

Bahrain reach AVC Men's Nations Cup final

Hosts Edge South Korea in Five-Set Semi-Final

TDT | Manama

Bahrain booked their place in the AVC Men's Nations Cup 2025 final after a five-set win over South Korea on Monday night.

The match swung in both directions and the hosts took the first two sets 25-21 and 25-23, before Korea mounted a comeback to level the match at 2-2. But Bahrain held their nerve in a tight decider, sealing the fifth set 15-13 to punch their ticket to the final vs Pakistan.

Bahrain made an early statement with aggressive serving and sharp middle play, unsettling a Korean side that had previously looked composed in their quarter-final win over Australia. The home side's consistency in transition and discipline on defence allowed them to grab a 2-0 lead, with the crowd firmly behind them.

Korea responded with typical structure, taking the third and fourth sets with improved



passing and smart play from the wings, including a particularly strong stretch in the fourth, which they won comfortably 25-18.

With momentum against them, Bahrain dug deep in the final frame. Despite several nervy

exchanges, the hosts edged out a narrow 15-13 fifth set, sending the home crowd into celebration.

Pakistan Sweep Qatar

In the other semi-final, Pakistan delivered arguably the most



complete performance of the tournament, defeating defending champions Qatar in straight sets (25-22, 25-22, 25-21).

The result was not only a reversal of last year's final but also a significant upset over the world's 23rd-ranked side. Paki-

stan outscored their opponents 75-65 and were more effective in both attack (47 points to 41) and at the net (7 blocks to 5). Despite trailing in service aces, they forced 20 unforced errors from Qatar, capitalising on every opportunity.

Usman Faryad Ali was the standout performer, racking up 18 points, including 17 kills and a block. Team captain Murad Jehan added 16, with Murad Khan, Fahad Raza and Musawer each playing key supporting roles in a dominant all-round effort.

Final Set: Bahrain vs Pakistan

Today's final now pits two of the tournament's most improved teams against each other. Pakistan

The rematch of their earlier group stage encounter, won narrowly by Bahrain, adds further intrigue. With silverware on the line, it will be a test of composure and who can seize the moment when it matters most.

Elsewhere in Nations Cup

Australia secured fifth place with a convincing 3-0 win over Indonesia (25-20, 25-21, 25-22), ending their campaign on a high note after a tough draw saw them face South Korea in the quarter-finals.

Tunisia outclass Bahrain with relentless attack

● Bahrain face Serbia today

● Bahrain turnover count hits 18

● Six Tunisians score 3+ goals

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Tunisia won their first match at the IHF Men's U21 World Championship in emphatic style on Sunday, beating Bahrain 39-27 in the President's Cup.

Tunisia Set the Tempo Early

From the opening whistle, Tunisia dictated the pace of the match with a fast, flowing attack that repeatedly pulled Bahrain out of shape. Averaging under 20 seconds per offensive possession, the North African side struck with intent and fluidity, capitalising on defensive gaps and unforced errors.

By halftime, Tunisia had al-



Action from the match

ready put the contest out of reach with a 23-14 lead—an advantage built not only on slick ball movement but also on Bahrain's inability to keep the ball, turning it over 18 times across the match.

Bahrain Struggles at Both Ends

Bahrain's performance was marred by inconsistency, particularly in goal, where their

shot-stoppers posted a save percentage below 20%. The defensive struggles were compounded by a disjointed attack that too often gifted Tunisia opportunities in transition.

Despite flashes of individual skill, Bahrain failed to string together any sustained momentum. Their third straight loss at the tournament leaves them level on points with Tunisia,

though the manner of this defeat will raise questions ahead of their today's outing against Serbia.

Depth Drives Tunisian Dominance

What stood out most in Tunisia's win was the balance in scoring. Six players recorded three or more goals, with Kousay Ben Fraj, Najib Hadded, and Khalil Barboura combining for nearly half the team's total output. The offensive spread proved overwhelming for a Bahraini defence that struggled with rotation and lacked answers to Tunisia's variety of threats.

Mohamed Seifeddine Ben Abdennabi was named Player of the Match.

Both Tunisia and Bahrain now sit on two points, with group standings still in flux. For Bahrain, the path forward is far from straightforward. Improvement, particularly in ball security and defensive cohesion, will be essential if they hope to rebound against Serbia.

Pant piles on agony for England with record-breaking century



India's Rishabh Pant plays a shot

AFP | Leeds

Rishabh Pant became the first India batsman to score hundreds in both innings of a Test against England as the tourists strengthened their grip on the series opener at Headingley yesterday.

The swashbuckling wicket-keeper, who made 134 in the first innings, completed a 130-ball century, including 13 fours and two sixes on the fourth afternoon.

He was out for 118, caught by Zak Crawley off the bowling of Shoaib Bashir to leave India 287-4, with KL Rahul unbeaten on 112.

Pant is just the second wicketkeeper in Test history to score hundreds in both innings of the same match following Andy Flower's scores of 142

and 199 not out for Zimbabwe against South Africa in 2001.

After a morning session in which India captain Shubman Gill was the only batsman dismissed, Rahul and Pant upped the tempo in their contrasting styles as India scored 80 runs in the first hour of the second session.

Right-hander Rahul hit off-spinner Bashir for a textbook cover-drive four, while left-hander Pant nicked Josh Tongue through a vacant second slip position and, on the next ball, thrashed him through the covers.

Another edge through the cordon took Pant to 49 before he completed an 83-ball fifty.

Pant then took a particular liking to Bashir, driving the young spinner for two soaring sixes in three balls.

AHF postpones U-17 Asian Championship amid regional tensions

● Jordan-set tournament pushed back as federations prioritize team safety

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The Asian Handball Federation has officially postponed the 2025 U-17 Men's Asian Championship, which was scheduled to be held in Amman, Jordan from July 1 to 11. The decision comes in light of the current regional situation, with the safety of players and

delegations cited as the primary concern.

Bahrain were placed into Group A alongside Kuwait and Hong Kong and their preparations will continue as normal.

Safety Takes Precedence

AHF released a statement em-

phasizing that the move was made "to ensure the safety of all teams and athletes." While no new dates have been confirmed, the AFC noted that discussions are ongoing with the Jordan Handball Federation and relevant authorities to determine a suitable rescheduling window.