

Shura supports tougher law on advertising with BD20,000 fines



H.E. Wael Al Mubarak
Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama



Ejlal Bubshait

Fines of up to BD20,000 and the prospect of private firms tearing down unlawful billboards moved a step closer yesterday after the Shura Council approved in full an overhaul of Bahrain's advertising law, with a final vote due at its next sitting.

Members backed a draft law amending Decree-Law No. 14 of 1973 on the Regulation of Advertisements, attached to Decree No. 8 of 2025.

The move follows the Council of Representatives' earlier support for the same text, and comes after the Shura Council's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee confirmed that the draft is sound in constitutional and legal terms.

Aim

Committee rapporteur Ejlal Bubshait said the changes are built around a simple aim.

"The draft law aims to reorganise the advertising sector in Bahrain so that it runs efficiently, is shielded from harmful practices and offers effective mechanisms to issue licences quickly and in an orderly way," she said, citing the Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission's memorandum.

On paper, the bill is short. It carries five articles and a preamble. Across the old 1973 text, general references to "the ministry" and "the minister" are replaced with "the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture" and "the Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture".

Articles 1, 6, 10, 16 and 17 are rewritten. A new Article 14 (bis) is added, allowing some tasks to be handed to other entities with Cabinet approval.

Article 5, which had required the minister to form a committee from several bodies to oversee the law's application, is removed. The final article deals with entry into force and implementation.

Rules

Municipalities Affairs Minister, His Excellency Wael Al Mubarak, told members the existing rules were written for another era.

"This law was issued more than fifty years ago, when the advertising market was very different. With the growth and evolution of this market, it has become necessary to develop the legislation that governs advertising," he said, adding that the draft draws on practice abroad and on experience in Bahrain.

Collateral freedom

New secured transactions law opens extra credit channel for SMEs



H.E. Nawaf Al Maawda



Khalid Al Maskati



Dalal Al Zayed



Dr Bassam Al Benmohammed

● Allowing Bahraini companies to use receivables, stock and movable assets to secure loans

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A 60-article law approved by Shura councillors yesterday will let Bahraini businesses use receivables, stock and other movable assets as loan collateral.

This change is expected to make financing more accessible and flexible.

The measure is also set to cut borrowing costs for small and medium-sized firms and improve Bahrain's score in the World Bank's new business-readiness index.

The council backed the bill in full, with a formal final vote due at its next sitting.

Rights

The law, attached to Decree No. 11 of 2025 and already cleared by Parliament, creates a single system for security rights over movable property, supported by an electronic notice register to record and enforce these rights and to arrange priorities between creditors.

It is designed to plug gaps between existing laws, give

lenders clearer tools to manage risk, and allow companies to keep using assets that have been pledged.

Committee rapporteur Hisham Al Qassab said the draft had been built with the World Bank Group's Business Ready (B-READY) report in mind and to open the door to cheaper lending.

Growth

He told the chamber: "The bill is designed to lift Bahrain's performance in financial services and to support private-sector growth by helping companies secure lower-cost finance, using their movable assets as collateral while still putting them to work in the business."

Shura Financial and Economic Affairs Committee head Khalid Al Maskati linked the bill to guidance from the top of the state.

He said: "This law flows directly from His Majesty the King's directive to complete the legislation needed to strengthen national security and the economy and to keep Bahrain competitive on the world stage."

Framework

He added that the government had treated the secured-transactions bill as one of the measures to reinforce the financial and economic framework and bring in laws that support the wider legal fabric for the mar-



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— H.E. NAWAF AL MAAWDA, JUSTICE, ISLAMIC AFFAIRS AND WAQF MINISTER

ket by encouraging investment and freeing up more liquidity through a more flexible regime for collateral.

According to the committee, the law lays down a flexible and integrated framework for security over movable property, widening the pool of assets that can be offered as collateral beyond real estate to include receivables, inventory, and intangible assets.

The electronic notice register will sit at the centre of the system, giving a way to record and enforce security rights and to make the order of priority between creditors clear.

Default

Members also noted that the law will let secured creditors enforce against collateral outside court in cases of default, with the aim of speeding up recovery of debts, while keeping

in place rules to maintain a fair balance between creditor and debtor.

These cover duties of good faith, disclosure, management of the collateral, and rights to inspect and obtain information.

Attention

Legal Affairs Committee head Dalal Al Zayed said the bill spells out the scope of the government and the procedures that must be followed, but added that close attention will still be needed when the executive regulations are written so that those who use the law can apply it clearly in practice.

She pointed in particular to the focus on transparency in electronic records, saying this should reassure parties in large secured deals and shows that Bahrain is following international practice in this field.

Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf Minister, His Excellency Nawaf Al Maawda, told the council that the new register must give both sides in a deal a clear view of existing pledges.

Transparency

"There has to be transparency in this register. The mortgagor and the mortgagee must be able to see clearly if goods have already been pledged to someone else," he said.

He added that the law will only work once the technical spine is in place.

Holiday Spark



Pars International Hotel came alive with festive cheer as General Manager Uday Mahar and his team led this year's Christmas tree lighting ceremony on Sunday, welcoming guests and families to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season. (Pics credit: Anchalo Bensiger)

GCC commitment



His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, highlighted that the Kingdom of Bahrain's hosting of the 46th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit reflects the GCC states' commitment to enhancing cooperation and achieving regional integration. It also reflects their determination to maintain GCC solidarity and cohesion and to advance further cooperation and integration for the benefit of member states and their citizens. H.E. Dr. Al Zayani, currently Chairman of the GCC ministerial session, was speaking as he chaired the 166th preparatory meeting of the GCC Ministerial Council ahead of the Summit. The meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of GCC states and Jassem Mohamed Al Budaiwi, Secretary General of the GCC. H.E. Dr. Al Zayani noted that the GCC has demonstrated over the past years its ability to address regional and international challenges, consolidating its position as an active and influential regional entity in promoting security and stability.