

Panel Backs Platform to Repair Crumbling Homes

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Mohammed Darwish

A national scheme to repair crumbling homes for low-income Bahrainis has won the backing of a parliamentary committee, despite government ministries saying much of the work is already covered by existing programmes.

The proposal, put forward by MP Basema Mubarak and four other MPs, calls for a Tarmeem platform to find homes at risk of collapse, arrange repairs and support families across Bahrain.

The platform would come under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and work with the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Development.

Funding would come from the state budget, alongside donations and grants accepted by the ministry.

The Public Utilities and

Environment Committee approved the plan unanimously, saying early repairs could keep ageing homes standing for years, ease the burden on low-income families and protect Bahrain's old architectural character and Islamic heritage.

It also said Bahraini engineering graduates could help draw up repair plans aimed at extending the life of each property.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning said the proposal's main aim was already being met through its housing finance services.

Under the 1976 Housing Law, the ministry provides low-income citizens with housing, land plots and finance to buy, build or repair homes.

Restoration loans are also available under Ministerial Decision No. 868 of 2022 for renovation, maintenance, structural faults and essential changes to



Basema Mubarak, MP

homes.

The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture said the plan matched work already carried out through the Cities and Villages Development Programme.

Applications are sent to municipal councils, which study each family's social circumstances before forwarding approved cases to the ministry under annual council plans.

The scheme covers home re-



pairs, maintenance, rainproofing and urgent work on houses damaged by fire.

Since 2006, it has repaired or restored 3,587 homes and fitted rain insulation at 8,722 properties, according to ministry figures up to the end of 2024.

Court Appoints New Lawyer in BD483,000 Endowments Fraud Trial

Hearing adjourned to July 19 as defence counsel withdraws from the case



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High Criminal Court has appointed a new lawyer to represent a department head at the General Directorate of Jaafari Endowments after his defence counsel withdrew from the case, adjourning the trial to July 19.

The defendant's lawyer cited an inability to reach an agreement with his client as grounds for withdrawal, which the court accepted before ordering new legal representation.

The 45-year-old, who served as a Sharia researcher and general coordinator of the Charitable Endowments and Assistance Committee, faces charges of embezzling BD483,107 from the directorate between 2022 and 2025.

Prosecutors allege he submit-

ted both genuine and fabricated assistance applications, recorded false entries in committee minutes, secured approvals, then diverted cheques into personal accounts and commercial companies. He also allegedly deposited funds into unwitting individuals' accounts before reclaiming portions under false pretences.

Defendant accused of laundering over BD404,000 through loans, property and vehicle purchases

Additional charges include laundering BD404,844, stealing official records, attempting to embezzle a further BD58,500, forging documents with fabricated signatures, and unlawfully using official seals — including a forged letter approving BD160,000 in personal loan repayments.

Private Engineering Firms to Handle Licence Checks

New regulation shifts inspection and document verification duties from municipalities to approved engineering offices

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Shopkeepers, landlords and property developers will have their licence applications checked by private engineering firms instead of the municipality itself. A resolution signed by the Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, Engineer Wael Al Mubarak, hands the firms the power to inspect, review and sign off the paperwork before it ever reaches a municipal desk.

The change, laid out in Resolution No. 86 of 2026, applies to firms already licensed under the 2014 law governing engineering work. From now on, these offices can carry out site

visits, check documents against building plans, and confirm that an application matches the rules before recommending it for approval.

The idea is to smooth the path towards what is called an inspection form, the first hurdle any applicant must clear. Engineering firms taking on the job must check that every application and its paperwork aligns with the law, and that drawings, maps and other details match what is needed for the licence.

Five kinds of licence fall under the new rule. These are permits to occupy public roads, approval to sell floors or flats separately, permission to merge or split up buildings or change



how they are used, commercial registration, and the registration of shared housing.

Anyone applying for a road permit needs only hand over a copy of their commercial registration certificate and an identity card.

Selling off individual floors

Licence reforms continue as Bahrain shifts more inspection duties to approved engineering firms.

WAEI AL MUBARAK, MINISTER OF MUNICIPALITIES AFFAIRS AND AGRICULTURE

or flats calls for far more paperwork. Applicants will need a letter from the Real Estate Regulatory Authority, an approved building permit and drawings, plans showing shared services and floor layouts, the authority's own application form, proof of ownership, address

cards, identity cards for every owner, and confirmation that the electricity supply has been connected.

Merging or splitting a property, or changing its use, brings its own list. A letter from the owner is required, along with proof of ownership, a title deed, a sale contract, or, in the case of an inheritance, a religious ruling together with identity cards and consent from each heir, or a power of attorney drawn up on their behalf. Older building permits and drawings, recent photographs of the site, plans of the layout and the front of the building, and an electrical load form are also required.

Firms seeking commercial

registration must submit photographs of the shop, inside and out, a picture of its metal address plate, an address certificate, a copy of the lease, an electricity bill, the building permit and drawings, and a letter of approval from the relevant authority.

Group housing registration needs a copy of the lease, proof that health rules have been met, proof that safety rules have been met, an electrical load form confirming the wiring meets the required standard, and a certificate from an accredited engineering firm stating the size of the building and the maximum number of people allowed to live there.

Shura Begins Preparations for Fifth Legislative Session

Smart Legislative Framework to Boost Efficiency and Modernise Council Operations

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Rehab Mohammad

The General Secretariat of Bahrain's Shura Council has begun preparations for the fifth session of the sixth legislative term, focusing on strengthening support systems and enhancing administrative, technical, legal and technological services to facilitate legislative work.

Secretary-General of the Shura Council, Kareema Mohammed Al Abbasi, confirmed that the Secretariat is developing comprehensive plans to ensure full readiness for the upcoming session and to provide effective support for the



Council's activities.

The announcement was made during an expanded coordination meeting chaired by Al Abbasi with officials, department directors and section heads at the General Secretariat. The meeting reviewed the readiness plan, ongoing projects and programmes, as well as the measures being taken to provide the required operational, legal, media and technical support.

Al Abbasi highlighted the Secretariat's efforts to establish a smart leg-



H.E. Kareema Al Abbasi

islative work system by adopting modern technologies, enhancing research and documentation tools, improving knowledge management, and expanding electronic systems to

increase efficiency and speed up task completion.

She also emphasised the importance of stronger coordination between departments and investing in national expertise to ensure the Secretariat remains prepared to meet the evolving needs of Bahrain's legislative process.

The preparations are part of ongoing efforts to modernise the Shura Council's operations and strengthen its role in supporting legislative development in the Kingdom.

SCE Upgrades Chemical Reporting Service

Updated system streamlines reporting procedures and strengthens tracking of chemical imports and consumption

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The Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) has upgraded its annual reporting service for restricted chemicals as part of Bahrain's ongoing efforts to improve government services and accelerate digital transformation.

The enhanced digital service aims to strengthen monitoring of the trade and use of restricted chemicals by providing accurate and integrated data, supporting environmental compliance, reducing risks associated with exposure to hazardous substances, protecting workers, and ensuring chemicals are used according to approved environmental and regulatory standards.

Under the upgraded system, the processing time for applications has been reduced from 20 working days to 15 working days through the integration of licensing information and

customs disclosure data into a unified electronic platform.

The new system also allows direct access to information on the quantities of restricted chemicals purchased and consumed, improving data accuracy while reducing the time and effort required by institutions to compile and submit reports.

Supreme Council for Environment Chief Executive Officer Amina Hamad Al Rumaihi said the service upgrade reflects the council's commitment to adopting innovative digital solutions that enhance environmental services and improve institutional efficiency.

She added that the initiative supports national efforts to raise the quality of government ser-



vices, improve user experiences for citizens and investors, and create a more effective environmental management system. Al Rumaihi highlighted that the launch of the upgraded service demonstrates the council's commitment to simplifying procedures, reducing administrative burdens on organizations, and improving the overall efficiency of operations.