

Cabinet hails outcome of 29th Arab Summit



His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa during the Cabinet meeting held at Gudabiya Palace yesterday

DT News Network Manama

The Cabinet chaired by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa yesterday welcomed the outcome of the 29th Arab Summit held in Dhahran and said that the keynote speech delivered by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at the summit fully expressed the Kingdom's firm stance towards various Arab issues as well as its support for Arab solidarity.

Welcoming the "positive results of the Jerusalem Summit", the Cabinet observed that the conference was "constructive and fruitful" in serving joint Arab action and strengthening unified Arab stance towards the multiple challenges facing the Arab Nation.

The cabinet also welcomed the Summit's final communiqué aimed at strengthening joint Arab action. The session also appreciated the Arab Summit for backing Bahrain's measures

to safeguard its security and capabilities against foreign interference in its domestic affairs as well as for showing full-fledged support for the Kingdom in tackling terror groups seeking to undermine its security and stability.

The session also lauded the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for the wise management of the 29th Arab Summit and praised the strenuous efforts made by sisterly Saudi Arabia to ensure its success.

Cabinet decisions

- The Cabinet endorsed, based on a recommendation by the Ministerial Committee for Legal Affairs and highlighted in the memorandum presented by the Deputy Premier and committee chairman, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Bahrain's National Space Science Agency and the UAE's Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre. Under the MoU, the two sides will exchange expertise, information and data in the field of space images applications, which will contribute to building national capacities.

- The session approved a draft air services agreement between Bahrain and Brunei Darussalam, for the aim of enhancing bilateral cooperation in the field of air transportation, as well as in expanding international air service opportunities between them. The Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications was mandated to sign the agreement, which replaces the one signed between the two sides in 1990, on behalf of the Kingdom of Bahrain, based on a recommendation by the Ministerial Committee for Legal Affairs, highlighted in the memorandum presented by the Deputy Premier and committee chairman.

- The Cabinet referred to the Ministerial Committee for Legal Affairs an MoU between Bahrain's Capital Trustees' Board and its Moroccan Rabat counterpart on municipal work. The MoU, highlighted in the presentation of the Minister of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, aims to ensure that Bahrain takes advantage of Morocco's experience in the field of municipal work and urban planning, as well as pave the way for exchanging expertise in this regard.

- The session referred to the Legislature two draft-laws which had been drafted based on proposals from Council of Representatives, along with the memoranda including the government's opinion on them. They included a bill on adding a new clause to Article (2) of Law 58/2006 on Protecting Society from Terrorist Acts, and another on amending Article (327) of Decree-Law 12/1971 with respect to the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law.

Traffic Law amendment

While reviewing the memoranda on its agenda, the session approved a draft-law on amending the Traffic Law to allow for more out-of-court settlement cases, including cases of crossing the traffic signals and exceeding the prescribed speed limits resulting in no deaths or injuries, misusing vehicle registration plates or failing to place them in the correct place, in addition to cases stipulated in the current law.

Aiming to ensure easy procedures for the citizens and residents, the bill on amending some provisions of Law 23/2014, highlighted in a memorandum presented by the Deputy Premier and Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Legal Affairs, was referred to the Legislative Branch.

Security cooperation

The session discussed Bahrain's signing of a draft comprehensive agreement that promotes security cooperation among Arab countries. Presented by the Minister of the Interior, the agreement aims to enhance cooperation among the States Parties on preventing and combating various types of crimes, arresting the perpetrators and exchanging information and experiences, as the best means to combat and address various forms of criminality.

A draft-law on ratifying the agreement was referred to the Ministerial Committee for Legal Affairs.

Economy in good shape

The Cabinet reviewed the main economic data for the year 2017, and expressed satisfaction with its positive economic indicators, including the remarkable growth in various economic sectors, reflecting Bahrain's ability to deal with the challenges thanks to the key role played by the successful government policies and the activities of the private sector in pushing economic growth forward.

Figures highlighted in the presentation of the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism showed a remarkable 4.1 per cent increase in the GDP in the fourth quarter of 2017 compared to 2016, amounting to BD 12.4 billion.

The GDP data also indicated that non-oil trade volume had reached BD 7.6 billion, posting an increase of 10pc compared to 2016, with Bahraini non-oil exports reaching BD 2 billion, or going up by 16pc.

Industrial licenses

The Cabinet was also informed that 91 industrial licenses had been issued in 2017 with a total investment value of BD 93 million.