

South Korea picks Hwang Sun-hong as interim coach



● REUTERS

The Korea Football Association (KFA) said on Tuesday it has picked Hwang Sun-hong, coach of the under-23 team, as temporary head coach of the national side to prepare for the upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

The National Team Committee, a KFA advisory body, had been looking for a replacement after sacking Juergen Klinsmann in the wake of the national side's semi-final exit at the Asian Cup and amid criticism of his leadership, Reuters reported.

Hwang, 55, steered the under-23 national team to gold in the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games, and was a member of the 2002 World Cup squad that reached the semi-finals on home soil under Dutch coach Guus Hiddink.

Hwang was the "No. 1 choice" given his experience and he will resume his role with the under-23 team after leading the national side through two 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Thailand in March, said Jung Hae-sung, who heads the committee.

"Our committee, in the meantime, will hold in-depth discussions to appoint a full-time coach, reviewing what kind of football we want to pursue and which style of the coach we need," Jung told a briefing.

The KFA dismissed Klinsmann following South Korea's stumble at the semi-final stage at the Asian Cup which extended their 64-year wait for a third title and rekindled criticism of the German coach's leadership.

Hwang will double as coach of the national team and also prepare the under-23 squad for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics, starting in April in Qatar.

He will also have to contain infighting in the national squad after a well-publicised quarrel between captain Son Heung-min of Tottenham Hotspur and team mate Lee Kang-in of Paris St Germain.

Fans of teams whose coaches were in the rumor mill for the national team job condemned the KFA's lack of respect for the league. Among the coaches being bandied about were Hong Myung-bo of Ulsan HD FC and Kim Hak-bum of Jeju United.

FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers:

India go down fighting against Iran

Iran defeated India 86-53 at the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Qualifiers Window 1 on Monday at the K.D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi. Five players finished in double figures in the lopsided win, with lead swingman Behnam Yakhchali leading the way with a game-high 15 points, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Ranked 81st in the FIBA rankings, India were the underdogs against 27th-ranked Iran but the hosts started with a lot of gumption as the packed stadium cheered them throughout the hour-long match.

Iran took time to get into their rhythm but moved ahead, using their superior physicality to get past the Indian defence but the hosts were definitely in the game, trailing by just three points at the end of the first quarter.

The Indians tried to counter Iran with fast-paced runs and converted over 40% of their two-pointers but struggled to content Iran on the rebounds and paid the price for the same. India, who had lost their Group opener away to Kazakhstan, trailed 32-42 at half time.

For Iran, Behnam Yakhchali scored 15 points while Mohammad Amini and Salar Monji added 14 points each for the team.

Salar Monji and 18-year-



● FIBA

old forward Mohammad Amini produced identical numbers of 14 points and 9 rebounds, with the former netting a game-best efficiency of 23. Sajjad Mashayekhi, the hero in their overtime escape of Qatar last game, supplied

11 points. Meisam Mirzaei flirted with a double-double with 10 points and 9 boards.

Team Melli was holding a slim three-point lead late in the second period until Mirzaei led a 9-2 run that gave it a 42-32 lead heading into

halftime.

Commenting on the team's performance, Serbian Vaseline Matic, who is head coach of Indian team said, "India has talent, we need more experience. We have some gap now before the next qualifier in Novem-

ber and the national team will be participating in club championship and multiple other exposure trips. We are confident that we can give a winning performance."

When asked which Indian player impressed him the

most and in response the Iranian Coach, Hakan Demor spoke highly about the young Indian side. He said he was really impressed by the Indian forward Pranav Prince.

Iran had defeated Qatar 76-74 in Tehran on Friday.



● TASNIM

Georgian defender Chabradze joins Zob Ahan

Georgian defender Grigol Chabradze joined Iran's Zob Ahan football club. Chabradze, 27, has joined the Iranian top-flight club from Georgian club Dinamo Batumi, reported Tasnim News Agency.

He has played in Georgia's national team nine times.

Zob Ahan will host Persepolis today in Isfahan in the 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL) and the player will most likely play in this match.

Chabradze's compatriot Giorgi Gvelesiani is a key player of Persepolis.

Andy Murray nets 500th career hard-court win

Three-time major champion Andy Murray from Great Britain won his 500th career hard-court match when he beat Canadian Denis Shapovalov 4-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3 in the first round of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.

Murray - who joined Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Andre Agassi and Rafael Nadal in the 500 club - said in a post-match interview that he "probably

(doesn't) have too long left but I'll do the best that I can these last few months," a possible hint that the 36-year-old is considering retirement, reported AFP.

No. 2 seed Andrey Rublev of Russia rallied past China's Zhizhen Zhang 6-7 (4), 6-2, 6-4, while Polish third seed Hubert Hurkacz outlasted German Jan-Lennard Struff 7-6 (5), 6-7 (4), 7-6 (6).

No. 7 seed Alexander Bublik also needed three sets to top Czech qualifier Tomas Machac 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (5), and Dutchman Botich van de Zandschulp upset French sixth seed

Adrian Mannarino 7-6 (3), 7-5.

American Sebastian Korda knocked off Russia's Pavel Kotov 6-0, 6-2 in 54 minutes, and Tallon Griekspoor of the Netherlands led 7-5, 2-0 when Jordanian opponent Abdullah Shelbayh retired.

Abierto Mexicano Telcel

Two seeded U.S. players lost their first-round matches at Acapulco, Mexico.

Great Britain's Jack Draper needed just 86 minutes to oust seventh-seeded Tommy Paul 6-0, 6-4, and Italy's Matteo Arnaldi stunned fourth-seeded Taylor Fritz 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Draper never dropped his serve, shaking off three break points while converting four of his five break opportunities.

Arnaldi wound up with a 39-22 edge in winners, while he and Fritz each committed 16 unforced errors.

Third-seeded Alex De Minaur of Australia sailed into the second round with a 6-2, 6-1 blowout of Japan's Taro Daniel. The United States' Ben Shelton rallied past Great Britain's Daniel Evans 2-6, 7-5, 7-6 (5), and Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic

came from behind to defeat Argentina's Diego Schwartzman 4-6, 6-3, 6-1. Austria's Sebastian Ofner edged Mexico's Ernesto Escobedo 6-7 (7), 6-4, 7-6 (4).

In late matches, Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka overtook Portugal's Nuno Borges 3-6, 6-2, 6-4, and Italy's Flavio Cobolli eliminated Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime 2-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Movistar Chile Open

Sixth-seeded Facundo Diaz Acosta prevailed in an all-Argentine first round, rallying past Pedro Cachin 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (2) on clay at Santiago, Chile.

In a match that lasted 3 hours, 8 minutes, Diaz Acosta won the last five points of the third-set tiebreaker. Cachin had 18 break chances in the match but converted just three of them.

Another Argentine, Federico Coria, registered a 6-1, 7-6 (1) win over Slovakia's Alex Molcan. French qualifier Corentin Moutet upset seventh-seeded Roberto Carballes Baena 6-3, 7-5, 6-2, and Spain's Pedro Martinez got past Italy's Francesco Passaro 6-4, 6-1.

