

Semifinals underway at BKS badminton tournament



Yeung Nga Ting and Yeung Pui Lam in action

TDT | Manama

Semifinals in all disciplines were underway at Bahrain International Challenge 2021 (BIC) which is being held at the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam.

The day started with Women's Singles on court 1, in an all-Indonesian match, Asty Dwi Widyaningrum beat Komang Ayu Cahya Dewi in a superb three games encounter which lasted for 66 minutes (21-9,10-21,23-21).

In the other match on Court 2, Women's doubles pair of Yeung Nga Ting and Yeung Pui Lam of Hong Kong China beat Indonesian pair Puspa Rosalia Damayanti and Jes-

Among the 20 semifinalists (4 in each discipline) 10 were from Indonesia, followed by Hongkong China's 5, India's 3 and 1 each from USA and Singapore

sica Maya Rismawardani in straight games (21-12,21-14).

Remaining Semifinal matches were in progress at the time of closing.

Top seed in women's singles, Aakarshi Kashyap of India and top seed in men's singles, Ikhsan Leonardo Imanuel Rumbay of Indonesia were featuring in their respective semifinal matches.



Asty Dwi in action

Campbell, Marjan move to top of leaderboard

England's Louis Campbell and Morocco's Ahmed Marjan head into final round of 13th King Hamad Trophy golf championship in tied-first place

● Campbell, Marjan each score 70 in second round to bring two-day totals to 138

● Just one shot behind joint-leaders are Sam Hobday and Jesper Alm with 18 holes to play

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Englishman Louis Campbell and Moroccan Ahmed Marjan rose to tied-first place yesterday after the second round of play in the 13th King Hamad Trophy golf championship at The Royal Golf Club (RGC).

Both players brought their two-day totals to six-under-par 138 over 36 holes.

The pair each opened play with a two-under-par 70 on Thursday, but yesterday carded a four-under 68 to go atop the leaderboard.

Both golfers registered five birdies and one bogey in round two, with Campbell scoring the better back nine.

They now head into today's final day of action just a single shot ahead of Sam Hobday, also from England, and Jesper Alm



Players in action during yesterday's second round

from Sweden, who are tied third on two-day totals of five-under-par 139. Hobday shot a 69 yesterday while Alm had a 71 score.

Day one leader Karim Elhali of Morocco dropped to fifth after carding a two-over-par 74 yesterday. He is tied with Englishman Zane Scotland on 141 totals.

Three others share seventh position with 142 scores, including Rory Tinker of Scotland, defending champion Luke Joy from England, and Marc Boucher from Ireland, who remained as the top-ranked amateur so far in the competition.

Rocco Sanjust and Joshua White were tied-10th overall on 143 totals heading into the

last round.

Amongst the other amateur golfers behind Boucher were Nizar Bourehim and Jake Wiltshire, who are tied-12th on 144 scores.

Khalifa Daij Alkaabi became the best-position Bahraini player in tied-14th. He shot a 73 yesterday to bring his score to 146, level with Jake Ayres, Erik Johansson, Jacob Davis and Chris Croucher.

At the end of yesterday's play, the top 45 players and ties made the cut for today's final 18 holes.

The last players to secure their spot included Peter Badawy, Jonathan Fransson, Philip Kelly and Paul Stent.

A total of 90 golfers have tak-

en to the fairways along RGC's Montgomerie championship course for the prestigious tournament.

Today's final round will be followed by the awarding ceremony.

The previous edition of the King Hamad Trophy was played in December of 2019. Joy clinched the title then after storming back from six shots behind countryman Sean Towndrow to force a dramatic play-off. He then beat Towndrow by just one stroke to clinch the coveted title after re-playing the par-four 18th.

The tournament is organised and run by the Bahrain Golf Association.

Neuchrist/Pervolarakis pair in ATP Challenger doubles final

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Austria's Maximilian Neuchrist and his partner Michail Pervolarakis of Greece extended their impressive run in the men's doubles event of the ATP Tennis Challenger, being held at the Public Security's Officers Club courts in Gudai-biya.

In their neck-and-neck semi-final tie against the fourth-seed Indian tandem of Arjun Kadhe and Ramkumar Ramanathan last night, Neuchrist and Pervolarakis put on a superb show to pick up a well-deserved victory and a place in the title match.

The winning tandem are now set for their final, scheduled for today, against the Portuguese pair of Nuno Borges and Francisco Cabral who edged third seed N. Sriram Balaji and Divij Sharan 6-4, 6-4 in another interesting tie late on. Borges and his compatriot Cabral proved the stronger side of this action-packed three-set match to ensure themselves a place in the competition's finale.

In the singles event, the last eight men battled it out for the final four places as Yanki Erel of



Turkey's Yanki Erel reacts after his thrilling three-set victory over Briton Ryan Paniston

Today's fixtures:

Singles (Semi-finals): 3pm - Yanki Erel (Turkey) vs Evgheny Karlovskiy (Rus); 4.30pm - Jay Clarke (GB) vs Ramkumar Ramanathan (Ind).

Doubles (Final): 6pm - Michail Pervolarakis (Gre)/Maximilian Neuchrist (Aus) vs Nuno Borges/Francisco Cabral (Por).

Turkey put on a spirited performance to clinch a come-from-behind 2-1 win over his Briton

opponent Ryan Paniston. Sets scores were (2-6, 6-3, 7-5).

The 21-year-old wild-card Turkish will now face Evgeny Karlovskiy of Russia, who was in superb form as he picked up a 7-6'5', 6-3 win over Portuguese Nuno Borges.

"It was really a tough match and I am so happy that I made it this far," said Erel after the victory. "This is my first challenger main draw actually, I am not playing a lot of challengers tournament and I hope I can play more in these events in the future," said the unseeded Erel.

Pochettino 'never asked to leave' PSG, says sporting director Leonardo

AFP | Paris

Mauricio Pochettino has "never asked to leave" Paris Saint-Germain despite speculation linking the coach with Manchester United, the French club's sporting director Leonardo said yesterday.

The Brazilian also denied reports that PSG had approached former Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane, saying he has had "no contact" with the Frenchman.

British media reports earlier this week suggested that former Tottenham boss Pochettino could be persuaded to leave Paris and join Man United mid-season.

But it has since emerged that German Ralf Rangnick is set to take over at Old Trafford until the end of the season, with his lawyer telling AFP subsidiary SID yesterday that the final points of a deal are being ironed out.

Bahrain lose to Iran in World Cup qualifier



Bahrain's Mohammed Kowayed in action against Iran yesterday

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Bahrain bowed to Iran 66-82 yesterday in their opening game of Asian qualification for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023, played in Tehran.

The Bahrainis were within striking distance at the half, 36-29. But in the third quarter the Iranians outscored the nationals 28-14 and took full control of the game. Bahrain tried to fight back in the final canto but their rivals were too good on the night.

Ahmed Salman top scored for Bahrain with 17 points in the loss. Mohammed Kowayed added 13 and Hesham Sarhan 11.

The nationals are now set to

play their return game against Iran on Monday at the Khalifa Sports City arena in Isa Town.

Bahrain's next two fixtures will be in the second window, scheduled for February 24 next year against Syria and then against Kazakhstan on February 27. The final window in July of 2022 will see their last two games of this qualification first round, against Syria on July 1 and Kazakhstan on July 4.

For this first round of qualifiers, 16 teams from Asia/Oceania are divided into four groups of four teams to play in home-and-away games. The three best-placed teams from each group will advance to the second round.