

HM King ratifies Bahrain and Cyprus academic deal

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His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa ratified and issued Decree (20) of 2026, approving the agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus regarding the mutual academic recognition of higher education qualifications for admission and continuation of study in higher education institutions, based on the proposal of the Minister of Education and following the approval of the Cabinet.

The agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus



HM the King

was signed in Manama on January 25, 2026.

The Minister of Education shall implement this decree, which shall take effect following the date of its issuance and be published in the Official Gazette.

Salary support approved to protect private sector jobs

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

MPs yesterday approved an urgent proposal to protect private sector jobs.

The proposal was submitted by Dr Hasan Eid Bukhamas, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee.

It calls on the government to direct Tamkeen to launch an exceptional programme covering the full salaries of Bahraini employees working in small and medium enterprises affected by current conditions.

Dr. Bukhamas said the move comes amid exceptional regional

The approved proposal aims to ensure salaries continue without interruption, while easing financial pressure on business owners. The lawmaker noted that protecting their stability is essential to prevent disruption and avoid layoffs that could directly affect many families.

circumstances, including ongoing conflict and its direct and indirect economic impact on Bahrain, which has disrupted business activity and increased operational costs.

He stressed that small and medium enterprises form a core

pillar of the national economy and a key source of employment for Bahrainis.

The lawmaker noted that protecting their stability is essential to prevent disruption and avoid layoffs that could directly affect many families.

Bahrain gets 1.5% of power from renewables

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain is still getting only a small share of its power from renewable sources.

Electricity and Water Affairs Minister, His Excellency Yasser Humaidan, said green energy now accounts for about 1.5 per cent of the Kingdom's yearly electricity output of roughly 20,000 gigawatt-hours.

H.E. Humaidan added that figure should be read as part of a measured shift, not a finished picture, as the Kingdom moves bit by bit towards a fuller renewables system.

Firm penalties

New decree enforces strict prison terms and fines for bank regulatory breaches

MPs pass jail term amendment in banking law

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A decree-law introducing jail terms and fines of up to BD1 million for breaches of Central Bank of Bahrain licensing and compliance rules was approved by Parliament yesterday.

Ministers told MPs the measure had already been in force since 8 September 2025 as Bahrain prepares for a Financial Action Task Force review this month.

Decree-Law No. 37 of 2025 rewrites the opening paragraph of Article 161 of the Central Bank of Bahrain and Financial Institutions Law of 2006.

Under the new wording, anyone who breaches Articles 40 and 41 of the law, or rules issued under Article 42, may face imprisonment, a fine of up to BD1 million, or either one of those penalties, without prejudice to any harsher punishment under the Penal Code or any other law.

Imprisonment

The amendment adds imprisonment to a provision that had previously allowed only a fine of up to BD1 million.

The offences concern carrying out regulated financial activity without a licence and



H.E. Ghanim Al Buainain



Ahmed Qarata



Khalid Humaidan

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— H.E. GHANIM AL BUAINAIN, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

the use of protected financial or insurance terms by unlicensed parties.

During the debate, MP Abdulhakim Al Sheno called the decree-law one of the measures that would “close some gaps” in Bahrain's banking law, but questioned the timing behind the urgency case.

Review

“We are now at the end of March,” he told the chamber. “How will there be enough time for it to be reviewed by the Shura Council?”

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, His Excellency Ghanim Al

Buainain, replied that the issue had already been addressed in the grounds of urgency accompanying the decree-law.

“The decree-law has been in force since 8 September 2025,” he said. “What we are doing now is only completing the constitutional procedures.”

Punishment

It also said the tougher penalty for breaches involving virtual asset service providers would strengthen deterrence and bring punishment into line with the gravity of the offence and its effect on the financial system.

The government said the case

for urgency also met the constitutional test of necessity, chiefly because time was needed before the FATF review to show that the new rule was being applied in practice.

Article 40 bars anyone from providing financial services subject to Central Bank oversight in Bahrain without a licence from the bank.

It also bars the establishment of a financial institution in the kingdom without Central Bank approval, subject to the Commercial Companies Law.

Article 41 bars unlicensed parties from using the word ‘bank’, or similar wording in any language, or any term suggesting they carry on banking business, in a trade name, address, letters, invoices or notices.

The same restriction applies to insurance activity. Unlicensed parties may not use names or wording suggesting they provide insurance or reinsurance services.

MP presses for Bahraini nursing jobs, elderly transport and housing review

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Calls to give Bahraini nurses and young doctors a stronger foothold in the health system, waive utility and municipal dues for bereaved families, provide transport for elderly patients and reopen some cancelled housing applications were pressed in Parliament yesterday by MP Dr Maryam Al Dhaen.

The lawmaker said Bahrainis must be “the first choice” in nursing jobs and that some families needed “a real solution”.

Dr Al Dhaen opened by praising the government, the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) and the Ministry of Interior for their work during what she called the “heinous attack” on Bahrain.

Reply

She also welcomed the government's reply to an urgent proposal calling for clear media plans for major incidents, disasters and emergencies, with fast guidance for citizens and residents and full use of technology.

The legislator said the work done by state bodies during the crisis deserved praise, before turning to a run of government replies on health, family support and housing.

On nursing, Dr Al Dhaen renewed her call for full Bahrainisation at Salmaniya Medical Complex and health centres.

She said the push should be felt most clearly in hiring



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at health centres, adding that there were many Bahraini graduates in the field still waiting for work and that “the Bahraini should be the first choice”.

Proposal

The MP also spoke in favour of a proposal for the Labour Fund to support the training of newly employed doctors in private hospitals through a wage support scheme linked to training inside government hospitals.

She said this “will serve newly graduated doctors well, reduce unemployment rates, and give them a real chance for training and employment so that we may benefit from their abilities”.

Few Bahraini homes cross power support threshold

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Only a minority of Bahraini household accounts went above the summer support thresholds in 2025, Electricity and Water Affairs Minister, His Excellency Yasser Humaidan, told Parliament yesterday.

He said 20,115 subsidised domestic accounts were above

5,000 electricity units in May and that the figure rose to 73,940 by September, while bills above BD150 for subsidised homes climbed from 1,917 to 9,550 over the same period.

H.E. Humaidan gave the figures as he defended the Electricity and Water Authority's reply to a parliamentary question from MP Dr Mahdi Al Showaikh, who had complained that the writ-



H.E. Yasser Humaidan

ten answer dealt mainly with accounts and bills that stayed below the thresholds rather than those that exceeded them.

Approach

The minister said the approach had been deliberate.

“It was not an attempt to avoid the answer,” he told the chamber, saying the authority chose to begin with the larger group of

households still within the subsidised range in order to show “the efficiency and effectiveness of government support” and how it had helped keep electricity and water costs at “reasonable levels” for most Bahraini families.

He said the figures showed that the cases above the thresholds were still limited when set against the full number of Bah-

raini domestic accounts.

Accounts

For subsidised homes, the number of accounts above 5,000 units rose from 20,115 in May 2025, equal to 5 per cent, to 44,419 in June, or 10 per cent, then 57,680 in July, or 13 per cent, 66,495 in August, or 15 per cent, and 73,940 in September, or 17 per cent.