

Shaikh Isa Crowns Asian Champions

● South Korea overcome hosts Japan to claim basketball gold

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

HH Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa presented South Korea with their gold medals after they defeated hosts Japan 67-57 in the men's five-on-five basketball final at the 20th Asian Games yesterday.

The Bahrain Olympic Committee vice-president and head



HH Shaikh Isa arrives courtside for the men's five-on-five basketball final

of the kingdom's delegation took part in the medal ceremony following a closely contested encounter between the two sides.

Also in attendance were Olym-

pic Council of Asia Executive Board member Prince Fahd bin Jalawi bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Aichi Governor and organising committee president Hideaki



The BOC vice-president presents a gold medal to a South Korean player

Omura, and Fiba Asia president Dr K Govindaraj.

He congratulated the champions on their success and praised both finalists for the high stand-

ard they displayed.

"We congratulate the Korean team on winning the gold medal and Japan on the level they showed in reaching the final,"

he said. "We witnessed strong competition and excellent performances that reflect the progress of basketball across Asia."

Bahrain also made their mark on the competition, recording their best finish in six Asian Games appearances by reaching the quarter-finals for the first time. The nationals opened their campaign with an 89-85 upset of defending champions the Philippines before suffering a 105-59 defeat to China. They responded by overcoming Kazakhstan 101-78 to progress from Group C, but their historic run ended with a narrow 79-74 loss to Iran.

Ali improves on Asiad Return: Strong closing run lifts Bahraini to 19th, three places higher than 2018

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama



Omar Ali competes in the cycling leg of the men's individual triathlon

Bahrain's Omar Ali improved on his previous Asian

Games finish by placing 19th in the men's individual triathlon final at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, yesterday.

The Bahraini completed the sprint-distance race at Gama-gori City Triathlon Venue in 56 minutes 50 seconds, finishing inside the top 20 of a 33-strong field representing 20 nations.

He emerged from the opening

750-metre swim in 19th position after clocking 9:42 and completed the first transition in 40 seconds.

A time of 29:26 over the 20-kilometre cycling leg saw Ali enter the second transition in 22nd, but his strongest section was still to come.

He completed the five-kilometre run in 16:42, the 12th-fastest time of the field, to overtake

three competitors and climb back to 19th overall.

Japan's Takumi Hojo claimed gold on home soil in 52:56, finishing nine seconds ahead of China's Zhang Xirui. Kazakhstan's Arlan Zhanabay secured bronze in 53:11, while Ali crossed the line three minutes and 54 seconds behind the winner.

The result bettered his Asian Games debut in Jakar-

ta-Palembang, Indonesia, in 2018, when the then-teenager placed 22nd among 34 competitors. On that occasion, he completed a longer course comprising a 1.5km swim, 40km bike ride and 10km run in two hours, five minutes and 28 seconds. Yesterday's race was held over exactly half those distances, meaning the two finishing times cannot be directly compared.

Bahrain pair reach MMA semis

● Pogosian and Nabiev assured medals ahead of today's bouts

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Diana Pogosian and Mukhammad Nabiev booked places in today's mixed martial arts semi-finals following opening victories at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, yesterday.

Pogosian advanced by overcoming Japan's Tomoe Katayama in their women's modern under-54kg quarter-final at Nagoya City Inae Sports Center. Com-



Mukhammad Nabiev

peting from the blue corner, the Bahraini secured a unanimous decision after two rounds.

Nabiev also impressed in the men's traditional under-77kg preliminaries, defeating Vietnam's Quang Van Minh by unanimous decision over two rounds.

He then progressed to the last four without contesting his scheduled quarter-final after India's Varun Sanyal failed to make weight and was declared medically unfit. Sanyal reportedly suffered dehydration and muscle cramps during an attempted weight cut.

There was disappointment, however, for Kurban Idrisov following a closely fought men's modern under-71kg quarter-final against Kazakhstan's Kadyrbek Shinbayev.

The contest went to overtime before Shinbayev edged the Bahraini by majority decision at the end of the third round.

Mohamed Alsameea also bowed out in the men's traditional under-65kg preliminaries after suffering a unanimous-de-

cision defeat to Iran's Afshin Salimi Touphghara over two rounds.

With bronze medals awarded to both losing semi-finalists, Pogosian and Nabiev are already guaranteed places on the podium and now stand one victory away from tomorrow's gold-medal bouts.

Pogosian faces South Korea's Lee Bomi at 5.10am today, before Nabiev meets Kyrgyzstan's Syymyk Zhanybek Uulu at 5.50am.

Victory would send Pogosian into the women's modern under-54kg final at 8.10am tomorrow, while the men's traditional under-77kg gold-medal bout is scheduled for 8.50am.

All times are in Bahrain time.



Diana Pogosian

Opening defeat for Bahrain paddlers

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain began their campaign in the men's team table tennis competition at the 20th Asian Games with a 3-0 defeat to Chinese Taipei at Sky Hall Toyota in Japan yesterday.

Rashid Sanad provided the strongest resistance in the opening match against Hsu Hsien-chia. After dropping the first game 11-6, he pushed his opponent closer in the second before going down 11-9 and 11-4 to lose in straight games.

Lin Yun-ju then doubled Chinese Taipei's advantage with an 11-3, 11-4, 11-1 victory over Mohammed Alaali.

Sayed Mahfoodh needed to

win the third contest to keep Bahrain in the tie and briefly established a three-point lead against Kuo Guan-hong. However, the Taiwanese recovered to prevail 11-5, 11-7, 11-6 and complete the sweep in 54 minutes.

The result secured top spot in Group C for Chinese Taipei, who had earlier defeated Nepal by the same overall score.

Attention now turns to Bahrain's meeting with the Nepalese at the



Sanad plays a return against his Chinese Taipei opponent

Strong showing in Asiad time trial

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain cyclist Ahmed Naser finished 13th in the men's individual time trial at the 20th Asian Games in Japan yesterday.

Competing at Shinshiro Cycling Road Course, Naser completed the 32.1-kilometre event in 46 minutes 58.46 seconds, recording an average speed of 41.001km/h.

The Bahraini reached the opening 8.4km checkpoint in 13th place after clocking 11:31.51. He slipped to 15th at



the following two intermediate points but recovered two positions over the closing kilometres to finish 13th among the 16 riders who completed the race. Naser crossed the line five

minutes and 34.41sec behind Kazakhstan's Alexey Lutsenko, who dominated the contest to claim gold in 41:24.05.

Averaging 46.521km/h, Lutsenko finished more than a minute and a half clear of Japan's Shunsuke Imamura, who secured silver in 42:58.04.

Mongolia's Jambaljamts Sainbayar collected bronze in 42:58.06, just two-hundredths of a second behind.

Eighteen cyclists representing the same number of nations were entered, although Qatar's Younes Ali and Syria's Ibrahim Alrefai did not start.

Goncharov smashes Bahrain swim record

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain swimmer Stepan Goncharov broke the national record twice on his way to eighth place in the men's 100 metres backstroke final at the 20th Asian Games in Japan yesterday. The 23-year-old from Tosno, Russia, was the only Bahraini to progress from the heats at Tokyo Aquatics Centre, qualifying 10th overall in 55.54 seconds.

That performance erased the previous national mark of 59.20 set by Omar Alrowaila in 2022, before Goncharov improved the record by a further 0.37sec in the final.

He touched the wall in 55.17 to finish eighth among the 10 contenders, completing the race 4.03sec faster than the former benchmark.

Xu Jiayu delivered gold for China in a Games-record 51.98, while Japan's Hidekazu

Takehara took silver in 53.93 and South Korea's Lee Juho secured bronze in 53.94.

Ahmed Helal also contested the backstroke heats, placing 25th overall in 1:01.26.

In the men's 100m freestyle, Abdulla Jamal clocked 53.55 to finish 33rd, while Goncharov did not start the event.

China's Pan Zhanle went on to capture gold, with South Koreans Kim Youngbeom and Hwang Sunwoo earning silver and bronze respectively.

The women's programme began with Sana Lefalher competing in the 1,500m freestyle timed final on her 19th birthday.

She recorded 17:57.23 to place third in her race and 10th overall, as Li Bingjie secured another gold for China in 15:53.52. Singapore's Gan Ching Hwee claimed silver in 16:00.45 and Japan's Ichika Kajimoto collected bronze in 16:06.83.

Noor Taha followed in the 50m breaststroke, finishing seventh in her heat and 21st overall in 35.87.

Tang Qianting added to China's medal haul by winning gold in a Games-record 29.45, ahead of Japanese silver medalist Satomi Suzuki in 29.91 and compatriot Yang Chang, who took bronze in 30.24.

The kingdom's opening day in the pool concluded with the women's 4x100m freestyle relay heats.

Asma Lefalher, Amani Al Obaidli, Taha and Sana combined for a time of 4:05.43, placing ninth overall and earning first-reserve status. They finished 8.60sec behind Macao, who secured the eighth and final qualifying berth.

China won relay gold in a Games-record 3:33.10, Hong Kong secured silver in 3:36.59 and Japan completed the podium with bronze in 3:39.09.



Stepan Goncharov launches into the men's 100m backstroke