

Bahrain opens Gulf Youth Forum

Ministry of Youth Affairs inaugurated a Gulf youth forum bringing together young participants and experts to discuss career pathways and labour market trends, marking Gulf Youth Day.

The forum, titled "Career Paths and the Labour Market," was held virtually and organised by the ministry with participation from across the GCC. It brought together Bahraini and Gulf youth alongside specialists in economic and development fields.

Speaking at the opening, Bahrain's Minister of Youth Affairs, Her Excellency Rawan bint Najeeb Tawfiqi, said Gulf Youth Day was an opportunity to celebrate young people's contributions to development across various sectors.

She highlighted the growing role of Bahraini youth in inno-



vation, entrepreneurship and the digital economy, saying they are increasingly shaping opportunities and helping to define future economic directions.

The minister said achievements in Bahrain's youth sector result from sustained support from the country's leadership, citing the efforts of His Majesty

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

She also praised the role of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, describing his initiatives as key in strengthening youth empowerment frameworks across the kingdom.

Tawfiqi said the forum addressed one of the most important issues facing young people today: career development and labour market transformation amid rapid global change.

She added that young people today have unprecedented opportunities to make an impact, supported by expanding platforms for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

MPs Push for Stricter Checks on Expat Qualifications

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Parliamentary Services Committee has backed a proposal to introduce stricter checks on expatriate workers' qualifications before they are hired, following concerns over forged certificates.

The proposal, submitted by several MPs, calls for creating a joint administrative committee linking the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA). This body would verify academic and professional qualifications before expat workers begin employment in Bahrain.

Lawmakers also proposed a central database to allow government agencies to record, verify and retrieve certificates more efficiently.

MPs said the move would help improve trust in workers' skills, raise service standards and pre-



Mohammed Janahi, MP

vent unqualified people from taking up jobs requiring specialised training or licences.

Government bodies told the committee that qualification checks are already carried out in several regulated sectors, including education and licensed professions.

The Ministry of Education said it uses electronic systems and accredited specialist firms to verify certificates submitted by private educational institutions, while the LMRA said professional licences are already required for specialised jobs.

Despite existing measures, the Services Committee un-



- A new committee would link the Labour Ministry, Education Ministry and LMRA.
- MPs say move would improve service quality and strengthen trust in skills.
- Authorities say several verification systems are already in place.

animously approved the proposal, saying stronger coordination between authorities would better protect the labour market and the public interest.

Winners honoured at Bahrain Quran awards

Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Consort of His Majesty King Hamad and President of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW), Bahrain held the awards ceremony for the 30th Bahrain Grand Holy Quran Award on Thursday.

The ceremony took place at Isa Cultural Centre and was attended by Dr. Shaikha Mariam bint Hassan Al Khalifa, Vice President of the Supreme Council for Women.

The event was organised by the Supreme Council for Islamic



Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments.

Speaking during the ceremony, Dr. Shaikha Mariam said HRH Princess Sabeeka's patronage reflects continued support for women who memorise the Holy Quran and efforts aimed at strengthening religious, educational and cultural awareness rooted in Islamic values.

She said participation in the competition has continued to grow over the years, adding that the award has played an important role in encouraging Quran memorisation and the study of

Quranic sciences over the past three decades.

Dr. Shaikha Mariam also praised Quran memorisation centres supervised by the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments for their efforts in preparing participants and promoting excellence.

During the ceremony, certificates and awards were presented to winners across several categories, including Quran memorization, recitation, and specialised competitions.

Partner organisations supporting the competition were also honoured. They included

the Ministry of Interior for the "Ghufran" competition for female inmates at rehabilitation centres, the Ministry of Education for the "Bayan" competition for school students, and the Ministry of Social Development for the "Ajran" competition for people of determination.

Members of the judging committee were also recognised for their contributions.

Special awards were presented for the oldest and youngest participants, the "Mizmar Dawood" award, the best Quran memorization centre, and the best local Quran competition.

Beauty That Exposed a Gap

Buhair Valley: From Trespassed Terrain to Bahrain's Next Great Attraction

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

Over the past month, families and visitors flooded into Buhair Valley — a protected nature reserve in East Riffa — drawn by viral videos showing its rare greenery, flowing streams and dramatic rock formations. They swam in potentially unsafe water, wandered restricted terrain, and turned a sensitive ecological site into a public concern.

But the crowds also delivered a message: Bahrainis are hungry for natural spaces.

Beauty That Exposed a Gap

The valley gained attention after social media posts — including a widely shared video report — revealed a landscape many residents never knew existed in Bahrain. The response was immediate and overwhelming.

Yet no visitor path, no entry system, and no managed experience existed to receive them. The result was disorder inside a zone that legally cannot be entered.

Southern Municipal Council Chairman Abdulla Abdullatif confirmed that a formal complaint was filed with the Oil and Environment Minister, and that the water was referred for inspection following reports of people swimming in it.

A Regional Model

Saudi Arabia's Jabal Al Qarah in Al Ahsa transformed its caves and rock formations into a managed destination — with cafes, walkways and viewing areas — without sacrificing the



Buhair value at present

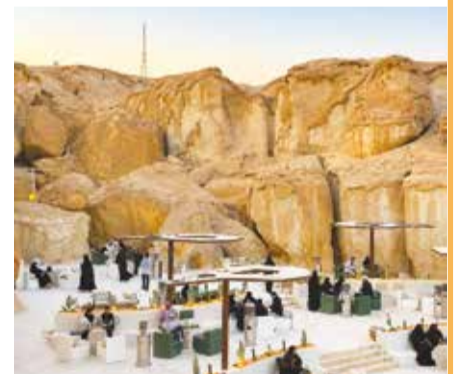


AI-generated vision of the new Buhair Valley landscape, blending nature and modern design

site's natural integrity. Can Bahrain apply the same thinking to Buhair Valley?

Look, But Do Not Enter

The valley's core should remain fully protected. Around it, however, Bahrain could develop raised viewing decks, shaded seating, controlled walking paths, and cafes overlooking the landscape—turning



A coffee shop in Jabal Al Qarah, Al Ahsa, Saudi Arabia viral curiosity into sustainable ecotourism.

BD19.9m Goes to Disability Support from Social Fund

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Mohammed Darwish

Nearly BD20 million from Bahrain's National Social Fund was allocated to disability support in 2024, accounting for the largest share of the fund's BD22.4m annual budget.

Social Development Minister Osama Al Alawi revealed the figures in a written response to Second Deputy Speaker Ahmed

Qarata, stating that BD19.931m was spent on disability allowances, rehabilitation services, assistive devices and care programmes.

The biggest portion, BD18.3m, was used for disability allowances under Bahrain's Persons with Disabilities Law. The increase followed a 2023 decision, agreed with Parliament, to double allowances for people with severe disabilities, including those with cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder,



Ahmed Qarata, Parliament's Second Deputy Speaker



Osama Al Alawi, Minister of Social Development

severe intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities.

Another BD1.2m was allocated to non-profit rehabilitation centres, while funds were also set aside for assistive devices, driving training for people with disabilities and support for the National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities.

The minister said the budget also covered service contracts, rehabilitation programmes and

partnerships with civil society organisations.

Additional spending from the National Social Fund included support for elderly care centres, shelter homes, child welfare services and disability-focused educational and social programmes.

Al Alawi said the ministry is working on plans to strengthen financial oversight and improve the effectiveness of services provided through the fund.