LuLu Celebrates 20 Years of Growth and Partnership in Bahrain

Two decades of investment, local employment, food security, support for Bahraini businesses and community engagement



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LuLu Group has marked 20 years in the Kingdom of Bahrain, celebrating two decades of growth and a long-standing partnership with the Kingdom, its people and business community.

The anniversary celebrations were inaugurated at LuLu Dana Mall in the presence of H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister; H.E. Yousif bin Abdulhussain Khalaf, Minister of Labour and Minister of Legal Affairs; H.E. Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro, Minister of Industry and Commerce; and LuLu Group Chairman and Managing Director Yusuff Ali M.A.

From its early presence in Bahrain, LuLu has grown to 13 stores across the Kingdom, becoming a significant part of the country's retail landscape. Alongside its retail expansion, the Group has focused on creating employment, developing Bahraini talent, supporting food security and strengthening partnerships with local producers and businesses.

Today, LuLu works with more than 150 Bahraini companies and SMEs, providing a strong retail platform for local farmers, producers and entrepreneurs and increasing the visibility of Made in Bahrain products.

Speaking on the milestone, Yusuff Ali M.A. said:

"Bahrain has been an important part of LuLu's journey and we are proud to have grown alongside the Kingdom over the past two decades. We are deeply grateful to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for their visionary leadership, and to the people of Bahrain for their continued trust and support.

"As we celebrate 20 years, our focus is firmly on the future — investing further, creating more opportunities for Bahraini talent, supporting local businesses and contributing to the Kingdom's continued growth and prosperity."

Supporting Bahrain's Priorities

LuLu has consistently supported Bahrain's food-security and supply-chain resilience, leveraging its global sourcing network to help maintain the availability of essential food products, particularly during periods of international supply disruption.

Bahrainisation has also remained a key priority. The Group continues to recruit and develop Bahraini nationals across its operations, with an emphasis on creating long-term career opportunities and developing local talent for leadership roles within the retail sector.

Beyond business, LuLu has maintained a strong commitment to the wider community through support for education, humanitarian initiatives, sport and social development. This includes long-standing support for initiatives such as the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program (CPISP) and the Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF), as well as sporting and community programmes across the Kingdom.

Under the anniversary theme "Celebrating the World in Every Aisle," LuLu's 20-year milestone reflects both its international character and its deep local roots in Bahrain.

As it begins its next chapter, LuLu Group reaffirmed its commitment to continued investment in Bahrain, greater opportunities for local talent, stronger partnerships with Bahraini businesses and SMEs, and supporting the Kingdom's long-term economic and social development.

The event was also attended by Export Bahrain team, Mr Juzer Rupawala, Director, LuLu Retail, among other senior LuLu management.

BBK Joins Fintech Forward 2026 as a Diamond Sponsor

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The Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, a leading retail and corporate bank in the Kingdom of Bahrain, has announced its role as a diamond sponsor of Fintech Forward 2026 (FF26), the region's flagship fintech forum, taking place on the 7th and 8th of October 2026 at Exhibition World Bahrain (EWB).

Hosted by the Bahrain Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB), supported by the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB), Bahrain Tourism & Exhibition Authority (BTEA), and Bahrain Fintech Bay, and programmed by Forbes Middle East, FF26 will bring together key decision makers and stakeholders from across the global fintech ecosystem to explore opportunities under the theme "Finance in the Age of Intelligent Infrastructure".

Mr. Yaser Alsharifi, BBK Group Chief Executive Officer

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Yaser Alsharifi, BBK Group Chief Executive Officer, said: "Our continued participation in Fintech Forward reflects our belief in the importance of collaboration in fostering a dynamic and future-ready financial services ecosystem. The event is a valuable space for industry leaders and innovators to share perspectives and explore emerging opportunities. We look forward to being a part of this year's discussions and supporting the continued development of the sector."

Returning to Fintech Forward for the second consecutive year, BBK's sponsorship underscores its commitment to advancing conversations around innovation and the evolving future of financial services. Alongside its contribution to the forum's programme, the bank will showcase its latest digital banking capabilities through a dedicated pavilion in the exhibition area. This builds on BBK's ongoing investment in technology-driven solutions designed to enhance customer experience, including the recent upgrade of BBK BanKey, its digital corporate banking platform.

FF26 will explore key trends in the financial services industry and bring together global experts in the field to share insights and explore new opportunities.

Ebrahim K. Kanoo Recognized for Participation in Sixth Edition of "Consumer Friend" Initiative


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Ebrahim K. Kanoo (EKK), one of Bahrain's leading diversified business groups, was recognized by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce for its participation in the sixth edition of the "Consumer Friend" initiative, held in conjunction with Bahrain's back-to-school season.

Launched by the Ministry's Consumer Protection Directorate, the "Consumer Friend" initiative aims to promote social responsibility, solidarity, and consumer support by encouraging businesses to provide valuable and affordable offers that help ease household expenses during key periods of the year.

Ebrahim K. Kanoo's participation reflects the Group's commitment to supporting consumers and the wider community through initiatives that deliver meaningful value. As a service provider, EKK's involvement also highlights the role businesses beyond the traditional food and retail sectors can play in supporting consumers, particularly during important periods such as the back-to-school season.

The recognition further reinforces Ebrahim K. Kanoo's longstanding commitment to corporate social responsibility and customer-centricity, while supporting the Ministry of Industry and Commerce's efforts to foster a marketplace built on trust, fairness, ethical business practices, and strong relationships between businesses and consumers.

BENEFIT Transactions Rise to 261.2 million, Valued at BD19.3 billion in H1 2026

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BENEFIT, the Kingdom's innovator and leading company in Fintech and electronic financial transactions service, recorded 261.2 million transactions across the Electronic Fund Transfer System (EFTS) between January and June 2026. These transactions, processed across bank channels and BenefitPay application, had a combined value of BD19.3 billion. The reported EFTS figures include successfully completed transactions only.

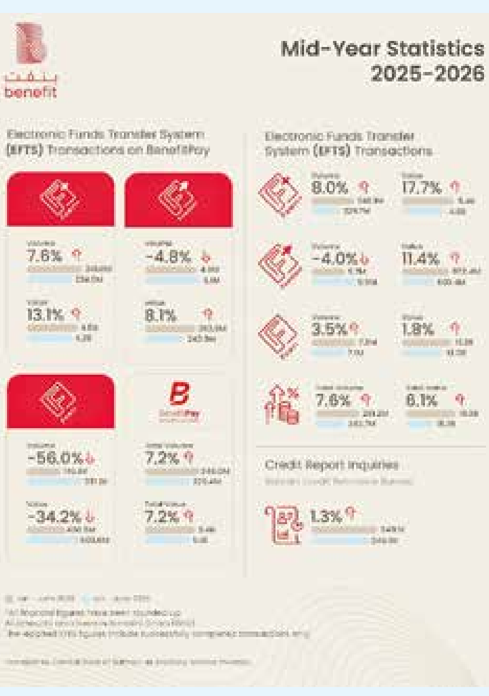
Transaction volume increased by 7.6% compared with 242.7 million transactions recorded in the first half of 2025, while the total value rose by 6.1% from BD18.2 billion. The results reflect the continued adoption of digital payment and transfer solutions across the Kingdom.

BenefitPay accounted for approximately 246.0 million transactions across all EFTS services, Fawri+, Fawri and Fawateer, with a total value of BD5.4 billion. This represented year-on-year growth of 7.2% in both volume and value, compared with 229.4 million transactions worth BD5.1 billion in the first half of 2025.

Fawri+ recorded 248.1 million transactions across all channels, valued at BD5.4 billion. This marked an increase of 8.0% in volume and 17.7% in value compared with 229.7 million transactions worth BD4.6 billion in the same period of 2025. Fawri+ transactions conducted through BenefitPay rose by 7.6% to approximately 241.0 million, while their value increased by 13.1% to BD4.8 billion.

Fawri processed 7.3 million transactions across all channels, with a total value of BD13.2 billion, compared with 7.1 million transactions worth BD13.0 billion in the first half of 2025. This represented growth of 3.5% in transaction volume and 1.8% in value.

Through BenefitPay, Fawri recorded approximately 145.8 thousand transactions valued at BD400.5 million, compared with 331.1 thousand transactions worth BD608.6 million during the corresponding period of 2025. This represented a decline of 56.0% in volume and 34.2% in value.



Fawateer recorded 5.7 million transactions across all channels, compared with 5.9 million during the first half of 2025, representing a 4.0% decline. Despite the lower transaction volume, their total value increased by 11.4% to BD672.4 million, up from BD603.4 million in the corresponding period last year.

Fawateer transactions conducted through BenefitPay totaled approximately 4.9 million and were valued at BD262.6 million, compared with 5.1 million transactions worth BD243.0 million in the first half of 2025. Transaction volume decreased by 4.8%, while the value increased by 8.1%.

The Bahrain Credit Reference Bureau, operated by BENEFIT, issued 11.1 thousand consumer and corporate credit reports during the first half of 2026, a 0.2% increase from 11.0 thousand reports in the corresponding period of 2025. The Bureau also recorded approximately 249.1 thousand credit enquiries, up 1.3% from approximately 245.9 thousand in the first half of last year.

These results highlight BENEFIT's central role in advancing Bahrain's digital payments and financial services ecosystem by delivering secure, accessible solutions that respond to the evolving needs of individuals and organizations. They also demonstrate the growing use of digital channels for financial transactions and the company's continued contribution to digital transformation and the development of the Kingdom's financial infrastructure, in line with the direction of the Central Bank of Bahrain, financial institutions and other partners.

BENEFIT also delivered several notable achievements during the first half of 2026. These included launching the digital Direct Debit service through Fawateer on BenefitPay, in which monthly Direct Debit service for bill payments in collaboration with the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) was introduced. The company also launched new features on BenefitPay including Scheduled Transfers to help users manage recurring payments more conveniently and personal QR codes display on the home screen to make payments and transfers faster and easier.

In addition, Rain became the first licensed crypto-asset platform in Bahrain to enable payments through BenefitPay. This provided its users with an additional local payment option while supporting greater connectivity across Bahrain's digital financial ecosystem.

BENEFIT continued to invest in talent development during the period, celebrating the graduation of the second cohort of Fintech Drivers Programme and launching the third cohort of its Ruwaad Leadership Programme. It also introduced the fifth edition of Masar, its fintech training programme, and launched the Tawajuh Summer Programme to strengthen students' career awareness and help them make informed academic and professional choices.

The company was also recognised among Bahrain's Top 50 Companies, reflecting its position and contribution to the Kingdom's digital transformation and fintech sector.