

## Asian junior tennis last-16 line-up completed in Bahrain



TDT | Manama

The field for the round of 16 was finalised yesterday at the Asian Tennis Federation Under-14 Championship (Category A – West Asia), as the round of 32 concluded with a full day of high-quality matches in the Bahraini capital. The tournament, hosted by the Bahrain Tennis Federation, has attracted a wide range of junior players from across Asia and beyond.

In the boys' singles, Syria's Mohammad Salim delivered an emphatic performance, defeating Jordan's Aouni Qubti in straight sets. India's Puneeth Manohar also advanced comfortably, while Iran's Amir Hassani staged one of the day's most dramatic comebacks, overturning a first-set loss to edge Kuwait's

Mohammad Mohammad in a deciding-set tiebreak. France's Thomas Toussaint also progressed after a hard-fought three-set win over Singapore's Noah Tsukakoshi.

The girls' singles saw Iran's Sagra Salikivar continue her strong run with a dominant victory over Kyrgyzstan's Sofia Satykeeva, while India's Shafza Wania moved into the last 16 with a solid win against Kazakhstan's Nurzhanova. Indonesia's Aubrey Kader came through a testing three-set encounter, and Iran's A. Mohammadian advanced with a commanding straight-sets result.

With the round of 32 complete, attention now shifts to the knockout stages, where competition is expected to intensify as the remaining players battle for places in the quarter-finals.

## Raducanu to 're-evaluate' after flat Australian Open exit

AFP | Melbourne

Emma Raducanu said she will sit down to "re-evaluate" her game following a flat second-round exit at the Australian Open yesterday.

The Briton won a stunning US Open crown as a teenage qualifier in 2021 but has not clinched a tour title since and has struggled for consistency and fitness.

Her latest disappointment came with a sluggish 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 loss to Austria's Russia-born Anastasia Potapova at Melbourne Park.

The 28th seed Raducanu missed the chance to test herself against world number one Aryna Sabalenka in the third round.

Raducanu admitted that she never felt comfortable on court against the 55th-ranked Potapova, despite being ahead 5-3 in the first set.

"Just one of those days you don't feel too good on the court," said the 23-year-old, who has been managing a foot injury.



Emma Raducanu in action

Raducanu has had a low-key start to the year, bowing out in the quarter-finals of a warm-up tournament in a surprise straight-sets loss to 204th-ranked Taylah Preston.

She also suffered defeat in her only singles match at the United Cup this month.

"I don't want to give myself too much of a hard time because I know my preparation going into this tournament," she said.

"I kind of have to leave with my head held high because of the matches I've had here."

# Flawless opening lifts Bahrain's confidence

## Nationals begin main round against UAE in Asian Handball Championship

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain begin their main round campaign at the 22nd Asian Men's Handball Championship today with a Group II opener against the United Arab Emirates. Throw-off is set for 2 pm at the Saad Al-Abdullah Hall in Kuwait City.

Confidence is high within the Bahraini camp after a commanding passage through the preliminary stage. The nationals completed a perfect Group B run, opening with a convincing 32-21 win over Jordan before overpowering China 40-29 in their second outing. They then closed the preliminary round yesterday with a dominant 34-18 victory over Iraq, sealing top spot and underlining their growing momentum in the competition.

Against Iraq, Bahrain asserted control early and never loosened their grip. They built a seven-goal cushion by halftime and continued to dictate the tempo after the break. Goalkeeper Hesham Issa was instrumental in the rout and was deservedly named Best Player of the Match for his assured display between



Swedish head coach Robert Hedin urges players from sidelines

the posts. Bahrain's attacking depth has been just as impressive. Jassim Khamis led the scoring against

Iraq with eight goals and remains one of the team's key dangermen.

He has been well supported by Salman Alshowaikh, Mohammed Habib Nasser, Mohammed Rabea, and Abdulla Abdulkarim, with contributions coming from across the squad, reflecting the balance and versatility within Robert Hedin's side.

Today's opponents, the UAE, progressed from Group C after mixed results in the preliminary phase.

The Emiratis opened with emphatic wins over Hong Kong (36-21) and India (43-21), showing their attacking potential, before falling 27-22 to hosts Kuwait in their final group match.

The Bahrainis will then face Qatar tomorrow at 2pm before closing the group on Sunday with a 4pm encounter against Saudi Arabia.

With semi-final places and qualification for the 2027 IHF Men's Handball World Championship at stake, the intensity is set to rise sharply. The preliminary rounds have laid a strong foundation, but the main round now represents the phase where Bahrain's title ambitions will truly be put to the test.

## Seeded players advance as Bahrain Women's Open reaches last 16

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The round of 32 at the Bahrain Women's Open Tennis Championship produced a series of hard-fought matches on Tuesday, with seeded players largely holding their ground alongside several eye-catching performances from emerging names. The tournament is being hosted by the Bahrain Tennis Federation at the Public Security Officers Club courts and is listed on the International Tennis Federation calendar.

American Claire Liu opened her campaign with a three-set win over Andorra's Victoria Jimenez Kasintseva, while Slovakia's Viktoriia Hruncakova advanced comfortably.



France's Fiona Ferro, coming through qualifying, underlined her form with a straight-sets victory, as seventh seed Ekaterine Gorgodze of Georgia also progressed after a tight contest.

Third seed Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands moved safely into the last 16, surviving a stern test, while several other seeded players including Japan's Mai Hontama, France's eighth seed Carole Monnet, and sixth seed Jessica Ponchet booked their places with convincing wins. There were also notable three-set battles, highlighting the depth of competition on display.

With the completion of the round of 32, the tournament now turns its focus to the last 16, where closer margins and heightened intensity are expected as players continue their push for the Bahrain Women's Open title.

## Medvedev says no plan to renounce Russian nationality amid war

AFP | Melbourne

Grand Slam champion Daniil Medvedev said yesterday he had no plans to follow a host of fellow Russian players and switch his nationality amid the war in Ukraine.

Since Moscow's invasion in February 2022, a number of Russian players have distanced themselves from their homeland.

Former world number eight Daria Kasatkina, now ranked 43, changed allegiance to Australia last March having criticised



Daniil Medvedev reacts after his victory against Quentin Halys

Russia's attitude towards LGBTQ+ people.

She also described the conflict as a "nightmare".

More recently, Anastasia Potapova announced that her application for Austrian citizenship had been accepted.

But Medvedev, the 2021 US Open winner and Russia's highest-profile player, said he would not be following suit.

"I 100 percent understand and respect, because, you know, that's something you can do basically, especially in sports," he said at the Australian

"It's even maybe a bit easier than for other people."

"I never really considered this," added the 29-year-old, who was born in Moscow but lives in Monte Carlo.

"Because I believe in where you are born is important."

"But again, a lot of players change, and I'm friends with them. I'm friends with a lot of players in the locker room, so it's their choice."

Russian and Belarusian players currently compete under a neutral white flag.