

Lionsâ?? Road To Riyadh: Singapore Target Strong June Friendlies Ahead Of ASEAN Championship And Asian Cup 2027

Description

default watermark

The Singapore Lions are on the move. With the AFC Asian Cup 2027 in Saudi Arabia secured and the ASEAN Championship Hyundai Cup 2026 looming in July, Gavin Leeâ??s Singapore national team head into their **June 2026** friendlies with real purpose. Two matches at Jalan Besar Stadium â?? against Mongolia on 31 May and China PR on 5 June â?? will serve as critical preparation blocks on the Lionsâ?? road to Riyadh.

Why The June 2026 Singapore Lions Fixtures Matter

When Singapore qualified for the Asian Cup on merit for the first time in their history â?? sealing it with a 2â??1 comeback win over Hong Kong last November â?? it marked a watershed moment for football in the Lion City. Now the real work begins. The draw in Riyadh on 9 May placed the Lions in Group D alongside Australia, Iraq and Tajikistan â?? a formidable challenge that demands the squad reach a new level.

Coach Gavin Lee has been consistent about one thing: qualification being secured changes nothing about the approach. â??The next match is always the most important,â?• he said ahead of the March camp. That mentality now drives a busy June window that will test depth, fitness and tactical cohesion ahead of the ASEAN Championship in July and August.

The Mongolia match on 31 May offers a controlled environment to bed in systems and hand fringe players valuable minutes. But it is the 5 June clash with China PR that really catches the eye. China are a team in the same World Cup qualification round as Singapore, and the encounter will reveal precisely where Leeâ??s side stand against higher-ranked Asian opposition.



Seven Lion City Sailors players were named in the Lionsâ?? June squad. Source: Lion City Sailors FC official website (lioncitysailorsfc.sg)

Key Players In Gavin Leeâ??s 28-Man Squad

Seven Lion City Sailors stars have been called up, reflecting how central the back-to-back SPL champions are to the national set-up. Captain Hariss Harun â?? 146 caps and still commanding in the centre of midfield â?? leads a spine that includes Kyoga Nakamura, whose versatility in midfield gives Lee tactical options, and Shawal Anuar, Singaporeâ??s reliable outlet on the left flank with 50 caps and 18 international goals.

Nur Adam Abdullah and Lionel Tan retain their places, while Song Uiyoung earns a recall after an excellent return to fitness. The 32-year-old capped his SPL campaign with a stunning long-range strike for the Sailors and Lee clearly values what the midfielder brings off the bench.

Up front, Ikhsan Fandi remains the Lionsâ?? standard-bearer â?? 46 caps, 22 goals and a growing profile across Southeast Asian football with BG Pathum United in Thailand. Alongside him, younger brother Ilhan Fandi (23 caps, 5 goals) continues to mature under the Buriram United setup. The Fandi brothers offer pace, movement and a dynamism that will be vital against the deep defensive blocks that Mongolia will likely deploy.

At the back, veteran Safuwan Baharudin (130 caps) anchors the defensive line alongside Amirul Adli and Irfan Fandi, who continues to develop his career in Thailand with Port FC. The defensive unit has grown significantly under Lee and conceding only four goals in eight qualifying matches was a major factor in their historic campaign.

default watermark



The Lions in training as they build towards the ASEAN Championship and Asian Cup 2027. Source: Lion City Sailors FC official website (lioncitysailorsfc.sg)

The Road Ahead: ASEAN Cup, Asian Cup And A Nationâ??s Ambitions

The ASEAN Championship Hyundai Cup 2026, running in July and August, is the most immediate prize. Singapore have won the tournament twice in their history â?? in 1998 and 2012 â?? and the appetite to bring the trophy back to the Lion City is real. The group stage draw will determine their path, but the Lions will enter with a squad that has been playing together with growing consistency since Lee took the helm.

Looking further ahead, Group D at the 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia presents a genuine challenge. Australia are ranked in the top 25 in Asia; Iraq are established continental contenders. But Singapore have already proven they belong at this level. The performances against Hong Kong and India in qualifying showed not just defensive solidity but the ability to come from behind and seize crucial moments.

These June friendlies are about more than winning results â?? they are about building the belief, the combinations and the tactical sharpness that Leeâ??s Lions will need on the grandest stage Singaporean football has ever reached. Both matches kick off at 7.30pm at Jalan Besar Stadium. Tickets are available through the Football Association of Singapore.

For more Singapore sports news and football coverage, explore our Sports section.

Date Created
20/05/2026
Author
jadeyeo

default watermark