

Bahrain on the Move

UN-Bahrain Partnership Delivers Results Across Four Key Areas

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Ashen Tharaka

The United Nations in Bahrain released its 2025 Country Results Report, highlighting progress made during the first year of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2025–2029.

The report, handed to the Government during a Joint Steering Committee meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reviews progress under four priorities: People, Prosperity, Peace and Planet.

In 2025, UN-supported efforts focused on health and social well-being, sustainable economic transformation, governance and human rights, gender equality, youth engagement, and environmental sustainability, in line with Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bahrain Khaled El Mekwad said the partnership strengthened social inclusion, supported economic transformation, advanced environmental stewardship and deepened partnerships for sustainable development.



United Nations Resident Coordinator and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain sign the new United Nations Strategic Cooperation Framework for 2025-2029, December 2024

UN-Bahrain 2025 Results

- **2025-2029:** UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
- **4 priorities:** People, Prosperity, Peace and Planet
- **251:** Entrepreneurs reached through 13 EDIP programmes
- **19 countries:** BNI chapters represented at BINOVATE 2025
- **50+:** Exhibitors at BINOVATE 2025
- **878:** Applications received for the GCCOE Global Call
- **50+:** Women-led startups supported by Women in Tech
- **US\$305,000+:** Prize money distributed across 19 ventures
- **2030:** Bahrain Economic Vision and UN SDG agenda guiding cooperation

Under the Prosperity priority, the report highlighted initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, innovation and women’s economic participation.

The Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion programme reached 251 entrepreneurs in Bahrain and four other countries through 13 programmes in 2025.



The UN also partnered in BINOVATE 2025, which brought together BNI chapters from 19 countries and more than 50 exhibitors.

The Global Centre for the Creative Orange Economy was inaugurated in Saar following a Global Call that attracted 878 applications from 78 countries.

The UN also supported the Standard Chartered Women in Tech Programme, which has backed more than 50 women-led startups and distributed over US\$305,000 in prize money across 19 ventures.

The report also noted new coordination mechanisms and Bahrain’s activities marking the UN’s 80th anniversary.

Packed labour homes worry Muharraq residents



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Mohammed Darwish

Homes packed with 10 or 15 foreign workers are going undetected during daytime inspections in old Muharraq neighbourhoods, where overcrowding and crumbling houses are leaving residents worried about crime and safety, a councillor has warned.

Muharraq Municipal Council member Abdulqader Mahmood said some tenants were packing rented homes with workers by sub-letting rooms or bed spaces.

He described cases in which a tenant paid about BD100 for a property, then charged 10 or 15 workers around BD20 each to stay there.

Some landlords, he said, did not even know how many people were living in their properties.

Council checks can miss the problem because inspectors often visit during working hours, when labourers are away at their jobs and the homes appear empty.

‘When inspectors visit, they often find nobody there because the workers are at work,’ Mr Mahmood told The Daily Tribune.

He urged neighbours to report suspected overcrowding and unlawful sub-letting, saying residents often knew which homes were being used in this way.

Families, he said, were worried about overcrowding and often did not know who was living nearby.

Empty and crumbling houses



Abdulqader Mahmood, Muharraq Municipal Council member

posed a separate danger.

Mr Mahmood said abandoned homes could draw trespassers and be used for illegal activity, while boarding doors and windows with plywood did not solve the problem.

Pulling them down, however, can prove difficult.

Some old houses belong to dozens of heirs, in some cases as many as 50, leaving families struggling to agree on repairs, demolition or who should pay.

Heritage rules can also stop a dangerous house from being pulled down.

Mr Mahmood said some ageing homes were protected because of their heritage value even when they had fallen into poor condition.

He said no heritage listings should leave neighbours exposed to a building that had become unsafe.

Mr Mahmood said he hoped the Royal Muharraq Development Project would clear derelict and overcrowded housing and bring Bahraini families back to old neighbourhoods.

He said that would also reduce the use of family homes as packed labour quarters.

AI to Shape the Future of Financial Oversight

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Artificial intelligence and digital innovation are emerging as key tools for strengthening financial oversight across the Gulf, as Bahrain brought together the heads of GCC financial and accounting audit bodies for their 23rd meeting.

Bahrain hosted the meeting as part of the Kingdom’s presidency of the 46th session of the Gulf Cooperation Council, highlighting growing efforts to modernise the region’s oversight systems and improve transparency and public resource management.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, President of Bahrain’s Financial and Administrative Audit Bureau. His Excellency Shaikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Thani, Assistant Secretary-General for Legislative and Legal Affairs at the GCC General Secretariat, and the heads of the GCC audit bodies attended.

Sheikh Ahmed said the gathering reflected the strong fraternal ties between GCC countries and the importance placed by Their Majesties and Highnesses the GCC leaders on strengthening Gulf cooperation and integration and developing its institutions.

He highlighted the central role played by audit bodies in promoting integrity and improving the efficiency of government performance.

With technology and artificial intelligence advancing rapidly, Sheikh Ahmed said new opportunities are emerging to develop oversight tools, improve the



Heads of the GCC audit bodies attended the meeting



“Innovation and AI offer new opportunities to enhance audit work.”

HIS EXCELLENCY SHAIKH AHMED BIN MOHAMMED AL KHALIFA, PRESIDENT OF BAHRAIN'S FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUDIT BUREAU

quality of audit outcomes and increase their impact.

He stressed that professional cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and expertise between GCC audit bodies remain essential to building an oversight system that is better prepared for the future and capable of keeping pace with rapidly changing challenges.

GULF OVERSIGHT

- **AI & Digital:** Proposed AI-supported platform for GCC audit knowledge
- **Skills:** Regional training programmes to strengthen professional expertise
- **Research:** Continued GCC competition for audit and accounting studies
- **Recognition:** Outstanding audit professionals honoured
- **Next Step:** Accelerating digital and innovative oversight solutions
- **Goal:** Stronger governance and financial sustainability across the GCC

A major focus of the meeting was a proposal to establish an AI-supported electronic platform bringing together the outputs of the financial and accounting audit bodies across GCC countries.

The proposed platform would facilitate access to institutional knowledge and enable greater

use of accumulated experience and expertise across the region.

The meeting also reviewed developments in the GCC Competition for Research and Studies in the Fields of Auditing and Accounting, alongside follow-up on recommendations arising from winning research projects from previous editions.

FROM THE COURT - Rehab Mohammad

Car Set Ablaze While Owner Slept

A man woke to his mother’s screams after his car was deliberately set on fire outside his home on July 6, 2026. Police and Civil Defence responded to the incident, while security footage showed the defendant starting the fire before fleeing.

Investigators found that pieces of plastic mesh had been ignited and placed on the driver’s seat and near the fuel tank opening. The defendant admitted setting

the vehicle on fire using cardboard and a lighter. The victim submitted a repair invoice amounting to BD530.

During questioning, the defendant said he had been receiving treatment for mental health issues, including depression and mood swings, but had stopped taking his prescribed medication about three months earlier. The case was adjourned to September 10, 2026.

BD10 Fine, Three-Year Deportation

The Court of Cassation has upheld a BD10 fine and three-year deportation order against a foreign woman convicted of working as a domestic worker on an hourly basis without a work permit.

The case began after the Labour Market Regulatory Authority detected Instagram advertisements offering domestic workers for hourly cleaning services. An LMRA inspection found the woman working without a valid

permit, and the lower court imposed the fine and deportation order.

Her lawyer challenged the ruling, arguing that there was insufficient evidence and that the judgment was inadequately reasoned. The Court of Cassation rejected the appeal, finding that the LMRA violation report and the woman’s statements during the investigation provided sufficient evidence to support the conviction.

Two Charged Over BD500 Robbery

The First High Criminal Court has begun hearing the case of two men, aged 46 and 32, accused of posing as police officers, forcibly detaining a man and allegedly stealing BD500 from him.

The incident occurred in Hooraa on July 25, 2026, when the victim was forced into a vehicle and taken to Ras Rumman. According to the case, his mobile phone was taken and he was asked to hand over his money; the second

defendant allegedly took BD500 from his wallet before the victim was returned to Hooraa.

Security camera footage reportedly captured the incident, while police investigations led to the identification of the two defendants. Both allegedly admitted during Public Prosecution questioning that the victim had been taken against his will. The court adjourned the case to September 15, 2026, for pleadings.