

Bahrain set up Serbia friendly

Senior men's national football team to take on FIFA World Cup 2022 participants in exhibition match at the National Stadium in Riffa on November 18

● **Friendly match is first confirmed for Bahrain since qualifying for AFC Asian Cup 2023 last June**

● **Serbian national team set to arrive in Kingdom on November 15 ahead of exhibition game**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national football team have lined up an international friendly match against FIFA World Cup 2022 participants Serbia later this year.

This was announced yesterday by the Bahrain Football Association.

The game is scheduled for November 18 and it will be played at the National Stadium in Riffa. It is scheduled for a 7pm kick-off.

The match is the first confirmed for Bahrain since they successfully qualified for



An image released by the Football Federation of Serbia announcing their friendly in Bahrain this November



The game is one of the most high-profile fixtures for Bahrain's national team in recent years, as it pits them against a top-ranked side from Europe—the Serbians are currently 25th in the FIFA World Ranking, while Bahrain are 85th

the AFC Asian Cup 2023 in June. It will be part of their preparations for upcoming competitions.

For the Serbians, the game will be leading up to their campaign in the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, where they have been drawn in Group G for the first round alongside Brazil, Switzer-

land and Cameroon.

The match is one of the most high-profile fixtures for Bahrain in recent years, as it pits them against a top-ranked national team from Europe. The Serbians are currently 25th in the FIFA World Ranking, including 14th amongst all teams in the Union of European Football Associations.

Bahrain are 85th, 12th amongst all squads in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

According to the Football Federation of Serbia, their delegation will depart for the Kingdom on November 15. Following their match against the Bahrainis, they will travel to Doha on November 19.

Aside from their match with Bahrain, the Serbians are expected to play two more games in the League of Nations before the start of the FIFA World Cup. Serbia will host Sweden on September 24, before playing Norway in Oslo three days later.

The friendly with Serbia will be the second for Bahrain under head coach Helio Sousa against

leading European opposition. The nationals also faced Ukraine in May of last year.

Earlier this year, Bahrain were one of 11 nations to secure their AFC Asian Cup 2023 berths from the third and final round of qualifying.

From the six groups in that stage, all six winners and the five best runners-up made it through. The others to qualify were Jordan and Indonesia from Group A, Palestine from Group B, Uzbekistan and Thailand from Group C, India and Hong Kong from Group D, Malaysia behind Bahrain from Group E, and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan from Group F.

They joined the 13 who had already claimed their places from the second round of qualification, namely Japan, Syria, Qatar, South Korea, Australia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, China, Iraq, Oman, Vietnam and Lebanon.

All 24 teams will feature in next year's AFC Asian Cup, which will be played at a yet-to-be-determined venue after China withdrew as hosts.

PSG coach denies bad blood between Neymar and Mbappe



PSG's Kylian Mbappe (R) and Neymar (L) take part in a training session

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain coach Christophe Galtier said yesterday there is no bad blood between star forwards Kylian Mbappe and Neymar.

Neymar insisted on taking the team's second penalty against Montpellier last Saturday after Mbappe had missed the first.

Mbappe did not celebrate after Neymar converted the spot-kick.

Galtier called the apparent differences between the two an "epiphenomenon", suggesting the spat was not a symptom of any deeper problem.

"We saw each other quickly the next day to iron out all that, to say what we had to say to each other," said Galtier told a press conference ahead of Sunday's Ligue 1 visit to Lille.

"We had a very pleasant week at work. Everyone worked well. I enjoyed all the sessions this week and this epiphenomenon disappeared very

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CHRISTOPHE GALTIER

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Galtier said after the game that instructions “had been respected” regarding penalty takers.

“There was a precise order in this game, Kylian as number one and ‘Ney’ as number two.”

Other potential penalty takers include Lionel Messi and Sergio Ramos, said Galtier, adding that it was “important for our strikers to score goals, to keep the confidence”.

Bahrain wrap up on-court preparations for Asian volleyball

TDI | Manama

Bahrain wrapped up their on-court preparations for the 21st Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship with a tightly contested 1-3 (23-25, 25-23, 14-25, 21-25) loss against their counterparts from Japan last night at the Bahrain Volleyball Association arena in Isa Sports City in Riffa.

The game was the final warm-up for the national team ahead of the start of the continental competition on Monday.

They are scheduled to have rest today and tomorrow following a week of intensive preparations, which included their friendly games.

Meanwhile, the participating



Action from Bahrain's friendly last night against Japan

national teams from across Asia are continuing to arrive in the Kingdom, with the last delegations expected to reach Bahrain by today.

The Chinese national team

touched down on Thursday night, while South Korea and Thailand arrived in separate flights yesterday.

Seventeen nations from across the continent are taking

part in the event.

Bahrain are in Pool A for the preliminary round alongside Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia. Pool B features Iran, Japan and India; Pool C includes South Korea, Qatar and Kuwait; Pool D features Thailand and the UAE; Pool E includes Iraq, Australia and Bangladesh; and Pool F comprises China, Chinese-Taipei and Pakistan.

Kazakhstan were also supposed to take part and were drawn in Pool D, but have withdrawn.

The opening stage is scheduled to continue until Wednesday, after which a drawing of lots for Classification one to 12 (top two teams from each pool) will be conducted.

Casemiro wants to leave Real Madrid as Man Utd close in

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti confirmed yesterday Casemiro is keen to leave the European champions as Manchester United close in on the Brazilian international.

According to the BBC and The Athletic, United are set to pay an initial 60 million euros (£51 million, \$61 million) plus a further 10 million euros in add-ons for the 30-year-old.

“I spoke with him this morning. He wants to try a new challenge, a new opportunity and I and the club understand that,” said Ancelotti

“For what Casemiro has done for this club and the person that he is, we have to respect his wishes. Now there are negotiations, nothing is official and he



Carlo Ancelotti, Head Coach of Real Madrid, chats with Casemiro after the UEFA Super Cup Final 2022 (file photo)

remains a Real Madrid player, but his desire is to leave.

“If that happens and there is an agreement, we have the resources to replace him.”

Casemiro has won three La Liga titles and five Champions Leagues during nine years at Madrid as he formed a formidable midfield trio with Luka

Modric and Toni Kroos.

However, his place in Ancelotti's preferred starting line-up has come under threat by the signing of Aurelien Tchouameni this summer for a fee that could rise to 100 million euros.

United are badly in need of new recruits after a miserable start to Erik ten Hag's reign has left them bottom of the Premier

League for the first time in 30 years.

The Red Devils will reportedly make Casemiro one of the top earners in the Premier League with a four-year deal at Old Trafford along with a club option to extend that contract by an extra season.

A lack of new signings has been one of the issues blamed for embarrassing defeats to Brighton and Brentford with Lisandro Martinez, Christian Eriksen and Tyrell Malacia the only additions to Ten Hag's squad so far.

Worse could still be to come for United with Liverpool up next at Old Trafford on Monday.

Even if talks progress smoothly in the coming hours, Casemiro will not be registered in time to feature in that match.

