

Housing Distribution Gathers Pace

Infrastructure readiness reaches 50% as projects advance

● **BD13,000 grant apartments**

● **BD10,000 grant + BD70,000 loan packages**

● **BD40,000 loan-linked housing plots**

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Parliament reviewed housing demand and allocation progress during its twenty-sixth ordinary session, where officials provided updated figures on applications and ongoing support programmes.

Housing and Urban Planning Minister Amna Al Romaihi informed lawmakers that 835 applications have been registered under a priority category covering divorced, widowed, and other eligible women, with 77 allocations completed so far through official housing draws.

The update came in response to a parliamentary question from MP Khalid Saleh Buanaq regarding the current status of housing demand and distribution.

The minister outlined that applicants are offered several housing options, including apartments supported by a BD13,000 non-refundable grant, as well as financing schemes combining a BD10,000 grant

Housing Eligibility & Application Process

- **Income eligibility:** Increased from BD600 to **BD800**
- **Age limit:** Extended up to **60 years**
- **Temporary housing rent cap:** Maximum **25% of monthly income**, or **BD100**, whichever is lower
- **Application assessment:** Conducted by a **specialised committee**
- **Coordination:** Includes the **Supreme Council for Women**
- **Application tracking:** Available through the **Ministry's online platform**
- **Purpose:** Improve access, transparency, and efficiency in housing allocations

with a BD70,000 loan, with the government covering associated costs for eligible beneficiaries.

She also noted that housing plots linked to a BD40,000 loan are being provided; allocation depends on the completion of infrastructure works in designated areas.

According to the minister, infrastructure readiness currently stands at around 50%, a milestone that is enabling further



Housing allocations are progressing in line with infrastructure readiness, which has reached around 50 percent

— H.E. AMNA AL ROMAIHI, HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING MINISTER

allocations and allowing beneficiaries to move forward with construction planning.

She added that several plots have already been handed over and are now occupied, while additional developments are underway following the awarding of infrastructure contracts. The pace of distribution is expected to increase as ongoing projects progress in coordination with applicants.

Temporary housing solutions have also been made available for eligible groups, with units provided in areas including Al Lawzi and Hamad Town.



This is not about assigning blame – it is about recognising the scale of a challenge that has built up over many years.

— MP MOHAMMED JASSIM AL ALAWI

Concerns over long-pending housing applications

Bahrain's housing backlog took centre stage in Parliament, as officials revealed that hundreds of families in Muharraq have been waiting decades for homes.

Lawmakers were told that 746 housing applications remain pending in one constituency alone, with some dating back to as early as 2001. The figures underscored the prolonged nature of the issue, with many families still awaiting permanent housing solutions after years of uncertainty.



We held over 110 meetings with civil society organisations to reflect their views in the amendments.

— H.E. OSAMA BIN SALEH AL ALAWI, MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MP Mohammed Jassim Al Alawi said the discussion was not about placing blame, but about understanding the depth of a challenge that has built up over time. He acknowledged the efforts of Housing and Urban Planning Minister Amna Al Romaihi and ministry staff, noting the long-standing responsibilities carried by key service sectors.

He added that MPs play a role in reflecting citizens' concerns while supporting practical solutions to address the backlog.

In response, Minister Al Romaihi outlined measures

to address older applications, particularly those submitted in 2004 and earlier. These include financial support packages of BD70,000, land allocation tied to infrastructure readiness, and alternative housing options.

A dedicated committee continues to review humanitarian cases, and citizens are also received directly to explore suitable solutions based on their circumstances.

Two reports pulled from Parliament

Parliament withdrew two proposed legislative amendments from discussion following a formal request by the government during its twenty-sixth ordinary session.

The decision covers amendments to the private sector labour law and the law regulating civil society organisations; both reports were set aside according to parliamentary procedures to allow for further review.

Osama bin Saleh Al Alawi, Social Development Minister explained that the proposed changes are designed to strike a balance between strengthening governance and ensuring the continuity of civil society organisations. Under the amendments, responsibility for violations would be limited to the individuals involved rather than the organisation as a whole, allowing entities to continue operating.

Housing Loan Relief For Frontline Personnel

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Frontline members of Bahrain's defence and security services will benefit from housing loan relief following the parliament's approval of an urgent proposal in the parliament.

The initiative covers personnel from the Bahrain Defence Force, Ministry of Interior, and National Guard who have been serving continuously under demanding conditions, often requiring long periods away from their families.

MP Mohammed Al Marafi said the decision reflects official recognition of the sacrifices made



MP Mohammed Mousa



MP Mohammed Al Marafi

by frontline workers, noting that the measure intends to ease financial pressures during an exceptional period of service.

He added that many personnel remain on duty around the clock, placing significant strain on both them and their families.

MP Mohammed Mousa described the initiative as part of broader national efforts to support those responsible for safeguarding the country, stressing that while they do not seek rewards, their commitment deserves tangible acknowledgment.

ment.

He also raised concerns regarding existing loan deferment schemes, including questions about whether interest would be applied, highlighting ongoing financial considerations for affected personnel.

Lawmakers said the proposal is designed to provide direct economic relief and help maintain financial stability for service members while they continue their operational duties.

The decision underscores continued efforts to support frontline personnel and recognise their role in maintaining national security during challenging conditions.

Souq Waqif set for road upgrades

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Drivers in Souq Waqif will benefit from road improvements after Parliament approved urgent upgrades, following concerns over congestion, damaged streets and limited access.

The decision comes in response to complaints about blocked narrow roads, insufficient parking, and difficult traffic movement in parts of the area, which residents say have also raised safety concerns.

MP Abdulhakim Al Sheno said vehicles frequently obstruct passage in tight streets, making it difficult for traffic to move smoothly and highlighting the need for better

organisation.

He urged traffic authorities to conduct an on-site assessment and introduce structured parking solutions as part of a broader infrastructure improvement plan.

Lawmakers noted that the upgrades aim to improve daily mobility, ease congestion, and enhance safety in one of Bahrain's busy community hubs.

The proposal also aligns with broader road development plans in surrounding areas, with calls for Souq Waqif to be included in future infrastructure projects. The approved measures are expected to improve road conditions, regulate traffic flow and enhance the overall quality of life for users of the area.

Six-Month Fee Suspension Backed for Bahraini Businesses

● **SMEs, face rising costs**

● **Protect jobs and maintain economic stability**

● **Not a permanent waiver**

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Five MPs secured Parliament's backing on Tuesday for an urgent call to suspend electricity and water bills, municipal charges and labour fees for Bahraini business owners for six months, in a move aimed at easing pressure on firms facing economic strain after recent Iranian attacks.

The proposal, submitted by Jaleela Alawi, Mahmood Mirza Fardan, Dr Hisham Al Ashiri, Mohsen Al Asbool and Mamdouh Al Saleh, asks the government to halt the charges for a fixed period to support local businesses, particularly small

Operating costs continue to rise while revenues decline, and many businesses simply cannot sustain these obligations without relief.

JALEELA ALAWI, MP



and medium enterprises.

Speaking during the session, Jaleela Alawi said the request comes amid "exceptional cir-

cumstances" affecting Bahrain's economy, with effects seen across commercial activity and operating costs.

"Markets have slowed, some business activity has dropped, and operating costs have gone up in a way many firms cannot carry for long," she said. "Bahraini business owners rely on steady income. Any disruption places them under real financial pressure, especially when expenses continue without pause."

She said business owners remain bound by core payments, including electricity and water bills, municipal fees and labour charges, even as revenues come under strain.

"These obligations continue regardless of income," she said.

"They build up and may push some firms to scale down or stop for a period, which then feeds into the wider economy and affects jobs linked to these businesses."

Alawi said the proposed six-month pause is meant to give firms time to recover and adjust their operations without adding longer-term strain on public finances.

"This is temporary support," she said. "It gives business owners time to rearrange their affairs, restore activity in stages and continue operating during this period."