

His Majesty congratulated on winning Unido award

THE Premier has congratulated His Majesty King Hamad on being conferred the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (Unido) Award conferred on him in recognition his role in ensuring the success of the Bahraini model for entrepreneurship and women's economic empowerment.

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa was chairing the weekly Cabinet session at Gudaibiya Palace when he described the honour as a tribute to His Majesty's milestone achievements.

Meanwhile, the Premier briefed the session on his recent visit to Saudi Arabia where he held talks with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on fraternal ties linking the two nations.

He praised the gracious hospitality accorded to him by King Salman during his visit, expressing the two countries' shared desire to constantly develop relations in various fields. Cabinet secretary general Dr Yasser Al Nasser said in a statement.

On development issues, the Premier ordered paying more attention to developing agriculture, boosting food industries, promoting Bahraini agricultural products and crops,



■ The Premier chairs the Cabinet session in the presence of senior officials

especially dates, to raise the added value of those products and crops and reduce wastage.

He also encouraged investment in agriculture and manufacturing industries.

The Ministerial Committee for Urbanisation and Infrastructure was tasked to conduct a study on the matter.

Moreover, the Premier urged the need to develop the Jewellery Arabia exhibition in terms of preparation and organisation. He stressed that relevant bodies should prepare well for the event, given its commercial and tourism importance.

The Cabinet approved a draft law on ratifying the agreement on establishing the Bah-

raini-Russian Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific-technical Co-operation.

It also approved the recommendation of the Ministerial Committee for Financial Affairs and Rationalising Expenditure, regarding adjusting fees levied in accordance to the law on the Regulation of the Practice of Engineering Professions.

Then, it reviewed a database of 143 boards of trustees and directors of public companies and institutions and specialised committees.

The memorandum included procedures taken to ensure that the boards and committees rectify their situation in accordance with the legal tools establishing them within the

preset time frame.

The session also endorsed a parliamentary proposal on removing wooden classrooms (cabins) at the Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa Boys' School and the Al Buaiya Primary Boys' School and replacing them with buildings.

A tribute was paid to Bahraini women for their landmark political, economic, social achievements. It came as the country gears up to celebrate the annual Bahraini Women's Day on Thursday.

The valuable contribution of Bahraini women to their country's development and progress was also hailed.

The role of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) in empowering and integrating the other half of society in the development process also won praise.

A bigger share will be given to residents of A'ali and Dimistan in the Ramli and Louzy housing projects following orders from the Premier who followed up the progress of work on other schemes to meet pending applications on the waiting lists.

He directed units to be distributed fairly, giving orders to meet all pending applications to 2002 by end of 2016.

New clamp on GMO imports

By RAJI UNNIKRISHNAN

STRICTER regulations are on the way on crops, seeds and medicines being imported into the country.

They will be drawn up during a two-day forum organised by the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE), which began yesterday at the Movenpick Hotel, Muharraq.

Over 30 representatives from decision-making entities will come up with an action plan to control the import of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

"The action plan and guidelines aim to protect Bahrain's native biodiversity, which will be finalised in this session, as a national policy to ensure the safety of our biodiversity," said workshop facilitator and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action

Plan international consultant Dr Elsa Sattout.

"In this two-day forum we aim to set the ground to have more control of import of GMOs, in terms of seeds, crops, food for processing and pharmaceuticals.

"This will include measures like advance agreement forms for GMOs like corn, maize, soya and canola at the ports of entry.

"The national policy for bio-safety and the guiding principles for the national framework for Bahrain, the methodology for its implementation and additional legislations needed, will be discussed."

This is the second meeting since in 2011 when Bahrain adopted the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on



■ Corn, maize and soya are among crops that will have stricter import regulations

Biological Diversity, an international agreement that aims to ensure the safe handling, trans-

port and use of living modified organisms (LMOs).

"In the first one, in Septem-

ber, we assessed the readiness of Bahrain and we found that until now we have no reports of any risks or harms from GMOs in Bahrain," added Dr Sattout.

"This session will also further raise awareness on the protocol to new stakeholders on the direct or indirect impact of GMOs released into our environment."

SCE biodiversity directorate senior environment specialist Nouf Al Wasmi said the focus of the action plan will be on agriculture produce, medicines and research supplements.

"Agriculture, medicine and supplements used in college labs for researches will be focused under this initiative," she said.

Risks

"We see risks of GMOs more in these, than any others, which could be to both human health and environment.

"We will debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the GMOs and LMOs."

The regulations would also help protect Bahrain's indigenous species, said SCE environmental policies and planning acting director Suzan Mohammed Al Ajjawi.

"It is a privilege to Bahrain that we are enhancing steps to preserve its own indigenous species and to protect and use it with the safeguard of the government," she added.

"GMOs are something that can affect a country's own species, which needs to be preserved to preserve its biodiversity.

"From both economic and biodiversity point of view, this is important for Bahrain."

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■ Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulhussain Mirza received Hilal Conferences and Exhibitions managing director Jubran Abdulrahman and company technical affairs director Ahmed Suleiman. The minister praised the company's efforts in organising various activities in Bahrain and its co-operation with ministries and government agencies. He lauded the company's co-operation with the Electricity and Water Authority. Mr Abdulrahman thanked the minister and EWA authorities for the warm reception and hospitality. EWA executive vice-president of distribution and customer services Adnan Mohammed Fakhro was present.

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Chartered to focus

The Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of Accountants of India (BCIAI), organised professional body of India (affiliated to the Bahrain Accountants Association) back with its thought-provoking and engaging annual conference.

Challenges Create Opportunities will take place on Friday and Saturday at Radisson Blu Hotel and Spa.

It will be held under the patronage of Commerce and Tourism Minister Zaid

It features a host of influential speakers from India and Bahrain such as Institute of Accountants of India president Deva vice-president Nilesh Vikamsey who will interact in a session on "The Future of Accountant Profession and its role in Development".

Bank of Baroda former chairman and director Dr Anil K Khandelwal will be the guest of honor in the Leadership Challenges in Modern Corporation.

He is also a best-selling author of several books and an award-winning banker.

Other topics include VAT in the GCC, international taxation based on base erosion and profit shifting and challenges in the new environment.

Focus on Bahrain's progressive economic growth will be showcased in a panel discussion on the look of Bahraini Economy for 2017 by Jamal Fakhro and a talk on Business in Bahrain - New Laws of Doing Business for Foreigners by noted corporate lawyer El Nayaal.

A detailed exploration of entrepreneurship and innovation will be led by Narayana lifestyle coach Dr Vishwas Chhabra and his brand of 'Chair Yoga'.

The highlight among the 18 events will be a talk on "The Dynamics of Power Making" by Swami Sukhabodhanan

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Accountants' forum on corporate trends

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"A lot of thought has gone into making the programme of this conference relevant professionally, and engaging with the aspirations of chartered accountants who want to explore innovation and new career paths as entrepreneurs," said BCICAI chairperson Vivek Kapoor.

"The conference will also offer 400-plus delegates from around the region and India a snapshot of Bahrain's economic promise and business-friendly commercial climate.

"Chartered accountants will find the talks a fascinating mix of latest developments in their field as well as insights into management style updates.

"The conference is open to non-chartered accountants too who will find it a gateway to understanding corporate trends.

Partnering

"Delegate fee is just BD50 per person and includes two-day breakfast, lunch and unlimited networking opportunities."

BCICAI vice-chairperson Uday Shanbhag added, "We are grateful to all our sponsors for partnering with BCICAI and supporting the event, especially the title sponsor Al Haddad Motors, event sponsors Ahli United Bank, BDO, KPMG, Protiviti and day sponsors Bahrain Credit Facilities Company, Grant Thornton, BisB and Diyar Al Muharraq."

Al Haddad Motors corporate sales manager Joel George said: "Al Haddad Motors (Mercedes-Benz) are pleased to sponsor the BCICAI's annual conference.

"Chartered accountants are the backbone of the corporate world and the contribution of the BCICAI members to the kingdom's progress over the years has been commendable and significant indeed.

"We have partnered with BCICAI in earlier events and we welcome this opportunity to support the conference which will be a review of the corporate challenges that chartered accountants and finance professionals are facing in the current economic scenario and how they transform them into opportunities."

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