



‘Back with the Cup’: Champions arrive in Jeddah after final rallying call

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Gulf Cup holders Bahrain touched down in Jeddah yesterday with a clear objective ahead of the 27th edition of the regional tournament. Before departure, head coach Dragan Talajic delivered one final message during Saturday night’s training session in Riffa. “We’re not going to Saudi

Arabia to win the trophy. No, we’ve already won it,” he told the squad. “We’re going there to defend it and keep it in Bahrain for one more year.” The players responded in unison: “Insha’Allah.” The Croatian carried the same confidence to Bahrain International Airport. Pointing to a sign that read “See you in Bahrain soon”, he added: “But with the cup.” The 26-man squad joined

several other competing teams in Jeddah ahead of the eight-nation tournament, which begins on Wednesday and runs until October 6. The nationals are in Group B alongside Qatar, the UAE and Yemen. Their campaign begins against Qatar on Thursday at 9pm before they face the UAE at the same time on Sunday. Bahrain then complete the preliminary round against Yemen on September 30 at 8.30pm,

with all three matches taking place at Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Stadium. Hosts Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman and Kuwait make up Group A. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals on October 3. The final will be held three days later at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium. A successful defence would deliver the kingdom’s third Gulf Cup crown, drawing Bahrain



level with Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Their maiden triumph came in Doha in 2019 before a 2-1 victory over Oman in Kuwait City secured the trophy again in January 2025. Kuwait are the competition’s record champions with 10 titles, followed by Iraq with four. Saudi and Qatar have three apiece, while Bahrain, the UAE and Oman each have two.

Ali Aldoseri and his teammates receive a floral welcome on arrival

GFH Bank partners with AlNassr Saudi Club for 2026–2027 Season

TDT | Riyadh

GFH Bank announced the signing of a partnership agreement with AlNassr Club Company, under which GFH will become a partner of the Club for the 2026–2027 season, bringing together two prominent regional brands with growing international reach. The partnership marks an important step in GFH’s strategy to strengthen its brand presence across key regional markets, while creating new opportunities to engage with AlNassr’s broad and passion-



ate fan community across the Kingdom and internationally. The signing ceremony took place in Riyadh in the presence of senior management representatives from both parties. Mr Hisham Alrayes, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member, signed on behalf of GFH, while Mr José Semedo, Chief Executive Officer of Al-

Nassr, signed on behalf of the Club. Commenting on the occasion, Mr Hisham Alrayes, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of GFH Bank, stated: “This sponsorship reflects our commitment to building strategic partnerships that strengthen GFH’s presence and bring it closer to

the communities and markets that are central to its growth plans.” Mr José Semedo, Chief Executive Officer of AlNassr, said: “We are delighted to welcome GFH Bank as a partner of AlNassr for the 2026–2027 season. GFH is a highly regarded regional institution with a strong track record of success and excellence in investment and wealth management, making it an ideal partner for AlNassr as we continue to expand the Club’s reach and strengthen our relationships with leading organisations across the region.”

Boxers primed for Asiad campaign



Chef de mission Ahmed Abdulghaffar, right, visits Bahrain’s boxing training camp in Japan

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Bahrain’s chef de mission Ahmed Abdulghaffar visited the kingdom’s boxing squad at their training camp in Japan as they completed preparations for the 20th Asian Games. During the visit, Abdulghaffar reviewed the training programme and met Irish head coach John Conlan to assess the boxers’ readiness. The five-member team begin their campaign today, with GCC Games champion Ali Abdalla facing Turkmenistan’s Bayramdurdy Nurmuhammedov in the men’s 70kg round of 32 at Nishio Gymnasium. Following Abdalla’s opener, Omar Budhahei and Hamza Vogel enter the ring on Wednesday. Budhahei faces Iraq’s Mohammed Sattar Salih Shijlawi in the men’s 60kg round of 32, while Vogel meets India’s Ankush in the last 16 of the men’s 80kg division. Maryam Khamis, the kingdom’s only woman boxer, is entered in the

54kg category. The division’s last-16 bouts will be held on Friday, although her opponent has yet to be confirmed. Jorge Luis Lobaina completes the line-up and will face Kyrgyzstan’s Bakyt Toktosun Uulu in the men’s 90kg last 16 on Saturday. Should they advance, Khamis, Budhahei and Vogel will contest their quarter-finals on September 27, while Abdalla and Lobaina could reach the same stage the following day. The women’s 54kg, men’s 60kg and men’s 80kg semi-finals will be held on September 29, followed by the men’s 70kg and 90kg last-four bouts on September 30. All five weight classes featuring Bahraini fighters will conclude with their gold-medal bouts on October 2. Bahrain are seeking their first Asian Games boxing medal, having made their debut in the sport at Hangzhou 2022. Danis Latypov reached the men’s over-92kg quarter-finals at that edition, while Azat Makhmetov exited the 51kg competition in the round of 32.

REHC renews Three-Season Partnership with Investcorp Ahead of 2026/2027 Golden Jubilee Season

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The Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) has renewed its partnership with Investcorp, a leading global alternative investment firm, through a three-season sponsorship agreement, under which Investcorp will become a Gold Partner. The agreement was signed by Mr. Yusuf Buheji, Member of the High Committee of the REHC and Acting Chief Executive Officer, and Mr. Yusef Al Yusef, Global Head of Distribution at Investcorp. On the occasion, Mr. Yusuf Buheji welcomed the renewal of



the partnership with Investcorp for the next three seasons and its elevation to Gold Partner status, stressing the importance of strategic partnerships with leading national and global institutions in supporting the Club’s development and strengthening its international presence. Mr. Buheji underscored the special significance of the

2026/2027 horseracing season for the Club, as it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Club’s establishment. He explained that the partnership includes Investcorp’s sponsorship of the Club’s international programme. For his part, Mr. Yusef Al Yusef highlighted the international successes achieved by

the REHC and its continued development, which has contributed to strengthening the Kingdom of Bahrain’s position on the international horseracing map. He emphasised that the Kingdom of Bahrain is an integral part of Investcorp’s identity and journey. Mr. Al Yusef affirmed Investcorp’s commitment, through this three-season partnership, to continuing its support for the Club’s development and international programme, as well as contributing to strengthening the Kingdom’s position as a leading destination for sport, business and international engagement.

Bahrain rout Kazakhstan in opener



Al Showaikh takes aim against Kazakhstan goalkeeper Assylkhan Nabiyyev

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Bahrain made an emphatic start to their men’s handball campaign at the 20th Asian Games, sweeping aside Kazakhstan 43-20 in their opening Group B match at ENTRIO, Toyoda Gosei Memorial Gymnasium, yesterday. Iran, South Korea and Kuwait complete the five-team group. Once play began, the Bahrainis quickly seized control and

raced into a 3-0 lead before the Kazakhs registered their first goal. Robert Hedin’s side were still only two ahead at 7-5 but dominated the remainder of the first half, outscoring their opponents 13-3 to establish a commanding 20-8 advantage at the interval. That momentum continued after the restart as the reigning Asian champions added another 23 goals while conceding 12 to complete a comprehensive victory. Salman Al Showaikh led the scoring with nine goals from 11 attempts, while Ahmed Fadhl struck six and Ahmed Kadhmed added five. Further support came from Ahmed Eid, Jassim Khamis and

Hasan Ali, who contributed four apiece, while Mohammed Rabeea and Abdulla Abdulkarim each scored three. Goalkeeper Ali Mohamed proved equally influential at the other end, saving 12 of the 20 shots he faced for an impressive 60 per cent success rate. Beyond the scoreline, the performance continued a remarkable period for the Warriors, who secured three major titles in the space of seven months. Their run began with Islamic Solidarity Games gold in Riyadh last November. Bahrain then captured their maiden Asian Men’s Handball Championship crown in Kuwait in January before triumphing at the GCC

Games in Doha in May. With the opening hurdle cleared, attention now turns to a considerably tougher test against Iran at 8.30am today. South Korea and Kuwait begin their campaigns against each other at 11am in the group’s other fixture. The nationals return to action against South Korea on Wednesday at 11.30am before completing the preliminary round against Kuwait on Friday at 7.30am. Four teams will progress from Group B to the quarter-finals on September 26, leaving only the bottom side eliminated. The four last-eight matches will be played at Kasugai City Gymnasium, with throw-off times scheduled

for 6am, 8am, 10am and noon. Over in Group A, three-time defending champions Qatar opened with a 40-17 victory over Hong Kong, while hosts Japan defeated China 31-27. With only four teams in the group, all are guaranteed places in the knock-out stage. The semi-finals will be held at ENTRIO on September 28 at 9am and 11.30am. The bronze-medal match follows the next day at 11am, before the gold-medal contest begins at 1.30pm. Bronze in 2014 and successive silver medals in 2018 and 2022 have left Bahrain chasing the first Asian Games handball title in their history. All times are in Bahrain time.