

Inside the Global Race to Redefine Stadiums: Why the World Stadiums & Arenas Awards Are Drawing Worldwide Attention

Landmark global projects confirmed among early nominations, including the iconic Santiago Bernabeu and Qatar's innovative World Cup stadiums

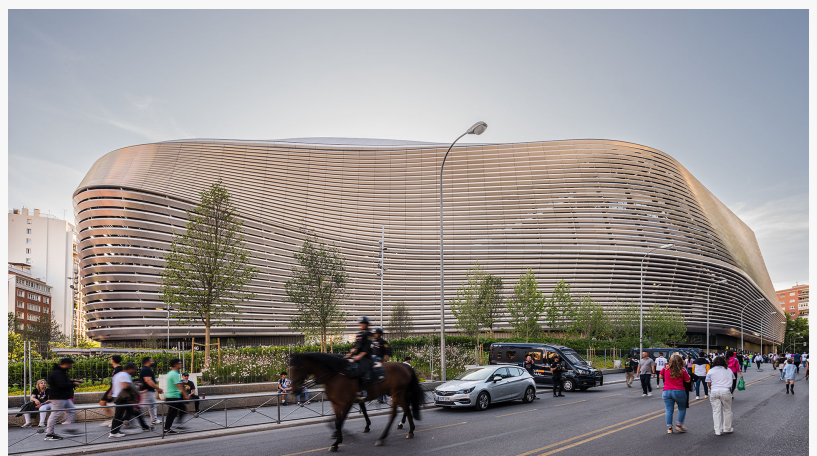
RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, February 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A global race is under way in the stadiums and arenas industry as the world's most ambitious venue projects vie for international recognition at the World Stadiums & Arenas Awards, part of the World Stadiums & Arenas Summit (WSAS) 2026, to be held in Riyadh next month.

The Awards have already attracted more than 40 high-calibre submissions from across the global sports and venue ecosystem, such is the calibre of the competition and entries; early rounds of judging have begun.

Early nominations highlight the growing competitiveness of the Awards, with landmark projects already submitted from Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and beyond, including recognised developments such as Real Madrid's iconic Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in Spain; Qatar's pioneering modular venue, Stadium 974; Sporting CP's next-generation José Alvalade 2.0 in Portugal; Serbia's flagship Belgrade National Stadium; the new national landmark Egypt New Capital Stadium; the renovation of Chile's historic Universidad Católica Stadium – Claro Arena; and the redevelopment of the Nove Bazaly Stadium, in the Czech Republic.

As global investment accelerates, the industry is undergoing a fundamental shift. Stadiums are no longer judged solely on capacity or spectacle, but on how intelligently they are designed, how efficiently they operate, and how meaningfully they integrate with their cities and communities. It is this evolution that the World Stadiums & Arenas Awards are designed to benchmark.

Judging is taking place across ten award categories, led by Brinda Somaya, founder and principal



Early nominations highlight the growing competitiveness of the Awards

architect of SNK | Somaya & Kalappa Consultants and Professor-at-Large emerita at Cornell University. Projects are being assessed against criteria that prioritise innovation, sustainability, operational excellence, fan experience and long-term legacy benchmarks increasingly defining global best practice.

“These submissions tell a story of an industry evolving at pace,” said Somaya. “The projects coming forward demonstrate how stadiums and arenas are being reimagined as civic landmarks, spaces that extend far beyond sport and entertainment.”

The World Stadiums & Arenas Awards will honour excellence through the full lifecycle of sports and entertainment venues, from design and construction to renovation, sustainability, and operational performance. Winners and two runners-up in each category will be announced during an exclusive Awards Gala Ceremony, marking the culmination of WSAS 2026, at the Hilton Riyadh Hotel & Residences, on 1 April 2026.

For event organisers, the growing volume of submissions signals something larger than numbers alone. Leila Masinaei, Managing Director of GM Events and World Stadiums & Arenas Summit, sees it as a reflection of where the industry is heading.

“Projects are no longer competing just to be bigger or bolder,” she said. “They are competing to be smarter, more sustainable and more meaningful. The response we’ve seen so far confirms that these Awards have become a global reference point for that ambition.”

As part of the event’s integrated 360° platform - bringing together the Summit, Athlete 360 Forum, and the Awards - the World Stadiums & Arenas Awards reinforce Saudi Arabia’s growing role as a global hub for sports infrastructure innovation and excellence.

Final Call for Submissions

Organisations across the sports and venue ecosystem—including clubs, venue owners and operators, developers, architects, engineers, contractors, technology providers, and public authorities—are invited to submit their projects before the extended deadline of 10 February.

Submissions are open via: <https://awards.stadiumsandarenassummit.com>

Ashraf Mohamed

Action Global Communication

+ +971502859460

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/891014082>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire,

Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.