

Nationals primed for youth games

Bahrain’s athletes ready to compete across five sports

● Games run October 22–31

● Pathway to Youth Olympics

● 24 sports confirmed in programme

● 5,000 athletes from 45 nations

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

The countdown is nearing its end for the third Asian Youth Games, set to take place in Bahrain from October 22 to 31 under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad. Originally awarded to Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 2019, the Games were reassigned to Bahrain in record time after construction delays and Uzbekistan’s withdrawal in December 2024, giving the Kingdom less than a year to prepare.

The event will now welcome more than 5,000 athletes aged 14 to 18 from 45 nations, all competing across 24 sports.

Bahrain’s Teams Take Place

Preparations are well un-



derway as Bahrain finalizes its squads for the Games, with the Olympic Committee confirming participation in athletics, 3×3 basketball, jiu-jitsu, badminton, and E-sports.

The under-16 3×3 basketball squad includes Somto Patrick Onoduenyi, Hassan Abdulkadir, Divine Tochukwu Abochi, Ali Hussain Mahdi, Yousif Yaqoob

Meshaei, and Hussain Fuad Ghuloom, guided by Serbian coach Bogdan Dragovic and Bahraini coach Murtadha Mohammed.

On the track, Bahrain will be represented by Salah Rashid, Yousef Ayman Rizq, Talal Al Dossary, Maryam Ateeq, and others across sprints, middle distance, and cross-country.

Jiu-jitsu competitors include European champion Pedro Bisi de Jesus, Yousif Mercer, and Hamad Fuad Waheed. Badminton features the likes of Ali Ashoor, Fatima Ebrahim, while the E-sports team is led by Hussain Al Jowder.

Expanded Sports Programme

The Games will feature swim-

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Opening ceremony will be held indoors first time

ming, athletics, badminton, 3×3 basketball, boxing, camel racing, cycling, equestrian, E-sports, indoor football, golf, handball, jiu-jitsu, judo, kabaddi, mixed martial arts, Muay Thai, table tennis, taekwondo, teqball, triathlon, volleyball, weightlifting, and wrestling. Kurash joins the programme for the first time at the Asian Youth Games as announced yesterday.

Venues are organised into zones. Zone 1, around Isa Sports City and Bahrain National Stadium, hosts athletics, handball, futsal, volleyball, kabaddi, and badminton. Zone 2, at Exhibition World Bahrain, stages table tennis, MMA, E-sports, taekwondo, Muay Thai, jiu-jitsu, boxing, judo, teqball, weightlifting, and wrestling.

Additional venues include the Military Sports Union for equestrian jumping, Bahrain Royal

Equestrian and Endurance Federation for camel racing and endurance events, Royal Golf Club for golf, Sofitel Bahrain Zallaq Thalassa for triathlon, NBH Loop for road cycling, and Sama Bay for beach volleyball and beach wrestling.

Exhibition World Bahrain also hosts the opening ceremony on October 22, the first indoor inauguration in the Games’ history.

Competition begins before the ceremony, with boys’ futsal, handball, and volleyball on October 19, followed by girls’ futsal, kabaddi, teqball, and beach volleyball on October 21.

The Games conclude on October 31 with swimming finals and the closing ceremony.

Gateway to Dakar

The Asian Youth Games is Asia’s second-largest multi-sport event after the Asian Games. Previous editions were held in Singapore (2009) and Nanjing (2013), with later editions cancelled.

The Games also serve as a qualification pathway for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar.

For Bahrain, the event builds on the ISF Gymnasiade 2024, which featured more than 5,000 participants from 80 countries, with the focus now on the Kingdom’s own athletes competing on home soil.

Bahrain eye bronze against Qatar

U17s seek consolation after semi-final defeat

● Bahrain eliminated from title contention

● Bronze medal match against Qatar today

● IHF U17 World Championship spot missed

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain’s U17 men’s handball team return to the court today as they face Qatar in the bronze medal match of the first Asian Men’s U17 Handball Championship in Amman, Jordan.

The nationals, coached by Egyptian Mohamed Abdelrahman, will be looking to end the tournament on a positive note following a heavy 19-37 semi-final defeat to Iran on Tuesday.

In that contest, Bahrain were outclassed, falling behind 17-7 at halftime and unable to close the gap despite improvement after the break.

The loss not only ended their title hopes but also saw them miss out on qualification for the IHF Men’s U17 Handball World Championship 2025 in Morocco.

Only the top two teams from Amman — Iran and South Korea — secured berths to the international event.

Today’s match against Qatar offers consolation for Bahrain. The Qataris were narrowly de-



Bahrain's Ahmed Abdulla in action against Iran

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Bahrain were held to seven first-half goals vs Iran

feated 35-36 by South Korea in the other semi-final, and like Bahrain, will aim to leave the tournament with a podium finish.

Kick-off is scheduled for 4pm Bahrain time, followed by the gold medal match between Iran

and South Korea at 6pm.

Bahrain’s squad includes captain Sayed Majeed Almuhafda, Sayed Omran Almuhafda, Ahmed Abdulla, Sayed Ali Ebrahim, Mahmood Ali Ahmed, Ali Adel Hasan, Mahdi Jaafar Ali, Jaffar Al Zain, Hasan Ali Saif, Sayed Mahmood Shubbar, Hussain Qasim Abadi, Sayed Nooh Ali, Mohamed Fathi Marzooq, Wadee Ali Hasan, and goalkeepers Mohammed Ali Hasan and Ali Mahdi Almahroos.

The tournament features 13 national teams under the Asian Handball Federation banner, with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Chinese Taipei, and Jordan having already secured fifth through eighth places.

Today will also see the final ranking for ninth through 13th place decided.

Bahrain win big against Brunei

Nationals salvage pride after Asian Cup exit

● Bahrain bounce back with 9-0 rout

● Brunei remain without a point

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Bahrain’s men’s futsal team bended their AFC Futsal Asian Cup 2026 qualifiers yesterday with a 9-0 win over Brunei Darussalam in Bangkok. Coached by Rafael Fogageiro, the nationals had already been eliminated after defeats to South Korea and Thailand, but put on a ruthless attacking display to close their Group B campaign on a high note.

Salman Al Mulla starred with a super hattrick, while Ammar Mihid added two goals. Ahmed Antar, Mohammed Abdulla Ali, and Ali Al Aribi also scored, highlighting Bahrain’s improved offensive cohesion and sharp finishing after two goalless outings.

Earlier losses – 0-2 to South

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Salman Al Mulla scored four goals



Action from the match

Korea and 0-4 to Thailand – exposed defensive gaps and missed chances, but Bahrain’s performance against Brunei

offered a morale boost and a positive end to their Bangkok campaign. Brunei remain without a point after the defeat.