

# Cost-of-living allowance may be based on net pay

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An urgent proposal to change how Bahrain's cost-of-living allowance is calculated was submitted to Parliament by five MPs led by Jalal Kadhem.

The MPs want eligibility to be assessed using net income after deductions, rather than the gross salary used under the current system.

Kadhem said the aim is to keep the allowance directed at low-income Bahraini families and to help them manage rising living costs and basic monthly bills.

"The cost-of-living allowance was made to support low-income Bahraini families and help them deal with rising living costs and basic monthly bills," he said.

### Deductions

He said the current method relies on gross pay and does not take account of mandatory deductions taken each month under laws and regulations, such as housing service instalments, housing loan re-



“The aim is to keep the allowance directed at low-income Bahraini families and to help them manage rising living costs and basic monthly bills.”

— MP JALAL KADHEM

payments and insurance contributions, including a 1 per cent unemployment insurance deduction.

Kadhem said this can leave some households classed as ineligible even though their disposable income falls after those deductions, alongside other commitments such as personal loans and everyday household costs.

### Category

"Many citizens, after mandatory deductions are taken out, fall in practice into the low-income category, yet they are denied support because the gross salary figure does not reflect their real living conditions," he said.

The proposal was submitted by Kadhem, Second Deputy Speaker Ahmed Qarata, Dr Ali Al Nuaimi, Dr Hisham Al Ashiri and Mamdouh Al Saleh.

# ‘Digital safety’

Shura Council proposes bill to bar children under 15 from social media

● Move to strengthen privacy and cut exposure to harmful online material

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A new Shura-drafted legislation would bar children under 15 from creating accounts on digital platforms, as the upper chamber prepares to debate adding a "digital safety" chapter to Bahrain's Child Law.

The proposal goes before the Shura Council on Sunday with a recommendation from its Women and Child Affairs Committee that it be taken up.

### Services

In the draft, "digital platforms" is used in a wide sense, covering services such as social media and other apps or sites where users open accounts, interact or communicate, and access digital content.

Teenagers aged 15 to 18 would still be able to use them, but under rules meant to strengthen privacy and cut exposure to harmful material.

Platforms used for education would be exempt, with the Minister of Education to decide which services qualify.

### Amendment

The amendment was submitted by the Second Deputy Chairperson of the Shura Council, Dr Jihad Al Fadhel, alongside the First Deputy Chairman, Jamal Fakhro; Head of the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee,



From left, Dr Jihad Al Fadhel and Jamal Fakhro



Digital platforms cover services such as social media and other apps or sites where users open accounts, interact or communicate, and access digital content.

The committee said the aim was to extend child protection into online life, where children can be exposed to harmful content, breaches of privacy and other forms of misuse.

### Platforms

It defined digital platforms as electronic means that allow users to interact and communicate in the digital space and offer digital services or content, where the service operates in, or is directed at users in, the Kingdom.

Under the draft, children who have not completed 15 would be banned from opening accounts on such platforms.

For those aged 15 to 18, use would be allowed but tied to controls and duties aimed at privacy and safer use, with the

rules framed around that age group's stage of growth.

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) would be tasked with issuing policies, standards and instructions on what internet service providers must do to protect children from harmful content and support digital safety online.

A separate body, to be named by decree, would draw up the list of administrative penalties for breaches, set out how they are enforced and appealed, and lay down rules on checking a user's age.

The committee also referred to moves in other countries to set age limits and place duties on platforms and service providers, with a mix of bans and regulated access depending on age.



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# Focus on legal framework for AI use in public prosecutions

Rehab Mohammad  
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The Public Prosecution chaired the 50th meeting of the Committee of Specialists from Public Prosecutions and Public Prosecutor's Offices of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The meeting was chaired by Advocate General Counselor

Fahd Khalid Al-Buainain, and attended by Chief Public Prosecutor Mohammed Yousif Al-Zubari, representing the Public Prosecution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, alongside representatives of public prosecution authorities from GCC member states.

### Agenda

The meeting discussed a number of agenda items, most notably

a proposal submitted by the Public Prosecution of Bahrain to develop a guiding (model) legal framework regulating the use of artificial intelligence in the work of public prosecutions and public prosecutor's offices.

Discussions also included the periodic review of unified judicial instructions for members of public prosecution bodies across GCC states, as well as certain criteria related to the Hamed



Fahd Khalid Al-Buainain

Al-Othman Award for public prosecution members.

### Cooperation

In his remarks, the Chair of the meeting, Al-Buainain emphasized the importance of strengthening joint GCC cooperation in judicial and legal fields, developing prosecution work mechanisms, exchanging expertise, keeping pace with legal and technological developments, en-

hancing performance efficiency, and reinforcing the principles of justice and the rule of law across GCC countries.

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants reaffirmed their commitment to continued coordination and cooperation among public prosecution authorities of GCC states, in support of institutional integration and the advancement of joint Gulf judicial cooperation.

# Parliament to review Bahrain's entry into design pact

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The government has referred to Parliament a draft law that would approve Bahrain's accession to the Locarno Agreement, the treaty that sets a shared classification system for industrial design filings.

The bill has been sent to the Council of Representatives for committee review, with the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee named as the main committee and the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee asked to give comments, under

Decree No. 77 of 2025.

The Locarno Agreement, overseen by the World Intellectual Property Organization, is meant to make design registration easier to sort and search by using the same class and subclass numbers across member states.

In its memorandum, the Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission said the aim is to adopt the Locarno Classification so Bahrain's approach to design classification matches the system used abroad for filing and protection.

The treaty explains how the



Ahmed Al Salloom, Chairman of Parliament's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee

classification is maintained, including a committee of experts that can amend the list

of classes and subclasses and circulate changes through WIPO channels, as well as rules on when updates take effect after notification.

The commission said the agreement does not conflict with the Constitution, but needs a law to take effect in Bahrain under the rules governing international agreements.

The proposed draft law is framed in two articles with one approving accession to the agreement, and the other requiring the Prime Minister and ministers, each within their remit, to carry it out.

# Man jailed for scalding female colleague

Rehab Mohammad  
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The High Criminal Court has sentenced a man in his twenties to three years in prison after convicting him of assaulting his female co-worker by throwing hot water on her, resulting in a permanent disability assessed at 5%, according to medical reports.

The incident occurred following a workplace dispute at a café over the handling of an order.

The argument escalated when the defendant physi-

cally assaulted the victim and knocked her to the ground, prompting intervention by other staff members.

After the situation appeared to have calmed, the defendant called the victim by name and, when she turned towards him, he threw hot water prepared for café use onto her face.

Investigations revealed that the defendant continued his assault outside the workplace by striking the victim with a metal water heater.

He later confessed to the charges during prosecution questioning.