

BOC, Royal Medical Services sign agreement



HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, centre, with Dr. Shaikh Fahd bin Khalifa, left, and Faris Al Kooheji at the signing

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) has inked an agreement with the Royal Medical Services (RMS) to step up joint-cooperation and provide health services to sports people.

The signing of the deal followed directives from His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), Chairman of the General Sports Authority (GSA) and President of the BOC.

RMS Acting Commander Brigadier Dr. Shaikh Fahd bin Khalifa and BOC Secretary General Faris Al Kooheji co-signed the agreement at HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad's Al Wadi Palace.

Brig. Dr. Shaikh Fahd bin Khalifa expressed thanks and gratitude to HH Shaikh Khalid

bin Hamad for his directives to seal the deal, which ushers in prospects for cooperation between the RMS and the sports sector.

"The Royal Medical Services will contribute through this agreement to providing care and medical services to players and members of the national teams (Team Bahrain)," he said.

Al Kooheji stressed the importance of the agreement, stressing HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad's keenness to support national teams and providing them with medical care.

Under the deal, the hospitals affiliated with the BDF RMS will provide healthcare for national teams, based on a BOC list in coordination with associations.

The list includes the BDF Hospital, the King Hamad University Hospital and the Mohammed bin Khalifa Specialist Cardiac Centre (MKCC).

Japan recall Celtic ace Furuhashi for friendlies

AFP | Tokyo

Scottish Premiership player of the season Kyogo Furuhashi earned a Japan recall yesterday after nine months in the international wilderness saw him miss the World Cup.

Furuhashi has scored 25 goals in 35 games this season as Celtic comfortably retained their league title, currently sitting seven points clear of

Rangers with one game to play.

Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu called up the 28-year-old forward for friendlies against El Salvador and Peru, along with Celtic team-mates Reo Hatate and Daizen Maeda.

"I called him up because he's getting results and making his presence felt," Moriyasu said of Furuhashi, who last played for Japan in September last year.

Djokovic and Alcaraz in same half of French Open draw

AFP | Paris

Novak Djokovic could face world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the semi-finals of the French Open after both players were placed in the same half of the draw yesterday.

Djokovic is chasing a record 23rd men's Grand Slam title in the absence of the injured Rafael Nadal, who will miss the tournament at Roland Garros for the first time since his 2005 title-winning debut.

The third-seeded Djokovic, Roland Garros champion in 2016 and 2021, meets 114th-ranked Aleksandar Kovacevic of the US in the first round in Paris -- the first French Open since 1998 without Nadal or the now retired Roger Federer.

The 24-year-old Kovacevic is making his Grand Slam main draw debut.

Djokovic, who turned 36 on Monday, has been bothered by a recurrence of a right elbow injury which has disrupted his clay-court season.

He failed to go beyond the last eight at any of the three events he played on clay this spring,



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz (R) and Serbia's Novak Djokovic shake hands after a match (file photo)

losing his number one spot to Alcaraz.

Djokovic has also fallen behind Daniil Medvedev in the rankings after the Russian succeeded him as Italian Open champion last weekend.

US Open champion Alcaraz and Medvedev both start their Roland Garros campaigns against a qualifier or lucky loser.

Alcaraz is also on track to play 2021 French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarter-finals.

Reigning women's champi-

on Iga Swiatek begins her title defence against Spain's Cristina Bucsa, the world number 67 who was beaten by the Pole in the third round of this year's Australian Open.

The top-ranked Swiatek, bidding to become the first back-to-back women's champion at the French Open in 16 years, is coming off a thigh injury which forced her to retire in Rome.

She is seeded to meet 2022 runner-up Coco Gauff in the quarter-finals and could face Wimbledon champion Elena

Rybakina, last week's Italian Open winner, in the last four.

"This is my favourite tournament. I always get this extra motivation to practise harder here. I'm really excited to be here," Swiatek said during the draw ceremony.

Aryna Sabalenka, who won her maiden Grand Slam crown in Melbourne, plays Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine in round one. Sabalenka has never got beyond the third round in Paris despite making at least the semi-finals at all of the other three majors.

Bahrain set for U23 Asian Cup qualifiers

Kingdom's Olympic football team drawn in tough Group D with Japan, Palestine and Pakistan

● Eleven group winners and four best second-placed teams qualify

● AFC U-23 Asian Cup to be held in Qatar from April 15 to May 3, 2024

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-23 Olympic football team were yesterday drawn in a challenging Group D for the qualifiers of the 2024 AFC U-23 Asian Cup.

The draw was conducted at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) House in Kuala Lumpur.

It divided the participating teams into 11 groups, with 10 comprising four nations and one containing three. Each group will host their matches at a centralised venue.

Bahrain have been drawn alongside Japan, Palestine and Pakistan.

The Kingdom will be staging the games in their qualification group, with the matches scheduled to take place from September 4 to 12 later this year.

Following a single round-robin, the 11 group winners and four best second-placed teams among all groups qualify for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup. They join tournament hosts Qatar, who have received automatic qualification, to form the final cast of 16 in the competition, to be played between April 15 and May 3, 2024.



Action from the Olympic team's friendly against Estonia (File)

Group A of the qualifiers will have group hosts Jordan, Syria, Oman and Brunei. Group B will see 2020 champions and group hosts South Korea, Myanmar, Kyrgyz Republic and Qatar contesting; while Group C will see group hosts Vietnam, Singapore, Yemen, and Guam. Qatar's qualifiers will be considered as friendlies.

In Group E are 2018 champions and group hosts Uzbekistan, Iran, Hong Kong and Afghanistan; while in Group F are 2013 winners Iraq, hosts Kuwait, Timor-Leste and Macau. In Group

G are the UAE, India, Maldives and group hosts China; while Group H features group hosts Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

Group I will see Australia, group hosts Tajikistan, Laos and North Korea; Group J consists of defending champions and hosts Saudi Arabia, Cambodia, Lebanon and Mongolia; and finally Group K comprises just three teams with Turkmenistan, group hosts Indonesia and Chinese Taipei.

Bahrain have qualified just once in the previous five edi-



Dario Basic



The Kingdom of Bahrain is set to host the matches in its qualification group, with the games scheduled to take place from September 4 to 12 later this year

tions of the AFC U-23 Asian Cup. That was in the 2020 event held in Thailand, when they did not make it past the group stage.

The Bahrainis, coached by Croatian Dario Basic, have already begun their preparations for the qualifiers. They played a pair of international friendly matches last March against their counterparts from Estonia.

PSG's Qatari owners in talks over Sampdoria investment - source

AFP | Paris

Qatar Sports Investments, the owners of French champions Paris Saint-Germain, are in negotiations over acquiring a stake in Italian club Sampdoria, a source with knowledge of the matter said yesterday.

QSI, whose president Nasser al-Khelaifi is also the president of PSG, has owned the French club since 2011, transforming a struggling outfit into one of the most powerful in Europe.

It also owns a 22 percent stake in leading Portuguese side Braga and is hoping to further expand its footballing empire to create a "diverse portfolio", the same source said.

The source said that QSI is hoping to acquire a "minority stake" in Sampdoria, the club from the Mediterranean port city of Genoa who are already condemned to relegation from Serie A with two games of this season remaining.

Sampdoria were one of Italy's leading sides in the 1980s



A general view of PSG's Parc des Princes stadium

Sampdoria were one of Italy's leading sides in the 1980s and early 1990s. They won Serie A in 1991 and were European Cup runners-up the following year, losing to Barcelona in the final

and early 1990s. They won Serie A in 1991 and were European Cup runners-up the following year, losing to Barcelona in the final.

The same source also confirmed that QSI are interested in investing in Brazilian club Santos, the former team of Pele and current PSG star Neymar, as well as Spanish outfit Malaga.