

Bahrain eyes specialized **pharma zone** to boost local production

Proposal aims to boost self-sufficiency, exports, and jobs



- **MPs will vote on a pharma manufacturing zone**
 - **Goals include reducing import dependency, boosting exports, and generating employment**
 - **The initiative is supported by health authorities and the Bahrain Pharmacists Society**
- Mohammed Darwish**
TDT | Manama

The proposal was tabled by Ahmed Al Salloom, Basema Mubarak, Mamdouh Al Saleh, Khalid Buanaq, and Mohammed Al Maarifi.

Bahrain could soon host a specialized pharmaceutical manufacturing zone if Parliament backs a proposal scheduled for debate on Tuesday. The motion, supported by the Finance Committee, aims to boost large-scale medicines production through a package of incentives and advantages. The proposal was tabled by Ahmed Al Salloom, Basema Mubarak, Mamdouh Al Saleh, Khalid Buanaq, and Mohammed Al Maarifi. “Achieving pharmaceutical security has become a basic pillar of policy. Raising local manufacturing capacity helps countries respond faster to epidemics or global supply shortages,” said Al Salloom. According to the supporting memorandum, the zone is intended to increase self-sufficiency, reduce the risk of shortages, attract investment and research,

train national cadres, expand exports, and create direct and indirect jobs. The Economic Development Board (EDB) said pharmaceuticals can boost related sectors—chemicals, packaging, and transport—while increasing exports and attracting local and foreign investment. Working with public and private partners, the EDB offers incentives such as low-cost industrial land, allocated via the Ministry of Industry and Commerce based on company needs, and prefers giving firms multiple siting options rather than restricting investment to a single area. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce noted that its Industrial Sector Strategy 2022–2026, part of the Economic Recovery Plan, already targets pharmaceuticals. Two drug plants operate in the Bahrain International

Investment Park at Salman Industrial City, and infrastructure upgrades across other estates aim to meet growing demand. The ministry supports allocating space for related projects as interest rises. Health authorities—including the Supreme Council of Health, Ministry of Health, and NHRA—emphasized that establishing industrial and investment zones falls under other competent authorities. The Bahrain Pharmacists Society welcomed the plan, highlighting benefits such as stronger domestic output, new roles for Bahraini pharmacists, export opportunities, and increased healthcare investment. It noted rising regional demand, ageing populations, growth in biologics, and opportunities in competitively priced generics.

The society recommended a full cost study covering capital, operating, and research costs, and added that local production could cut import bills, improve the trade balance, and, with proper training, quality standards, and environmental practices, yield broader benefits. It also stressed the NHRA’s role in facilitating partnerships and technology transfer.

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MPs push to lengthen time to contest criminal orders

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Lawmakers are set to vote on Tuesday on a proposal to extend the objection period for criminal orders from seven days to one month. The draft, which amends Article 277 of the Criminal Procedure Law, would give the Public Prosecution one month from the date an order is issued to file objections, while other parties would have one month from the date of service. Filing an objection with the court registry would nullify the order as if it had not been made. The law would take effect the day after publication in the Official Gazette, with the Prime Minister and relevant ministers responsible for enforcement. The proposal



Mohammed Al Maarifi, MP

was submitted by MP Dr Ali Al Nuaimi. The Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf said the change conflicts with the purpose of criminal orders, which is to allow quick disposal of simple cases, and noted that a right of appeal already exists. The Ministry of Interior said the matter is outside its remit. The National Society for Human Rights said the bill

does not infringe on protected rights or international standards and noted that a longer period strengthens the right to object and seek redress. The Bahrain Bar Association welcomed the proposal, saying it would serve justice. Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security backs the bill and, with all members in agreement, recommends approval.



The delegation of Bahrain’s Parliamentary Division, led by Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives, concluded its participation in the 151st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held in Geneva from 19 to 23 October. The Bahraini delegation participated in a series of meetings, including the IPU Governing Council and various parliamentary forums, focusing on issues such as gender equality, peace and security, sustainable development, and promoting dialogue and coexistence.



Nani Mohammed Butti, Assistant Undersecretary for Support and Initiatives at the Ministry of Youth Affairs, received Omar Abdulaziz Ayoob, Chairman of AIESEC Bahrain. Butti highlighted the ministry’s strong commitment to supporting organisations that empower young people, noting that youth development remains a national priority. She emphasised the importance of forging effective partnerships with such bodies to nurture innovation, encourage community engagement, and help young Bahrainis realise their ambitions.

Proposal for temporary patient parking to go before Parliament

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A proposal to create clearly marked parking bays for patients with temporary or chronic health conditions who do not hold a disability card will be debated in Parliament on Tuesday. Tabled by MP Hanan Fardan,



the plan would introduce temporary permits and a distinctive logo to regulate usage. Bays would be located near hospitals, clinics, shopping centres, stadiums, and places of worship, with a public-awareness campaign detailing the locations and rules. Permits would be issued based on approved medical reports through authorities such as the Ministry of Social Development or the General Directorate of Traffic, allowing patients with limited mobility to park closer to essential services. The scheme targets people experiencing short-term or intermittent mobility issues, including those with sickle cell disease, multiple sclerosis, or recovering from fractures or surgery. The logo, displayed on signs and permits, would read something like: “Parking

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reserved for patients with temporary health conditions”. The Ministry of Interior noted that disability stickers are currently issued based on certification from the Ministry of

Social Development, and any expansion to chronic conditions would require a clear definition. The Ministry of Works said it already reserves spaces for people with special needs near homes and public facilities, in line with traffic regulations. The Services Committee, which reviewed the proposal, recommends approval, citing public interest and the need to ease access for affected patients while protecting the rights of people with permanent disabilities.