

# Bahrain bets big on AI future

Transportation Minister participates in WSIS+20, AI for Good Global Summit

TDT | Geneva

Bahrain is positioning itself as a regional leader in artificial intelligence by investing in digital infrastructure, telecom networks and innovation-friendly policies, Transportation and Telecommunications Minister Dr Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa said.

Speaking at the AI for Good Global Summit in Switzerland, he said the Kingdom's progress



has been built on a clear vision, strong partnerships and continued investment in advanced digital infrastructure, enabling AI adoption across key sectors.

Dr Shaikh Abdulla said close cooperation between government agencies, regulators, telecom operators and the private sector has been central to Bahrain's digital transformation and AI growth.

He stressed that governments,

technology companies and telecom providers must work together to strengthen digital trust, create flexible regulations and invest in digital skills to build an inclusive and sustainable AI ecosystem.

The minister was participating in the WSIS+20 High-Level Event and the AI for Good Global Summit, where global leaders discussed the future of digital transformation and artificial intelligence.

## UN adopts Bahrain-backed digital arbitration reforms

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A proposal put forward by Bahrain has helped shape new United Nations recommendations that will make it easier to recognise and enforce electronic arbitration awards around the world.

The recommendations, unanimously adopted this week by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) during its 59th commission session in New York, amend the UN Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration to recognise arbitration awards and related notices issued in electronic form.



The changes stem from an initial proposal submitted by the Council for International Dispute Resolution of the Kingdom of Bahrain in late 2024, followed by a joint proposal with Switzerland and Mexico in 2025.

The new reforms are intended to provide greater legal certainty for businesses and governments using international arbitration in an increasingly digital environment, regardless of whether awards and notices are issued electronically or on

paper.

They also strengthen the implementation of the New York Convention by ensuring its protections remain effective as cross-border commercial disputes increasingly move to digital platforms.

## US move to remove Syria from terror list welcomed

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Bahrain has welcomed the United States' decision to begin removing Syria from its list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, describing it as a significant step towards the country's reconstruction and economic recovery.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the move, announced by US President Donald Trump, would help attract foreign investment and international assistance while facilitating Syria's reintegration into the global financial and economic systems.

The ministry said Bahrain appreciated President

Trump's efforts to support Syria, including initiatives to lift economic sanctions and promote security, peace and sustainable development across the region.

It also reaffirmed the Kingdom's longstanding support for Syria's security, stability, unity and territorial integrity, expressing hope that the move would help fulfil the aspirations of the Syrian people for lasting peace, stability and prosperity.

The ministry added that Bahrain looks forward to Syria resuming its active role within the Arab region and the wider international community.



## 136 top private school students honoured



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A total of 136 private school students who scored 99% and above in Bahrain's national examinations were honoured by Education Minister Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma during a special reception at the Ministry of Education headquarters in

Isa Town.

Congratulating the high achievers on their outstanding academic performance, Dr Juma wished them continued success as they prepare to pursue higher education.

The minister also met with the students to discuss lessons learned from the current

and previous academic years, highlighting the ministry's ongoing efforts to further strengthen Bahrain's education system.

Students were invited to share their views and suggestions on improving the learning experience, while ministry officials presented an overview of the

forthcoming scholarship programme.

The sessions outlined the main criteria for scholarship allocation and included discussions on students' preferred fields of study and future academic specialisations as they prepare for the next stage of their education.

## UoB builds on global ranking success with expansion plans



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Fresh from securing international recognition in the 2026 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, the University of Bahrain is pressing ahead with plans to expand its academic offerings, strengthen global partnerships and enhance research.

The university's Board of Trustees, chaired by Education Minister Dr Mohammed

bin Mubarak Juma, reviewed a proposal to establish a College of Design during its third meeting of 2026 and discussed measures to further improve the university's standing in international rankings.

The board also examined progress on construction projects and reviewed agreements and memoranda of understanding signed with local, regional and international institutions during the second quarter of 2026.

## Global population growth slows as Bahrain's demographics shift

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The world's population continues to grow, but at its slowest pace in decades, with falling birth rates and longer life expectancy reshaping societies across the globe, according to the United Nations.

Marking World Population Day on July 11, the UN's World Population Prospects 2024 report estimates the global population at about 8.3 billion in 2026. It is projected to reach



9.7 billion by 2050 before peak-

ing at around 10.3 billion in the mid-2080s.

The report says declining fertility rates are driving one of the biggest demographic shifts in modern history. Global fertility has fallen to about 2.2 children per woman, down from around five in the 1950s, while more than half of all countries and territories now record fertility rates below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. Rising life expectancy, now averaging about 73 years, and increasing urbanisation are also transform-

ing population patterns.

India remains the world's most populous country with an estimated 1.46 billion people, followed by China with about 1.41 billion. Vatican City remains the world's least populous sovereign state, with around 800 residents.

### Bahrain mirrors global trend

Bahrain is experiencing many of the same demographic changes.

World Bank data show the Kingdom's crude birth rate fell from 15.4 births per 1,000 people

in 2015 to about 12 per 1,000 in 2024, a decline of more than 20% over the past decade.

At the same time, Bahrain's population continues to grow through migration. According to the Information & eGovernment Authority (IGA), the Kingdom's population reached 1,603,260 in June 2025, with non-Bahrainis accounting for 53.5% of the total.

Experts attribute declining birth rates to later marriages, smaller families, greater participation of women in higher education and the workforce,

and rising living costs. As demographic patterns evolve, long-term planning for healthcare, education, housing and the labour market is becoming increasingly important.

Observed annually since 1990, World Population Day highlights global population issues and the importance of informed reproductive choices. For Bahrain, it also reinforces the need for sustainable demographic planning in support of Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 and the Kingdom's long-term development goals.