

Stronger than ever

UK praises Bahraini people's resilience as symbol of national unity

Reaffirms unwavering security commitment to Bahrain during Starmer visit



Starmer departs Bahrain on Thursday Night after high-level meetings with leadership during his three day visit to the region

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

The United Kingdom has reaffirmed its "full and firm" commitment to Bahrain's security, saying Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit underscored close bilateral solidarity during a sensitive regional period.

UK Ambassador to Bahrain Alistair Long said in a video message published by the embassy that the visit was part of a pre-arranged programme, which later coincided with regional de-



Starmer meets military personnel on a beach in Bahrain

velopments, including a ceasefire agreement.

He noted that the Prime Minister met His Majesty King



Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, adding that the timing of high-level visits

between close partners carries added significance during periods of heightened tension.

The ambassador said Star-

mer praised the resilience of the Bahraini people and their strong sense of national identity, describing it as a reflection of unity and strength in the face of challenges.

He added that both sides

reaffirmed their support for a rules-based international order and stressed the importance of safeguarding freedom of navigation in global sea lanes, calling it essential to international peace and stability.



The United Kingdom's naval base in Bahrain, UK Naval Support Facility, is Britain's first permanent military base east of the Suez Canal since 1971 and can host up to 500 Royal Navy personnel.

No cap on renewal of travel bans for debtors

TDT | Manama

Travel bans imposed on debtors could be renewed repeatedly without a fixed overall limit, under proposed amendments to Bahrain's civil enforcement law that are set for a parliamentary vote on Tuesday.

The Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee has merged two draft laws into a single proposal, retaining the existing three-month travel ban period while allowing extensions to be renewed continuously as long as legal grounds remain valid. The amendment to Article 40 of the civil enforcement law also stipulates that travel bans will not override final deportation orders or prevent authorities from requiring foreign residents to leave Bahrain.

The government and the Ministry of Justice have raised concerns over legal balance and equal treatment, while the Bahrain Bar Society has supported the proposal, arguing it is necessary to prevent debtors from evading enforcement measures.

Who can hold your passport?

Draft law says no one without consent

● **Lawmakers propose replacing the term "house servants" with "domestic workers" in Bahraini labour legislation**

● **A 2012 Court of Cassation ruling confirmed that passports are personal property and cannot be withheld unlawfully**

● **Services Committee has recommended rejecting the bill**

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Employers in Bahrain could soon be prohibited from retaining domestic workers' passports or identity documents without consent under a government bill set for a parliamentary vote next Tuesday, but the proposal has drawn mixed views, with authorities backing the move while a key parliamentary committee argues existing laws already provide sufficient protection.



Mamdouh Al Saleh, Chairman of Parliament's Services Committee

The draft law proposes fines ranging from BD200 to BD500 for violations and introduces clear rules requiring employers to issue receipts for any documents held and return them immediately upon request.

The proposal also seeks to replace the term "house servants" with "domestic workers" in Bahraini law and place the regu-

lation of employer-worker relations in the sector under a Cabinet-issued framework.

Despite these measures, Parliament's Services Committee has recommended rejecting the bill in principle, arguing that existing legislation, court rulings and labour regulations already address most of the issues covered.

The draft law, linked to Decree No. 93 of 2024, proposes amendments to key provisions of the Labour Law for the Private Sector, including Articles 2 and 12, and introduces a new Article 184 bis outlining penalties.

The committee said domestic workers are already protected under around 56 provisions in the current labour law, cover-

ing contracts, wages, leave, end-of-service benefits and dispute resolution. It also cited a 2012 ruling by Bahrain's Court of Cassation, which affirmed that passports are personal property and cannot be withheld except by legal authority, along with references to Labour Market Law No. 19 of 2006 and LMRA regulations governing domestic worker permits.

In contrast, the Labour Ministry and the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) have backed the bill, saying it would provide clearer legal foundations, reduce disputes and better define the rights and obligations of both employers and workers. They added that formalising the ban would help



Bahrain had 73,222 domestic workers in 2024, marking a gradual decline from previous years. The largest category comprised domestic servants, followed by private drivers, gardeners, cooks, and personal care nurses.

address recurring violations and enhance Bahrain's international standing in labour rights.

Official data showed that 91 cases involving the retention of workers' documents were resolved amicably between 2022 and 2024, with most recorded in 2022.

The report also noted that Bahrain had 73,222 domestic workers in 2024, reflecting a gradual decline from previous years. The largest group comprised domestic servants, followed by private drivers, gardeners, cooks and personal care workers.