Africa ‘unanimously’ backs Sheikh Salman for FIFA presidency

**Lakers down Pelicans for second straight win**


didate to succeed Sepp Blatter as president of FIFA, the world’s governing body.

KIGALI, Feb 5, (AFP): The Confederation of African Football (CAF) and its Executive Committee have unanimously backed Sheikh Salman of Bahrain as its candidate for the FIFA presidency on February 26 when a vote will be held to elect a new FIFA president.

The other challenger in the vote for football’s top job on February 26 are Prince Ali, the only candidate not in the running for the FIFA presidency, and the Bahraini hinting of an attempt to breach the election rules and reach an agreement with two other candidates joining forces.

Sheikh Salman and his supporters have sought to put pressure on the other candidates to withdraw from the race despite being widely criticised and faced with an 8-year ban from football.

The other candidates in the race are Tokyo Sexwale and Ebrahim al-Khalifa of Bahrain as its candidate for the FIFA presidency on February 26 when a vote will be held to elect a new FIFA president.

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Speaking before CAF’s decision, Sexwale, who has a candidate from the African Football Confederation (CAF) and its Executive Committee have unanimously backed Sheikh Salman of Bahrain as its candidate for the FIFA presidency on February 26 when a vote will be held to elect a new FIFA president.

Kabele Camara said the decision to support Sheikh Salman for the FIFA presidency was made during the African Football Confederation (CAF) executive committee meeting held in Kigali on Feb 5.

During the campaign the sheikh has been backed by his country’s leaders, including the Prime Minister and the President of the country, who have praised his approach to the conduct of football and his ability to bring together the continent.

Sheikh Salman is a long-time FIFA member who has been a strong advocate for the development of football in Africa and the promotion of the game on the continent.

**NEW ORLEANS, Feb 5, (AP): Kobe Bryant scored 27 points, hitting three pivotal 3-pointers in the last six-plus minutes, and the Los Angeles Lakers won their second straight game, 99-96 over the New Orleans Pelicans on Thursday night.

Bryant, who scored a career-high 50 points in Minnesota two nights earlier, held his follow-through as his third 3-point attempt with 1:03 left to put the Lakers up 98-92, then regained his form and set up the Pelicans, who missed a critical shot at the end of the game. Bryant made 12 of 19 3-point attempts on the night, with Lowry scoring 12 of 19 3-point attempts on the night, with Lowry scoring 12 of 19.

In Portland, Oregon, Kyle Lowry had 25 points and nine assists, while CJ McCollum added 21 points and seven assists for the Pelicans in the matchup between two of the league’s top teams.

In Phoenix, Corey Brewer scored 24 points and 11 rebounds in the 200th meeting between the Clippers and the Suns.

Archie Goodwin led the Suns with 22 points, five assists, and four rebounds in the 200th meeting between the Clippers and the Suns.

In Dallas, the Mavericks’ Jose Calderon had 20 points and nine assists, while Wesley Matthews added 19 points and seven rebounds.

The Mavericks won their fifth straight game and improved to 31-13-1, while the Pelicans fell to 20-24-2.

In Orlando, Andre Drummond had 17 points and 12 rebounds as the Magic defeated the Pelicans, 111-105.

The Lakers won’t have Bryant for their next game against the Denver Nuggets on Saturday.

Bryant said he had a mild ankle sprain in the game and will be re-evaluated before the next game.

The Lakers (27-24) are currently the second-best team in the Western Conference, while the Pelicans (23-25) are struggling to get back into the playoff race.

**WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (AP):** Kevin Durant scored 27 points and hit a three-pointer with 1:03 left to put the Brooklyn Nets up 110-108 against the Miami Heat.

Durant hit a jumper and Allen Crabbe made a 3-pointer and the Nets scored 13 of 14 3-point attempts in the fourth quarter to blow past the Heat, 111-108.

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Durant hit a jumper and Allen Crabbe made a 3-pointer and the Nets scored 13 of 14 3-point attempts in the fourth quarter to blow past the Heat, 111-108.

In Philadelphia, the 76ers scored only 10 points in the fourth quarter and the Brooklyn Nets won 111-103.

In Denver, the Nuggets scored 125 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder scored 124 points.

In Dallas, the Mavericks scored 129 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder scored 120 points.

The Mavericks won their fifth straight game and improved to 31-13-1, while the Pelicans fell to 20-24-2.

In San Antonio, the Spurs scored 124 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder scored 121 points.

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