

# Iran to Host 2 Int'l Beach Volleyball Events



TEHRAN – Iran will host two international beach volleyball events in 2022 after numerous negotiations with the Asian Volleyball Confederation.

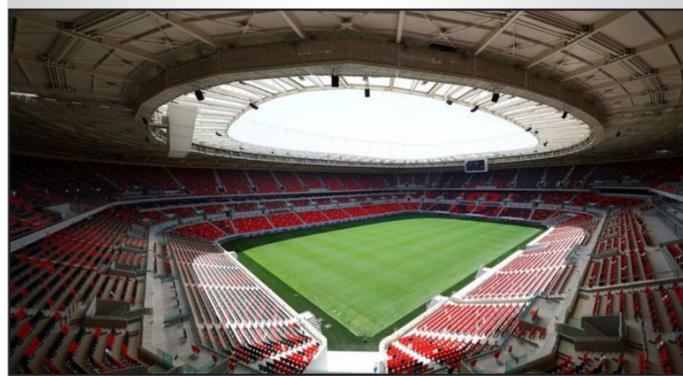
The Asian Volleyball Confederation agreed with Iran to host two major beach volleyball events in 2022.

Iran's Volleyball Federation will host the 2022 Asian Men's Beach Volleyball Championship and the Asian Men's Master Beach Volleyball Tournament.

The Asian Men's Master Beach Volleyball Tournament will be held from November 7 to November 11 in Bandar Abbas, Iran.

The 2022 Asian Men's Beach Volleyball Championship will also be followed from November 14 to November 18 in Bandar Abbas.

## Qatar World Cup Audience Projected at 5 Billion, Says FIFA Boss



Soccer Football - General views of the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium - Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, Al Rayyan, Qatar, March 30, 2022. General view inside the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, a venue for the 2022 Qatar World Cup

LONDON (Reuters) - The TV audiences for the 2018 World Cup in Russia was a record-breaking 3.5 billion people.

Qatar, a small but wealthy Persian Gulf Arab state, will host the first World Cup in the Middle East starting late November.

Its ruling Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has criticized attacks on Qatar by some people, "including many in positions of influence", over its hosting of the event.

"Even today, there are still people who cannot accept the idea, that an Arab

Muslim country, would host a tournament, like the World Cup," he said in a speech at the World Economic Forum.

He said Qatar, like other states, was "not perfect" but has pushed reforms and development. Reforms include raising the minimum wage and new rules authorities say are designed to protect workers, including from heat stress.

Qatar has come under intense criticism from human rights groups over its treatment of migrant workers, who along with other foreigners comprise the bulk of the country's population.

## Djokovic Eases Past Nishioka Into Round Two of French Open

PARIS (Reuters) - World number one and holder Novak Djokovic has cruised past Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-3 6-1 6-0 to advance to the French Open second round in a comfortable start to his quest for a record-equaling 21st Grand Slam.

The Serb, who turned 35 on Sunday, needed less than two hours to beat the Japanese world number 99 in his first Grand Slam this year after missing the Australian Open.

"I have to be pleased with the match. I struggled to adapt in the first set. He is a very quick player. The first set was close but I cruised through the second and third," Djokovic told reporters.

"I always expect the highest



Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a shot against Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka during their first round match at the French Open tennis tournament in Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France, May 23, 2022.

for myself but it was a very good start."

Fresh from his Italian Open victory without dropping a set eight days ago, the defending champion broke Nishioka, who deployed a risky strategy of playing tight angles from the start, to move 4-2 up.

Djokovic, unable to defend his Australian Open title due to his refusal to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and his subsequent deportation amid a media frenzy, squandered a set point at 5-2 but comfortably held serve to close it out.

The Serb was never really troubled by Nishioka and galloped through the next two sets, dropping one game in the process.

## Barcelona Finish With Defeat by Villarreal



BARCELONA (AFP) - Barcelona finished 13 points behind La Liga champions Real Madrid after ending their turbulent season with a whimper on Sunday by losing 2-0 at home to Villarreal.

Atletico Madrid secured third place by winning 2-1 away at Real Sociedad, retaining their one-point lead over Sevilla, who won 1-0 at home to Athletic Bilbao.

Athletic's defeat, combined with Villarreal's excellent victory at Camp Nou, means Villarreal beat Athletic into seventh and qualify for the Europa Conference League.

Villarreal's season was lit up by their sensational run to the semi-finals of the Champions League but Unai Emery's team have suffered from inconsistency against the lower sides in La Liga and will be demoted to Europe's third-tier competition next term.

Athletic finish eighth while Real Socie-

dad held onto sixth and Europa League qualification, despite their loss at home to Atletico Madrid.

At the other end of the table, Granada joined Alaves and Levante in being relegated.

Granada were held to a goalless draw by Espanyol, allowing Cadiz, who won 1-0 away at Alaves, to survive. Mallorca also stayed up by beating Osasuna 2-0.

Barca already had second place and a spot in the top four wrapped up but Xavi Hernandez will be concerned heading into the summer about how his team has faded.

"We feel a bit sad about today's result," Dani Alves told Barca TV. "We have to reflect, change our mentality next season and put more effort on the pitch because we are representing this great club and we cannot reach the end of the season again without competing for anything."

## Celtics Thrash Heat to Even NBA Series 2-2



Boston Celtics guard Derrick White (9) pressures Miami Heat forward Jimmy Butler (22) on a shot during the first half of Game 4 of the NBA basketball playoffs Eastern Conference finals, May 23, 2022, in Boston.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - With Jayson Tatum's 31 points, the Bos-

ton Celtics thrashed the Miami Heat 102-82 to tie their NBA East-

ern Conference finals series 2-2.

The Heat were routed in the first quarter, misfiring on their first 14 shots while Bam Adebayo's one point from a free throw barely avoided the embarrassment. The away team got the first field goal at 3:22, a 3-pointer by Victor Oladipo. The Celtics led 29-11 in the first quarter.

With Miami's offense unable to penetrate a defense bolstered by the return of Robert Williams, the Celtics kept the pressure on in the second quarter, extending the lead to 27 points. Jimmy Butler contributed just six points, and the Heat's starters totaled 10 points in the first half. Oladipo was the only one

from the Heat squad to step out as he scored 18 points off the bench.

The Celtics stretched their advantage to 32 in the third quarter, and any hopes Miami had of mounting a second-half fightback were quickly snuffed out. The departure of Williams helped Miami cut the deficit to 23 points at 73-50, but it was only a temporary reprieve.

Boston continued to score steadily at the start of the fourth quarter and set a 31-point lead at 88-57 with just under nine minutes remaining before sealing the final victory.

Jayson Tatum rediscovered his scoring touch with 31 points, as well as eight rebounds and five assists. Payton Pritchard had 14 points for the Celtics.

Victor Oladipo led the Heat with 23 points. Miami's starting five were a combined 7 of 36 shooting and all sat out the fourth quarter.

## Ukraine Will Be Ready for World Cup Play-Off: Scotland Boss Clarke

LONDON (AFP) - Scotland manager Steve Clarke expects Ukraine to be focused in their World Cup play-off showdown despite the impact of the war in their homeland.

Clarke's side host Ukraine on June 1, in a rescheduled play-off semifinal which was due to be played in March before Russia-Ukraine war led to a postponement.

Ukraine have been working at a training camp in Slovenia for several weeks and Clarke believes they will arrive in Glasgow determined to try to secure a place at the World Cup in Qatar later this year.

"We all understand and respect the position of the Ukrainian team," Clarke said on Monday. "Fortunately for them they've managed to get out of the country and get their players into a training camp. "They've been playing matches



Scotland manager Steve Clarke

and they'll be ready for the game. The most important thing for me as the Scotland head coach is to make sure we're ready for the game, and we will be ready. Both teams will be ready to go on June 1."

When the war began there were doubts about whether Ukraine would be able to fulfil the fixture,

but Clarke is delighted they can have a fair shot at qualification.

If Scotland beat Ukraine they would travel to Cardiff to face Wales in the play-off final on June 5.

Scotland, 39th in the FIFA rankings, have not played at a World Cup since the 1998 tournament in France.

## Alvarez to Face Golovkin in Trilogy Fight

PARIS (AFP) - Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez will face Gennady Golovkin in a trilogy fight in September rather than meet Dmitry Bivol in a rematch.

Mexican Alvarez, 31, will return to super-middleweight, where he is undisputed champion, after a shock defeat by Bivol at light-heavyweight.

Alvarez had the option of a rematch with Russian Bivol, but will honor his agreement with Kazakhstan's Golovkin.

"In the next few days we will announce the September fight," he told ESPN.

"Surely, it will be against GGG because we already had that agreement, but I will also fight Bivol again."

Alvarez beat Golovkin in their rematch in 2018 after a contro-



Alvarez (left) has won 57 of his 61 fights, while Golovkin has won 42 of 44

versal draw in 2017, both of which were at middleweight.

Golovkin, who turned 40 in April, has won four successive fights since losing to Alvarez, reclaiming the IBF and WBA (Su-

per) middleweight titles along the way.

Before his defeat by Bivol on 7 May - only the second loss of his career - Alvarez had agreed to face Golovkin on 17 September.