



GCC Laws

GCC Legal Flash News – March 2026 Issue No. 3

Legal Updates	Description
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	
1	<p>DIFC Enacts Variable Capital Company Regulations</p> <p>The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) enacted the Dubai International Financial Centre Variable Capital Company Regulations 2026 for Variable Capital Companies (VCCs) which creates a flexible corporate vehicle that permits a variable share capital structure, enabling capital adjustment without the need for shareholder approval or court intervention typically required under traditional company rules. Key features include the ability for VCCs to issue and redeem shares at net asset value, mandate segregation of assets and liabilities via sub-funds, and accommodate multiple investment strategies within a single legal entity.</p>
2	<p>UAE Tightens Rules on Telecom Device Imports</p> <p>As a part of broader efforts to regulate the telecommunications sector and reinforce compliance with approved procedures the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) and customs authorities have enforced updated framework for importers to obtain specific TDRA type-approval certification or authorisation before customs clearance of telecommunications devices into the country. The revised rules require that consignments of mobile phones, IoT devices, routers and other telecom equipment be supported by valid type-approval certificates issued or recognised by the TDRA to demonstrate compliance with national technical standards.</p>
3	<p>UAE Lowers Age of Majority to 18 Under Civil Transactions Law</p> <p>The United Arab Emirates has amended the Federal Decree-Law No. 25 of 2025 on Civil Transactions to reduce the age of legal majority from 21 to 18 years and grant individuals aged 18 full legal capacity to enter into contracts, manage assets, and undertake civil acts independently, removing the need for guardian consent in most transactions. The revised age of majority provision is set to become applicable from June 2026 pursuant to the law's transitional framework.</p>
4	<p>Introduction of Facial Recognition for Notary Services</p> <p>The Abu Dhabi Judiciary launched a new facial recognition authentication system to replace traditional digital signatures for a range of notary and legal services. The technology enables individuals to complete identity verification and execute documents using biometric facial recognition, enhancing convenience and security while reducing reliance on physical presence or digital signature credentials.</p>
5	<p>UAE Announces New Mechanism to End Monopoly in Medicines Market</p> <p>The Emirates Drug Establishment has introduced a new regulatory mechanism under the Federal Decree-Law No. (38) of 2024 Governing Medical Products, Pharmacists and Pharmaceutical Establishments to dismantle monopolistic practices in the medicines market. The initiative is designed to enhance competition in the pharmaceutical sector by removing barriers that previously allowed exclusive supply arrangements and limited participation by alternative suppliers.</p>

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

6	Introduction of Digital Framework for Lawful Termination of Domestic Worker Contracts	Saudi Arabia introduced a new digital service on the Musaned platform enabling employers to legally terminate domestic worker contracts through an integrated online process. The service allows parties to complete termination procedures, record final settlements, and update employment status in coordination with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development.
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Sultanate of Oman

7	Introduction of Regulatory Framework for Foreign Ships in Territorial Waters	The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology issued Ministerial Decision No. 30/2026 establishing a new regulatory framework governing operation of foreign ships within the territorial sea of Sultanate of Oman. The rules set out procedures for registration, navigation permissions, anchorage, security screening, reporting obligations and inspection protocols for foreign-flagged vessels, aligning maritime governance with international conventions and enhancing oversight of maritime operations.
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State of Kuwait

8	Kuwait to Introduce Freelance Visa Without Sponsor	Kuwait has announced plans to launch a freelance residency visa that does not require a local sponsor, aimed at formalising independent work and curbing visa trading. Under the proposed scheme, applicants will pay a fee ranging between KD 750 and KD 1,000 for a residency permit that allows them to live and work independently in the country.
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State of Qatar

9	QICCA Conciliation Rules	With effect from 1 February 2026, the Qatar International Centre for Conciliation and Arbitration (QICCA) implemented its 2026 Conciliation Rules, modernising the framework for commercial conciliation in Qatar. The updated rules clarify the scope and applicability of conciliation, strengthen confidentiality protections, streamline the procedure for initiating and conducting conciliation, and introduce clearer timelines for notices and appointment of conciliators. The amendments also reinforce the enforceability of settlement agreements.
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Kingdom of Bahrain

10	Ministry Launches Online Service for Minor Movables Sale and Purchase Contracts	The Bahrain Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments has introduced a new electronic service to facilitate the drafting and execution of sale and purchase contracts for minor movable assets. The platform enables users to prepare, review and register contracts for items such as vehicles and small equipment entirely online, enhancing transactional efficiency and reducing reliance on in-person procedures.
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