

# Driverless cars set for testing in Bahrain

New legislation aims to attract global technology companies

● Focus on digital transformation and sustainability

● Smart cities aim to improve the quality of life

● Strong role for AI, data and smart infrastructure

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Hasan Barakat



Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa tours the exhibition centre at the Smart Cities Conference

Bahrain is set to introduce new regulations allowing the testing and operation of self-driving vehicles in the Kingdom, marking a major step towards adopting future transport technologies.

Transportation and Telecommunications Minister Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa said the upcoming legislation would create a clear regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles, enabling companies to test driverless cars and advanced mobility solutions in real-world conditions.

The minister said the initiative reflects Bahrain's efforts

to develop a modern legislative environment, encourage innovation and attract high-quality investment in the transport technology sector.

Shaikh Dr Abdulla highlighted Bahrain's previous success in supporting advanced technology trials, including BMW's testing of an early GPS positioning system installed in a vehicle, citing the Kingdom's infrastructure and operational conditions as key advantages.

## Smart Cities push

The announcement was made during the ninth Bahrain Smart Cities Conference, held at the Gulf Hotel under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al

Khalifa.

The two-day conference brought together government officials, GCC representatives, and regional and international experts to discuss smart urban development, sustainability, digital transformation, innovation and future city planning.

## Technology focused on improving lives

Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Minister Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak said smart cities are no longer defined only by technology, but by their ability to enhance quality of life, improve services and support sustainable development.

Al Mubarak highlighted Bahrain's progress in areas including



AI, data and smart solutions are shaping better decisions and smarter resource management."

- WAEL BIN NASSER AL MUBARAK



"Autonomous vehicle framework opens new opportunities to test and develop future mobility solutions."

- DR. SHAIKH ABDULLA BIN AHMED AL KHALIFA

sustainable urban development, infrastructure, digital government services, transportation and smart solutions, describing them as part of the wider goals of Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 through government and private-sector cooperation.

## Sustainability and innovation

Sustainable Development Minister Noor bint Ali Al Khalifa said smart city initiatives

were closely linked to global Sustainable Development Goals, with Bahrain adopting an integrated approach focused on long-term sustainability and improving citizens' quality of life.

She said Bahrain is investing in digital infrastructure, innovation, data-driven government systems, efficient resource management and solutions aimed at reducing consumption while supporting environmental and economic sustainability.

## United Against Aggression

Parliament condemns attacks on Bahrain, Gulf states and Jordan, calls for stronger cooperation

Shura Council members Dr. Adel Abdulrahman Al Muawada and Dr. Ebtessam Mohamed Saleh Al Dallal highlighted Arab parliamentary unity in rejecting Iranian attacks targeting Bahrain, GCC states and Jordan, stressing the need to protect national sovereignty and prevent interference in internal affairs.

Speaking during the third session of the Arab Parliament's second regular session of the fourth legislative term, held at the League of Arab States headquarters in Cairo, the Bahraini representatives said discussions reflected a shared commitment to strengthening Arab



Dr. Ebtessam Mohamed Saleh Al Dallal

cooperation and addressing regional security challenges.

They welcomed the Arab Parliament's adoption of a statement condemning attacks targeting oil facilities and civilian sites, describing it as a unified Arab stance supporting stability and security.

Al Muawada and Al Dallal stressed the importance of

greater coordination between Arab parliaments to defend common interests, strengthen parliamentary diplomacy and support efforts to maintain peace and stability.

They reaffirmed Bahrain's commitment to supporting joint Arab initiatives, noting that unity and cooperation among Arab institutions remain key to safeguarding sovereignty and achieving security and development.

## Regional Threats Require Unified GCC Response

Senior GCC military leaders attended a high-level coordination meeting in Manama

Regional security and strengthening collective defence cooperation were the central focus of a high-level meeting of the Higher Military Committee of the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, held in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Lieutenant General Dhiyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi, Chief of Staff of the Bahrain Defence Force, and brought together senior military leaders from GCC member states.

At the opening session, the Bahraini Chief of Staff welcomed the delegations and emphasized the importance of



advancing GCC cooperation in light of evolving regional security challenges. He described the meeting as a key platform to reinforce joint defence coordination and enhance collective readiness.

The Bahraini Chief of Staff underlined the need for a unified and practical framework to address regional security developments, stressing the importance of strengthening

coordination mechanisms, improving operational readiness, and ensuring rapid response capabilities among GCC armed forces.

The meeting concluded with GCC military leaders reaffirming their commitment to enhancing joint defence cooperation and strengthening the region's collective security architecture.

## 42 New Parking Meters Activated

The Ministry of Works, in coordination with the General Directorate of Traffic at the Ministry of Interior, announced the activation of 42 new parking meters in Bahrain's Diplomatic Area.

The initiative aims to regulate parking space use and improve traffic flow in the area, ensuring better parking availability for visitors and daily users. The Diplomatic Area includes 546 parking spaces, which will now be more efficiently managed through the upgraded system.

According to the ministry, the new meters offer multiple payment options, including credit cards, Apple Pay, and cash pay-



ments. This is designed to provide users with greater convenience and a smoother payment experience when using public parking facilities.

Authorities urged all motorists to comply with posted parking time limits, regulations, and guidance, emphasizing that adherence will maximize the benefit of available spaces and improve access for

the largest possible number of visitors.

The Ministry of Works said the rollout is part of ongoing efforts to enhance parking services across Bahrain, improve operational efficiency, and raise the overall quality of public road services.

## RHF, UNIDO Join Forces for Humanitarian Development



The Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) signed a cooperation agreement to enhance collaboration in sustainable development and humanitarian action.

The agreement was signed at the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna by RHF Acting Secretary-General Ebrahim

Dalhan Aldoseri and UNIDO Director General Gerd Müller, focusing on joint efforts to support economic recovery, restore livelihoods and empower communities affected by crises. The partnership will also contribute to rehabilitation programmes and support small and medium-sized enterprises in affected regions, including Palestine, Syria and Sudan.

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## Man Arrested for Filming Police at Checkpoint

The Ministry of Interior arrested a 29-year-old Asian national for misusing social media after he filmed police officers performing their duties at a security checkpoint and posted the footage online.

The General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security said the act constituted a legal violation. Authorities confirmed that legal procedures were taken against the individual, and the case was referred to the Public Prosecution.

## Five-Year Jail Term in Violence and Vandalism Case

The High Criminal Court sentenced a defendant to five years in prison in a case involving violence and vandalism linked to incidents during last March's attacks on Bahrain.

The court also ordered the confiscation of seized items. The Public Prosecution said the defendant was arrested at the scene and later referred for investigation, where witness statements and evidence were collected before trial.

Authorities reaffirmed their commitment to taking firm legal action against acts threatening public security and societal stability.

## 7 Defendants Jailed 5-10 Years

The High Criminal Court issued prison sentences ranging from five to ten years against seven defendants in six separate cases involving support for terrorist attacks against Bahrain, spreading false news, and filming sensitive locations.

Some defendants were also fined 2,000 Bahraini dinars, with confiscation of seized items ordered. The Public Prosecution said cyber monitoring teams identified the involved accounts, leading to arrests and forensic examination of electronic devices.

## Ex-Official on Trial for Fraud and Financial Crimes

The First High Criminal Court has begun hearing a major case against a former official from the Jaafari Endowments Directorate, accused of embezzlement, forgery, exploitation, and money laundering.

The defendant is alleged to have misappropriated more than 483,000 Bahraini dinars between 2022 and 2025 by manipulating charity aid processes, forging documents, and diverting funds into personal accounts. He is also accused of exploiting vulnerable individuals through false marriage promises and financial deception.

Investigations revealed extensive financial irregularities, including money laundering through asset purchases, loan repayments, and use of third-party accounts. IT records reportedly showed 937 aid requests processed under his control.

The Public Prosecution presented witness testimony from financial officers, auditors, investigators, and affected individuals, while the court continues to hear the case.