

BIC congratulates Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa on appointment as BMF Board Chairman



BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa

TDI | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa sent a message of congratulations today to Bahrain Motor Federation (BMF) President Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa bin Mohammed Al Khalifa on his appointment as Chairman of the BMF Board of Directors until 2024.

The appointment was made by Supreme Council for Youth and Sports First Vice-Chairman and Bahrain Olympic Committee President His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa. HH Shaikh Khalid also named the members of the board who will serve in their posts for the four-year term of 2020 to 2024.

Shaikh Salman commented: "On behalf of the BIC family, I congratulate Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa bin Mohammed Al Khalifa on his appointment as BMF Board of Directors Chairman and the board mem-



(BMF) President Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa bin Mohammed Al Khalifa

bers for the term of 2020 to 2024.

"Shaikh Abdulla is a great leader and the rapid development of Bahrain's motor racing community, along with our motoring culture, over the past several years is a testament to his outstanding dedication and capability.

"We look forward to working side by side with Shaikh Abdulla, the BMF and all our affiliates in the new term and to contributing towards the continued growth of motorsport and motoring in Bahrain."

Under the chairmanship of Shaikh Abdulla, the BMF Board from 2020 to 2024 is comprised of Shaikh Salman bin Isa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, Nawaf Al Hamer, Rashid Abdullatif Al Zayani, Abdulrahman Ghuloom, Elie Semaan, and representatives from the Motorsport Marshals Club, Bahrain Motorcycle Club, Circuit Racing Club, Bahrain Drag Racing Club and Bahrain Karting Club.

Djokovic beats Zverev to reach semis at ATP Finals

Novak Djokovic eliminated Alexander Zverev in an empty O2 Arena

● Serbia's Novak Djokovic remains on track for a sixth ATP Finals title

AFP | London

Novak Djokovic out-battled Alexander Zverev to qualify for the last four at the ATP Finals yesterday, staying on track to match Roger Federer's record of six titles at the end-of-season event.

The Serbian top seed, who was beaten comprehensively by Daniil Medvedev in his second round-robin match, was again below his best at London's O2 Arena but did enough to win 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

The five-time winner finishes second in Group Tokyo 2020 behind Medvedev and will play third-seed Dominic Thiem in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Second-seed Rafael Nadal, seeking his first win at the elite eight-man event, will face Medvedev in the other semi-final after finishing second in Group London 2020.

Djokovic broke Germany's Zverev at the first time of asking in the empty stadium and raced into a 3-0 lead, threatening to run away with the match -- a repeat of the 2018 final, which Zverev won in straight sets.

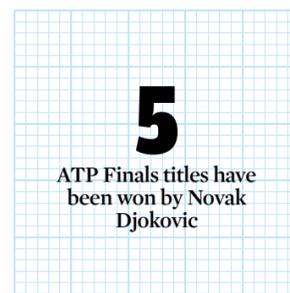


Novak Djokovic hits a return

The 33-year-old looked focused after his uncharacteristic mauling by Medvedev, serving himself out of trouble when he found himself trailing 15-40 in the seventh game.

That proved to be the last chance for Zverev in the set and 17-time Grand Slam winner Djokovic hammered a backhand winner down the line to take it 6-3.

Djokovic handed Zverev a break point in the fourth game of the second set after double-faulting but the German could not capitalise.



The 23-year-old fifth seed saved two break points on his serve in the following game, letting out a roar as he kept his nose in front.

The set went to a tie-break. Zverev earned an early mini-break but Djokovic levelled and the pressure was back on the German, who faltered to hand the Serbian victory.

Djokovic, who recently equalled Pete Sampras's record of six year-end number one finishes, has the chance to end the coronavirus-truncated 2020 season on a high by joining the absent Federer on six titles.

Medvedev will take on eighth-seed Diego Schwartzman, in the evening match, which is a dead rubber.

Mourinho questions Sterling's withdrawal from England games

AFP | London

Jose Mourinho called on England boss Gareth Southgate to name the managers pressuring their players to pull out of international duty as he suspects Manchester City's Raheem Sterling will be fit to start against Tottenham on Saturday.

Southgate hinted several times during the recent international break that some players faced pressure from their clubs to withdraw from his squad.

Sterling withdrew from the squad with an injury niggle which Southgate would not elaborate on, while Spurs striker Harry Kane played all-but 14 minutes of the Three Lions' two Nations League fixtures.

"Gareth Southgate, I read, supposedly told that some football club managers put pressure on their players not to play for the national team," Mourinho said at his pre-match press conference yesterday.

"And because of that he feels the need sometimes to call club managers to try and cool down the emotions and cool down difficult situations for him.

"I would like him to say who. I would like him to say which are the coaches who put pressure on the players not to go. And I would like him to say which are the coaches that he calls and speaks on the phone with them."



Jose Mourinho holds onto the ball as Manchester City's English midfielder Raheem Sterling tries to retrieve (file photo)



Sterling withdrew from the squad with an injury niggle which Southgate would not elaborate on, while Spurs striker Harry Kane played all-but 14 minutes of the Three Lions' two Nations League fixtures

Sterling also withdrew from England's internationals in October, but then scored the winner against Arsenal in the first match after the international break.

"We all know Sterling will play tomorrow," added Mourinho.

"When Eric Dier left the national team injured in the previous month, he didn't play two matches for Tottenham. He didn't play a Premier League match and a Europa League match.

"He needed a couple of weeks to recover and Raheem is going to play tomorrow. These are the little details I think Gareth should explain to us all.

Koeman uncertain about Messi future

AFP | Barcelona

Ronald Koeman has admitted he has no idea if Lionel Messi will leave Barcelona next summer and said it is not his job to persuade the Argentinian to stay.

Messi made an attempt to leave Barcelona this summer before backing down. He can talk to other clubs in January and leave for free when his contract expires in June, with Manchester City expected to make a renewed attempt to lure the 33-year-old away from Camp Nou.

"Messi still has a contract and in my opinion he has to stay here," Koeman said in a press conference yesterday, ahead of Saturday's crunch La Liga game away at Atletico Madrid.

"But I am not the person that has to try to make him stay here. We will see about his future, still he is a Barcelona player. Nobody knows what will happen with the future of Messi."

After returning from a 15-hour trip back to Barcelona on Wednesday morning following international duty, a frustrated Messi faced questions about his relationship with French forward Antoine Griezmann.

A former agent of Griezmann's had claimed Messi was difficult to play with at Barca, to which Messi said: "I'm tired of always being the problem with everything at the club."

When the comments were put to Koeman, he said: "I can



Lionel Messi shakes hands with Ronald Koeman after a match (file photo)

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RONALD KOEMAN

understand why Leo was fuming. People should show a lot more respect to people like Lionel Messi.

"After such a long trip, to ask Messi about Antoine is a lack of respect, once again to create

controversy.

"I have not seen any problem between the two of them, not in the changing room on the training pitch. There are enough pictures who showing them working well together.

"Someone has said something and that someone has not been a client of Griezmann for three years. It's bullshit."

Atletico will go nine points clear of Barca if they win but Diego Simeone's side have not beaten the Catalans in La Liga since 2010.

"Every game is an opportunity and obviously this is it," said Simeone. "We will try to take the game where we can hurt them. They have experience, even with a squad that is being refreshed, young players with experience and an exceptional level.