

## Life sentence upheld for drug smuggler

● Large-scale sea trafficking case

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The First High Criminal Court has rejected the appeal of a defendant sentenced to life imprisonment in connection with a large-scale drug trafficking operation conducted via Bahrain's territorial waters. The original verdict sentenced four defendants — including the appellant — to life in prison and fined each BD5,000, while two others received 10-year prison terms and the same fine.

A female Arab defendant was sentenced to one year in jail and fined BD1,000 for drug use, in addition to being deported after serving her sentence.

The court also ordered the confiscation of the seized narcotics.

### Case details

According to case details, the Directorate of Anti-Narcotics at the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science received intelligence on an international network smuggling drugs into Bahrain by sea from a neighboring country.

Investigations revealed that the first and second defendants were responsible for receiving consignments of hashish (cannabis) offshore and transporting them into Bahrain, where they sold them to the third defendant, who then handed the proceeds to the sixth defendant.

The latter used a grill restaurant's commercial license he owned as a cover to transfer the illicit funds to the network's leader abroad.

# Parent relief

MPs approve bill requiring prior Education Ministry approval for tuition hikes in private schools

Mohammed Darwish  
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Tuition rises will need prior approval under a private-education bill approved unanimously by Parliament yesterday.

The bill now moves to the Shura Council and carries penalties of up to BD100,000 and a year in jail.

The text will take effect only after passage by both chambers, Royal assent and publication in the Official Gazette.

Existing providers will then have one year to bring their status into line.

Running to seven chapters and 36 articles, the bill introduces a three-year, renewable licence, bars enrolment until health, safety and teaching standards are met, and requires audited accounts.

### Request

Any request to raise tuition must be cleared in advance by the Ministry of Education; refusals must be reasoned and can be appealed to the Minister.

Inspectors can enter schools and review records to check compliance.

The Ministry may open inquiries on its own initiative or on serious complaint.

After due process, it may order fixes, publish the breach at the school's cost, fine up to BD100,000, suspend services, place the school under administration, close it temporarily or cancel the licence.

### Cost

If services pause or a licence is cancelled, the school must keep operating for a set period to allow transfers at its cost.



H.E. Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma



“Our policy is clear. We will not allow unjustified burdens on parents.”

• H.E. DR MOHAMMED BIN MUBARAK JUMA, EDUCATION MINISTER

Education Minister, His Excellency Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, said: “The law puts fees under firm, direct oversight. No school may raise fees without prior approval.”

He added: “We stopped a BD400 “stationery fee” immediately. Our policy is clear. We will not allow unjustified burdens on parents.”

On enforcement, Dr Juma said the text sets “a stepped ladder of measures” after due process: “We can order the breach removed, issue a written warning, publish the breach at the school's cost, suspend some services without harming pupils, fine up to BD100,000, place the institution under ministry administration, close it temporarily, or cancel the licence where needed.”



AbdulNabi Salman, First Deputy Speaker



MP Mohsen Al Asboul

### Inspectors

He said inspectors had found “expired fire extinguishers, unmanned gates and even a hidden door into an unlicensed residence”, adding that “seeing it with our own eyes proves the need for firm, organised deterrence”.

Some cases, he noted, go to the Public Prosecution.

MP Hassan Ibrahim said: “The 1998 regime no longer meets today's needs. Private education now teaches about one third of pupils, around 90,000, which eases pressure on public



MP Jalal Kadhém



MP Hassan Ibrahim

### Checks

He urged means-tested help for lower and middle-income families “to keep children in their schools’ and backed incentives for high-performing schools to ‘create healthy competition that lifts quality”, alongside tighter control of fee rises.

### Checks

First Deputy Speaker Abdulnabi Salman called the bill “a needed update after many years” and pressed for stronger checks on prices.

“Education must not turn into

## Court to rule on false-news case

● Maximum penalty pushed

Mohammed Darwish  
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Judgment set for 27 November as the court keeps a woman in custody in a false-news case after prosecutors sought the maximum penalty.

Prosecutors told the Minor Criminal Court that the defendant posted videos attacking a ministry “from the realm of her imagination”, claiming to warn female students about certain senior staff while also sharing indecent sketches and chatting in ways offensive to public morals.

They said the clips spread confusion and carried false information.

The Head of the Cyber-crimes Prosecution presented electronic material with timestamps said to match the broadcasts.

She argued the posts were deliberate and repeated, intended to shake public confidence.

“Does Bahrain, a land of tolerance, deserve to have charges of corruption falsely attributed to it?” she asked.

She said the Public Prosecution stands “to safeguard public order, protect social peace, and preserve the reputation of institutions and individuals from malicious tampering and false news”, adding: “When freedom is cut loose from responsibility, it becomes chaos.”

For the defence, lawyer Shaikh Rashid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa asked for acquittal.

The court allowed the defendant to speak and she also sought to be cleared of all charges. The panel kept her in custody and ordered the defendant to remain in custody until the hearing on 27 November 2025.

## Lawmakers back year-round allowances for oyster divers

● Protecting earnings

Mohammed Darwish  
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MPs yesterday approved, under urgent procedure, a proposal to keep the cost-of-living allowance and the meat subsidy for recreational oyster divers, rather than have these payments switched off when monthly income rises and falls.

The proposal was tabled by MP Hamad Al Doy with four other MPs.

It covers hobby divers whose earnings depend on sea seasons, weather and the opening of fishing areas, leaving no steady wage through the year.

Al Doy said: “Diving to harvest oysters is one of Bahrain's oldest trades. It helped build the economy before oil and shaped the island's social and cultural character. “The Heritage of Diving and Pearlring in



Bahrain” has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List because of its historical value. Because incomes from this craft are irregular, benefits have sometimes been stopped automatically under monthly income rules, even though most divers do not have a fixed salary.”

### Earnings

The text states that divers' earnings would be treated as seasonal so they do not trigger suspensions of the allowance or the subsidy. Payments would continue year-round for citi-



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• MP HAMAD AL DOY

zens holding a valid diving or marine fishing licence.

Seasonal income would be recorded through Fisheries Directorate records, with the Ministry of Social Development working with the Agriculture and Marine Resources Agency to check who qualifies.

The proposal cites UNESCO recognition of Bahrain's pearlring history and states that continued payments would help keep the craft going and maintain family income.

## Businessman, company cleared of tax evasion

● Paid BD52,000 in VAT settlement

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The First High Criminal Court has ruled to dismiss a tax evasion case against an Asian businessman and his company after confirming that they had reached a settlement with the National Bureau for Revenue (NBR) by paying BD52,108.271 in owed value-added tax (VAT).



During the court session, defense lawyer Hanan Abdulaziz Al-Arabi appeared on behalf of the defendant, confirming that her client had acknowledged his criminal liability and paid the full VAT amount to the NBR. She therefore requested

that the case be closed on the grounds of reconciliation.

### Defendants

In its judgment, the court stated that both defendants — the company director and his firm — had reached a settlement with the NBR prior to the issuance of a final ruling.

The case documents included an official letter from the Bureau's Chief Executive confirming acceptance of the reconciliation request filed on August 26, 2025, along with proof of payment of the evaded VAT amounting to BD 52,108.271.



## Health services check

Hs Excellency Lieutenant General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH), visited the Cardiology Unit at Salmaniya Medical Complex to review its operations and follow up on efforts to enhance specialised cardiac care services. He was briefed on the diagnostic and therapeutic services provided in line with the latest international medical standards, as well as the training and research programmes carried out by the unit to strengthen healthcare quality and expand specialised services across government hospitals.