

# World Cup to 'go ahead as scheduled' amid Iran uncertainty

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● Iran's football federation says it has opened talks with FIFA about potentially relocating its matches.

● Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Tuesday that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches if required

AFP | Paris, France

FIFA president Gianni Infantino yesterday underlined the body's commitment to making sure the World Cup goes ahead "as scheduled" with "all teams" taking part amid doubts about Iran's presence at the



This view shows the pitch and stands at Akron Stadium, home of the Guadalajara soccer club, in Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico. Akron Stadium will host two World Cup playoff matches next week and will be one of Mexico's three venues for the 2026 World Cup.

tournament.

"FIFA is looking forward to all teams participating at the World Cup to compete in a spirit of fair play and mutual respect," Infantino said from Zurich during an online FIFA Council meeting.

"We have a schedule. We will soon have the 48 competing teams confirmed, and we want

the World Cup to go ahead as scheduled."

Iran's participation has been shrouded in doubt due to the conflict in the Middle East.

They are due to play group games in the United States, against New Zealand and Belgium in Los Angeles and in Se-

attle against Egypt.

However, Iranian football federation president Mehdi Taj indicated that as a result of the US-Israeli attacks on his country he wanted its matches moved to one of the other host nations -- Canada and Mexico will host the World Cup with the United States.

"We will be preparing for the World Cup. We will boycott the United States but not the World Cup," Taj said in the video released on Wednesday.

Iran's football federation says it has opened talks with FIFA about potentially relocating its matches.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Tuesday that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches if required.

"FIFA can't solve geopolitical conflicts, but we are committed to using the power of football and the World Cup to build bridges and promote peace as our thoughts are with those who are suffering as a consequence of the ongoing wars," added Infantino.

# Super Al Khaldiya Cruise Past Muharraq



Al Khaldiya captain and goalkeeper Thawadi lifts Super Cup.

TDT | Manama

Al Khaldiya secured the 2025-26 Bahrain Super Cup on Wednesday night with a 3-0 victory over Muharraq at Khalifa Sports City Stadium, claiming the trophy for a fourth consecutive year.

The match pitted Bahrain's two top sides against each other, with Khaldiya entering as 2024-25 King's Cup winners and Muharraq as reigning Nasser Bin Hamad Premier League champions. Both teams largely relied on youthful squads, with only a handful of senior players in action.

The deadlock was broken in the 22nd minute when Moroccan Nizar Elotmani curled a

brilliant free kick from outside the penalty area, the ball striking the crossbar before settling in the top-left corner, leaving Muharraq goalkeeper Ebrahim Sanad rooted.

Despite some early threats from Muharraq, Khaldiya remained in control, and the game was effectively sealed in the 79th minute. Substitute Zahui Winley was fouled in the box, and following a VAR review, Elotmani calmly converted the penalty to double the lead.

The final flourish came in the 89th minute when Elotmani set up Mubarak Khalifa, who struck first-time into the top corner to complete the 3-0 scoreline.

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