

## Bahrain's preparations hailed as FIBA Asia qualifiers tip off



Bahrain's national team players and coaching staff

● **FIBA Asia executive director Hagop Khajirian inspects Khalifa Sports City arena in Isa Town**

**TDT | Manama**

Bahrain has been given two thumbs up for its preparations to host the games of two qualifying groups for the FIBA Asia Cup 2021.

FIBA Asia executive director Hagop Khajirian inspected yesterday the Khalifa Sports City arena in Isa Town, which will host the four days of play beginning from today.

Khajirian took note of the Bahrain Basketball Association's keenness to provide all that is necessary to successfully host the qualifiers, and said that the work done is consistent with the highest international standards for FIBA competitions.

The Kingdom is hosting action in both Group A, comprising the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand; and Group D, which includes Iraq, India, Lebanon and hosts Bahrain.

Three games are scheduled for today's first day.

India and Lebanon get things going with the first contest scheduled for a 1pm tip-off. The Filipinos and Thais then



lock horns at 4pm, followed by the Bahrainis facing off with Iraq in a crucial encounter.

Bahrain have already taken to the hardwood twice earlier this year, including a 68-67 home win over India which was followed by a 73-116 loss to Lebanon in Beirut.

The nationals are hoping to finish as one of the top two teams from qualifying's Group D in order to book their tickets to the FIBA Asia Cup. If they finish third, they will have to play in another stage of qualification for a chance to claim one of four other spots up for grabs for the 2021 FIBA Asia Cup. If they finish last, the Bahrainis will be out of the running for a tournament berth.

## Haas boss applauds team's 'survival' in difficult season

**AFP | Manama**

Haas team chief Guenter Steiner believes the American Formula One outfit's greatest achievement this season was the first and most important of all -- survival.

Speaking at a virtual news conference yesterday ahead of this weekend's Bahrain Grand

Prix, Steiner admitted that earlier this year, following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, team owner Gene Haas had considered pulling out of F1.

Asked to sum up Haas's season, Steiner said: "We survived. That's what we have done right."

## Action packed nine-race card today at REHC

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A packed programme of nine races, seven of which are for a Bapco Cup, is on the race card today at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Sakhr.

Just a week removed from a hugely successful second edition of the Bahrain International Trophy, the top-class action at REHC continues, with over BD25,000 in prize money to be won by the participants.

The ninth and final race of the day, for a Bapco Cup, and the third race for the Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) Cup, are the richest events, each offering BD5,000 to the winners.

Race nine will be over seven furlongs, with nine horses taking part.

Tipped with a chance are Macaque,



Action from a previous race day

owned by Victorious, trained by Hesham Al Haddad and to be ridden by Abdulla Faisal; Austin Powers, racing for Ramadhan Stable, Jaber Ramadhan and Ben Sanderson; and Beauchamp Bagenal, competing for KHK Racing, Hesham Al Haddad and David Egan.

The race's other horses are Nibras Bounty, Raselasad, Solar Flair, Strong Challenge, Light Angel and Inclination.

Race three for the BOC Cup will also be over seven furlongs, and just five horses will be battling it out.

Tipped with a chance are Tuwaisan 1762, owned by Victorious, trained by Yousif Taher and to be ridden by Abdulla Faisal; Al Saqlawy 1757, competing for Safra, Alan Smith and Abdulrahman Jasim; and Al Jellaby 1683, representing Al Riffa, Yousif Alboainain and Hasan Al Saffar.

The day's eighth race (seven furlongs) offers BD3,000 in prize money, as do race seven (straight of six furlongs) and race six (straight of five furlongs). The day's other four events feature BD2,000 in prize money.

# BRAVE CF's Said Maalem fires back at Fakhreddine

Mohammed Said Maalem accepted Mohammed Fakhreddine's challenge, but claimed the champ's "disrespect" towards him deserved to be "punished"

● **Anton Turkalj, Todd Stoute and Mohammed Fakhreddine have all called for a title shot for the Light Heavyweight belt**

**TDT | Manama**

Tensions are revving up in the BRAVE Combat Federation Light Heavyweight division. The idea of a BRAVE CF Light Heavyweight title has come to the spotlight ever since Middleweight champ Mohammed Fakhreddine brought it up following the conclusion of BRAVE CF 45. The Lebanese star called out Mohammed Saeed Maalem for the proposed title fight. Now, the Algerian has made it clear that he is more than happy to engage in this duel.

Said Maalem used his own social media profiles to indicate that he would accept Fakhreddine's challenge, but claimed the champ's "disrespect" towards him deserved to be "punished".



Mohammed Said Maalem

"Your disrespect deserves to be punished, that is why I accept your challenge, and you will have the honour of facing me", said Mohammed.

Three fearless juggernauts Anton Turkalj, Todd Stoute and Mohammed Fakhreddine have all called for a title shot for the Light Heavyweight belt. The calls for the title fight came after an impressive victory by the

division's mainstay Maleem at BRAVE CF 45 which prompted Fakhreddine to challenge the Algerian. Now, Maleem has responded to the Middleweight champ saying he is up for a title fight.

This comes after Swedish phenom Anton Turkalj, who has won twice in two BRAVE CF bouts, commented on social media about going for the title,

**“Your disrespect deserves to be punished, that is why I accept your challenge, and you will have the honour of facing me”**  
MOHAMMED SAID MAALEM

rejecting the idea of Fakhreddine and Said Maalem fighting for the belt. Turkalj said he would even face both men in the same night and would bet his fight purse that he would come out victorious. Todd Stoute, on the other hand, had already expressed his desire for a rematch against Said Maalem.

'Black Hulk' lost to Mohamed but has bounced back with a win against Cristian Constantinov. Currently ranked as the number one Heavyweight and number two Light Heavyweight in Canada, Stoute believes he deserves a title shot after impressing in all of his three BRAVE CF contests, with one loss and two wins.

## BRAVE CF is the only global promotion to host events in Pakistan

**TDT | Manama**

The Pakistan MMA scene has witnessed a transformation in recent years as the country's youth have become increasingly passionate about combat sports. The rise in popularity, however, has not yet attracted a substantive level of interest from global promotions with the exception of BRAVE Combat Federation who is the first and only global MMA promotion to host MMA events in Pakistan.

BRAVE CF's long-term plan consisted not only in providing a global platform for athletes to showcase their skills and seek personal and professional development but also carrying the flag of the sport around the world, including to nations that have never before seen an event of such magnitude, a report in Pakistani newspaper The Day Spring stated.

"That was exactly what BRAVE



A Pakistani athlete reacts after a bout

Combat Federation accomplished in Pakistan. BRAVE CF went further and became the very first international MMA promotion to host an event in Pakistan. In October 2018, BRAVE Combat Federation made its mark in the city of Lahore with BRAVE CF 17. The historic

fight night was not only the first global MMA event in the history of the country but one of the biggest international sports events ever held in Pakistan," the report stated.

With thousands of fans watching it live at the arena and millions catching up through

their TVs around the world, BRAVE CF 17 brought an unprecedented level of exposure not only for the Pakistani MMA and sports scene but for the country of Pakistan as a whole.

The fight card was a mix of international talent, such as Abdoul Abdouraguimov, Brazil's Rodrigo Cavalheiro, and New Zealand's John Brewin, and national superstars, such as Kareem Ulloomi, Haider Farman, and Mehmosh Raza.

But BRAVE Combat Federation's commitment to Mixed Martial Arts' development in Pakistan kept going. After promoting BRAVE CF 17, BRAVE CF continued to be the global MMA promotion with most Pakistanis within its roster. In addition, the country was selected to receive the very first BRAVE Gym, a new endeavor that combined top-notch structure with an exclusive and detailed training program forged by BRAVE CF.

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