

Urgent proposal to review, verify expats’ degrees

● Following reports about professional forgery groups

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

An urgent proposal to create a committee to review and verify the university degrees of expats working in ministries and other government bodies won backing in Parliament yesterday, with legal action sought where forged qualifications are confirmed.

The motion calls for a single committee to check credentials held by expats employed on permanent and temporary contracts across the public sector, and to refer cases for legal steps when fraud is proven. MP Khaled Buanaq, one of the sponsors, said the proposal followed a run of reports about professional forgery groups. He cited recent claims of counterfeit university degrees being produced with stamps, covering different levels and specialisms, including technical, vocational, medical and scientific fields.

Link

He said the committee would link the work of the Ministries of Education, Labour, Justice and Interior, so information can be shared and qualifications checked against



MP Khaled Buanaq



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recognised standards through one process, rather than separate checks by each body. Buanaq said the committee would also draft clear rules and open procedures for checks, to reduce differing treatment of doubtful cases and give clearer ground for institutions and individuals.

Handle public affairs ‘responsibly’

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The Political Associations Affairs Office at the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments said that a recent statement by several political associations included selective information on public finance reform initiatives, giving a misleading impression of these initiatives and their goals. The ministry added that these initiatives are being discussed within the framework of cooperation.

Highway lane closure tomorrow

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The Ministry of Works announced that the laying of 400 KV electrical cables necessitates the closure of one lane in stages on the slip road leading from Shaikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah Highway to Shaikh Isa bin Salman Highway towards Mina Salman, and one lane will be provided for traffic movement. The closure will be effective during the weekend from tomorrow at 11:00 pm to Sunday, December 28, at 05:00 am.

Education spending

Minister tells MPs: Public schools cost BD1,771 per pupil each year

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Bahrain spends about BD1,770.71 a year on each student in public schools, the Education Minister, His Excellency Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, told MPs yesterday, putting the 12-year cost per student at BD21,248.48.

He said the ministry uses three ways to calculate the figure.

The first counts spending on items and services directly linked to the pupil, which he said is the method the ministry follows.

A second method adds running costs, taking the yearly amount to about BD1,800 and the 12-year total to more than BD22,000.

A third method counts the full education budget, including building schools and maintaining them, putting the annual cost at around BD2,000 and the 12-year total at roughly BD24,600.

“The idea of creating public schools that charge fees puts us in a constitutional breach, because the Constitution states that education is free in government institutions.”

- H.E. DR MOHAMMED BIN MUBARAK JUMA, EDUCATION MINISTER

H.E. Dr Juma rejected calls for fee-paying public schools, telling the chamber: “The idea of creating public schools that charge fees puts us in a constitutional breach, because the Constitution states that education is free in government institutions.”

On school buildings, he said there are 5,000 classrooms within full school facilities and 860 portable classrooms, making up 14 per cent of the total.

He put the cost of building one portable classroom at about



BD12,500, saying the units are now modular, air-conditioned and sound-insulated, rather than wooden as in the past.

Maintenance

Maintenance costs average about BD1,200 each time, he said, with each unit maintained three times over an expected life of about 16 years.

The minister said portable classrooms date back to the 1980s, when there was no plan to meet demand for school space.

He said a Cabinet-approved plan is now in place to build 18 schools across Bahrain, based

on student density, alongside 23 academic buildings within existing schools that have spare capacity, to remove manufactured classrooms at those sites.

Work

H.E. Dr Juma also referred to work to refurbish older and historic schools and return them to service.

Tenders are expected for four new schools either this month or early next month, he said, with two planned in Madinat Salman and two in East Hidd.

Construction is due to begin in the first quarter of 2026, with completion within two years.

MP Mohammed Mousa argued that the figures point to pressure on families paying for private schooling, saying: “People who are forced to send their children to private schools end up paying that cost... We want model public schools with reasonable fees, sitting between public and private, run by the ministry, with fewer pupils than ordinary public schools.”

‘Simbang Gabi’ reflects faith of Filipino community



“Simbang Gabi” is a Filipino Catholic tradition of nine dawn Masses held before Christmas

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Filipinos attended the “Simbang Gabi” Mass at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, reflecting personal devotion and generosity.

Wilfred Dolormente, a service technician who has worked in Bahrain for 15 years, shared that “Simbang Gabi” is a cherished Filipino tradition and a spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

He noted that many Filipinos strive to complete the nine-day devotion in the hope that “their prayers and intentions will be fulfilled.”

Blessings

Dolormente also took part in the offertory, sharing his bless-



ings with those in need.

Jhoan Mendoza, residing in Adliya, said that attending the nine days of “Simbang Gabi” is more than just a tradition for her.

She shared that completing the devotion gives her “a deep sense of fulfillment”, and serves as her personal offering of time

to God, strengthening her relationship with Him.

Determination

Mendoza expressed her determination to complete all nine days of the Simbang Gabi.

As the season of Advent begins, the Filipino community is reminded of the values it repre-

sents, hope, generosity, and joy.

Through the collective participation of organizations, leaders, and individuals, the “Simbang Gabi” celebration at Sacred Heart Catholic Church highlighted the strong faith, unity, and compassion of Filipinos in Bahrain during the Christmas season.

Seventh Derasat forum concludes successfully

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The seventh annual forum of the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat) concluded yesterday under the theme “The Arab Research Centers Consortium for Sustainability and Development”.

The forum was held in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Arab League.

It was attended by representatives of Arab countries, heads of think tanks, diplomats,

experts, and researchers from across the Arab world.

The forum’s conclusion held a series of in-depth dialogue sessions and discussions that addressed the growing role of Arab research centres in supporting sustainable development pathways, enhancing Arab knowledge integration, and employing future tools, which include big data, artificial intelligence, and strategic foresight, in policy analysis and decision-making.

These discussions were aligned with the outcomes of

recent Arab summits, notably the Jeddah Summit 2023 and the 33rd Arab Summit, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, and their recommendation to establish a “knowledge incubator for research and studies in sustainability and economic development”.

Participants emphasised that the forum reflects the Kingdom of Bahrain’s commitment, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and with the support and follow-up of His Royal Highness

Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to advancing joint Arab action and strengthening the role of thought and scientific research as a core pillar of sustainable development and future policymaking.

At the conclusion of its proceedings, the forum issued a final statement affirming that this intellectual and scientific gathering represents a foundational step toward building an integrated Arab research ecosystem.



State Bank of India, Kingdom of Bahrain
(Licensed as Conventional Wholesale and Retail Banking Branch by Central Bank of Bahrain)

Request for Proposal

Proposals are invited from reputed/experienced Bahrain-based Audit Firms for the purpose of selection of Internal Auditor for SBI Bahrain Operations.

Details can be obtained from our website <https://bh.statebank/web/wbb>

RFP Document is available on above site – 23.12.2025

Last date for submission of proposal - 04.01.2026 up to 4.00 pm (Bahrain time)

Bank reserve the right to accept or reject any proposal or all the offers without assigning any reason.