

Asiad medal rush continues

Balew defends 10,000m crown as Bahrain add three more athletics medals

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Birhanu Balew successfully defended his men's 10,000 metres crown as Bahrain added another gold and two bronze medals to their athletics haul at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya yesterday.

Balew led a double podium finish for the kingdom at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium, winning in 28 minutes 27.51 seconds, while compatriot Albert Kiptoo secured bronze in 28:34.38. India's Gulveer Singh split the Bahraini pair to take silver in 28:29.38.

Edidiong Odiong added a third medal of the night with bronze in the women's 100m, where Raihanah Garoubah also reached the final and finished seventh.

The latest successes continued an impressive campaign for the nationals, following Winfred Yavi's women's 10,000m triumph and the mixed 4x400m relay team's Games-record victory earlier in the programme.

And there could be more to come



Edidiong Odiong in full stride during the 100m final

today, with Salwa Eid Naser, part of that relay quartet, safely through to the women's 400m final as she pursues another individual Asian Games title.

Distance Double
Balew's triumph came at the end of a tightly contested men's 10,000m, with Kiptoo moving to the front at the 6,000m mark and remaining there through 7,000m.

China's Wang Wenjie had taken over by 9,000m, but Balew produced the strongest finish to cross the line first in 28:27.51.

Singh followed just 1.87 seconds later to take silver, with Kiptoo completing the podium five seconds behind his compatriot.

It was Balew's second successive Asian Games 10,000m title, having also triumphed at the previous edition in Hangzhou.

Odiong Takes Bronze

Bahrain's success extended
Birhanu Balew celebrates with the Bahrain flag

to the sprint events, where Odiong and Garoubah both earned places in the women's 100m final after winning their opening heats a day earlier.

Odiong finished second in her semi-final in 11.33 seconds to qualify automatically, while Garoubah clocked 11.45 to advance as one of the two fastest non-automatic qualifiers.

Back on the track for the medal race, the 29-year-old matched her semi-final time, crossing the line in 11.33 to claim bronze.

China's Chen Yujie stormed to gold in a new Games record of 11.06, breaking the previous mark of 11.15, while Singapore's Shanti Pereira took silver in 11.21. Garoubah finished seventh in 11.53.

Away from the 100m, Naser began her individual 400m campaign by winning her opening-round heat in 53.02. The 28-year-old was the third-fastest qualifier overall, securing her place in today's final.

There was less success in the men's events, with Abdulraof Rashid and Ali Haji both missing out on the 100m final.

Rashid nevertheless produced a personal best of 10.34 to finish fifth in his semi-final and 14th overall, while Haji was also fifth in his race in 10.36 and placed 15th overall.

Musa Isah's men's 400m campaign also came to an end after he finished fourth in his heat in 46.38, leaving him 13th overall.

More to Come

Another packed programme awaits today, beginning with Elhassan Elabbassi in the men's marathon at 1.30am, followed by Shitaye Habte and Rose Sitienei in the women's race at 1.50am.

The focus then shifts to the shorter distances, with Haji returning for the men's 200m heats at 5.30am and Abbas Ali contesting another heat at 5.54am.

Later in the day, Salem Bakheet lines up in the men's 110m hurdles at 1.21pm, before Garoubah contests the women's 200m at 1.55pm.

Abdelrahman Mahmoud takes part in the men's shot put final at 2pm, while Odiong returns for the second women's 200m heat three minutes later.

The middle-distance runners then enter the action, with Zouhair Aouad and Abdissamad Hirsi beginning their men's 1500m campaigns at 2.51pm and 3.01pm respectively.

Attention will then turn to Naser in the women's 400m final at 3.45pm. The 2018 Asian Games champion holds both the Asian record of 48.14 and the Games record of 50.09, and has already struck gold in Aichi-Nagoya as part of the kingdom's victorious mixed 4x400m quartet.

Nelly Korir rounds off Bahrain's action for the day when she contests the women's 1500m final at 4.15pm.

The athletics competition continues through Tuesday.

Black leads Bahrain dressage challenge

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Megan Black led Bahrain's dressage challenge at the Asian Games yesterday, finishing 27th overall in the opening individual qualifier at Equestrian Park in Tokyo.

Riding Deinrich in the Small Tour, Black earned an overall score of 65.324 per cent from the five-member judging panel.

Compatriot Aneesa Al Mahmood, aboard Samira O, placed 40th overall with 60.676 per cent.

At the top of the standings, South Korea's Nam Dongheon led the way with 70.559 per cent on Leonidas, narrowly ahead of China's Yu Jiayi, who registered 70.265 on Jackpoint.

Palestine's Aleksandra Maksakova was third on So Secret with 69.882.

China Take Gold

China, meanwhile, captured the team dressage title with



Megan Black aboard her horse Deinrich

a combined score of 208.148, ahead of silver medallists South Korea on 205.265 and bronze winners Japan on 204.117.

The dressage competition continues today with the second individual qualifier at 3.30am, Bahrain time, before the individual final takes place at the same time tomorrow.

The equestrian programme, which began on Tuesday, continues next week with the team and individual jumping competitions still to come.

Sana finishes 10th in 800m

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Bahrain's Sana Le Falher finished 10th overall in the women's 800 metres freestyle as the Asian Games swimming programme concluded at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre yesterday.

The 19-year-old clocked nine minutes 27.33 seconds to finish second in the B final, behind Singapore's Sarah Sim, who touched home in 9:13.62.

In the medal race, China's Li Bingjie claimed gold after winning the A final in 8:24.02, with Singapore's Gan Ching Hwee taking silver in 8:26.25 and Japan's Ichika Kajimoto securing bronze in 8:27.37.

Final Heats

Elsewhere, Asma Le Falher placed 18th overall in the women's 50m butterfly heats

after clocking 29.33 seconds.

The Bahraini finished seventh in the opening heat and missed out on a place in the final, which was later won by China's Zhang Yufei. Compatriot Wu Qingfeng took silver, while Japan's Rikako Ikee completed the podium.

Abdulla Jamal finished 30th overall in the men's 50m breaststroke heats, touching home in 29.71 seconds to place 10th in his race.

China's Qin Haiyang later took gold ahead of compatriot Liu Junjie and Japan's Shin Ohashi.

The results brought the kingdom's swimming campaign to a close, a day after Mikhail Arkhangelskiy made history by winning Bahrain's first Asian Games swimming gold in the men's 50m butterfly.

Gamers' run ends in quarter-finals

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Bahrain's esports campaign at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya ended in the quarter-finals yesterday following a 3-1 defeat to Japan at Aichi Sky Expo Hall D.

The trio of Yusuf Bahram, Mohamed Derbas and Husam Alansari had advanced to the last eight after finishing second in Group C, but were unable to get past the hosts in the Fighting Games competition.

Japan made the stronger start, taking the opening TEKKEN 8 set 2-0 before the Bahrainis responded by winning the first Street Fighter 6 contest by the same score.

The hosts regained control with a 2-0 victory in The King of Fighters XV before wrapping up the tie by taking the second Street Fighter 6 set 2-0.

Group Progress

Bahrain had booked their quarter-final place a day earlier after completing the group



Mohamed Derbas in action during the Fighting Games competition

stage with one win and one defeat.

They opened with a 3-0 victory over Kyrgyzstan before going down 3-1 to Saudi Arabia, leaving the kingdom second in Group C behind their Gulf neighbours.

Japan, meanwhile, had topped Group B with victories over the UAE and Palestine before overcoming Bahrain to reach the semi-finals.

The result concluded the kingdom's involvement in the Fighting Games event, although the wider esports programme continues until October 2.

Paddlers bow out of games

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Bahrain's remaining table tennis players bowed out of the Asian Games yesterday following defeats in the men's singles and doubles at Sky Hall Toyota.

Mohamed Saleh and Rashid Sanad both saw their singles runs end in the round of 32, while the kingdom's two doubles pairings were also eliminated at the same stage.

Saleh went down 4-0 to South Korea's Jang Woojin, who prevailed 11-4, 11-9, 11-4, 11-8.

Sanad was also beaten in straight games, falling 11-4, 11-7, 11-8, 11-4 to Chinese Taipei's Lin Yun-ju.

Doubles Exit

Earlier in the day, Mohamed Alaali and Sayed Mahfoodh were denied a place in the men's doubles last 16 by Singapore's Chew Zhe Yu and Josh Chua.

The Bahraini pair pushed their opponents hard in the opening game before losing it 15-13, with the Singaporeans taking the next two 11-3, 11-3 to

complete a 3-0 victory.

Saleh and Sanad suffered the same fate against Chinese Taipei's Hsu Hsien-chia and Hung Jing-kai. They narrowly lost the opener 14-12 and threatened to extend the contest in the third, but their opponents took the second 11-4 before edging the final game 13-11 to seal a straight-games victory.

Winning Starts

All four Bahrainis had entered yesterday's action on the back of victories in their respective opening matches.

Saleh defeated Bangladesh's Ramhimlian Bawm 4-1 in the singles, while Sanad swept Pakistan's Taha Bilal 4-0.

Alaali and Mahfoodh had also begun their doubles campaign with a 3-0 victory over Pakistan's Taha Bilal and Abdal Muhammad Khan, while Saleh and Sanad defeated Kyrgyzstan's Abai and Atai Kasymov by the same scoreline. Those results concluded Bahrain's table tennis challenge. The sport continues at the Games until Monday, but there will be no further representation from the kingdom.

Jaafar falls in badminton opener

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Bahrain's Sayed Adnan Jaafar bowed out of the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya yesterday following a straight-games defeat to Vietnam's Nguyen Hai Dang in the men's singles badminton competition.

Jaafar went down 21-8, 21-8 in their first-round encounter at Ichinomiya City Municipal Gymnasium.

Nguyen controlled proceedings to seal victory in 28 minutes and advance to the second round.

The result concluded the kingdom's badminton chal-



Sayed Adnan Jaafar stretches high for an overhead return

lenge, with no other Bahrainis entered in the sport, which continues until Tuesday.

MEDAL STANDINGS - TOP 10

Rk	Nation	G	S	B	Total
1	China	98	37	24	159
2	Japan	28	43	44	115
3	South Korea	13	17	34	64
4	Kazakhstan	8	8	14	30
5	Uzbekistan	7	15	9	31
6	Thailand	7	6	8	21
7	Iran	6	11	7	24
8	Hong Kong, China	4	11	11	26
9	North Korea	4	4	3	11
10	Bahrain	4	2	2	8