and table tennis, among others.

Events are being staged across 10 world-class venues in Doha, including Aspire Dome, Al Gharafa Sports Club, Qatar Sports Club, Lusail Shooting Range, and the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex, reflecting the scale and organisation of this year's edition.

Bahrain arrives with a strong



Athletes Rashid Sanad and Bayan Salman carry Bahrain's flag during the ceremony

track record in the competition. It topped the medal table at the inaugural 2011 GCC Games and has remained a consistent con-

tender ever since, most recently securing 64 medals, including 20 gold, at the 2022 Games in Kuwait.



On the field of play, Bahrain's campaign begins today in 3x3 basketball at Al Gharafa Hall, with both men's and women's teams opening their round-robin fixtures against regional opponents. In handball, expectations are high as the men's national team

begins its campaign later this week following a landmark year that included winning the Asian Men's Handball Championship and qualifying for the 2025 IHF Men's World Championship in Germany.

Under head coach Robert Hedin, the squad has prioritised continuity and cohesion, completing final preparations at the Bahrain Handball Federation Arena in Um Al Hassam. Handball remains one of Bahrain's most successful disciplines at the GCC Games, with gold in 2011 and silver in both 2015 and 2022.

As competition unfolds in Doha, Bahrain's athletes continue to pursue strong performances across multiple disciplines, carrying national ambitions onto one of the Gulf's most prominent regional sporting stages.

Salem Clinches Overall Golf Title

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The final event of a disrupted season concluded with strong performances as Husain Salem secured the overall title, while Nasser Yaqoob Saleh won the Medal in challenging windy conditions.

Salem produced an impressive round, shooting three under his handicap to finish with a net 67 and a gross 73, securing the overall win. Saleh responded with a solid gross 72 to edge ahead and claim the Medal by a single shot.

The blustery weather added difficulty for players, forcing careful club selection and shot planning, though it also provided a cooler playing experience.

The competition marked the end of a season heavily affected by regional tensions, which led to a nearly two-month closure of the course.

Following the round, players attended a dinner before the prize distribution ceremony. Awards were presented by TD



Rashed Al Qutami and Captain Steve Newall.

In the divisions, Jasper Meinema and Mohamed Ali Al Kowari shared top honours in Division One, while Abdulla Mubarak Al Jowher led Division Two. Chaitanya Kodange topped Division Three.

Organisers noted that, although the traditional Winners Trophy and Consolation Cup were not held due to the seasonal shift, club members will now move into summer social competitions, with hopes for a full competitive season resuming at the end of September.

'I'll never forget this day': Barca's Flick after Liga triumph

AFP | Barcelona

Hours after the death of his father, Barcelona coach Hansi Flick led the Catalan giants to a second straight La Liga title with a Clasico win over rivals Real Madrid and said it was a day he would "never" forget.

Flick's Barca side earned a 2-0 win over Los Blancos and the coach said he was grateful to his team for their support and commitment.

"I'm proud. I'll never forget this day. Never. I'm happy about this (triumph) and the atmosphere in this stadium is unbelievable," Flick told reporters.

The German coach said his mother called him in the morning to tell him that his father had died.

"This morning, my mum called me and she said that my father passed away. And so I thought about (whether) I should hide it, or should I speak with my team? Because for me it's like a family," explained Flick.

"And I said, okay, I want to



Barcelona's team celebrates winning the 2025-2026 Spanish League

get the information to the players. And what they did (then) was unbelievable. I will never forget this moment.

"I'm really happy and really proud about everyone. Every player in the team. My staff around as well, and the club."

Flick, who was tossed into the air by his players in celebration at full-time, said he had "never" felt so much love in a stadium as on this day.

The coach said his team were still hoping to match the record of 100 points in a La Liga season in their final three league

matches, and their big goal for next season was to end their 11-year wait for the Champions League.

Spanish media have reported Flick will extend his contract, which expires in 2027, by a year.

"I'm feeling in the right place, at the right time, and I think we all want to continue, and we want to give more for this club," added Flick.

"I know everyone here and also in Barcelona wants to win the Champions League. We try next season again, and hopefully we can achieve this goal."

Miha Frlic charges toward historic gold at BRAVE CF 106

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Top-ranked heavyweight contender Miha Frlic stands on the brink of a defining moment that could echo across Slovenian sporting history.

He is set to challenge Pavel "The Experiment" Dailidko for the BRAVE CF Heavyweight World Championship in the main event of BRAVE CF 106, scheduled for Saturday, June 6, at Hala Tivoli in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

A triumph would enshrine Frlic as the first Slovenian to capture a recognized World Title in the sport of mixed martial arts, elevating him into national legend status.

"I know what is at stake," Frlic stated. "This is bigger than



me. This is for my country, for every person who believed in this dream. I am ready to carry that responsibility and turn it into history."

Frlic's ascent has been built on

discipline, grit, and undeniable power.

Sporting an unblemished 7-0-1 slate, including a perfect 4-0 record under the BRAVE Combat Federation banner, the Slovenian



powerhouse has dismantled every obstacle placed before him.

His aggressive style, paired with concussive finishing instincts, has made him one of the

most feared competitors in the division.

He cemented his place as the frontrunner for a shot at divisional gold at BRAVE CF 104 this past February, where he obliterated

Samuele "Tank" Di Guardo in the opening round, a statement performance that left no room for debate.

"It was never easy getting here," Frlic admitted. "There were sacrifices people did not see, moments when I had to push beyond limits. Every fight, every camp, every setback shaped me into the fighter I am today."

Now, destiny aligns with opportunity in front of a home crowd eager to witness history unfold. For Frlic, the stage could not be more fitting.

"To become World Champion in Slovenia, in front of my people, is the ultimate dream," he said. "I will give everything to make sure that when the night ends, we celebrate together and make history that will never be forgotten."