

Bahrain prepares for Asian junior handball test with UAE friendly series

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TDT | Manama

Bahrain's junior handball national team will compete in a five-nation friendly tournament in the United Arab Emirates from June 27 to July 1 as part of its preparations for continental competitions.

The squad departs for the UAE today with a 20-player roster led by head coach Hussam Madan, assistant coach Jaafar Abdulqader, team manager Ali Redha, goalkeeping coach Makram Maissaoui and physiotherapist Karim Hassan.

The selected players are Salman Al Showaikh, Abudhir Jaafar, Hassan Khatem, Ahmed Eid, Mahmood Jalil, Mohammed Haitham, Abbas Hussain, Ahmed Abdullah, Sayed Majid Al Muhafadha, Mahdi Jaafar, Ali



Bahrain junior handball team during a local training session

Sami,

Ahmed

Al Samahiji, Sayed Ahmed Al Falahi, Fadhel Abbas, Haider Mohammed, Ali Al Mahroos, Mohammed Zuhair, Mohammed Taradah, Wadi Hilal and Hassan Saif.

The tournament features Bahrain, hosts UAE, Oman, Qatar and Morocco, with the nationals opening against the UAE tomorrow at 6pm. They will then face Oman on Sunday and Qatar on Monday, with both matches also scheduled for 6pm.

Bahrain will later turn their attention to the 19th Asian Men's Junior Championship in Chuzhou, China, from July 15 to 26. The tournament also serves as qualification for the 2027 IHF Men's U21 World Championship, which will be held in North Macedonia from June 23 to July 4 next year. Drawn in Group A, Bahrain will face hosts China, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong as they seek to build on a strong continental record that includes silver in 2022 and bronze medals in 2018 and 2024.

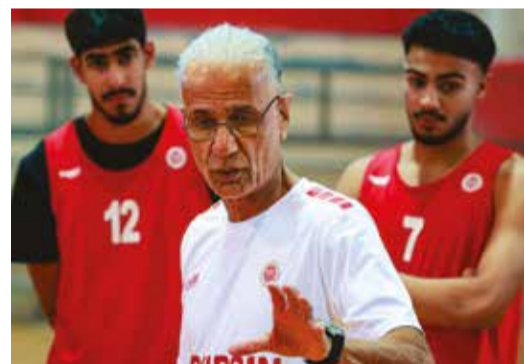
U18 Basketball Team lands in Tunisia for Arab Championship Campaign

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Bahrain's youth national basketball team has arrived in Sfax, Tunisia, to compete in the 23rd Arab U18 Basketball Championship 2026, which runs from June 27 to July 6 and features six Arab nations.

The tournament, organised by the Arab Basketball Confederation (ABC) and the Tunisian Basketball Federation, brings together Bahrain, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Egypt, and hosts Tunisia. All matches will be played at Sfax's Raed Al Bajawi Hall.

Bahrain are led by veteran coach Salman Ramadhan. Their final 14-player roster is spearheaded by standout prospects Somto Patrick Onoduanyi and Hassan Abdulkadir, and also includes Hussain Madan, Ali Al Haddad, Jock James, Mohammed Farhan, Ali Ayman, Mahdi Habib, Yousif Al Samahiji, Ali



Head coach Salman Ramadan gives a team talk during practice

Khalil, Mujtaba Rayyan, Mohammed Adel, Hussain Fuad and Ali Ferdousi.

Bahrain open their campaign against Algeria tomorrow at 3:15pm, before facing hosts Tunisia on Sunday at 5:30pm. They then meet Libya on Monday at 1pm, followed by a rest day on Tuesday. The team will resume action against Morocco on Wednesday at 1pm, before



Bahrain's frontcourt duo Onoduanyi (L) and Abdulkadir (R) in a training session

concluding their preliminary round against Egypt on Thursday at 3:15pm. All times are Bahrain time.

After the single round-robin stage, the top two teams will advance to compete for the gold medal, while the third- and fourth-placed teams will contest the bronze medal match.

Bahrain's participation in Sfax forms part of their wider devel-

opment programme ahead of the Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) U18 Championship 2026, which will be held in Doha, Qatar from July 17 to 22. The GBA competition will serve as a qualifier for the FIBA U18 Asia Cup 2026, with the top three teams securing qualification for the continental event set to take place in Ahmedabad, India from August 13 to 23.

FIFA suspends Nepal over third-party interference

Kathmandu, Nepal

World football's governing body FIFA has suspended Nepal's football association, officials said yesterday, barring the country from all international competitions.

FIFA said in a letter to the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) that the decision came after "undue interference by a third party", referring to arguments between ANFA and Nepal's National Sports Council, the country's authority for sports administration, over governance of Nepali football.

FIFA holds that a national football association must operate independently of government bodies.

FIFA decided on Wednesday "to suspend ANFA with immediate effect due to flagrant violations of the FIFA Statutes," FIFA's Secretary General Mattias Grafstrom said in the letter, shared by ANFA on Facebook.

The council had suspended

ANFA in March 2026 for three months as the association was preparing for an election process that FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation had agreed to. It was later lifted in May.

The suspension means Nepal can no longer participate in international competitions and the association will lose out on FIFA development programmes, courses or trainings.



Nepal is currently ranked 175th in FIFA's world rankings. The women's national team ranks 88th.

Bahrain on the brink of AVC Cup semi-finals

Bahrain's men's national volleyball team produced a strong response to their previous defeat, overcoming Kazakhstan 3-1 in their AVC Men's Cup Pool A encounter yesterday in Ahmedabad, India. The defending champions won 22-25, 25-23, 25-17, 25-20 in a match played in front of 2,152 spectators and lasting 2 hours and 7 minutes, strengthening their position in the race for a semi-final spot in the 11-nation tournament.

Kazakhstan struck first, taking the opening set 25-22. Bahrain then regrouped to level the contest with a tight 25-23 second set before asserting control with a dominant 25-17 third set and closing out the match 25-20 in the fourth.

Bahrain's attacking unit

shared the workload effectively, with Mahmood Abdulwahed leading the scoring with 18 points, while fellow outside hitter Mahmood Abdulhussain added 12. Opposite hitter Ali Khamis contributed 16, and middle blocker Hasan Alwarqaa chipped in with 10 points.

For Kazakhstan, Vladislav Mastikhin delivered a standout performance with a match-high 27 points, while fellow outside hitter Azamat Seilkhanov added 13. However, the team were ultimately unable to maintain consistency after their strong opening set.

Coached by Ivan Joksimovic, Bahrain responded strongly after their 3-0 loss to hosts India in their previous outing, which ended their perfect start to the



Mohammed Abdulla rises at the net to attack against Kazakhstan

tournament. That defeat had followed back-to-back wins against Chinese Taipei and New Zealand, meaning Bahrain now hold three

wins from four matches and sit on nine points, behind group leaders India, who have maintained a flawless record so far. Kazakhstan

remain on five points. The result puts Bahrain in a strong position heading into their final preliminary fixture

against Australia, scheduled for 6:30pm Bahrain time today. At the end of the single round-robin stage, the top two teams from each pool will advance to the semi-finals, scheduled for tomorrow, with the gold and bronze medal matches to follow on Sunday. Classification matches will also take place to determine final standings from fifth to tenth place.

Bahrain's historic title triumph in last year's AVC Men's Cup marked the kingdom's first-ever championship in any Asian Volleyball Confederation competition. That victory also secured their qualification for the AVC Volleyball Men's Continental Championship 2026, set to be held in Fukuoka, Japan, from September 4 to 13.