

Shura Council Leads Reform

42% of Council are women

- 13th in digital index
- Women lead key committees
- Reform drive gains praise

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Shura Council is gaining international recognition as a model of modern governance, combining digital innovation with gender inclusion.

On the occasion of the International Day of Parliamentarism, the Council marked its dual achievements by placing 13th globally in digital maturity and raising women's leadership to 42 percent within its Secretariat, underscoring a reform path praised at home and abroad.

Reform in motion

Led by Secretary-General H.E. Kareema Mohammed AlAbbasi, the Shura's General Secretariat highlighted the Council's embrace of both technological excellence and institutional inclusion.

AlAbbasi called the Council's digital transformation and commitment to gender equality a



H.E. Kareema Mohammed AlAbbasi



H.E. Dr. Fatema Abduljabbar Alkooheji



H.E. Sabeeka Khalifa Alfadhala



H.E. Dalal Jasim Alzayed



H.E. Lina Habib Qassem



H.E. Dr. Jameela Mohamed Redha Alsalman



H.E. Dr. Jehad Abdulla Alfadhel



H.E. Nancy Dinah Elly Khedouri

reflection of Bahrain's broader reform project under His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

The Council's digital leadership was confirmed by the 2024 Global e-Parliament Report issued by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which placed Bahrain's

Shura 13th globally and first in the Arab world for digital maturity.

The recognition reflects years of work to modernise legislative infrastructure, boost virtual participation, and streamline institutional transparency.

Women at the forefront

At the same time, the Council

celebrated its growing female presence.

Shura members including H.E. Dr. Fatema Abduljabbar Alkooheji, H.E. Sabeeka Khalifa Alfadhala, H.E. Dalal Jasim Alzayed, Lina Habib Qassem, and H.E. Dr. Jameela Mohamed Redha Alsalman spoke about the national strides made in institutionalising gender balance.

Women now lead multiple

standing committees and take active roles in legislation, oversight, and parliamentary diplomacy.

H.E. Dr. Jehad Abdulla Alfadhel, Second Deputy Speaker, described Bahrain's legislative chamber as a platform for national dialogue and equal participation, where women's representation in policymaking demonstrates both constitution-

Bahrain is the only Arab country ranked in the global top 20 on the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 2024 Digital Maturity Index. The ranking covers 115 parliaments across 86 countries and evaluates transparency, digital access, and innovation.

al values and global competitiveness.

Global model recognised

Council member H.E. Nancy Dinah Elly Khedouri emphasised the impact of Bahraini women in international forums, noting their presence in regional and global parliamentary events as proof of Bahrain's commitment to equality and inclusion.

H.E. Leena Habib Kassim, Chair of the Women and Children's Affairs Committee, echoed that sentiment, calling the Council an institutional expression of trust in women's leadership.

In line with this year's global theme, "Achieving Gender Equality: Step by Step", the Shura Council used the occasion to spotlight its efforts as part of Bahrain's national reform narrative.

'Modern Parliament Leads Globally'

- Bahrain promotes global dialogue
- Parliament backs gender equality
- Royal support drives reform

Mahir Haneef
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Bahrain's modern parliamentary system is emerging as a regional model by integrating digital innovation, gender equality, and diplomatic outreach into

its legislative identity.

On the occasion of the International Day of Parliamentarism, MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen reaffirmed that Bahrain's experience now stands at the forefront of national reform and international recognition.

Diplomacy in focus

Dr. Al-Dhaen described Bahrain's parliament as a key pillar in the Kingdom's state-building and development strategy, empowered by the continued support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and guided by the national reform programme.

She said the legislative branch now plays a vital role in foreign

policy by building bridges with global parliaments, participating in regional dialogues, and promoting Bahrain's image in multilateral forums.

She noted that Bahrain's parliamentary diplomacy reflects the maturity of its democratic experience and supports peace, security, and mutual understanding.

These are also among the key goals recognised globally on this day celebrating parliamentary cooperation.

Institutional progress

Al-Dhaen also commended the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin



MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen

Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for fostering an effective environment of collaboration between

the legislative and executive branches.

This, she said, enables the Council to perform its constitutional role with efficiency and confidence, especially in contributing to policymaking and sustainable development.

The statement follows a series of recognitions for Bahrain's parliamentary transformation.

These include the Shura Council's first-place ranking in the Arab world and 13th globally in the 2024 Digital Maturity Index issued by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Council has also achieved a 42 percent female leadership rate within its General Secretariat,

and women now chair several permanent committees.

Unified direction

Al-Dhaen said Bahrain's parliament is evolving not only as a legislative institution but also as a platform for international engagement and democratic expression.

International Parliamentary Day, she added, serves as a reminder of the responsibility parliaments bear in upholding justice, promoting development, and advocating for equality across borders.

She pledged to continue representing Bahrain's national interests in global forums.

Bahrain's Parliament a regional model

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's parliamentary record, shaped by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's reform charter, now stands as a model for the region.

MP Ahmed Al Salloom said this as the world marks the International Day of Parliamentarism today.

He credited steady cooperation between Parliament and the Cabinet, under His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for keeping bills in good order and tuned to public needs.

The Shura Council, across



MP Ahmed Al Salloom

several terms, has overhauled key economic and social laws.

Al Salloom said this has helped Bahrain sharpen its edge, attract investors and open doors for jobseekers.

This year, the United Nations chose the theme "Achieving gender equality, action by action".

Al Salloom pointed to Bahrain's figures.

Shura Council's active engagements globally

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Shura Council took part in 55 international meetings during the third sitting of the sixth legislative term, with members attending a variety of foreign visits and virtual sessions.

These engagements covered subjects ranging from trade and finance to climate policy, healthcare, artificial intelligence, and national security.

Ideas

The Council described the effort as part of its aim to exchange ideas with other par-

liaments and improve its own legislative practices. Discussions covered topics now common across global assemblies: sustainable growth, gender parity, technological change, and defence.

Bahrain chaired the Asian Parliamentary Assembly and took over leadership of next year's GCC conference of parliamentary speakers from the United Arab Emirates.

The Council also obtained observer status in the South-east Asian parliamentary bloc and became a full member of the Mediterranean assembly.

Constitutional Architect Passes Away

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Dr. Hussain Al Baharna, the legal scholar who helped shape Bahrain's 1973 Constitution and served as Minister of State for Legal Affairs for nearly a quarter of a century, passed away on Sunday at the age of 93.

His funeral will be held at 5pm today at Al Hoora Cemetery.

Al Baharna was among the first Bahrainis to study law abroad, earning his degree from Baghdad in 1953 before pursuing further study in Britain and the Netherlands.

He later completed a doctorate in public international law



Dr. Hussain Al Baharna

at the University of Cambridge in 1961, cementing a legal foundation that would influence both national and international jurisprudence.

He was appointed Minister of State for Legal Affairs in 1971, shortly after Bahrain's independence, and remained in that position until 1995.