

High-flying cagers eye third win

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain will look to maintain their perfect start to the FIBA Asia Cup 2029 pre-qualifiers when they take on Nepal today at 4pm, Bahrain time.

The kingdom’s senior men’s basketball national team head into their third Group A encounter in Dubai, the UAE, with two wins from as many games following victories over Oman and hosts UAE.

The Bahrainis opened their campaign with a ruthless 106-62 victory over Oman before showing their resilience in an 83-80 win against the UAE on Friday night at Sheikh Saeed bin Maktoum Sports Hall.

Greek-Slovenian head coach Slobodan Subotic’s cagers will now be heavily favoured to make it three straight against a Nepal side still searching for their first victory.

Nepal have suffered two de-



Mustafa Hussain goes up for a lay-up in Bahrain's previous game

feats so far, going down 110-64 to the UAE in their opener before losing 88-65 to Kuwait on Friday.

Bahrain, meanwhile, have shown two different sides to their game across their opening contests.

They dominated Oman from start to finish in a 44-point rout before having to fight their way back from nine points down with less than five minutes remaining to edge the Emiratis.

Mustafa Hussain and JaKarr Sampson were instrumental in that comeback, combining for 49 points. Hussain finished with a game-high 28, including four three-pointers, while Sampson posted 21 points and 14 rebounds.

Ahmed Salman, who added 19 points in the victory, credited Subotic’s leadership for Bahrain’s composure during the tense closing stages.

“I’ve been coached by a lot of coaches, and he is one of the best,” Salman said. “I’m not just saying that because he’s

here. The calmness we showed against the UAE came from our leader. He stayed calm, and that helped us stay calm as well.”

Victory over Nepal would further strengthen Bahrain’s position in the battle for one of Group A’s three places in the second round.

The Bahrainis are amongst 18 national teams competing across four groups in the first round, with the top three from each advancing.

The 12 qualifiers will then be divided into two groups of six for the second round, scheduled to be played from November 23 to December 1.

The top four from each of those groups will earn places in the 2029 Asia Cup qualifiers, joining the 16 nations that competed at the 2025 continental championship in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Bahrain then wrap up their Group A campaign against Kuwait tomorrow at 7pm, Bahrain time.

Bahrain set for U20 qualifying bid

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain will begin their bid to reach the AFC U20 Asian Cup 2027 when they take on Tajikistan tomorrow at Khalifa Sports City Stadium in Isa Town.

The kingdom’s junior men’s football national team are hosting Group D of the qualifiers, which also features Jordan and Afghanistan, with matches running until September 6.

Head coach Ali Aamer has selected a 23-player squad for the campaign as Bahrain look to end a decade-long absence from the continental tournament.

The Bahrainis begin against Tajikistan tomorrow before returning to action against Jordan on Thursday. They then conclude their Group D fixtures against Afghanistan on September 6, with all three matches kicking off at 8.30pm.

Aamer, the former Bahrain and Muharraq midfielder, has been overseeing the team’s final preparations at the Bahrain Football Association (BFA) pitches at Isa Sports City in Riffa.

His final squad features Hus-



Bahrain junior men football Coach Ali Amer

GROUP D SCHEDULE

Date	Fixture	Time
Tomorrow, Aug 31	Jordan v Afghanistan	5pm
	Tajikistan v Bahrain	8.30pm
Thursday, Sept 3	Afghanistan v Tajikistan	5pm
	Bahrain v Jordan	8.30pm
Sunday, Sept 6	Jordan v Tajikistan	5pm
	Bahrain v Afghanistan	8.30pm

sain Zuhair, Sayed Ahmed Alwadaie, Amjad Jaafar, Khaled Ahmed, Bader Hussain, Khaled Alkhalaf, Mubarak Fawaz, Mohammed Salah, Khaled Alkhaladi, Adam Fareed, Jassim Qasem, Abdulrahman Bassam, Ali Mehran, Karrar Huwaida, Ahmed Nasser, Ahmed Almuraisi, Komail Alsitrawi, Abdulla Osama, Ali Hussain and Mohammed Aljazzaf.

Goalkeepers Abdulla Ahmed, Hassan Albastaki and Hussain Ebrahim complete the 23-man roster.

Bahrain are amongst 32 teams competing in the qualification competition, divided into eight groups of four playing at centralised venues.

Each group will be contested in a single round-robin format, with the eight group winners and seven best runners-up securing their places at next year’s AFC U20 Asian Cup in China.

The continental showpiece is scheduled to take place from March 24 to April 10.

Bahrain are seeking their 10th appearance at the tournament and their first since 2016, having missed out on each of the past three editions.

Sixth straight loss ends Bahrain U18 campaign



Zahra Alasfoor attacks at the net

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A sixth straight defeat brought Bahrain’s Arab U18 Women’s Volleyball Championship campaign to a bleak end yesterday as Morocco won 3-0 in Amman, leaving the young side without a victory or a single set.

Morocco took the match 25-16, 25-7, 25-6, closing out Bahrain’s run in a seven-team field that also included Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Lebanon and Palestine.

The result capped a hard week for a newly assembled Bahrain side asked to play six international matches in eight days.

They had already lost in

straight sets to hosts Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Algeria before facing Morocco in their last outing. Algeria won 25-12, 25-10, 25-9 in Bahrain’s previous match.

The championship was played at the Sports Palace Hall in Al-Hussein Youth City from August 22 to 29 under a single round-robin format.

For Bahrain, the main gain came from testing a young group against stronger regional sides and giving the players a run of international matches.

The six games also helped head coach Ebrahim Hasan, assistant Wadea Abdulla and general manager Abdulradhi Ashoor identify weaknesses in reception, attack and rally play.

Norris extends McLaren stay until 2030

AFP | London

Reigning F1 world champion Lando Norris has committed his long-term future to McLaren after signing a contract extension that will keep him at the team until 2030.

The new deal comes less than a week after Norris secured back-to-back wins with victory at the Dutch Grand Prix, rekindling the British driver’s hopes of a successful defence of his world title.

It includes an option for a multi-year extension beyond 2030, McLaren said in its announcement yesterday.



Lando Norris celebrates with the trophy after Dutch Grand Prix

Last season, the 26-year-old Norris delivered McLaren’s first drivers’ title since Lewis Hamilton won it in 2008. Norris joined McLaren’s junior programme when he was

just 17 and made his F1 debut two years later, in 2019.

“McLaren is my home, and I’m very pleased to be signing a new contract to keep me with the team until at least 2030,” Norris said in a team statement.

“When I started this journey nine years ago, I was clear about the goals I wanted to achieve: to get McLaren back to the front and to win championships.

“We’ve achieved that goal, but we want more, we want to keep on winning, and we know as a team that we’re capable of achieving it.”