

# Saudi's Al-Dawsari, Australia's Kerr named AFC players of the year

AFP | Doha, Qatar

Saudi Arabia winger Salem Al-Dawsari and Australia striker Samantha Kerr were named Asian Football Confederation (AFC) players of the year at a glitzy ceremony in Doha yesterday.

Al-Dawsari, who won the accolade of best men's player, thanked his teammates, fans and family at the annual awards held this year in the Qatari capital. "I thank my father, my mother and my teachers in life, and I also thank my wife and my sons and daughters," Al-Dawsari, who plays for Saudi Pro League Team Al Hilal said.

The player also thanked political leadership in the Gulf monarchy which is all but certain to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup following the withdrawal of Australia, the only other contender for the tournament, on Tuesday.

The Saudi player, who clinched the winning goal in his team's upset win against Argentina in the 2022 World Cup, fought off competition from Australia's Mathew Leckie and Qatar's Almoez Ali to win AFC male player of the year.



President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim al-Khalifa (C) poses for a picture with the award winners during the AFC Annual Awards Doha 2022



The Saudi player, who clinched the winning goal in his team's upset win against Argentina in the 2022 World Cup, fought off competition from Australia's Mathew Leckie and Qatar's Almoez Ali to win AFC male player of the year.

Kerr, who also won the women's AFC player of the year award in 2017, had vied with nominees, China's Zhang Linyan and Japan's Saki Kumagai to win the women's accolade.

"It's been an amazing year for me and my team and I just want to thank all my teammates, my coaches, my family and friends. It's been amazing," the Chelsea player and all-time Australia top goal scorer said as she accepted the award in a video message.

The annual awards ceremony, which had been due to be held in Qatar in 2020, returned after a four-year hiatus because of the

coronavirus pandemic.

The gas-rich Gulf state, which hosted the 2022 World Cup, is to host the confederation's upcoming Asian Cup beginning in January.

The tiny emirate has said the Asian Cup will be held across nine stadiums including seven that are a legacy of the world cup held almost exactly one year ago.

"The AFC is delighted to be able to bring the Asian football family together in the stunning city of Doha," AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa said.

# Al Ahli rout Samaheej in basketball league



Al Ahli's Ali Aqeel looks to make a play against Samaheej last night

● Patrick McGlynn scores 21 points to spearhead victors in game

TDT | Manama

Al Ahli powered to a resounding 78-63 victory over Samaheej last night in the 2023/2024 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

Ahli went ahead early and made the most of their talent and size advantage, with Samaheej playing without an overseas professional.

Ahli raced out to a quick 19-13 lead at the end of the first quarter and never looked back.

They enjoyed margins as big as 24 points but cruises in the last period en route to the final buzzer.

Patrick McGlynn top scored for Ahli with 21 points, while Hesham Sarhan added 17 and Ali Aqeel 11.

Feras Ali Abdulla came off the bench to pace Samaheej with 14, while Salman Alkaabi was their only other player in double figures with 11.

With the result, Ahli claimed their first win of the new season, having bounced back from a surprising loss to Nuwaidrat in their opener. Samaheej, on the other hand, suffered their second straight defeat, having previously bowed to defending champions Manama in their first game.

# Israel Euro 2024 qualifiers moved to Hungary

AFP | Paris, France

Two of Israel's home qualifying matches for the Euro 2024 finals have been moved to Hungary for security reasons due to the Israel-Hamas conflict, UEFA announced yesterday.

Sitting third in Group I, Israel had been due to play Switzerland on November 15 and Romania three days later in Israel. Both matches will now be played in Felcsut in Hungary.

The three teams are closely tied for the two automatic qualifying places. Romania have 16 points from eight games, the Swiss 15 from seven and Israel 11 from six.

Israel wrap up their qualifying campaign away to Andorra November 21.

# Zverev through in three, Fritz pulls out of Paris Masters

AFP | Paris, France

Alexander Zverev beat qualifier Marton Fucsovics in three sets yesterday at the Paris Masters as ninth seed Taylor Fritz pulled out through injury after earlier reaching the second round.

The German 10th seed came back from one set down to beat Hungarian Fucsovics 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 in the round of 64 at Bercy Arena.

Zverev is still seeking to secure his place among the top eight who will go on to the ATP Finals in Turin next month.

After this victory, the 2021 champion sits seventh just behind Stefanos Tsitsipas and 430 points ahead of ninth-placed Hubert Hurkacz.

American Taylor Fritz's chances of qualifying for the tour's showpiece event took a



Germany's Alexander Zverev celebrates after winning his men's singles match against Hungary's Marton Fucsovics

hit when he was forced to retire with an abdominal injury.

On Monday, the ninth seed had comfortably beaten Argentine Sebastian Baez 6-1, 6-4.

The 11th-seeded Hurkacz saw off Sebastian Korda 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3 on Tuesday to book

his place in the second round alongside Felix Auger-Aliassime, who toppled Jan-Lennard Struff in two sets.

Later in the evening, world number two Carlos Alcaraz will take on Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin on centre court.

# Muharraq claim second win in volleyball league

TDT | Manama

Muharraq eased past Ma'ameer 3-0 (25-19, 25-15, 25-20) last night in their week two contest of the 2023/2024 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League.

Muharraq were the aggressors from the beginning as they secured their second straight win, while Ma'ameer suffered a second loss.

In another week two contest, Al Nasser claimed their second successive triumph after beating Bani Jamra 3-1 (25-23, 22-25, 25-21, 25-23) in Group B.

The 14 participating clubs this season have been divided into two groups for the league's preliminary stage. Group A also includes defend-

ing champions Dar Kulaib, Al Dair, Nabih Saleh, Busaiteen and A'ali, while Group B also features Al Najma, Al Ahli, Tadamun, Al Shabab and Etehad Al Reef.

League action continues tonight with Ahli facing Tadamun at 6pm in Group B and then Busateen playing Nabih Saleh at 7.30pm in Group A.

Following a single round-robin, the top three teams from each group qualify for the top six, while the remainder play in a bottom-tier league.

The top six will then play two rounds, with the top four making it through to the Golden Square semi-finals. There, the top seeds play the fourth and the second seeds take on the third.

# India's Rushikesh advances in ITF tennis

TDT | Manama

Second seed Rushikesh Sonawane of India barged into the second round of the boys' singles main draw yesterday in the third Bahrain ITF Juniors 2023 tournament, currently being played at the Bahrain Tennis Federation (BTF) hard courts in Isa Town.

The competition is a J30 event that is part of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) World Tennis Tour Juniors, which features the world's top tennis talents aged 13 to 18.

Rushikesh made it through



A player in action in the boys' singles yesterday

with a 6-2, 6-0 win against Satam Moafa of Saudi Arabia. He will next take on Nikita Gribyakin of Estonia, who was a victor on the opening day of the tournament on Monday.

Others to claim victories yesterday and move on to round two were third seed Georgii Arakelian, Ernest Yakubovskiy, Daniil Karpukhin, Fedor Sosedkin, Abdulmalik Alshamrani of Saudi Arabia, Akmal Abdullaev of Uzbekistan, Khaled Ibrahim of Egypt, and Sacha Fontanges of France.

Ernest claimed a tough 6-4, 5-7, 6-0 win over Bahrain's Shadi

Kallel, while Sacha upset boys' singles eighth seed Ahmed Ibrahim of Egypt 7-6 (10-8), 4-6, 6-4.

Meanwhile, action in both the girls' and boys' doubles got underway yesterday.

Taking wins amongst the girls were the pairing of Arina Malygina and Anastasia Myachina, the tandem of Katarina Curcic of Serbia and Saiyette Varadkar of India, the duo of Sara Desouky of Egypt and Asil Oktay of Turkey, and the Turkish pair of Yasemin Eiselmeier and Sude Ulueren.

Amongst the boys pairings, emerging triumphant were

fourth seeds Radu Cojocar of Australia and Nikita, Emre Atlamis and Doruk Calikoglu of Turkey, Akmal and Sofyan El-naqa of Egypt, and the Mongolian tandem of Sonompuntsag Enkhjargal and Undrakh Purevdorj.

Tournament action continues today at the BTF.

The ongoing competition is the first of three straight ITF tournaments to be hosted by Bahrain in succession. The second, which begins on 6 November, is also a J30 event, while the third, a J60 competition, will begin on 13 November.