

Ariana, Venkat keep hopes alive

Top seeds stay in running for both singles and doubles crowns in Bahrain ITF Juniors 2023 tennis tournament

● Ariana and Adiya Omarbek to face Luisa Fusil and Pallavi Patel for girls' doubles title

● Venkat and Dev Kanbargimath to play Bora Bakici and Cagan Efe Tufekci in boys' doubles final

TDT | Manama

Top seeds Ariana Gogulina of Kazakhstan and Venkat Rishi Batlanki of the US both stayed on course to secure impressive title-doubles in the Bahrain ITF Juniors 2023 tournament, currently being played at the Bahrain Tennis Federation (BTF) hard courts in Isa Town.

Ariana remained in contention for the titles in both the girls'



A player in action during yesterday's matches

singles and doubles categories, while Venkat kept in the running for the first-place trophies in the boys' singles and doubles.

Ariana advanced to the girls' singles semi-finals yesterday after beating sixth seed Liliya Piskun 6-2, 6-2. She will next

take on third seed Sosanne Malak of Egypt, who was a 6-2, 6-3 winner over Luisa Fusil of Slovenia in their match yesterday.

The other final four encounter will be between seventh seed Alina Sogomonyan and Arina

BETTER YOU KNOW

Ariana Gogulina of Slovenia, Sosanne Malak of Egypt, Alina Sogomonyan and Arina Malygina will play in the girls' singles semi-finals; while in the boys' singles final four are Venkat Rishi Batlanki of the US, Bora Bakici of Turkey, Josh Hinton from Great Britain and Andres Pereiro Lopez of Spain

Malygina. Alina edged past Simona Cucu of Romania 6-4, 6-4

in their clash yesterday while Arina overcame a tough challenge from Kazakhstan's Adiya Omarbek 6-3, 0-6, 6-4.

Meanwhile, in the girls' doubles, Ariana and Adiya, the fourth seeds, advanced to the gold medal match after beating Simona and Emily Lederer of Austria 7-5, 6-2 in their semi-final yesterday.

They will take on Luisa and Pallavi Patel of India, who beat Arina and Anastasia Myachina 6-3, 3-6, 10-8.

In the boys' singles, top-seeded Venkat won his quarter-final against eighth seed Dev Kanbargimath. Dev won the first set 6-2 but Venkat was leading in the second 4-3 when Dev retired.

Venkat will face sixth seed Bora Bakici of Turkey, who won over third seed Samprit Sharma of India 6-4, 6-1 in their match yesterday.

The other final four encounter will be between fifth seed Josh Hinton from Great Britain

and Andres Pereiro Lopez of Spain. Josh was a 6-3, 6-3 winner against Vishnu Balachandar of the US, while Andres overcame Radu Cojocaru of Australia 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-2 to advance.

The boys' doubles crown will be contested by the pairs of Venkat and Dev and third seeds Bora and Cagan Efe Tufekci. Venkat and Dev beat Turks Ozan Avanoğlu and Mustafa Ege Topbas 7-6 (4), 6-3, while Bora and Cagan overcame second seeds Samprit and Rushikesh Sonowane 7-5, 6-1.

The singles semi-finals are scheduled to be held today at the BTF, along with both doubles finals.

The tournament is the second of three straight ITF events being hosted by the Kingdom. It is a J30 event that is part of the 2023 International Tennis Federation (ITF) World Tennis Tour Juniors, which features the world's top tennis talents aged 13 to 18.

Jokic leads Nuggets past Warriors in NBA thriller

AFP | New York

Nikola Jokic scored 35 points as the Denver Nuggets defeated the Golden State Warriors 108-105 in a blockbuster showdown between the two NBA heavyweights on Wednesday.

A pulsating clash featuring the last two NBA champions lived up to the billing, with the Western Conference rivals going toe-to-toe in a game that saw the lead change hands nine times.

After trailing for almost the entire game at Denver's Ball Arena, the Warriors edged in front heading into the fourth quarter after outscoring Denver 31-23 in the third.

But Denver recovered from a five-point deficit early in the fourth to snatch victory, clinching the win after Klay Thomp-



Nikola Jokic of the Denver Nuggets drives against Kevin Looney of the Golden State Warriors

son's attempted game-tying buzzer-beater drifted wide.

The victory cemented Denver's place at the top of the Western Conference, with the reigning NBA champions im-

proving to 8-1.

"We don't have the pressure of being a champion, we're just trying to enjoy the moment," Jokic told ESPN.

"I'm just trying to play the

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We don't have the pressure of being a champion, we're just trying to enjoy the moment. I'm just trying to play the game the right way. And as long as we're winning I think I'm doing a good job," added Jokic, who also had 13 rebounds and five assists

NIKOLA JOKIC

game the right way. And as long as we're winning I think I'm doing a good job," added Jokic, who also had 13 rebounds and five assists.

Reggie Jackson backed Jokic with 20 points while Michael Porter Jr. had 17.

Najma miss out on semis berth



Al Najma's Mohammed Habib Ahmed looks to shoot from the penalty stripe during their game against the San Francisco Calheat

● Bahrainis to play for fifth-to-eighth classification, starting tomorrow against Khaleej Club of Saudi Arabia

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Al Najma Club narrowly missed out on the semi-finals of the prestigious IHF Men's Super Globe, currently being held in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Najma lost out on a potential berth after and Barlinek Industria Kielce routed the San Francisco Calheat from the US 49-23 to claim first place in Group D of the competition's preliminary round.

Only the top team from each of the four preliminary round pools move on to the last four. The runners-up go to the fifth-

to-eighth place bracket, while the bottom clubs will play in the ninth-to-12th placement games to determine their overall classification.

Najma finished as runners-up and will now take on Khaleej Club from Saudi Arabia in their opening game of the fifth-to-eighth classification. That will be tomorrow at 3.15pm, Bahrain time.

The winners will then move on to contest for fifth overall on the tournament's final day on Sunday.

Najma are participating in the IHF Super Globe for the second time, following the 2018 edition when they finished seventh.

They hope they can better that result this year.

The global competition, organised by the International Handball Federation (IHF), is in its 16th year, and Najma are the only Bahraini participants from the 12 teams.

Australia coach says big-hitter Maxwell has key World Cup bowling role

AFP | New Delhi

Glenn Maxwell's extraordinary batting exploits may have made headlines but coach Andrew McDonald believes the all-rounder's bowling could be just as vital to Australia's hopes of winning the World Cup.

Maxwell assured Australia of a semi-final spot thanks to a stunning unbeaten double century against Afghanistan in Mumbai on Tuesday that secured a three-wicket win after his side had collapsed to 91-7 chasing a target of 292.

Earlier in the tournament, the 35-year-old scored the fastest century at any World Cup, off 40 balls, against the Netherlands.

Yet even though the off-spinner has taken only five wickets at an expensive average of 52 he boasts the best economy rate of any Australia bowler, conceding just 4.95 runs per over at this World Cup.

Australia still have one group game, against Bangladesh in



Australia's Glenn Maxwell (R) celebrates with teammates

Pune on Saturday, before a semi-final against South Africa -- the last team to defeat them in pool play in India before they went on a six-game winning streak -- in either Mumbai or Kolkata next week.

McDonald has no doubts about Maxwell's role in support of in-form leg-spinner Adam Zampa.

"Him (Maxwell) as the second spinner has been really pivotal in the role that he's played," McDonald told Australian yesterday.

"We talk about him and his batting in one space, but I think his bowling has allowed us to function as a team differently to potentially how we saw it coming in and potentially how

everyone else saw it coming in." Steve Smith missed the Afghanistan game following a bout of vertigo, a condition that has troubled the star batsman several times in recent years.

"He feels pretty good today, I saw him in the corridor," McDonald said of the 34-year-old Smith, who was ruled out shortly before the toss after training on the outfield.

YOU KNOW WHAT

With a place in the last four guaranteed, Australia do have the option to rest key players against Bangladesh tomorrow

FINAL GROUP D STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	+/-	Pts
Barlinek Industria Kielce (Poland)	2	2	0	0	27	4
Al Najma (Bahrain)	2	1	0	1	6	2
San Francisco Calheat (US)	2	0	0	2	-33	0