

## Bahrain senior men's national team kick off training camp



Veteran international Sayed Dhiya Saeed leads his teammates in drills during last night's training session

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national football team kicked off last night their latest training camp in the Kingdom.

The nationals are preparing for a pair of upcoming friendlies this month, which is part of their programme leading up to their highly anticipated title-defence in the Gulf Cup and the AFC Asian Cup, both happening next year.

The nationals held their opening practice session at the Hamad Town Stadium under the supervision of head coach Helio Sousa and his staff.

The Portuguese tactician has called up 24 players for this period, including Ali Madan, Abdulla Yusuf, Ali Haram, Hamad Shamsan, Jassim Al Shaikh, Komail Al Aswad, Mohammed Jassim Marhoon, Mohammed Al Rumaihi, Sayed Redha Isa, Abdulwahab Al Malood, Amine Hasan, Rashed Al Hooti, Sayed Mohammed Jaafar, Waleed Al Hayam, Mahdi Humaidan, Mohammed Adel, Sayed Dhiya Saeed, Ammar Abbas, Ebrahim Al Khattal, Mahdi Abdullatif,

Hussain Al Khayyat, Jassim Khelaif, Abdulaziz Mohammed and Ebrahim Luthfallah.

All but one of the players were present yesterday, with Jakarta-based Abdulla Yusuf having a club fixture today. He is scheduled to join training by Monday, according to a national team official.

The Bahrainis will play their first tune-up game next week against Cape Verde on September 23, and then face off with Panama on September 27, which will also be the final day of this training camp. Both contests are to be held at the National Stadium in Riffa, kicking off at 7pm each time.

The friendlies are the second and third warm-up games scheduled by the BFA for the senior men's team. They have added to the game Bahrain will be playing against FIFA World Cup 2022 participants Serbia on November 18, also at home.

Both Cape Verde and Panama are classified above Bahrain in the FIFA World Ranking. Cape Verde are in the Confederation of African Football, and they are currently 72nd in the world.

# Bahrain beat Bhutan in Asian U-20 football

Hosts keep hopes alive of finishing as Group B winners with second successive victory in qualification for AFC U-20 Asian Cup 2023

TDI | Manama

Bahrain made the most of home-field advantage and posted a hard-earned 2-1 victory over Bhutan last night in the Group B qualifiers for the AFC U-20 Asian Cup 2023, currently being held in the Kingdom.

Skipper Mohammed Mubarak Habib and midfielder Salem Isa Aldoseri were both on target for the hosts on either side of half-time.

For Bhutan, forward Santa Kumar Limboo fired in their consolation goal.

The result earned the Bahrainis their second successive victory of the qualifiers, while Bhutan suffered their third loss in four games.

Bahrain stayed in second place on the division standings after improving to seven points, while Bhutan completed their qualification campaign with three points from a single victory.

The nationals remained behind Qatar on the Group B table. The Qataris outclassed Bangladesh 3-0 in yesterday's other game to remain undefeated in three matches.

The result kept them in first place with nine points, while Bangladesh suffered their first



Bahrain's Mubarak Mohammed Habib tries to keep possession of the ball against Bhutan's Karma Tashi Jamtsho

loss and are third with four points.

Only one matchday remains in the qualifiers being held in Bahrain. That will be played tomorrow, with Nepal taking on Bangladesh at 6pm followed by Qatar and Bahrain clashing at 9pm. Both fixtures will take place at the Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium in Arad.

The Bahrainis' match with their Qatari counterparts will determine the Group B winners, who will earn an automatic spot at next year's AFC U-20 Asian Cup.

A draw or loss for Bahrain could put them in second place in the division, and they will hope to be one of the best five

to the right of the net. That was enough to put the Bahrainis ahead heading into the locker rooms.

In the second half, Habib was this time the supplier of the assist that led to their second goal in the 60th minute. His low cross from the right was left uncleared by the Bhutan defence, and Aldoseri pounced and tapped the ball in from close range.

The nationals should have tripled their advantage just three minutes later when they were given another penalty after midfielder Sayed Ali Naser was tripped in the area by Bhutan defender Kinzang Tshering, but Habib's left-footed shot was poorly hit and was saved by Gyeltschen.

The visitors then gave Bahrain a scare when they reduced the deficit in the 76th minute with their lone goal—a left-footed effort to the bottom-right corner by Limboo.

### Group B standings

	P	W	D	L	+/-	Pts
<b>Qatar</b>	3	3	0	0	11	9
<b>Bahrain</b>	3	2	1	0	7	7
<b>Bangladesh</b>	3	1	1	1	-2	4
<b>Bhutan</b>	4	1	0	3	-6	3
<b>Nepal</b>	3	0	0	3	-10	0

## 'Exceptional' Haaland can get even better, says Guardiola

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola has described Erling Haaland as the "perfect person" to manage but says the prolific Manchester City striker can get even better.

Guardiola compared the Norwegian to Johan Cruyff in midweek after his superb late winner against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League.

The strike was Haaland's 13th in just nine appearances since his £51 million (\$58 million) move to the Etihad Stadium from Dortmund in the summer transfer window.

"He's an exceptional striker, I've said it many times," City boss Guardiola told reporters yesterday.

"But at the age he is, and I think he has ambition, he wants to be better and I think he will be better."

"He's a perfect person to manage. He's a nice guy and this is the most important thing."

"The quality he has he had before he came here and he has continued to do what he has done. We didn't add many things."

City, second in the Premier League, are back in action at Wolves in the early kick-off on Saturday.

The champions won 5-1 at Molineux, with four goals from



Manchester City's Erling Haaland, right, scores his side's second goal

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goals have been scored by Erling Haaland in 21 in the Champions League games

Kevin De Bruyne, on their last visit in May but Guardiola expects a different encounter this time.

He feels Wolves are a much tougher proposition than their record of one win in six league games suggests.

"It's a completely different team to previous seasons. They played five at the back with (Conor) Coady, now they decide to play with four and I'm really impressed with the way they play," Guardiola said.

"Their position in the table is because football is unpredictable and sometimes you don't get what you deserve."

"They have a lot of good things in terms of central defenders making a good process and when they attack they have incredible runners, a lot of talent."

"We have to be mentally prepared, otherwise it will be difficult."

While City can rely on

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PEP GUARDIOLA

Haaland's predatory instincts, Wolves have found it harder to score this far this term.

Bruno Lage's team have netted just three times in six league games, prompting the free transfer signing of Spanish striker Diego Costa this week.

But the 33-year-old, a two-time Premier League champion with Chelsea, has not played since leaving Brazilian club Atletico Mineiro in January and Lage admits he will need time to make an impact.

"When Sasa (Kalajdzic) got injured Diego was available, so it was time to talk to him and convince him to come to us," Lage said.

"He is fit, there are no problems but he needs to be ready to compete at this level."

## Mourinho urges Roma forwards to be 'mean'



AS Roma coach Jose Mourinho reacts during a match (file photo)

Reuters | Rome

AS Roma manager Jose Mourinho called on his strikers to shake off the "playmaker bug" and focus on scoring goals after his side beat HJK Helsinki 3-0 in the Europa League on Thursday but passed up several chances to inflict a heavier defeat.

Roma scored three times in the second half to beat 10-man HJK in their Group C encounter, with Andrea Belotti recording his first goal for the club since joining last month.

"We need to improve in how quickly we move the ball,"

“We need to improve in how quickly we move the ball. Our forwards need to be mean; we waste too many openings”

JOSE MOURINHO

Mourinho said. "Our forwards need to be mean; we waste too many openings."

The Portuguese manager said that new striker Belotti seemed to have caught the "playmaker bug".