

# Bahrain draws tough opener in Arab Basketball Championship

Qatar clash set for Friday night as full tournament schedule lands for 26th edition on home soil

- **Championship follows round-robin format with seven national teams**
- **Tournament runs from July 25 to August 2, with two rest days**
- **Host Bahrain enters with momentum after strong showing in Taiwan**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain will tip off its Arab Basketball Championship campaign with a match against Qatar at 8 PM this Friday at Khalifa Sports Hall in Isa Town. The matchup headlines the opening day of the tournament, which also features Tunisia facing Algeria at 4 PM, followed by Kuwait against the UAE at 6 PM. Egypt will sit out the first day with a scheduled rest. This 26th edition of the Arab Championship, hosted in Bahrain for the first time since the tournament began in 1974, will follow a single round-robin format.



Each of the seven participating teams plays the others once, with two points awarded for a win and one point for a loss. The team with the highest total

#### Bahrain's schedule (all matches at 8PM)

July 25 vs Qatar

July 26 vs UAE

July 27 vs Tunisia

July 29 vs Egypt

August 1 vs Algeria

August 2 vs Kuwait

points at the end of the competition will be crowned champion. Bahrain's remaining schedule is packed, with all their games set for 8 PM: Rest days for all teams are

scheduled for July 28 and July 31. Tournament Director Mohammed Ahmed confirmed that preparations are complete, with Arab delegations arriving throughout the week. The organizing committee has finalized logistics, and expectations are high for a smooth and stand-out edition that reflects Bahrain's growing presence in the regional basketball scene. The championship features top Arab basketball nations: Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia. The host team enters the 26th edi-

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Bahrain is hosting the Arab Basketball Championship for the first time

tion of the championship with plenty of confidence, and for good reason.

## Reds return from Taiwan with heads held high



Just before the tournament draw was revealed, Bahrain's national team returned home from Taiwan after a successful run at the 44th William Jones Cup. The squad finished third overall, which is one of its best performances in recent mem-

ory, after posting a 6-2 record against elite competition. Bahrain's wins came over Japan U25, Chinese Taipei Development Team, Malaysia, Australia United, the UAE, and Qatar B. Their only losses were to host Chinese Taipei (93-50)

and the Philippines (92-68). The campaign was a clear sign of the team's upward trajectory. With momentum, cohesion, and confidence all trending in the right direction, the performance in Taiwan couldn't have come at a better time.

Head coach Georgios Vovorass now shifts focus to the home tournament, where the challenge is clear: capitalize on the positive momentum, handle the pressure of hosting, and make a deep push for another title in front of their home fans.



## Siraj expects Bumrah to feature for India in fourth Test

AFP | London

India's Mohammed Siraj expects fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah to feature in the vital fourth Test against England at Old Trafford this week. Bumrah, the world's top-ranked Test bowler, is only slated to play three of the five matches against England as he battles a back injury. He has already featured in India's defeats at Headingley and Lord's, leaving the tourists 2-1 down in the series. With doubts over the availability of India seam bowler Akash Deep due to a groin injury, Siraj believes Bumrah will feature in Manchester on Wednesday rather than hold him back for next week's final Test at The Oval. "So far, we only know that Jassi (Bumrah) will play," Siraj said yesterday. India must make at least one change as Nitish Kumar Reddy will miss the last two Tests be-



Jasprit Bumrah (L) talks with Mohammed Siraj (file photo) cause of a knee injury. fitness of wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant, who suffered a finger injury last week.

Siraj was last man out as India fell to an agonising 22-run defeat in the third Test at Lord's. The pace bowler played Shoaib Bashir's delivery on to his stumps before slumping to his knees in frustration. Siraj took heart from India's lower-order fight as he lasted 30 balls and Reddy and Bumrah more than 50, with Ravindra Jadeja contributing an unbeaten 61. "It took a long time to get over. That match felt like we could've won. I'm very emotional," he said. "We fought hard. Jadeja did great and even Bumrah batted 54 balls. Still, we lost. But I told myself, it's 2-1 now, not over yet. That gave me motivation to do better. "At one point it looked like we'd lose by 80 runs but we took it deep and made it close, losing by just 22. That fight meant a lot."

## Liverpool agree to sign Ekitike: reports

AFP | London

Liverpool have agreed to sign Eintracht Frankfurt striker Hugo Ekitike in a deal worth an initial £69 million (£92m), according to reports.

The Premier League champions switched their focus to Ekitike following Newcastle's refusal to sell Sweden striker Alexander Isak, who is valued at around £150 million by the Magpies.

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