

GCC Eyes Unified Data Future

Bahrain Leads GCC Push for Smarter Statistics

TDT | Manama

Bahrain chaired a key Gulf meeting on regional statistical cooperation, with officials highlighting digital readiness's role in maintaining operations during recent regional tensions. The 14th meeting of the Permanent Committee for Statistical Work of GCC countries was chaired remotely by Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, chief executive of the Information & eGovernment Authority, as part of Bahrain's presidency of the 46th GCC session. Representatives from GCC national statistical offices discussed plans to strengthen regional data coordination, unify statistical standards and improve digital statistical platforms across member states. Al Qaed said closer cooperation among GCC statistical offices is essential to providing accurate data to support development and decision-making across the region.



Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, chief executive of the Information & eGovernment Authority

He also praised the technological preparedness of GCC countries, noting that advanced digital systems helped institutions maintain business continuity and respond efficiently to the impact of recent Iranian attacks targeting Bahrain and other GCC states.

- Committee reviewed GCC-Stat work from Sept 2025 to April 2026.
- Topics included training, workshops and digital platforms.
- GCC backed Saudi Arabia's hosting of the 2026 UN World Data Forum.
- Members reviewed the GCC Statistical Work Strategy for 2026-2030.
- Discussions included unified GCC statistical standards.

The meeting also reviewed progress on the GCC joint statistical work strategy for 2026-2030 and preparations for Saudi Arabia's hosting of the 6th United Nations World Data Forum in 2026.

Shura Member Warns Over Online Attention Race

Call for stronger ethical standards in media and digital platforms

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Trust and credibility must outrank the online chase for attention, Shura Council member Dr Ibtisam Al Dallal told a WPL forum on media and the digital age. Dr Al Dallal said His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's vision placed responsible media and aware digital communication among the main tools for holding society together, deepening public understanding and encouraging openness, clarity and useful civic life. Bahrain treats the media as a partner in building society, protecting its gains and aiding long-term development, she said. She was speaking by video link at the Ambassadors Forum, held by the Women Political Leaders network, or WPL. The forum discussed media and the risks of commercial rivalry for public attention in the digital age. Dr Al Dallal said the world



"At a time when attention has become a valuable commodity, trust and credibility remain the true capital of societies and states"

- DR IBTISAM AL DALLAL, SHURA COUNCIL MEMBER

Dr Al Dallal said the world faced a new test in what is often called the attention economy. In the digital age, she said, information no longer competes

only through accuracy and trustworthiness. It must also fight for the public eye. Some online platforms, she said, place disputed or highly charged content higher because it draws more clicks and replies. The result, she added, is the wider spread of misleading information, deeper polarisation and weaker trust in news and other sources of knowledge. Political leaders, Dr Al Dallal said, must do more than keep pace with technology. They must also ensure it is used in the service of truth, public awareness and social cohesion. During the discussion, she asked how media platforms could help widen women's role in politics instead of reinforcing stereotypes and bias. She also raised the need for laws and rules that can keep pace with fast-changing digital platforms, saying the world needs more flexible models to deal with artificial intelligence, misleading information and the effect of algorithms on public opinion.

Bahrain Moves to Bring in More Budget Flights

● Government aiming to attract more passengers

● Plans focused on increasing flight routes

● Bahrain International Airport positioned as regional hub



Mohammed Al Olaiwi, MP

government to create a budget airline in partnership with the private sector.

A joint parliamentary committee between the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee and the Public Utilities and Environment Committee has recommended approval of the proposal.

The committee said the plan could help cut air fares, make travel easier for a wider share of the public and ease the cost of trips and holidays for citizens.

It said a low-cost carrier could also bring more tourists to Bahrain by opening direct routes to promising travel markets, while giving passengers more choice and adding more rivalry in the local and Gulf aviation market.

The proposal's explanatory note said Bahrain needed a stronger place in the region's aviation, travel and tourism markets, with air transport playing a part in economic and social growth.

It argued that a budget carrier could serve busy, price-sensitive destinations and open routes that differ from those

served by Gulf Air.

The note said the new airline would work beside Gulf Air rather than against it, with each carrier serving different parts of the market.

It also said Bahrain could draw travellers from GCC states and nearby countries by offering lower-cost flights from the kingdom, adding to transit movement and feeding trade and tourism.



The committee said the project could create jobs for Bahrainis, boost related sectors such as maintenance, logistics and catering, and strengthen Bahrain's position as a Gulf aviation hub while reducing pressure on the state budget through private-sector partnership.

From The Court TDT | Manama Rehab Mohammad

The Trap: How Two Young Sisters Were Fooled into Human Trafficking

Two Asian sisters, only 16 and 17 years old, left their home country hoping to find a job and help their poor family. Instead, a criminal network tricked them, and they ended up trapped in a nightmare in Bahrain. It all started because the sisters' family was going through a very hard time financially. A man living in a Gulf country took advantage of their poverty and their young age. He promised them a "great job" that would bring in a lot of money. The girls believed him and traveled for work. But when they arrived in Bahrain, they

realized they had been lied to. They were handed over to two people from their own country: a 32-year-old man and a 40-year-old woman.

Trapped with No Escape

As soon as the sisters arrived, the nice promises disappeared. The two suspects locked the girls up, threatened them, and forced them into prostitution. It was all about greed. The two suspects took all the money from the customers and kept it for themselves. The 32-year-old man used the money to pay for his expenses, while the 40-year-old woman lived entirely off what the girls were forced to make. The two young

sisters did not get a single penny. Luckily, the nightmare did not last forever. The police received information about a gang exploiting young girls. After investigating and confirming the story, the police raided the place, rescued the two sisters, and arrested the suspects. The Public Prosecution has officially charged the suspects with human trafficking, locking people up illegally, and forcing minors into prostitution. The First High Criminal Court has set June 15 to announce the final verdict and sentence the suspects.

Court upholds 5-year prison sentence for Asian man convicted of drug dealing

The Court of Appeal upheld a 5-year prison sentence against an Asian man convicted of drug dealing. The court also fined him 3,000 dinars and ordered his deportation after serving his sentence. All seized drugs were confiscated.

The case began when security authorities received information that the defendant was involved in selling drugs. Investigations confirmed this information, and police identified the suspect through a confidential source who established contact with him.



A controlled purchase was arranged for 130 dinars for marijuana. After agreeing on the location, police arrested the defendant while he possessed the marked money and other cash. Police later searched his home and found 48 packets of mar-

ijuana and other drug materials. The defendant told investigators that he received the drugs from different locations arranged with another person. The Public Prosecution charged him with selling marijuana without legal permission and possessing it for personal use. The court found him guilty and sentenced him to 5 years in prison, fined him 3,000 dinars, confiscated the drugs, and ordered his deportation after completing the sentence.