

EXCLUSIVE

# Bayan Salman breaks Gulf basketball ground



The Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) U21 3x3 Championship, 1st Place Women's Division and MVP Honour

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Bayan Salman has become the first women's basketball player from Bahrain and the GCC to join an NCAA Division I team after signing for Charleston Southern University in the United States.

The 21-year-old Bahrain national team player will also study for an MBA at the university, pairing basketball in the NCAA's top tier with postgraduate work in business.

Salman said the move was about more than her own career, as she hoped it would show girls in Bahrain and across the Gulf that a place in US college basketball was possible.

'I want them to see that with hard work and belief, you can achieve things that seem out of reach,' Salman told *The Daily Tribune*. 'Being able to represent

Bahrain on this stage is a huge honour, and I hope it inspires more girls to pursue their dreams in sport.'

Salman said basketball first came into her life through her parents, who urged her to try different sports as a child. She said she loved the game from the start and wanted to improve each day.

She grew up admiring British basketball player Holly Winterburn, whose career helped her believe she could reach that level too.

Away from the court, Salman said her parents and sister had helped her reach this point. She also paid tribute to her late aunt, Fatima Jawad, whom she described as a kind and determined businesswoman who helped many people.

Charleston Southern stood out, she said, because of its coaching staff and style of play. With an almost new roster, Salman believes the team has a chance to shape a new side.

'I'm very grateful for the belief they have shown in me,' she said. 'I'm excited to go there, work hard and hopefully help make some programme history.'

Salman said she did not fully grasp where basketball could take her when she first started playing. As she grew older, Division I became a clear goal, though her path has not followed the usual college route.

Her biggest change off the court will be living away from her family. On it, she expects the speed and physicality of the American game to be the main test, along with taking on a role that may differ from the one she has known.

Salman described herself as a quick, hard-running player who likes to



Bayan Salman in action during Alba vs Najma 2026 Takafao League



With gold medal at 4th GCC Games, Doha

push the ball, attack in transition and bring energy to every training session and match.

She said balancing basketball with an MBA would require discipline, time management and focus, but added that Charleston Southern offered support for student-athletes.

Her message to young girls in Bahrain was to believe their goals are possible and not allow stereotypes or other people's doubts to set the limits.

'Never let anyone tell you what you can or cannot achieve,' she said. 'Stay close to God, trust the process, and remember that hard work never goes to waste.'

## Bahraini youth team climbs Africa's highest peak



● **Five-member team advances steadily on Mount Kilimanjaro in a test of endurance and teamwork**

**Hasan Barakat**  
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A team of young Bahraini adventurers is making steady progress towards the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, aiming to raise the Kingdom's flag atop Africa's highest mountain.

Organised by the Bahrain Youth Hostels Society, the expedition departed Bahrain earlier this week and began the mountain ascent about two days ago. The team is led by Saeeda Al Jowhro, Salman Rafiee, Haifa Abdulla, and Janan Ebrahim.

The multi-day expedition presents a demanding test of endurance, requiring physical fitness, mental resilience and discipline as climbers navigate

changing weather conditions and challenging terrain on their journey to the 5,895-metre summit.

The team hopes to raise Bahrain's national flag at the peak, marking a symbolic achievement that reflects the ambition and determination of the Kingdom's youth.

The expedition is held under the patronage of Bahrain's Youth Affairs Ministry as part of initiatives designed to empower young Bahrainis through international adventures and outdoor experiences. Organisers say such programmes help develop leadership, self-reliance, teamwork and cross-cultural understanding.

According to the latest updates, the team has successfully completed the advanced stages of the climb and remains on schedule as it continues its ascent towards the summit. If successful, the expedition will add another milestone to Bahrain's growing record of youth achievements on the international stage.

## MOI team claims two medals in Serbia

● **Police Sports Federation credits leadership support for the team's outstanding achievement**

**Rehab Mohammad**  
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Ministry of Interior's shooting team delivered an outstanding performance at the International Open Rifle and Pistol Shooting Championship held in Serbia from June 28 to July 6, 2026, winning silver and bronze medals against strong international competition.

Badria Ebrahim Al Attawi secured the silver medal after finishing second in the wom-



en's 25-metre pistol event, while Sara Mohammed Khalaf claimed the bronze medal with a third-place finish in the women's 50-metre rifle prone event. Brigadier Khalid Abdulaziz Al

Khayat, President of the Police Sports Federation, congratulated the team on their achievement, describing the results as a reflection of the Ministry of Interior's continued commitment

to developing talented athletes and strengthening Bahrain's presence at regional and international sporting events.

He said the success was made possible through the support of Lieutenant-General Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalfa, Minister of Interior, whose commitment to sports development has enabled the Ministry's teams to compete successfully on the international stage.

Brigadier Al Khayat also acknowledged the support of Lieutenant-General Tariq bin Hassan Al Hassan, Chief of Public Security, for enhancing the preparedness of the Ministry's sports teams and encouraging them to achieve distinguished results in international competitions.

## Ahmed Al Ghazal ready for handball return

**Mohammed Darwish**  
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Ahmed Al Ghazal is ready to restart his handball career after nearly two seasons out, with the former Bahrain youth player fully fit and free to sign for a new club.

Al Ghazal last appeared in the 2023-24 season for Tubli Club before medical diagnoses and reports forced him away from the court. He has since been through follow-up care and rehabilitation, and is now said to have regained full health and match fitness.

The player is now a free agent, giving him the right to join any club he wishes as he seeks a way back into Bahraini handball.



Ahmed Al Ghazal

Al Ghazal began his career in Tubli's age-group teams and rose through the ranks to the first team. He later played for Al Ettifaq before returning to his boyhood club.

His career also took him into Bahrain's national age-group sides. He was part of the team that won the Asian youth title in 2016 and later played at the Youth World Championship in 2017.

His absence came at a time when he was still seen as one of the promising names in the local game, making his return a boost for the player and for followers of Bahraini handball.

Now clear of the health problems that kept him out, Al Ghazal begins the search for a club and a route back to match action.