

# MPs Seek After-School Scheme to Cut Screen Time

TDT | Manama  
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Five MPs have proposed a national after-school scheme to cut children's heavy use of smartphones and smart devices, saying the hours after classes have become the emptiest part of many children's day.

The proposal, brought by Dr Munir Seroor, Lulwa Al Rumaihi, Ali Saqr Al Doseri, Hassan BuKhammas and Mohammed Salman Al Ahmed, seeks a state-led programme of sport, culture, life skills and group play.

It says Bahraini families, like others across the Gulf, have seen a clear shift in the way children spend their time, with the after-school period often left to phones and tablets because there are too few other choices.

The MPs said the problem was not technology itself, but the way it had become the default answer to free time, above all when parents and other family



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- DR MUNIR SEROOR, MP

members are at work.

They warned that long hours on smart devices after school were linked to early digital addiction, social withdrawal, weaker conversation skills, poor

sleep and strain on the eyes, neck and spine.

Families, they said, were also being left under greater strain because easy-to-reach and low-cost choices were lacking. The problem grows during Ramadan, when children stay up later and fewer activities are made for them.

Dr Seroor said: "This proposal offers a direct answer by organising the hours after school through a national programme run by the bodies concerned."

He said the work could bring in the Social Development Ministry, the Education Ministry, the Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Ministry, the Youth Affairs Ministry, the Health Ministry, the General Sports Authority, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, and the private sector.

The proposal seeks wider schemes at clubs and youth empowerment centres, along with sports and social activities inside schools after lessons.

## The proposed programme includes

- Sports activities
- Cultural programmes
- Life skills training
- Group games
- Scout programmes
- Social events

It also calls for school scout programmes to be widened, and for children's events to be held in parks, open spaces and shopping centres.

The MPs also want phone-free family events, the return of old outdoor games and the creation of new group games to draw children away from screens and back into shared play.

## Securing Borders, Enabling Trade



Customs President Shaikh Ahmed bin Hamad Al Khalifa led the Kingdom of Bahrain's delegation to the 147th and 148th sessions of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Council meetings, held at the organisation's headquarters in Brussels, with participation from customs leaders and representatives of member states.

Shaikh Ahmed affirmed that Bahrain's participation reflects its commitment to strengthening international customs cooperation and maintaining an active role in global customs forums. He noted that this engagement supports discussions on enhancing customs operations, facilitating international trade, protecting society, and securing global supply chains.

He highlighted that Bahrain continues to advance its customs system in line with international

best practices by adopting quality-driven initiatives and strengthening cooperation with global customs bodies. These efforts aim to improve operational efficiency, facilitate trade flow, support sustainable economic growth, and enhance community security.

The meetings addressed key topics including the use of data as a strategic resource in customs decision-making, the future of customs operations amid rapid digital transformation, and emerging technological developments.

Participants also discussed strengthening efforts to combat drug smuggling and protect societies from risks associated with illicit trade, as well as ensuring the integrity of global supply chains and expanding cooperation with the private sector.

## Non-Custodial Sentences Cover 10,219

Lawyer: Alternative Sentencing System in Bahrain a "Working Model"

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Non-custodial sentences have covered 10,219 people in Bahrain since the alternative penalties scheme began in 2018, Public Prosecution figures show.

A total of 15,566 penalties and measures were used between 2018 and 2025, meaning some people were given more than one penalty or measure.

Community service made up the largest share, with 5,218 cases, or about 33.5 pc of the total.

Training and rehabilitation covered 3,030 people, while 2,644 were banned from entering certain places and 1,427 were placed under electronic monitoring.

Orders to repair damage caused by crime covered 1,590 people. A further 1,308 gave undertakings not to approach or harass others, 337 were placed under house arrest at a fixed address, and 12 were



Fareed Ghazi, lawyer

ordered to report to a security body at set times.

In 2025 alone, 2,411 people were given non-custodial sentences, including 2,166 men, 213 women and 32 young adults aged over 18 and under 21.

The number of penalties used last year reached 3,214. Orders to repair damage caused by crime were the most-used measure, with 966 cases, followed by community service with 685 and training and rehabilitation with 562.

Fareed Ghazi, a lawyer, said the figures showed Bahrain's use of

Figures for 2025	
People given non-custodial sentences	2,411
Men	2,166
Women	213
Young adults (18-21)	32
Total penalties/measures used	3,214
<b>Most used measure:</b>	
Repairing damage caused by crime (966 cases)	
<b>Other key measures:</b>	
Community service (685 cases)	
Training & rehabilitation (562 cases)	

alternative penalties had grown into a working model for non-custodial sentencing.

He said the effect went beyond those serving the penalties, as families also benefited when relatives stayed within their family and community setting.

Ghazi said electronic monitoring and house arrest allowed offenders to be supervised outside prison while they remained under legal supervision.

He rejected claims that the wider use of such penalties was lenient, saying the measures were

applied under clear legal rules and did not weaken deterrence.

He said the scheme's success should be judged not only by the number of people covered, but also by reoffending rates and the ability of reform and rehabilitation schemes to stop repeat offences.

Public Prosecution figures under the Restorative Justice Law for Children and their Protection from Maltreatment show that 94 children benefited from replaced measures and penalties, including 88 boys and six girls.

The cases included 36 children whose penalties were replaced directly by restorative courts, 31 whose penalties were replaced after judgments, and 27 who received direct measures from the relevant judicial committee.

Ghazi said restorative justice for children gave priority to rehabilitation and allowed each case to be handled while weighing the interests of the child and society.

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Bahrain's move to allow a wider range of legal papers to be notarised in English will cut translation bills, reduce delays and help courts deal with commercial disputes faster, a senior civil court judge has said.

Judge Zain Al Asfoor, of the High Civil Court, said the change would 'eliminate the need for costly certified translation' of commercial documents, particularly in cases involving large volumes of contracts, records and supporting papers.

Her remarks came after Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf Minister Nawaf bin Mohammed Al Maawda issued Decision No. 47 of 2026, allowing notarial papers, attested signatures and dated private documents to be completed in English when the parties ask for it, unless another law requires Arabic.

Judge Al Asfoor said some commercial cases involved 'thousands and thousands of documents' that would otherwise have to be translated into Arabic before they could be used in proceedings.

The use of English, she said, would 'reduce delays' because translation often takes considerable time. It would also 'minimise the risk of translation errors or discrepancies that may affect legal outcomes', since some words can carry different meanings once rendered into another language.

She added that lower translation costs would 'lower the overall litigation costs for the parties and businesses', while helping courts move cases more quickly.

Judge Al Asfoor said the move was in line with Bahrain's judicial vision of faster justice, while still protecting fairness, allowing parties time



**"Speedy justice would definitely be achieved, judgments could be issued faster when parties no longer needed to translate large bundles of documents."**

- ZAIN AL ASFOOR, JUDGE

to exchange memoranda and defences, and ensuring judgments remain of high quality.

Decision No. 47 of 2026 applies to documents that fall within Decree Law No. 14 of 1971 on notarisation. That law regulates the work of the notary office, including the notarisation of documents required by law or requested by parties, attesting signatures, proving the date of private papers and keeping notarial records.

The new order replaces Decision No. 78 of 2017, which dealt with documents that could be notarised in a foreign language, namely English. The 2017 decision had been amended in 2019.

Under the new decision, English may be used only where the document falls within the scope of the notarisation law and the parties choose that language. The exception remains any case in which another law requires notarisation in Arabic.

## Hamala Fire Victim Still Unable to Return Home After 100 Days

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Hamala resident remains unable to return to his home more than 100 days after a fire damaged the property, with delays in repair procedures preventing restoration work from beginning.

Northern Municipality Councillor Mohamed Saad Al Doseri said the homeowner has already completed all required administrative and technical procedures, but continues to wait as the case moves through multiple layers of approvals and assessments.

The fire broke out on March 3 in Hamala and was later confirmed in a Civil Defence report



to have been caused by an electrical fault in a lighting fixture. One room and its contents were destroyed, with smoke and heat damage extending to the first floor and affecting the ground floor as well. The blaze was extinguished on the same day.

Despite the incident being

resolved at the scene, the homeowner has since been living in alternative accommodation at personal expense while awaiting repair works.

Al Doseri said the case has passed through inspections, engineering evaluations, site visits and budgeting procedures, but

no repair work has yet started, creating continued uncertainty for the affected family.

In a memorandum submitted to the council, he urged urgent intervention, stressing that delays are placing financial and emotional pressure on the homeowner, who is still paying rent while unable to use his damaged property.

He called for the Northern Municipal Council to recommend immediate action to the Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture to accelerate the process.