

Key Bills Face Shura Council Decision

● Law targets unlicensed financial operations

● Measure linked to upcoming FATF review

● Officials warn of risks to financial reputation

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Disability Hiring Quota Hike Faces Resistance

Bahrain's Shura Council is set to debate a proposal to increase the employment quota for people with disabilities in private companies, despite a recommendation to reject the plan.

The draft law, already approved by Parliament, seeks to raise the minimum quota from 2% to 4% in firms employing 50 workers or more. It would amend parts of Law No. 74 of 2006, which governs the care, rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities.

The proposal also makes it mandatory for the Labour Minister, in coordination with relevant authorities, to identify government positions where qualified individuals with disabilities would receive hiring priority.

However, the Shura Council's Services Committee has advised against the bill, arguing that the issue lies in weak enforcement of the current law rather than the quota itself.

According to a recent audit, 96% of eligible companies failed to meet the existing 2% requirement, highlighting sig-



“Raising the quota would open more doors for people with disabilities and encourage inclusion

- DR. JAMEELA AL SALMAN, HEAD OF SHURA COUNCIL'S SERVICES COMMITTEE



“Delays in strengthening regulations could affect Bahrain's global standing

- KHALID AL MASKATI, HEAD OF SHURA COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



“Regulation is important, but it must support creativity rather than restrict it

- NANCY KHADOURI, SHURA COUNCIL MEMBER

nificant compliance gaps. The committee stressed that stricter enforcement, improved training and better job preparation would be more effective than raising the quota.

While some civil society groups support the increase, others emphasized the need for enhanced rehabilitation, workplace readiness and better coordination between government bodies.

New Law Targets Illegal Financial Services

Shura Council will review stricter penalties for unlicensed financial activities, including jail terms and fines of up to BDI1 million.

The proposal, issued as Decree-Law No. 37 of 2025, amends the Central Bank of Bahrain and Financial Institutions Law. It targets violations such as operating financial services without a licence or misusing regulated financial terms.

The Shura Council's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee recommended approving the measure, citing the need to combat money laundering and terrorism financing more effectively.

The committee warned that delays in strengthening regulations could expose Bahrain to international risks, including possible placement on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list, which could impact investment and financial credibility.

Officials also highlighted the urgency of implementing the law ahead of Bahrain's upcoming FATF evaluation.

If approved, offenders could face imprisonment, fines, or both, depending on the severity of the violation.

Licensing Law for Artists Pulled Due to Delays

A proposed law to regulate artistic professions in Bahrain

was withdrawn after the government failed to provide feedback.

The draft legislation, submitted in May 2025, aimed to introduce licensing requirements for artists, including actors, musicians and performers.

It would have made it mandatory to obtain official approval before practicing in the sector.

The bill's sponsors withdrew the proposal after the Ministry of Information did not respond to requests for its opinion, leaving lawmakers without sufficient input to proceed.

The proposed law also included plans for a professional licensing system, fees for foreign artists and the creation of a fund to support the arts sector in the Kingdom.

Although withdrawn, the bill marked a significant attempt to formally regulate Bahrain's creative industries and enhance support for local artists.

UoB Board Reviews Major Academic and Investment Projects

The Board of Trustees of the University of Bahrain held its second regular meeting for 2026, chaired by Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, Minister of Education and Chairman of the Board, with members and invited attendees participating via video conferencing.

At the beginning of the meeting, the board reviewed the latest updates on construction, investment, and academic projects being implemented at the university's Sakhir campus. These initiatives aim to diversify resources and further

enhance both educational and operational performance.

The board also examined several partnerships and memoranda of understanding signed between the University of Bahrain and various local, regional, and international entities.

In addition, the board reviewed reports submitted by the Academic Committee and the Audit and Finance Committee. It approved the necessary decisions regarding the recommendations in these reports and tasked the university presidency with following up on their implementation.

Broadening representation in global arbitration sector



Professor Marika Patrani Paulson, Secretary-General of the Centre at the forum.

A senior official from the Bahrain International Dispute Resolution and Arbitration Centre spoke at the International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) conference in Madrid.

Professor Marika Patrani Paulson, Secretary-General of the Centre, joined a panel session focused on "Diversity," where experts examined how representation and inclusion are shaping the future of international arbitration and related decision-making frameworks.

In her remarks, she referred to key findings from her research paper titled "Diversity

and Its Risks: Towards Effective Implementation in International Arbitration." The study presents practical recommendations aimed at strengthening diversity in a meaningful and results-oriented way.

She underlined the need for a clear and precise understanding of diversity, its alignment with excellence standards, and the importance of broadening the geographical and institutional reach of arbitration practices. She also pointed to capacity building as a key pillar, along with replacing superficial indicators with deeper, more substantive inclusion measures.

Traditional Gulf Dance Finds a New Voice

● Preserving tradition through research and teaching

● Growing international interest in Khaleeji dance

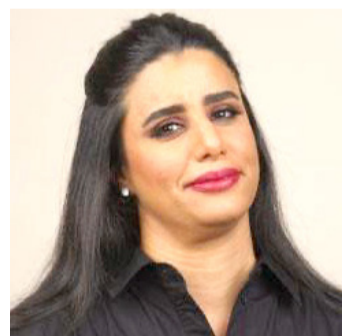
● A step toward institutional recognition of traditional dance

Ghadeer Alkumaish
TDT | Manama

Bahraini artist Shareefa AlZayani, a former DJ and now a Khaleeji dance teacher, is working to preserve one of the Gulf's important cultural traditions.

In November 2022, she published a book documenting the movements and meanings of Khaleeji women's dance.

AlZayani began teaching Khaleeji dance in 2020 after noticing a lack of proper learning resources.



“There were very few books—so I decided to create one myself

- SHAREEFA ALZAYANI



Shareefa AlZayani teaches children traditional Khaleeji women's dance with joy and pride. Right, the book documenting its movements and meanings

Her experience highlighted a bigger issue—the limited documentation of traditional Gulf dances, especially those performed by women.

“I was first a DJ, and later I became a teacher in 2020,” she said. Her shift into teaching made her realize how difficult it was to find detailed material on dance techniques.

Her background in Physical Education from the University of Bahrain helped her develop a structured teaching method. She focused on breaking down movements into simple and clear steps for her students.

“It was very challenging when I started teaching,” she explained. “There were very few books, and most of them focused

on music, not the movements.” Determined to fill this gap, AlZayani began researching and documenting the dance herself. “I thought, there are no books—so let me do it,” she said.

Her book took months of work, as she carefully analyzed and recorded the dance movements. Despite the challenges, she succeeded in creating a

guide that others could easily follow.

The response to her work has been very positive. Many readers appreciated her efforts and were proud that a Bahraini woman was the first to document this art form in a book.

AlZayani has also gained students from across the GCC and other countries. She said inter-

national audiences enjoy and respect Khaleeji dance.

“I hope we can have academic schools, a local committee, and even a Khaleeji Dance Championship every year,” she said.

Looking ahead, she remains dedicated to spreading awareness. She encourages aspiring dancers to learn, watch performances, and study the art.

