



Subotic arrives to lead Bahrain basketball



Slovenian coach Slobodan Subotic welcomed by Bahrain national team manager Mohammed Dawood

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Slovenian coach Slobodan Subotic has arrived in Bahrain to take charge of the senior men's national basketball team before preparations begin for the Gulf qualifiers for the FIBA Asia Cup.

He met the coach on arrival, as Bahrain moved towards the next stage of their preparations.

The squad begins its training programme on 20 July before taking part in the first stage of the Gulf qualifying tournament.

The Bahrain Basketball As-

sociation appointed Subotic to lead the side through its next campaign, drawing on his long record in European basketball.

He has coached Panathinaikos, Olympiacos, Aris and AEK Athens, and has also led the national teams of Slovenia and Lebanon.

His honours include the FIBA Korac Cup, two Greek league titles and the Greek Cup. He was twice named Greek League Coach of the Year.

Subotic will now oversee preparations before Bahrain begin their Gulf qualifying campaign for the FIBA Asia Cup.

Bahrain thrash Chinese Taipei 39-27



Bahrain team player Abbas Ali

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Bahrain crushed Chinese Taipei 39-27 to make a ruthless start to their Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship campaign in China, with Abbas Ali named player of the match after a standout display.

The under-21 side took charge

early and never let go, running out 12-goal winners in their opening match in Chuzhou.

Bahrain are in Group A with hosts China, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong. The top four sides will move into the quarter-finals.

They face Saudi Arabia next, before matches against Hong Kong and Oman, and then close



the group stage against China.

Thirteen teams are taking part in the tournament, which runs from July 15 to 27 and doubles as a qualifier for the 2027 IHF Men's Junior World Championship in North Macedonia.

The four semi-finalists will earn places at the world finals.

Bahrain are coached by Husam Madan, with former na-

tional team player Jaffar Abdulqader as his assistant. Senior international Salman Al Shuwaikh is part of the 18-man squad.

Bahrain won the Asian junior crown in 1998, took silver in 1994 and 2022, and bronze in 2018 and 2024. They reached the podium at each of the past three editions.

Cricket World Cup revamp could see extra India-Pakistan clash

AFP | London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced yesterday a revamped format for the men's 2027 one-day international World Cup that could lead to an additional fixture between arch-rivals India and Pakistan.

While next year's edition in southern Africa remains a 14-team competition, the three lowest-ranked qualifiers will now take part in a preliminary round with just one of them progressing to a 12-strong main group stage.

That will now feature just two pools of six, with a new 'super seven' stage replacing the previous 'super six' round-robin.

The restructure comes after concerns were expressed about the prospect of too many dead rubbers, which in turn would lead to sparse crowds at venues, and the number of foregone



Australia's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the 2023 men's ODI World Cup final

conclusions at the recent T20 World Cup.

Significantly, there will be no quarter-finals with the 50-over tournament denied the further jeopardy and interest that comes with an extra round of clear-cut knockout matches.

The ICC, however, insisted in a statement that the new ODI World Cup structure "creates greater context, competitiveness and consequence during the event."

An additional team in the round-robin phase also in-

creases the prospects of an extra match between India and Pakistan.

The passion for cricket in the sub-continent, which in turn generates huge broadcast rights and commercial revenues for the ICC, makes a match between India and Pakistan the most lucrative in the sport.

Another change approved at the ICC's recent annual board meeting in Edinburgh will see the next men's T20 World Cup in 2028 remain a 20-team competition, but with 10 sides qualifying from the group stage rather than eight.

The two best performing teams in the 'Super 10' will automatically secure a semi-final spot, with a new eliminator stage to decide their opponents.

In a separate announcement, the ICC said it had approved an \$12.82 million loan to Cricket West Indies "to support the member board".

Riffa stay top after Bahrain draw



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Riffa held on to the top spot in Bahrain's General Bowling League after a gripping 4-4 draw with Bahrain Club in the pick of the fourth-round fixtures.

The result kept Riffa at the summit despite being pushed throughout by Bahrain in a closely fought contest between two evenly matched sides.

Bahrain's Khalid Sameer posted a total of 616, while Fawaz Abdulla Majdami led Riffa with 635, the highest score by a player from either side.

Al Hala recorded the biggest

win of the round, sweeping Al Ettifaq 8-0 after producing a team total of 2,103 pins against 1,949.

Umm Al Hassam beat Bu-saiteen 6-2, finishing with 2,088 pins to their opponents' 1,992. Mohammed Muhannad Al Ansari topped the scoring with 626.

Sanad also secured a 6-2 victory over Isa Town in the closest contest of the round. Sanad edged the pin count by just seven, scoring 1,824 against Isa Town's 1,817.

The fourth-round results left the race for the leading places closely fought as the league moves through its early stages.

Belgian great Meunier signs for Premier League side Sunderland

AFP | London

Veteran Belgian defender Thomas Meunier said he was "hugely excited" to "begin a new chapter" after he signed for Premier League side Sunderland on a free transfer yesterday.

The 34-year-old -- one of Belgium's 'golden generation' whose last hurrah was a World Cup quarter-final exit to Spain -- signed a two-year contract.

The 83-times capped Meunier, who has played club football at the top level in his homeland, Germany, Turkey and France, had been at Ligue 1 side Lille.

"I am hugely excited and honoured to join Sunderland," said Meunier in a statement on the Sunderland website.

"I'm very happy to be here



Belgian defender Thomas Meunier (L) in action during the World Cup

and to begin this new chapter in my career.

"The Premier League is one of the most competitive and ex-

citing leagues in the world, and it's a challenge I've wanted to experience.

"When I spoke with the club, I

was impressed by the ambition, the project and the desire to keep moving forward.

"Competing in Europe (the Europa League) was also a big factor in my decision because, as a player, you always want to test yourself against the best teams and compete for trophies."

Meunier, who won three Ligue 1 titles with Paris Saint-Germain during his spell there from 2016-2020, "brings a wealth of experience, leadership and professionalism", said Sunderland's director of football Florent Ghisolfi.

"Thomas is a player who understands what it takes to compete for success, and we're confident his mentality and character will have a positive influence on the squad," added Ghisolfi.