

Upgrades taking shape

Manama Central Market set for fourth redevelopment stage from this year until 2028

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Manama Central Market will move into a fourth redevelopment stage in 2025 to 2028, with the budget yet to be set.

Three stages have already been completed since 2017 at a cost of about BD2.296 million.

The next tranche will target core works, raising safety standards, improving services and renewing key parts of the site.

Planned tasks include security and fire-safety upgrades, new cabling and power networks, and better sewage and rainwater drainage.

Floors will be relaid and fitted with thermal insulation. Streets and walkways will be resurfaced.

Car parks will be expanded around the market and inside the fruit and vegetable section, with added spaces in front of the fish and meat markets.

The 2023 to 2024 stage delivered 12 projects.

Air-conditioning was overhauled and air condensers installed. Fly traps were added. Fire systems were improved.

Solar lighting

Air curtains went into the meat and fish halls. Solar lighting was introduced and 618 trees planted in open areas.

Public toilets were demolished and rebuilt.

The main canopy at the fish market was replaced.



Fruit and vegetable areas will be upgraded for the convenience of vendors and shoppers

Loading and unloading zones two and three were shaded, and over 55 per cent of shading was completed in zone one.

Funding to date stands at BD1.29 million for 2017 to 2019, BD101,500 for 2020 to 2022 and BD904,500 for 2023 to 2024.

The fourth-stage allocation has not yet been decided.

On a 141,302 square metre plot, the market contains 952 commercial units made up of stalls, shops, offices and cafés across four main sections for fruit and vegetables, meat and

fish.

The programme is being carried out in partnership with the Capital Municipality, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority and the Ministry of Health.

Roads, parks and drains dominate Capital Board report

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BD3.7 million to run Lulu Shopping Centre leads the Capital Trustees Board’s third-session work, the board said.

Chairman Saleh Tarradah put money matters first in his report on the September 2024 to June 2025 session, pointing to tighter rent and fee collection and efforts to recover arrears.

The contract for Lulu Shopping Centre was highlighted as the largest move, while other municipal properties are to be brought back into use.

Roads, drains and parks filled much of the agenda.

The board logged over 300 requests across Manama, from

“The board’s focus was on finishing ongoing projects, drawing in private investors, widening the use of technology and pursuing new environmental and social drives with community groups.”

- SALEH TARRADAH, CAPITAL TRUSTEES BOARD CHAIRMAN

resurfacing and garden upkeep to new green spaces. Waterfront schemes, including the King Faisal Corniche and Tubli



Walkway, were also pursued, together with repairs to public markets and amenities.

Environmental work ranged from a recycling trial in Aker with the Supreme Council for Environment and Bapco to

planting and protecting mangroves.

Tarradah said: “These steps show Bahrain’s aim to quadruple mangrove cover by 2035 and reach carbon neutrality by 2060.”

Technology was another strand. The board proposed a trial using artificial intelligence in public gardens to track visitor use, with the stated aim of improving facilities while keeping data private.

Tarradah said: “Such an approach shows the council’s intent to keep pace with smart urban management.”

Applications to reclassify land and redraw zoning were reviewed, with views passed to the Housing and Urban Planning Ministry.

Fintech Maturity to be Showcased in Two-day Bahrain event

Mahir Haneef
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Bahrain’s fintech journey, which began with the region’s first regulatory sandbox, is now drawing global leaders to Manama with the return of ‘Fintech Forward 2025’ in October.

The two-day forum, set for October 8 and 9 at Exhibition World Bahrain, comes under the theme ‘The era of integration: the maturing age of fintech’. The focus reflects how financial technology



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has evolved from experimentation to becoming an integral part of financial infrastructure.

Industry heavyweights from

Revolut Global Digital Assets, Citi Institute and MonetaGo will join policymakers and innovators to discuss regulatory

integration, digital asset infrastructure, green finance and cross-border payment solutions tailored to emerging markets.

Over the past decade, Bahrain has positioned itself as a launchpad for scalable fintech models, from open banking to digital assets and blockchain. Early steps by the Central Bank of Bahrain, including its pioneering sandbox and a national open banking framework, provided fertile ground for growth and international recognition.

Bids opened for Bahrain’s National Urban Observatory

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Bids were opened yesterday for a national urban observatory that will serve as Bahrain’s main source of data on development, growth patterns, and planning decisions.

The Urban Planning and Development Authority is seeking a consultancy to set up and run the platform, which will gather, manage and present information from across the country.

Three firms submitted offers. Ahmed Fared Mostafa Consultants Company came in lowest at BD359,710, and its bid was accepted.

Conditions

Integrated Services Engineering Consulting offered BD784,764 and was accepted with conditions.

Company Hassan Mohamed Ali Faqih for Engineering Consultancy entered the highest bid at BD847,256, but it was suspended.

The final decision will depend on both technical and financial reviews. Price alone will not decide the outcome.

Online system

The chosen firm will be expected to design an interactive online system capable of feeding information between the observatory and a range of public and private entities.

The aim is to present town and city data in a clear and accessible way.

Requirements include experience in similar projects and a proven ability to handle data architecture and visualisation using GIS and other tools.

Bootcamp Fuels Startup Win

Bahraini startups Wajba and Jaras shine at StartUp Bahrain Pitch

● Wajba wins first place

● Jaras secures runn r-up spot

● amkeen priorities shape ecosystem

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

The latest edition of the ‘StartUp Bahrain Pitch’ brought together some of the Kingdom’s most promising startups, showcasing how structured training and support can translate into tangible wins for young innovators.

Organised by StartUp Bahrain with the backing of the Ministry of Industry & Commerce, the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB), and the Bahrain Development Bank (BDB), the event highlighted the depth of talent emerging across different industries.

Investor spotlight

A panel of seasoned entrepreneurs and investors judged the contest, including Stephanie Nour, Partner at Nuwa Capital and keynote speaker; Ronald Daher, CEO of Astro-Labs; Hasan Haider, Founder and Partner at Plus VC; and Laith Al Khalili, Associate Director at Mumtalakat. Their presence underscored the high standards expected from the competing startups.

Winning ideas

Among the contenders were platforms offering tech-driven solutions across varied fields: Unlabeled, helping SMEs create instant e-commerce sites; Jaras, an educational platform for children; Wajba, a digital



Bahrain has hosted the StartUp Bahrain Pitch series since 2018, making it one of the region’s longest-running platforms linking investors with emerging startups.

service reducing food waste by selling surplus meals at discounted prices; and WeFit, a fitness booking platform connecting users with gyms and trainers.

Following the evaluations, Wajba emerged in first place, with founder Ghassan Esfahani describing the win as a milestone in the company’s growth journey. Jaras secured the second position, with co-founder Walaa Al Araibi praising the event’s role in fostering connections and opening new opportunities.

Future focus

The initiative reflects Tamkeen’s 2025 strategic priorities, which emphasise equipping Bahrainis with competitive skills, promoting enterprise growth, enabling digitisation and sustainability, and strengthening the wider labour market ecosystem. The latest Pitch round shows how these policies are turning into measurable successes for local entrepreneurs.

The event not only celebrated winners but also reaffirmed Bahrain’s position as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, with more opportunities set to follow in upcoming rounds of the series.