

Bahrain's Mixed Fortunes on Busy Day at Youth Games

Home teams hold their own as Gulf rivals impress

● Bahrain's Teqball women win twice

● Beach volleyball teams fall short

● GCC sides strong in volleyball, handball

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

At Exhibition World Bahrain, the spotlight belonged to the teqball women. Rawan Abdulaziz and Fatima Al Banna opened with a straight-sets win over the Philippines (2-0) before holding their nerve to defeat India 2-1 in a tense deciding match. The pair, both still in their teens, could hardly hide their emotion after sealing the win. "Alhamdulillah, I have no words to express how I feel right now," said Abdulaziz. "I am very happy and proud to represent my country. This is an achievement for my family, for Captain Basil, Captain Abdulrahman, Captain Mohammad Ghanem, Captain Ahmed and Fawaz — all those who worked



Bahrain's Teqball girls proudly raise the national flag after their win

hard for us and trained us. They gave us hope."

She spoke of the nerves that came with representing Bahrain on home soil. "We faced many difficulties, but we kept talking to each other and encouraged each other. We learned how to calm down the situation. Alhamdulillah, we won the match. We are very optimistic. This win is for the Kingdom of Bahrain and His Majesty King Hamad." Her teammate, Fatima Al Banna, recalled the crucial final moments of their win. "The most difficult moment was when we played

against India. It was the third shot — we were both very nervous, but Alhamdulillah, we won the last point."

Both players dedicated their success to their coaches and supporters. "We will do our duty, InshaAllah," they added. "Alhamdulillah, we worked very hard and trained a lot."

While the women celebrated, the men's teqball pair Hussein Isa and Ali Hasan endured a challenging afternoon. Facing a tough draw, they lost in straight sets to the Philippines, Thailand, India, and Cambodia, including



Celebratory moment from Saudi Arabia's win over Mongolia in beach volleyball

a 0-2 defeat to the Philippines, a 0-2 loss to Thailand, a 0-2 loss to India, and a 0-2 setback against Cambodia.

Battles on the Beach

From the indoor courts, the focus shifted to the shoreline at Sama Bay, where Bahrain's beach volleyball teams faced some of Asia's best. The men's duo Karrar Yaqoob and Hussain Al Warqaa opened against Thailand's Kittiwat Suwansirirat and Boonyarit Maneewan, losing 17-21, 13-21. Later, they pushed Mongolia hard in a four-set con-

test, eventually going down 1-3 (25-20, 17-25, 25-23, 25-20) after 98 minutes. Their statistics told the story of determination — 44 successful spikes, 16 blocks, and three service aces — numbers that reflected both promise and fatigue.

The women's duo, Layan Majeed and Maya Falah, also faced an uphill battle against regional heavyweights. Losses included defeats to Jordan (0-2), Thailand (1-2), and Qatar (0-3, 25-8, 25-6, 25-13) at Isa Sports City — Hall B, where their opponents' serving proved decisive.

Regional Rivals Impress

Elsewhere, the day brought mixed fortunes for Gulf neighbours. In volleyball, Saudi Arabia's boys edged Uzbekistan 3-2 in a five-set thriller, while Indonesia defeated Chinese Taipei 3-1 in the girls' preliminary round. Qatar were swept 0-3 by Iran in the boys' preliminary round, and Jordan fell 0-3 to China in the girls' pool B match. Bahrain's volleyball teams struggled, with the girls going down 0-3 to Qatar and the boys losing 1-3 to Mongolia.

In handball, Kuwait overpowered Thailand 43-15, UAE beat Kazakhstan 35-27, and Iran defeated China 20-17 in boys' competition. In girls' matches, Iran beat Uzbekistan 27-24, India lost to Kazakhstan 26-39, and China thrashed Thailand 33-15.

Bahrain's boys were handed a harsh 17-92 defeat — the day's widest winning margin — while Iran's girls defeated Thailand 61-35. Other notable kabaddi results included Sri Lanka edging Thailand 50-49, Sri Lanka defeating Pakistan 55-36, and Thailand overcoming Bangladesh 49-42. India also beat Iran 46-29 in boys' team action.

South Africa grind to 86-2 at tea in reply to Pakistan's 333



South Africa's Keshav Maharaj celebrates after taking a wicket

AFP | Rawalpindi

South Africa battled to 86-2 at tea on day two of the second Test in Rawalpindi after spinner Keshav Maharaj took seven wickets to dismiss Pakistan for 333 yesterday.

Tristan Stubbs and Tony de Zorzi were on 23 and 13 respectively at the break, with South Africa trailing the hosts by 247 runs on a day when Maharaj stole the limelight.

The left-armers, who missed the first Test defeat with injury, exploited the dry Rawalpindi

pitch to maximum effect with figures of 7-102, his 12th five-wicket Test haul.

In South Africa's reply fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi struck early to remove Ryan Rickelton caught behind for 14.

Visiting skipper Aiden Markram tried to take the attack to the home spinners, clouting debutant Asif Afridi for a six before holing out off Sajid Khan at long-on for 32.

Earlier, Pakistan resumed on 259-5 and reached 316 untrobbled when the Maharaj show began.

Bayern Munich extend coach Kompany's contract until 2029

AFP | Munich

Vincent Kompany has extended his contract as coach of Bayern Munich by two years until 2029, the Bundesliga champions announced yesterday.

Kompany was not Bayern's first choice when he was appointed in the summer of 2024, but the Belgian reclaimed the German title for the Bavarians in his debut season at the club.

"It feels like I've been here a lot longer and that I know the club well," former Manchester City captain Kompany said in a statement.

"It's been a great experience so far. We've started on a wonderful journey. Let's keep working hard and celebrate much more success!"

The 39-year-old has Bayern flying with 11



Vincent Kompany looks on during a match (file photo)

wins in 11 games this season, sitting atop the Champions League and Bundesliga tables. "Vincent Kompany has brought the fun

back to FC Bayern -- and the spark has really caught on. Under his leadership, a real team has grown that plays dominant and attractive football," Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen said.

"I like Vincent's level-headedness. He never pushes himself into the limelight and makes our players better with his meticulous work."

Kompany's appointment came as a surprise when Bayern paid a £10 million (£13 million) to release him from his contract with Burnley in 2024.

"When we appointed Vinny, we had a clear vision of our shared path and he quickly proved that he would help FC Bayern move forward -- both on and off the pitch," said Max Eberl, the club's sporting director.

Barca Miami match 'adulterates' La Liga: Real Madrid's Courtois

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois said yesterday the plan to take Barcelona's La Liga match against Villarreal to Miami is "adulterating" the competition.

La Liga announced they were moving the game to the United States in December, which will be the first European League fixture to be held abroad.

"It's totally adulterating the competition," Courtois told a



Thibaut Courtois

news conference.

"It's easy to talk about the NFL

and the NBA (which move locations), they have 82 games and it doesn't change anything for them, and in the NFL it's voted for by the owners of the teams..."

"Here it's the opposite... they decided to do it and it adulterates the competition."

Courtois said Barcelona would gain an advantage by facing Villarreal at a neutral stadium, rather than in a normal away game.

"Villarreal away is a difficult game... everyone should play at

home and away, apart from for force majeure."

The Spanish Footballers' Association (AFE) organised protests against the game being moved last weekend, with players from every team not moving for 15 seconds at the start of each league match.

However the protests at the start of each match were not all shown on television broadcasts.

"Hiding it... is censorship and manipulation, and that's not good at all," added Courtois.