



Bahrain set for Gulf Cup defence

Final preparations complete ahead of today's flight to Jeddah

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TDT | Manama

Defending champions Bahrain will depart for Jeddah today ahead of the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup, which begins on Wednesday and runs until October 6.

The team signed off their local build-up with a training session at the Bahrain Football Association's pitches in Riffa last night, focusing on technical and tactical work under head coach Dragan Talajic.

"Full rakkiz," the Croatian called out during the workout, combining English with the Arabic word for "focus".

It capped a week-long programme that began on September 13 and included a behind-closed-doors practice match on Wednesday.

The group assembled in full on Friday after Muharraq's call-ups returned from AFC Champions League Two duty



Dragan Talajic embraces Hamad Shamsan during training session

overseas. BFA vice-president Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Isa Al Khalifa watched that evening's workout, after which the players entered camp at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel, Residence and Spa.

The final 26-man squad was confirmed on Thursday, with

Ebrahim Lutfalla, Mohammed Al Gharably and Omar Salem selected as the three goalkeepers.

The travelling party also features Hamad Shamsan, Vincent Emmanuel, Amine Benaddi, Ahmed Rabeea, Waleed Al Hayam, Sayed Mahdi Baqer, Abdulla Al Khalasi, Hasan Al Karani, Ab-



Recent call-up Ali Al Doseri trains ahead of the tournament

bas Al Asfoor and captain Sayed Dhiya Saeed.

Completing the line-up are Ali Madan, Omar Saber, Mahdi Humaidan, Ibrahim Al Khattal, Ali Al Doseri, Kamil Al Aswad, Mohammed Abdulqayoom, Jassim Al Shaikh, Mohamed Marhoon, Hashim Sayed Isa, Mohammed

Al Rumaihi, Mahdi Abduljabbar and Hussain Abdulkarim.

Bahrain have been drawn in Group B alongside Qatar, the UAE and Yemen. Hosts Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq and Kuwait make up Group A.

Their campaign begins against Qatar on Thursday, September

24, at 9pm. They then meet the UAE on Sunday, September 27, at 9pm before concluding the group stage against Yemen on Wednesday, September 30, at 8.30pm.

All three matches will be played at Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Stadium.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals on October 3. The Group A winners face the Group B runners-up at 6.55pm, followed by the Group B winners against the Group A runners-up at 9pm.

The final will be played at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium on October 6, with the kick-off time yet to be confirmed.

Bahrain are chasing a third Gulf Cup crown. Their maiden triumph came in Doha, Qatar, in 2019, before they defeated Oman 2-1 in Kuwait City to lift the trophy again in January 2025.

Arsenal thrashed by Brighton, sorry Spurs lose again

AFP | London

Arsenal's perfect start to their Premier League title defence came off the rails in a 3-0 trouncing by Brighton, while Tottenham remain winless after a 3-2 defeat to Aston Villa.

Mikel Arteta's men arrived on the south coast in formidable form having won all seven games in all competitions this season.

But it was Brighton's fine start to the campaign that was maintained as goals from Pascal Gross, Charalampos Kostoulas and Chema Andres breached the Gunners' normally impenetrable defence.

It is the third consecutive season that the Premier League champions have lost at the Amex after Liverpool and Manchester City in the past two years.

Brighton were full of confidence after becoming the first side in 50 years to come from 2-0 down to beat Manchester United at Old Trafford in the League Cup in midweek.

Fabian Hurzeler's side went at Arsenal from the start but had to wait until 31 minutes for the opener when Gross crashed a



Brighton's Spanish midfielder #14 Chema Andres scores the team's third goal against Arsenal

shot in off the inside of the post.

Arsenal were punished for allowing too much space on the edge of their area again just before half-time when Kostoulas this time picked his spot to beat David Raya.

Rather than a rousing second-half response, the visitors fell further behind on the hour mark as Andres was afforded

the space to head in Gross's corner inside the six-yard box for Brighton's 16th goal in five league games this season.

The defeat is Arsenal's heaviest in any competition since April 2023.

Spurs 'too fragile'

It was also another day to forget for their north London rivals

as Tottenham will have to stew over a three-week international break in the relegation zone.

After four games without a goal, an end to Spurs' drought came too late as they were already 3-0 down before two consolation strikes from Conor Gallagher and Jan Paul van Hecke.

Villa were indebted to goalkeeper Zion Suzuki for a string of saves to keep them in the game before Johan Manzambi slotted the visitors ahead at the end of the first half.

Nicolas Jackson exposed some woeful Spurs defending to add a second before a brilliant strike from Emi Buendia secured Villa's first league win of the season.

"We played well in the first half, we didn't score, but (we are) too fragile," said Spurs boss Roberto De Zerbi.

"The moment when we have to defend, we have to defend compact. The leaders have to be leaders and to lead the team."

Newcastle ended newly-promoted Hull's unbeaten start with two goals inside the first seven minutes through Joe Willock and Lewis Hall for a 2-1 win.

Martin wins Austrian MotoGP sprint after Acosta crash



Aprilia Racing's Spanish driver Jorge Martin (L) and Ducati Lenovo Team's Spanish driver Marc Marquez compete during the Sprint event

AFP | Spielberg

Jorge Martin won yesterday's Austrian MotoGP sprint race to retake the championship lead from Marc Marquez, after Pedro Acosta crashed out with victory in sight.

Martin started from pole after edging Marquez in qualifying at the Red Bull Ring, but Acosta swept past the title rivals on the opening lap of the sprint.

The KTM rider looked set for a second sprint win of the season before sliding off his bike after running wide into the gravel with less than four laps to go, dropping down the order and eventually being forced to retire.

Martin took advantage of Acosta's mishap as the Aprilia rider moved three points clear of Marquez in the overall standings.

Ducati star Marquez finished second ahead of Marco

Bezzecchi on the other factory Aprilia.

"I was a bit lucky with Pedro's crash because without it I would be second," said Martin, who had relinquished his championship lead last weekend after suffering from nerve compression in his right arm.

"I thought my chances were over but I never gave up... and was pushing to my maximum. To come from behind and then win at the end is so good."

"We are ready for tomorrow. I hope we can continue with this pace," added the 2024 world champion.

Japan's Ai Ogura took fourth place in front of Alex Marquez and two-time former world champion Francesco Bagnaia.

Martin secured his third pole of the season earlier yesterday, beating Marquez by just 0.015 seconds in a closely fought qualifying session. Acosta completed an all-Spanish front row after setting the pace in Friday's practice.

Mourinho hails Real Madrid grit before Atletico derby clash

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho highlighted his team's physical and mental strength ahead of Sunday's La Liga derby clash against Atletico Madrid.

Los Blancos trail leaders Bar-

celona by three points going into the weekend, with the Catalan giants winning all six matches to this point, scoring 28 goals.

Mourinho's Madrid have lost one and won five, but have been less convincing as a whole and needed to snatch two late victories to stay close to Hansi Flick's

defending champions.

Their defeat came at Real Betis, in which they fought hard to equalise and almost managed it, but striker Kylian Mbappe missed a 94th minute penalty.

"Historically, culturally, Real Madrid cannot be compared to

any team... but I'll speak without any issue about our problems and things to improve," Mourinho told reporters yesterday.

"We're conscious (of that) but also of very conscious of the power that we have, individually or collectively, of the very good things about our team."