

## Higher govt spending to offset gains from VAT, says report



DT News Network  
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### Manama

Benefits associated with the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) to Bahrain's fiscal position are expected to be diminished by elevated government spending, according to a report. While introduction of VAT will create an additional stream of revenue for the nation, elevated government spending to limit social instability will offset any gains from VAT.

"Elevated spending, in a bid to limit social instability, will severely constrain improvements in Bahrain's fiscal position, even as VAT is introduced," the report stated.

The report noted that the impact of the tax will differ

among GCC countries. UAE, which has the strongest retail sector, will benefit the most from the tax, the report noted. "VAT will be a bigger boost for government revenues in the UAE, given its larger consumer base and importance of retail spending for the economy, especially from overseas visitors. Moreover, with Abu Dhabi and Dubai attracting wealthy visitors, we believe that consumers will be able to absorb higher costs," the report noted. "In Saudi Arabia, the fiscal impact of VAT will be lower, especially as the government introduces cash transfers to the most vulnerable households to limit the negative impact of VAT," the report stated. Saudi and UAE have already implemented VAT. Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman are yet to implement. "Kuwait will see limited fall-out from the failure to introduce VAT. The country benefits from tremendous oil reserves and financial buffers. While the limited political willingness to implement fiscal reforms in Kuwait will limit the scope to reduce exposure to fluctuations in oil prices, long-term risks are limited," the report stated.

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# Hazy, dusty weather in parts of Bahrain



The hazy, dusty view of Bahrain on Sunday

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Dusty and hazy conditions continued in parts of Bahrain, with poor visibility, accompanied by 1000 metres, less at first and strong north-westerly winds.

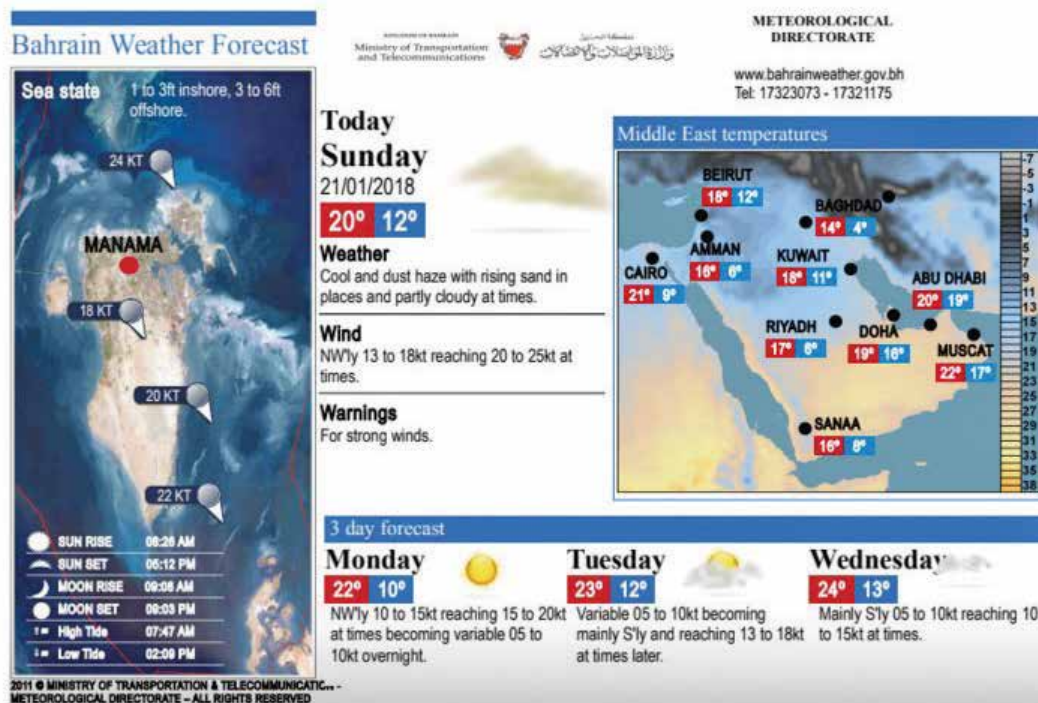
The official weather account of the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications - Meteorological Directorate - said that dust haze expected to affect the Kingdom reducing the visibility to less than 1000m during the morning associated with strong westerly winds causing rough seas.

The department has requested the public, to be cautious, and follow weather bulletins and updates on social media networks.

While Ministry of Interior issued a statement on their social media stating, "General Directorate of traffic calls up road users to be cautious of dust, drive in the right lane, follow the speed limits and keep a safe distance between the vehicles."

Further People were quick with their comments about the weather conditions.

"A severe sandstorm is on



the way, close all your windows and don't let your children play outside. Those with breathing problems should be cautious," Mohammed Ateeq tweeted yesterday. Moreover, the weather condition did affect many

companies too; where Bahrain Auto Fair was closed for the day. Bahrain Auto Fair further issued a statement stating that "Bahrain Auto Fair management would like to inform their dear visitors that due to the unfortunate weather

conditions, the Bahrain Auto Fair will be closing today. We will be announcing new dates and timings very shortly as Bahrain auto fair will be extended. Your convenience and safety is our priority."

## 70 women graduate in women crisis care

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Seventy women who successfully underwent Women's Advocacy Certification Training received graduate certificates at a function held at the British Club, Adliya yesterday.

Women's Crisis Care International (WCCI) trained the 2018 batch to support women in Bahrain who face

domestic or sexual violence. "The programme runs for a period of four days, where there is a series of in-class work and out of class work, where we cover topics from sexual violence, domestic violence, subconscious mind, history of advocacy movement, women's rights in Bahrain to legal issues," said Mary Justine Todd, CEO of WCCI.

"With these advocates now graduated and certified they

will step up as active on duty advocate volunteer and work as per their shift as WCCI operates 24 hours a day and they will be on duty whenever there is a need," said Todd.

"A program like this in a country like Bahrain is equally beneficial as it is for any other country in the world as whenever there is a victim of any domestic or sexual violence, in order for them to develop the likelihood of post-traumatic stress disorder

and further help them to cope up with the traumatic event is extremely important," said Todd.

"We have been operating on a full scale since January 2016, but in 2017 WCCI responded to approximately 250 cases. Further, WCCI would like to express the most sincere gratitude for all of the support offered in their endeavours to support victims of abuse," she added.

Until now, WCCI has

been operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in English, with Arabic available during weekday working hours.

However, with the new group of advocates, WCCI plans to launch an additional Arabic speaking programme. Beginning February 20, help will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 3844 7588 or visit their office partner, American Mission Hospital, in Manama, Saar, or Amwaj.



Mary Justine Todd