

Move to Stop Added Interest on Payment Deferrals

● **Charges undermine relief programs**

● **Warn of rising financial burden on citizens**

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Five MPs have submitted an urgent proposal calling on the Central Bank of Bahrain to instruct banks and finance companies to cancel extra interest charged on deferred instalments, saying the added sums run against the purpose of the relief programme announced recently.

The proposal was put forward by Khalid Buanaq, Zainab Ab-

dulAmeer, Hisham Al Awadhi, Ahmed Al Salloom and Mohamed Al Maarefi, with a request for immediate discussion.

In the explanatory note attached to the proposal, Buanaq said the move was meant to ensure the scheme gave real relief to citizens rather than leaving them with higher costs later.

"This proposal concerns directing the Central Bank of Bahrain to instruct banks and finance companies to cancel the extra interest resulting from the deferral of instalments under the programme announced recently," he said. "That would secure the main aim of the programme, which is to ease financial burdens on citizens in the current conditions."

He said some lenders had added extra interest to the deferred payments, leaving borrowers with heavier dues instead of the relief the scheme was meant to bring.



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Charging extra interest on deferred instalments undermines the purpose of the initiative and places a heavier burden on citizens

KHALID BUANAQ, MP



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At a time when families need support, financial institutions should be easing burdens, not adding to them

ZAINAB ABDULAMEER, MP

"Banks and finance companies are imposing extra interest on the deferred instalments, which

leads to higher financial obligations for citizens instead of easing them," he said. "It strips

the programme of its real purpose, so that the real benefit goes to financial institutions at the expense of the citizens who are meant to benefit."

The proposal says this runs against the social and economic purpose behind the scheme, arguing that deferring instalments should help citizens at a time of need, not leave them facing a longer burden through accumulated interest.

Buanaq also said banks had already gained from other support schemes and should now play their part.

"Banks have benefited from other support programmes, including the covering of staff salaries for a fixed period," he said. "That means they should play their part in supporting citizens, rather than placing extra burdens on them."

The MPs said the proposal

aimed to keep the instalment deferral programme focused on easing financial pressure on citizens, stop added interest from raising the burden on those using it, and push banks and finance firms to do more to support household stability.

They said it was submitted on an urgent basis because the extra charges were having a direct effect on living conditions.

"The continuation of these extra charges increases financial burdens and causes obligations to pile up on citizens, in a way that runs against the urgent aim of the programme, which is to provide support and relief," the note said. "This situation could deepen the strain on a wide section of citizens, making urgent action necessary to put the programme back on track and ensure it gives the relief it was meant to provide."

New Push to Grow Arbitration Education

The Secretary-General of the Bahrain Chamber for Dispute Resolution met with representatives from the University of Miami School of Law and the Miami International Arbitration Institute on the sidelines of an international arbitration course and the New York Convention programme hosted by the university.

Professor Marika Patrani Paulson held discussions with the delegation to explore new academic initiatives in international arbitration and to advance ongoing cooperation between the two sides.

The talks focused on expanding specialised arbitration training programmes and strengthening the institute's academic presence.

The meeting also reviewed ways to broaden enrolment opportunities in the Master's programme in International Arbitration Law, as part of wid-



Professor Marika Patrani Paulson with a representative from the University of Miami School of Law and the Miami International Arbitration Institute

er efforts to enhance academic collaboration and provide advanced learning pathways for students and legal practitioners.

The discussions reflect Bahrain's continued commitment to building effective international partnerships that support arbitration education, professional development, and

the advancement of specialised expertise in dispute resolution across the region.

The Master's programme in International Arbitration Law is considered one of the leading global academic programmes in this field, offering advanced training and contributing significantly to legal research and practice.



H.E. Speaker Ahmed bin Salman Al Mussallam with Bahrain delegation

Istanbul Declaration Adopted

Bahrain's parliamentary delegation concluded its participation in the 152nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), using the global platform to advance dialogue on international cooperation, development priorities, and regional security concerns.

His Excellency Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives and head of Bahrain's delegation, said the participation reflected Bahrain's strategy to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy and expand en-

gagement with international partners.

During bilateral engagements, the delegation raised concerns over regional security developments, describing recent attacks affecting GCC states and Jordan as threats to stability.

The Assembly concluded with the adoption of the "Istanbul Declaration," which called for stronger multilateral cooperation, renewed commitment to peace and justice, and greater inclusion of youth and women in decision-making processes.

Bahrain-UAE relations



Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Minister received UAE Ambassador Fahad Mohammed Kardous Al Ameri at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Manama. Both sides reviewed the strong Bahrain-UAE fraternal relations and discussed ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation. The meeting also touched on regional developments and GCC coordination efforts to safeguard security and stability in the region.

Expansion of Artificial Intelligence Initiatives

Dr. Hassan bin Abdullah Fakhro, Economic Advisor to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, met with Dr. Jassim Haji, Chairman of the Global Artificial Intelligence Group, to discuss developments in artificial intelligence and related projects.

The meeting highlighted ongoing efforts to advance AI initiatives and explore new sector opportunities.

Dr. Fakhro commended Dr. Haji's role in promoting artificial intelligence awareness and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in the field.



Dr. Hassan bin Abdullah Fakhro with Dr. Jassim Haji

Dr. Haji expressed appreciation for the strong support given to research and development efforts.

He also stressed continued work on launching specialised programmes aimed at expanding AI literacy and enhancing its impact across Bahrain's key sectors.

Drunk Driver Faces Trial

Rehab Mohammad
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The First High Criminal Court has begun hearing the case of an Asian man in his thirties accused of causing a fatal traffic accident while driving under the influence of alcohol.

The defendant admitted to the charges during the opening session and requested leniency from the court. According to the Public Prosecution, the incident took place at around 2:25 AM on Friday, April 3, 2026, on Shaikh Jaber Highway.

The defendant was allegedly driving at 110 km/h, exceeding the speed limit by more than 30%, before running a red light and triggering a multi-vehicle collision.

Prosecutors have charged him with vehicular manslaughter, driving under the influence of alcohol, serious traffic violations, and property damage. The crash led to a chain-reaction collision involving several vehicles.

Civil Defense teams responded to the scene and rescued occupants trapped in one of the vehicles. One driver was pronounced dead at the scene, while a passenger sustained critical injuries and was taken to hospital.

The court has adjourned the case until April 27 to allow the defense to review case files.