

Iran book ticket to 2018 WC

Tehran

Iran become the third team assured of a berth in the 2018 World Cup finals along with hosts Russia and Brazil after a 2-0 win over Uzbekistan in Tehran yesterday.

Goals in either half from Sardar Kazmoun (23) and Mehdi Taremi (88) guaranteed the Iranians, coached by former Manchester United assistant Carlos Queiroz, a top-two finish in Asian qualifying group A with two games to play.

It is the fifth time Iran have qualified for the World Cup finals and the first time they have achieved the feat twice in succession.

There are 29 other berths up for grabs for the tournament.

Iran join hosts Russia and five-time champions Brazil in securing a place for the tournament which runs from June 14 to July 15, 2018.

Bahrain team ready for IMMAF

Manama

Bahrain are set to participate in the first edition of the 2017 International Mixed Martial Arts Federation (IMMAF) Asian Amateur Open Championships from today until Friday at Marina Bay Sands Exhibition and Convention Centre in Singapore.

The Kingdom will be represented by Hussain Ayyad, Nayef Fikri and Abbas Khan

have qualified to represent Bahrain at their relative weight classes, accompanied by Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Federation board member Yousif Al Kooheji and coach Eldar Eldarov.

Abdulla is in the Men's Flyweight: 56.7 kg (125 lbs), Fikri, Men's Lightweight: 70.3 kg (155 lbs) and Khan, Men's Middleweight: 83.9 kg (185 lbs). These fighters are members of the KHK MMA

initiative under the leadership of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad AlKhalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and Honorary President of the Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Federation (BMMAF), which has promoted and popularised the sport of Mixed Martial Arts in Bahrain. Recently Bahrain, has attracted global attention due to the growth of the sport and popularity of global events

conducted by Bahrain based initiatives.

The International Mixed Martial Arts Federation (IMMAF) recently announced that Bahrain will host the fourth edition of the IMMAF World Championships of Amateur MMA, in November 2017. World Championships will feature amateur mixed martial fighters from around the world competing at the most recognised championship

supported by premium fight promotions.

The Singapore championship is based on a nation vs nation format and the 17 participating national teams are - Australia, Bahrain, Belarus, Chinese Taipei, Czech Republic, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, UK and US, with Belarus, Chinese Taipei, Singapore and South Korea making their debuts.

Al Mahmood, Hassan clinch doubles title



Manama

Ahmed Al Mahmood and Mohammed Abo Hassan won in straight sets 7-5, 6-2 against Ali Fakhro and Ebrahim Qaed to clinch The Late Yousif Khalil Almoayyed Cup - Doubles at the Bahrain Tennis Club (BTC) 2017 Ramadan Tournament at its premises in Juffair.

The competition comprised three groups playing round-robin with eight qualifying for the knockout quarter finals.

Attending the final and the awarding ceremony were Founder and Honorary Chairman of Y.K.Almoayyed

and Sons, Farouk Yousuf Almoayyed, BTC President, Khamis Al Muqla, Honorary BTC President, Dr Ali Fakhro and other board members.

In The Late Majid Al Zayani Cup - Super Doubles, Ahmed Janahi and Salman Hassan defeated Nalan Chokappa and Sundara Ram took book a place into tonight's final at 9.30pm when they take on the winner of the Mahmood and Abdul Rahman Janahi against Ali Al Asfoor and Roy Boutagy match.

The players had played in two group round-robin qualifiers to determine the

qualifiers. Meanwhile, in The Late Ahmed Al Mahoozi Cup - Masters Singles, Group 1 action saw Rick De Groot defeat Elias Abdul Redha 6-3, 6-1 and Abdul Rahman Janahi receive a walkover win from Hassan Abdul Redha.

In Group 2, Eric Lavaud eased past Ali Al Asfoor in straight sets 6-2, 6-1 and Karim Abdul Redha was a 6-4, 6-1 winner against Rahul Jaideep.

The 10 players are split into two groups of five playing five round-robin sets of matches, with the top two qualifying for the semi-finals on Friday and the final set for Saturday.

Youssef Msakni stars as Tunisia defeat Egypt

Johannesburg

Tunisia captain Youssef Msakni starred in a 1-0 victory over Egypt yesterday that completed the first series of qualifiers for the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon.

The Qatar-based midfielder set up the only goal three minutes after half-time at the national stadium in Rades on the outskirts of Tunis.

Msakni intercepted a headed clearance and

delivered a sublime through ball for Taha Yassine Khenissi to score from a tight angle.

The result confirmed the recent dominance of Tunisia over 2017 Cup of Nations runners-up Egypt having beaten them home and away in 2015 qualifying.

Tunisia top Group J with three points and Niger and Swaziland have one each after a 0-0 draw in Niamey at the weekend.

Group winners and the

best three runners-up from 12 mini-leagues qualify for the biennial African football showcase.

New Spain-born Algeria coach Lucas Alcaraz saw Sofiane Hanni score midway through the opening half to bring a 1-0 Group D win over Togo in Blida.

The match-winner was the highlight of a generally laboured performance by the nation that reached the last 16 at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

