

Man's decade-long hospital stay to continue

Parents cleared of abandonment charges

The case revolved around allegations that the parents had refused to take their son back home, effectively abandoning him despite his long-term hospitalisation.

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For over 10 years, a man with an intellectual disability has lived in a government hospital — a reality that led to criminal charges against his ageing parents.

This week, the Minor Criminal Court acquitted the couple, ruling that the evidence did not support a guilty verdict.

The case revolved around allegations that the parents had refused to take their son back

home, effectively abandoning him despite his long-term hospitalisation.

However, the 67-year-old father told prosecutors that his son, now in his forties, does not properly understand what is happening around him and suffers from additional medical conditions. He also said his son

had previously been assaulted by others.

“We are not able to control him, and allowing him to live outside the hospital would put both him and others at risk,” the father told the court.

The couple denied abandoning their son and insisted they continue to care for him with-

in their capacity. They said his monthly allowance is used to cover his needs, including clothing and food, and that they visit him regularly.

According to their statements, these visits include Fridays and Eid holidays. They also take him out occasionally for meals and to visit his grandmother.

A social and psychological assessment prepared for the prosecution supported the parents' position. The report concluded that the couple's age, health conditions and financial circumstances prevent them from providing care suited to their son's condition. It recommended that he continue to remain under

hospital supervision.

The court also heard testimony from the couple's other son, who rejected the allegations and said his parents had not abandoned his brother. He told the court they continue to support him through regular visits and weekly outings whenever possible.

After reviewing the evidence, including the expert assessment, the court found insufficient grounds to convict the couple and ordered their acquittal.

Call for stronger monitoring of ministry-funded institutions



Khalid BuAnaq, MP

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MPs have submitted an urgent proposal calling for tighter oversight of institutions and associations funded by the Ministry of Social Development.

The proposal urges the Government to strengthen monitoring of entities receiving ministry support to ensure compliance with employment contracts and labour law protections. In an explanatory memorandum, the members said staff stability is essential to maintaining the quality of social services, warning that uncertainty and sudden decisions can undermine professional performance.

They argued that stricter supervision would help safeguard wages, allowances, leave entitlements and other benefits, ensuring they are not altered without clear legal procedures. Oversight, they added, should play a preventive role by stopping arbitrary measures that weaken job security or reduce rights without lawful grounds.

The proposal was submitted by Khalid Buanaq, Ahmed Al Salloom, Hisham Al Awadhi, Zainab AbdulAmeer and Mohammed Al Maarefi, who requested that it be treated as a matter of urgency in the public interest.

Nearly BD4m paid by expats for public healthcare in three years

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Nearly BD4 million was collected from non-Bahraini patients at government health facilities over the past three years, according to figures released by the Health Ministry.

In a written reply to MP Mahmoud Fardan, the ministry said BD3,518,787 was collected from non-Bahraini patients at government hospitals between January 2023 and October 2025. A further BD469,201 was generated from non-Bahraini visitors to primary healthcare

centres between January 2023 and December 2025, bringing the total to BD3,987,988.

The ministry said 343,262 non-Bahraini patients fell outside the scope of fee exemptions during the period under review. Of these, 276,234 attended clinics and emergency departments at government hospitals between the beginning of 2023 and October 2025.

Primary healthcare centres re-

corded 67,028 visits by non-Bahrainis from 2023 to December 2025.

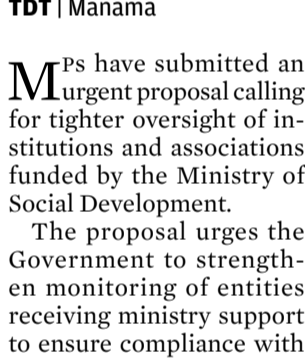
In addition, 47,105 non-Bahraini patients were admitted to government hospitals as inpatients between January 2023 and October 2025.

Over the past three years, a total of 258,765 cases were granted exemptions from healthcare service fees. This included 45,951 cases linked to government hospitals and 212,814 related to primary healthcare centres.

The ministry said exemptions are granted either under legal provisions or on humanitarian grounds. Eligible categories include a foreign wife of a Bahraini man and a foreign husband of a Bahraini woman, provided

they are actual residents of the Kingdom. Widows and divorcees of Bahraini spouses may also qualify, subject to the same residency condition.

Exemptions can also extend to children of Bahraini women married to non-Bahrainis, citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council countries, emergency cases classified under approved guidelines, inmates of reform and rehabilitation centres, stateless individuals born and residing in Bahrain, Bahraini newborns aged one to two months whose passports have not yet been issued, and government employees covered by the Civil Service Law along with their family members, provided they hold permanent residence.



Mahmoud Fardan, MP

SIO: Unfunded Pension liabilities hit BD13.8 billion

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Unfunded pension liabilities have reached BD13.8 billion, the Social Insurance Organisation (SIO) said in its audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024, as actuarial projections point to fewer insured contributors for each pensioner over the next 50 years.

The SIO disclosed the figure in a written reply to a parliamentary question from MP Dr Muneer Seroor. It said the

latest actuarial studies showed a marked fall in the contributor-to-pensioner ratio, and that financial sustainability measures indicated a gap between the fund's assets and future financial obligations that are not funded.

The organisation said the rise in future unfunded liabilities was linked to benefits due and paid out exceeding the contributions collected.

It also said the most recent reforms recommended by the actuary had

not been carried out in full as one package, adding that full implementation would have improved financial sustainability and extended the fund's lifespan.

The SIO said it was working through its asset management company, Osool, to secure the liquidity needed to meet pension obligations in the years ahead. It said it was focusing on investment opportunities suited to current conditions, particularly time deposits, treasury bills and fixed-income instruments.

Figures included in the reply showed changes in average monthly pensions across income brackets. The average pension for retirees receiving less than BD500 rose by about 10 per cent, from BD371 in 2022 to BD410 by the third quarter of 2025.

Over the same period, the

average pension for retirees receiving between BD500 and BD1,000 fell by 3 per cent. For those receiving between BD1,001 and BD2,000, the average pension rose slightly from BD1,358 in 2022 to BD1,366 by the third quarter of 2025. For retirees in the BD2,001 bracket, the average pension stood at BD2,390 and fell to BD2,384 by the third quarter of 2025.

The SIO also listed the number of retirees' dependants receiving a pension after the retiree's death up to the third quarter of 2025. It put the figure at 19,177 in the under-BD500 bracket, 4,908 in the BD500 to BD1,000 bracket, and 1,008 in the BD1,001 to BD2,000 bracket. It also recorded 87 beneficiaries in the BD2,001 to BD3,000 bracket and 28 in the BD3,001 to BD4,000 bracket.



Dr Muneer Seroor, MP

Workshop employee to stand trial in drug trafficking case

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A workshop employee accused of drug trafficking will appear before the High Criminal Court on March 1, prosecutors said.



He is charged with possessing, storing and selling narcotic and psychotropic substances for trade in 2025, as well as drug use. Three other defendants face

charges of possessing drugs for personal use. All four remain in custody.

The case began after the workshop owner grew suspicious of repeated visits by strangers who asked only for the employee. When three men arrived and

appeared nervous before leaving abruptly, the owner alerted authorities.

A search of the living quarters used by the defendant inside the workshop led to the seizure of about 200 grams of suspected drugs.

Prosecutors said investigations uncovered a wider trafficking network. The defendant is accused of acting as a courier for an overseas-based individual, receiving smuggled quantities, storing them and distributing smaller amounts through hand-

to-hand transfers and “dead drops”.

The case is also linked to a separate robbery in which three suspects allegedly stole drugs from the defendant instead of paying.

The trial is set for March 1.