End to prison labour?

Bills push rehabilitation shift

● **Draft laws propose replacing prison labour with rehabilitation**

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Compulsory work linked to prison sentences could be replaced with structured rehabilitation and training programmes under two draft laws set to be reviewed by Parliament on Tuesday.

One bill proposes amendments to the Penal Code, while the other targets the law governing reform and rehabilitation centres. Together, they aim to align Bahrain's penal system with a more reform-focused approach centred on reintegration.

Hassan BuKhammas, Chairman of Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee

Under the proposed Penal Code changes, inmates serving custodial sentences would be assigned rehabilitation and training programmes within reform and rehabilitation centres. These would be tailored to individual circumstances, with the goal of correction and social reintegration.

The second bill would amend Article 18 of the reform and rehabilitation law, making participation in such programmes mandatory for inmates deemed fit, as far as possible in line with their existing skills or trades. Executive regulations would define the structure of these programmes, including their nature, working hours, rewards and conditions, as well as provisions for training outside the centres in coordination with relevant authorities.

The amendments would also revise terminology across the 2014 law, replacing references to "employment" with "rehabilitation and training", and "work reward" with "rehabilitation and training reward".

International Labour Organisation

The government said the proposals follow observations by the International Labour Organisation and its expert committee, which raised concerns over provisions allowing compulsory labour alongside prison sentences. According to the explanatory note, such provisions may conflict with the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention No. 105, which Bahrain joined in 1998.

The convention prohibits the use of forced labour as punishment for expressing views, participating in strikes, or enforcing labour discipline.

Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee has recommended both bills for approval in principle, with unanimous support from members present.

The Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf said the amendments would bring national laws in line with international standards and modern reform principles. The Ministry of Interior also backed the proposals.

The National Institution for Human Rights expressed support, noting the changes respond to international recommendations and reinforce Bahrain's commitment to eliminating forced labour practices.

Bahrain-Saudi Double Tax under review

Hasan Barakat / Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A draft law aimed at preventing double taxation between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia is set for review in Parliament on Tuesday, spotlighting cross-border income and financial clarity.

Referred under Decree No. 16 of 2026, the bill has been recommended for consideration by Parliament's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee.

Submitted by the government, the draft law seeks to regulate how income is taxed between the two countries, limit tax avoidance, and ensure that individuals and businesses are not taxed twice on the same earnings. The measure is expected to benefit workers commuting between the two nations, entrepreneurs managing cross-border businesses, and families with income tied to both economies, who often face uncertainty over taxation.

The legislation applies to residents of one or both states and covers income taxes imposed by either country, its administrative divisions, or local authorities. It also provides key definitions and clarifies how residency is determined when both sides could classify the same person as a tax resident.

The draft further states that the agreement will not affect financial privileges granted to diplomatic and consular missions under international law or special bilateral agreements.

Lights of reassurance remain

Shop closed for hiking flashlight prices

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Raising prices on flashlights, now in high demand across the Kingdom, has landed a shop owner in hot water.

This swift action by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce followed complaints that shops were illegally hiking prices of essential goods.

Several residents told the Daily Tribune: "In times of uncertainty, small lights have become a source of reassurance for households. Yet some retailers are exploiting the situation, hiking prices on these must-have items."

As part of the crackdown, the Ministry's Inspection Directorate conducted checks across 102 retail outlets in Manama, Al Hidd, Diyar Al Muharraq, East Riffa, and Isa Town. Officials verified pricing, ensured the availability of goods, and monitored compliance with laws and regulations.

Officials said the administrative closure serves as a warning to retailers attempting to take advantage of the public during a critical period.

Residents explained that their use of small lights is driven by caution, not fear. "We rely on these for practical reasons—especially families with children or elderly members," one shopper said. "Access to essentials at fair prices gives a sense of trust and stability."

The Ministry urged consumers to report any suspicious price hikes through its call centre at 80001700, the "Tawasul" system, email at inspect@moic.gov, or other official communication channels.

Stronger consumer safeguards on the way

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Lawmakers are set to strengthen Bahrain's consumer protection framework, with a renewed focus on everyday transactions and boosting market confidence.

The government-backed proposals, scheduled for discussion on Tuesday, aim to enhance safeguards, clarify regulations, and ensure commercial practices keep pace with evolving market activity.

The parliamentary session will examine how the amendments could reinforce consumer trust while maintaining a balanced and fair market environment.

Ex-Executive director must repay BD53,000 in misuse of cheques

● **An accounting expert calculated the total misappropriated at BD58,936, mostly withdrawn in 2009 and 2010.**

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A former executive director has been ordered to repay more than BD53,000 after the Court of Cassation upheld a ruling that he misappropriated funds from his employer using blank cheques signed by the business owner.

The top court rejected his appeals, leaving the previous ruling in place. Court findings showed that the ex-manager abused his position by filling in over 29 blank cheques, naming himself as the beneficiary, and transferring the money to his personal account and to a private cleaning company he owned.

The business owner had entrusted him with signed blank cheques to handle company affairs. An accounting expert calculated the total misappropriated at BD58,936, mostly withdrawn in 2009 and 2010. The former director claimed the sums were part of a partnership or wages, but the court rejected this, noting they far exceeded his monthly salary of BD500 and amounted to unlawful taking.

The former director claimed the sums were part of a partnership or wages, but the court rejected this, noting they far exceeded his monthly salary of BD500 and amounted to unlawful taking.

Earlier, the High Civil Court of Appeal had overturned the first-instance dismissal and ordered compensation. It stated that fault had already been established by a prior final judgment awarding temporary compensation of BD5,001, meaning the question of wrongdoing could not be re-litigated.

With the Court of Cassation's refusal of further appeals, the ruling is now final, ending a protracted legal dispute.