

IFTDO hails Bahrain's measures to combat COVID-19

Board of Directors of leading global non-profit organisation holds remote meeting chaired by elected Board Chairman from Bahrain

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A leading global non-profit organisation has praised the precautionary measures taken by Bahrain in the on-going fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This was expressed by the Board of Directors of the International Federation of Training and

Development Organisations (IFTDO). They recently held a meeting that was chaired by elected IFTDO Board Chairman Dr. Ibrahim bin Khalifa Al Dossary.

Considering the extraordinary circumstances the world is currently witnessing, the meeting was held remotely and consisted of 15 board members from different countries of the world.

In the meeting, each member was given the opportunity to explain the situation in their respective country.

Dr. Al Dossary took the chance to share the situation in Bahrain and the precautionary measures taken by the Kingdom, as well as the facilitations it offered citizens and residents.



Dr. Al Dossary during the remote meeting

Board members expressed their appreciation of the initiatives, which reflect the wise management of the government in dealing with the pandemic and which represent the awareness of

the people of the Kingdom.

The board then discussed the meeting agenda, in which several programmes were approved, in addition to discussing the possibility of offering human development consultations to the countries that have been affected most by COVID-19.

It has also been agreed to postpone the IFTDO World Conference, which was scheduled to be held in India, until year-end.

Additionally, board members agreed to communicate with NGOs in some poor countries to provide logistic support in order to assist in efforts to combat this pandemic.

It is worth mentioning that IFTDO is a non-profit organisation

registered in the United Nations, established in Geneva since 1972.

A Board of Directors and a Chairman is periodically elected, and the federation includes most of the profitable and non-profit organisations across the world, with around 500,000 members.

Dr Al Dossary was re-elected for the post after winning the majority of the votes in the federation's recent assembly held in Bosnia. During his chairmanship period of IFTDO's Board of Directors, Dr Al Dossary achieved noticeable improvement in different aspects – a matter that is considered as an international gain for the Kingdom of Bahrain and its citizens, thanks to their dedication, devotion and competencies.

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Bahrain had exported BD196million-worth of products during February of this year.

This was revealed in the month's foreign trade report issued by the Information and eGovernment Authority (IGA), which encompassed data on the balance of trade, imports, exports (national origin) and re-exports.

The value of exports of national origin increased by 11 per cent to BD196million during February 2020, compared to BD177million for the same month last year.

The top 10 countries in terms of the value of exports purchased from Bahrain accounted for 85 per cent of the total value, with the remaining countries accounting for 15 per cent.

Saudi Arabia ranked first amongst the countries receiving Bahraini exports of national origin, importing BD57million from Bahrain. Meanwhile, the UAE was second with BD28million and Oman third with BD19million.

Agglomerated Iron and Con-

February exports worth BD196million

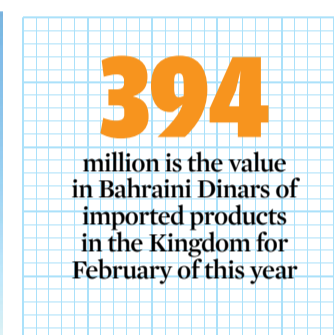
Foreign trade report shows value of exports increased by 11 per cent compared to same month last year

centrates were the top products exported during February with BD29million. Bridges and bridges-sections were second with a value of BD16million, and Aluminum wire not Alloyed third with BD15million.

The total value of re-exports increased by six per cent to reach BD75million during February of this year, compared to BD71million for the same month in 2019.

The top 10 countries accounted for 90 per cent of the re-exported value, while the remaining countries accounted for 10 per cent. The UAE ranked first with BD23million, Saudi was second with BD17million, and the USA came third with BD8million.

Gold ingots emerged as the top product re-exported from Bahrain with BD15million. Four-



wheel-drive vehicles came second with BD8million, and parts for airplanes came third with BD7million.

The value of imports increased by 13 per cent, reaching BD394million during February of 2020 compared to BD350million for the same month the previous year.

The top 10 countries accounted for 68 per cent of the value

of imports, with the remaining countries accounting for 32 per cent.

According to the report, China ranked first when it came to imports to Bahrain, with a total of BD57million. Brazil was second with BD38million and Saudi third with BD30million.

Aluminum oxide was the top product imported into Bahrain with a total value of BD31 million, while non-agglomerated iron ores and concentrates was second with BD24million. Four-wheel-drive vehicles were third with BD15 million

The trade balance, difference between exports and imports, the value of the deficit of the trade balance reached BD123 million during February of 2020 versus BD102 million for the same month of the previous year, with an increase of 21 per cent.

Fees reduction at public and private schools proposed

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House of Representatives Services Committee chairman Mamdouh Al Saleh confirmed yesterday that MPs are trying to reduce fees in public schools.

This comes after a proposal was submitted by MP Adel Al Asoumi for private schools and kindergartens to decrease their fees by 65 per cent during the leave period, which has been implemented as part of precautionary measures to help contain the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Al Asoumi said that it is only



Al Saleh

right that schools also bear the brunt and not just parents.

"This is an exceptional sit-

uation and everyone is going through a hard time," Al Asoumi explained. "Private schools and kindergartens should understand this and take 35 per cent of the total financial dues in order to cover operating costs only, without profit during this period."

In his proposal, Al Asoumi emphasised the importance of community partnership in such exceptional circumstances.

"Schools are closed at this time and this would result in decreased operating expenses, so there is no need to take the same amount in fees," he said.

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MP ADEL AL ASOUMI

"We are at an exceptional stage, and everyone must cooperate in it and overcome this adversity with minimal damage."

Duo in the dock for using counterfeit bank notes

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The Fourth High Criminal Court recently sentenced a duo to five years' imprisonment and fined them BD1,000 each for forging bank notes and using them in several commercial shops around Bahrain.

The Court also ordered both defendants permanent deportation after they serve their jail terms.

Court files showed that the duo (a Gulf man and an Arab woman) counterfeited several SR500 notes and used them to purchase goods from different shops, and receive the change in genuine Bahraini Dinars.

The case was reported to the police on July 24 last year by their first victim, who informed that the duo cheated him after the female defendant purchased a juicer worth BD8 from the shop he worked at using a fake SR500 bill.

The shopkeeper said that he had returned the remaining amount in Bahraini Dinars as per the request of the woman, who he claimed had also asked to change more Saudi bank

notes.

The victim added that he discovered the notes were forged at a nearby money exchange, and he quickly returned to his shop where he saw the duo were still walking around.

He further told investigators that he was physically assaulted and yelled at by the duo when he confronted them, adding that they walked away from the spot after beating him.

Further investigations revealed that more complaints were lodged against the duo for similar accusations. A second victim informed the police that the female defendant had purchased a BD8 phone cover from his shop, used a counterfeited note to pay, and collected the remaining change in genuine Bahraini Dinars.

A third victim also reported the same to the police. CCTV footage and the confiscated bank notes proved the duo's involvement in the crime.

In the interrogation, the female defendant confessed that her male partner had handed over the counterfeited bank notes to her.

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Human rights society calls for deferral of monthly Flexi payments

A leading human rights organisation in Bahrain has called on the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) to urgently consider postponing the monthly payments of Flexi Work Permit holders, in light of the current situation affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Individuals with Flexi Work Permits are required to pay BD30 per month for this facility, which allows them to live freely in the Kingdom and work in any non-specialised occupation without a sponsor.

Bahrain Human Rights

Watch Society (BHRWS) secretary general Faisal Fulad said that with the coronavirus bringing havoc to all sectors of the economy locally, regionally and globally, Flexi Work Permit holders are amongst the most affected.

"They are people who are earning by hourly or daily wage, contractual, or those terminated because of no business during the outbreak," explained Fulad. "Sad to note that most of them are expatriates earning



Fulad

a low income and holders of Flexi visa.

"It is their cry that the government help and provide them with a flexible payment scheme in this time of crisis, especially with regard to their monthly fees to postpone until economy back to normal.

"It is with our ardent and humble request to ease the hardship and provide a compassionate assistance to these deprived members of the community."