

One **job**, one location?

That could change for foreign workers

Parliament considers easing rules that tie employees to a single job and location

● Workers could move between outlets, as long as the work is of a similar nature

● LMRA insists transfers must respect work permits and cannot give employers unlimited freedom

● Bahrain Chamber of Commerce backs the move; trade unions warn of potential misuse by some employers.

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Foreign employees, according to LMRA, should work at the location and in the job stated on their work permits.

But that rule may not stay for long.

Soon, employers could be allowed to rotate foreign staff between

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Letting employers move foreign staff between their own businesses would give more room for entrepreneurship, help newer and smaller projects grow and allow better use of the skills and experience that foreign workers bring.

MOHAMMED AL MA'ARAFI, MP



The Labour Ministry backed partial approval, in line with LMRA's view. LMRA said keeping workers tied to the jobs listed on their permits is central to labour market regulation and the purpose of Act 19. It rejected giving employers absolute freedom to move foreign workers across all jobs and establishments, saying this would violate the law.

their outlets, as long as the work is of a similar nature.

The change comes through an amendment tabled before Parliament, up for debate this Tuesday. The Services Committee has urged lawmakers to ease the rules that currently tie each worker to a single job at a single workplace.

The proposal was first put forward by MPs Mohammed Al Ma'arafi, Ahmed Al Salloom, Abdullah Al Dhaen, Basema Mubarak, and Mamdouh Al Saleh.

Under Act 19 of 2006 on the regulation of the labour market and Decision 76 of 2008 on foreign work permits, employers must apply to the Labour Market Regulatory Authority for each

foreign worker. The worker is then tied to the job and location on the permit, limiting them in practice to one task at one place.

MP Al Ma'arafi says this system holds back growth for start-ups and small to medium-sized firms with multiple branches. Allowing rotation would give employers more flexibility, help new projects grow, and make better use of foreign workers' skills and experience.

Talks between the Services Committee and the MPs led to an amended version. The new wording limits rotations to work of a homogeneous nature in establishments and branches owned by the same employer, provid-

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If the proposal is adopted and employers are allowed to use foreign workers across all their activities and branches, it will strengthen the labour market in many fields and, in the Chamber's view, have a positive effect on the Kingdom's economy.

BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY CHAIRMAN SAMIR ABDULLA NASS



ed their commercial activities do not differ. The aim is to stay within the limits of Act 19 of 2006 and its related regulations.

The Labour Ministry backed partial approval, in line with LMRA's view. LMRA said keeping workers tied to the jobs listed on their permits is central to labour market regulation and the purpose of Act 19. It rejected giving employers absolute freedom to move foreign workers across all jobs and establishments, saying this would violate the law. Instead, employers may rotate workers only within roles of the same nature, in their own branches, without breaching permit terms or regulatory obligations.

The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry supports the proposal. Chairman Samir Abdulla Nass said allowing rotation across branches and activities would strengthen the labour market and benefit the Kingdom's economy.

The General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions, however, opposed the move, warning that some employers could misuse transfers to punish staff under the guise of permit flexibility.

MPs push for autism training programme at teachers' college

Mohammed Darwish
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A proposal to introduce an autism spectrum disorders specialisation at Bahrain Teachers College will be debated in Parliament on Tuesday, aiming to train national teachers to support more than 2,400 autistic people and reduce care costs that can exceed BD 900 a month.

The motion requires the government, through the Education Ministry, to launch a dedicated academic programme at the college. It has been submitted by MPs Hisham Al Awadhi, Jaleela Alawi, Second Deputy Speaker Ahmed Qarata, Jameel Mulla Hassan and Mohamed Mousa. MP Al Awadhi, the main sponsor, said rising autism cases and the high fees charged by specialist centres highlight the need for

qualified local staff able to provide long-term support.

According to the explanatory memorandum, autism cases in Bahrain now exceed 2,400, while many families struggle with high monthly bills for specialist care. A dedicated specialisation would train Bahraini teachers to work in schools and centres, expand public-sector services and open new employment pathways for citizens.

In its written response, the Education Ministry said it is already working with Bahrain Teachers College to design new programmes aligned with labour-market needs.

The Service Committee has recommended approving the proposal in the form of a wish, citing strong public-interest grounds.

Hisham Al Awadhi,
MP



Master's degree rule for expat hires back before MPs

Mohamed Darwish
TDT | Manama

MPs will again debate a proposal on Tuesday that would allow the government to hire expatriates only if they hold at least a master's degree and have ten years' experience — rules the Shura Council has rejected but Parliament wants to keep.

The changes, which amend Article 11 of the Civil Service Law, were previously ap-

proved by the Council of Representatives. However, the Shura Council refused the draft in principle. Despite this, Parliament's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee has advised

MPs to stick to their earlier decision and uphold the original wording.

Under the proposal, ministries and state bodies could only recruit an

Mahmoud Fardan,
Chairman of
Parliament's
Legislative and
Legal Affairs
Committee



expat if no Bahraini candidate meets the job requirements. Any non-Bahraini hire must have a master's degree (or equivalent) in the relevant field and at least a decade of experience. Contracts would be limited to two years and could be renewed once for another two years, but only after rechecking that no qualified Bahraini is available. A Civil Service Bureau committee would also need to approve any renewal.

During their contract, expat employees would be required to train a Bahraini staff member so that locals gain the skills needed to eventually take over these roles.

The draft also states that foreign staff hired through contracts must follow the Civil Service Law whenever their contracts do not cover a matter. The Civil Service Bureau would issue the detailed rules for hiring non-Bahrainis, including the training obligation.

Supporters say the goal is to reduce unemployment and ensure Bahrainis come first in public recruitment. The government argues that setting fixed qualifications in law is too restrictive because staffing needs change. Despite this, the committee has recommended that MPs reaffirm their earlier approval of the draft.

Ads move in? Public buildings could open to marketing

Mohammed Darwish
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MPs will discuss a government bill on Tuesday to amend Article 12 of Decree-Law 14 of 1973 on the Regulation of Advertisements, allowing controlled advertising in parts of public buildings.

The draft, linked to Decree 27 of 2025, has been reviewed by the Public Utilities and Environment Committee, which



recommended approval. The aim is to give government bodies legal authority to rent out vacant areas in public buildings for advertising, generating additional revenue for the state.

Currently, the law bans ad-

vertising on public buildings used for services, monuments, places of worship, historic sites, recreation areas, pavements, road surfaces, roundabouts, and trees. The amendment modifies paragraph (b) of Ar-

article 12, retaining the general ban but permitting advertising under conditions set by the minister.

The committee supported the bill's title, preamble, amended Article 12, and enforcement clause, all drafted by the government. The change is intended to allow public entities to turn unused spaces into commercial advertising areas while maintaining oversight and protecting public interests.