

# Bahrain braces as Asian Games near

Over 5,000 athletes compete in Asia's largest youth sporting events

● **Third Asian Youth Games from October 22–31**

● **Competitions held across 23 venues, 30+ training sites**

● **24 sports, 207 events, promoting youth Olympic development**

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain is counting down the days to the third Asian Youth Games, with just 55 days to go until the event kicks off on October 22. Yesterday at 7pm, a press conference at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel revealed the Kingdom's readiness to host one of Asia's largest youth sporting gatherings.

The press briefing was led by HH Shaikh Issa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Vinod Tiwari, Deputy Director General of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), Dr. Thani Al Kuwari, OCA Vice President West Asia, Mr. Tayyab Ikram, Chairman of the OCA Coordinational Committee, and Faris Al Kooheji, Secretary General of the Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC).

## "A Special Event for Bahrain"

Speaking exclusively to TDT, Shaikh Issa described the Games as a "special event for Bahrain" and confirmed that all preparations—from venues and accommodation to sports facilities—have been progressing under the directives of His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, President of the BOC and Organising Committee. "We are confident that Bahrain is fully prepared to host this major regional event and that the third edition of the Asian Youth Games will succeed across all categories," he said.

Dr. Thani Al Kuwari high-



Panel of speakers including Vinod Tiwari, Dr. Thani Al Kuwari, Mr. Tayyab Ikram, HH Shaikh Issa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Faris Al Kooheji, and Yusuf Muhroofi



Crowd in attendance at the press conference at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel



**The official mascot "Shihab" represents the Arabian oryx, while welcoming mascots "Najm" and "Dana" reflect Bahrain's rich cultural heritage**

lighted the Games' broader significance, noting: "The image of Bahrain and Asia will be honored. This event is a celebration of respect and friendship across the continent."

Scale and Sporting Zones

The Games will gather over 5,000 athletes aged 15–17 from nearly 45 countries, competing

in 24 sports ranging from athletics, swimming, and basketball to judo, kabaddi, teqball, e-sports, and more. Events will be held across 23 competition venues and over 30 training facilities, organized into three main zones and subzones.

Zone 1 centers on Isa Sports City, hosting track and field from October 23–26, handball and futsal from October 21 and 23–27, and volleyball and kabaddi competitions across multiple halls. Zone 2 at Exhibition World will feature table tennis, MMA, e-sports, taekwondo, Muay Thai, jiu-jitsu, boxing, judo, teqball, weightlifting, and wrestling. Subzones include C: Military Sports Association and Royal Golf Club for show jumping and golf, and D: Bahrain International Endurance Village and Sofitel Bahrain Zallaq for camel racing, cross country, endurance, and triathlon events. Accommodation will span Amwaj, Manama, Seef, and Juffair/Adliya, ensur-



Official mascot "Shihab" unveiled alongside welcoming mascots "Najm" and "Dana"

Pics credit : Anchalo Bensingar

ing athletes are close to their respective competition zones.

## "Making the Games Relevant"

Mr. Tayyab Ikram emphasized the Games' importance for the Olympic movement and the youth of Asia: "Our objective at the Olympic Council of Asia is to make the Games more relevant for today's generation. Bahrain has delivered in record time to host an event that will welcome the future stars of Asia, leave a sustainable legacy, and

inspire youth across the continent."

## Mascots and Cultural Identity

The event also marked the unveiling of the official mascot "Shihab", representing the Arabian oryx and symbolizing strength and agility, alongside welcoming mascots "Najm" and "Dana", reflecting traditional Bahraini attire and cultural heritage. High-profile attendees included Mohammed Shahid, President of BRAVE CF, among others.

## Legacy Beyond 2025

The Asian Youth Games, which build on previous editions held in Singapore (2010) and Nanjing, China (2013), promote physical fitness, cultural exchange, and Olympic ideals. In addition to medals, athletes will gain pathways toward qualification for the 2026 Youth Olympics in Dakar and ultimately the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

With just under two months to go, Bahrain is poised to host a Games that promise to be both memorable and transformative for athletes, fans, and the broader sporting community.

## Indian spin great Ashwin calls time on IPL career

AFP | Chennai

Indian spin great Ravichandran Ashwin yesterday announced his retirement from the Indian Premier League and plans to play in other global franchise tournaments.

The 38-year-old, a master off-spinner who quit international cricket in December during India's Test tour of Australia, ends as the fifth-highest wicket-taker in the IPL with 187 scalps.

He played for five IPL franchises and won the tournament with Chennai Super Kings in 2010 and 2011, where he also played in this year's edition.

**They say every ending will have a new start. My time as an IPL cricketer comes to a close today but my time as an explorer of the game around various leagues begins today**

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN

"They say every ending will have a new start," Ashwin wrote on social media.

"My time as an IPL cricketer comes to a close today but my time as an explorer of the game around

various leagues begins today."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) does not allow any current player in Indian international or domestic cricket to feature in overseas leagues.

The feisty Ashwin finished his India career with 537 wickets in 106 Tests at an average of 24.00.

He also played 116 one-day and 65 Twenty20 internationals.

Ravichandran Ashwin



## Vingegaard reclaims lead as UAE win Vuelta time-trial



Germany's defender #02 Antonio Rudiger warms up ahead of a match

AFP | Figueres

Jonas Vingegaard reclaimed the overall lead of the Vuelta a Espana on the fifth-stage team time-trial on Wednesday, while Team UAE riders Juan Ayuso and Joao Almeida climbed to second and third in the standings.

As the 21-day race arrived in

Spain after four stages in Italy and France, the leaderboard was reshuffled with the three race favourites moving to the top of the deck.

Team UAE won the 24.1km stage around Figueres in 25min and 26sec, with Vingegaard's Visma just eight seconds off the pace and Giulio Ciccone's Lidl-Trek a further second slower in third on the day.

## India says Ahmedabad 'ideal city' for Commonwealth Games

AFP | Ahmedabad

India said yesterday that the city of Ahmedabad is an "ideal" location for the 2030 Commonwealth Games, with its bid viewed as part of a wider push by the cricket-mad nation to

host the 2036 Olympics.

Ahmedabad is the key city in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat, home to a 130,000-seater arena, the world's biggest cricket stadium and named after the

premier.

Modi's cabinet approved India's bid for the 2030 Commonwealth Games yesterday. India submitted a formal letter of intent last year to the International Olympic Committee to

host the 2036 Games.

"Ahmedabad is an ideal host city offering world-class stadiums, cutting-edge training facilities, and a passionate sporting culture," a cabinet statement read.