

Bahrain debt rises by 8pc to BD19.3bn

● NAO report

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Hidden borrowing has pushed Bahrain's real public debt above the official BD19.3 billion figure, the National Audit Office warns in a new 600-page report that tracks billions in loans taken directly by ministries and state bodies.

According to the report, gross public debt rose by eight per cent from BD17.9bn at the end of 2023 to BD19.3bn a year later.

Interest costs climbed from BD843m in 2023 to BD945m in 2024. On top of the recorded debt, ministries and other public bodies borrowed directly from external funds and banks, taking the total to an estimated BD4.9bn in 2024, up from BD3.9bn a year earlier, without those loans appearing in the Finance and National Economy Ministry's debt register.

The Finance Ministry said it partly agreed with the observation.



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Plans

It linked its debt-management work to wider plans to narrow the budget gap and said smaller deficits would reduce the need to borrow, subject to market conditions and liquidity.

It added that it works with the Central Bank of Bahrain to secure lower-cost funding. On direct borrowing by public bodies, the ministry cited Article 108(b) of the Constitution, which allows municipalities and public institutions to borrow

under their own laws, and said such loans are not classified as government debt as they are not guaranteed by the state.

The deficit between income and spending widened. The Audit Office reported that the shortfall rose from BD774m in 2023 to BD1.026bn in 2024, an increase of 33 per cent.

Income

The ministry attributed this mainly to an 11 per cent fall in oil income, a 13 per cent increase in interest payments and a five per



The Finance Ministry said higher allocations, especially for infrastructure, had helped support economic activity.

cent rise in project spending.

Total state revenues dropped from BD3,196m in 2023 to BD3,026m in 2024, a fall of five per cent. Oil income slipped from BD2,035m to BD1,820m.

The report also noted that Bapco Energies had yet to transfer BD66.4m in 2024 returns to the Treasury, as required under the 2023-2024 budget law.

Dues

The ministry said it shared the aim of collecting all dues and was following up with the company.

Jannusan farm spreads wings with butterfly project



An eco-tourism and educational destination

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

In the heart of Jannusan village, Jumaa Bee Farm is soaring into a new chapter, placing butterflies at the forefront of its evolving appeal.

The Daily Tribune visited the farm to explore a project that intertwines ecological education, heritage preservation and environmental stewardship within one captivating space.

The butterfly initiative has already begun to transform the farm, inviting visitors to witness nature's elegance unfold in every flutter.

Though still under development, the butterfly section features carefully designed houses and meticulously arranged floral patches, offering a thriving habitat for these delicate creatures.

Jumaa explained that the project is envisioned as an immersive, educational environment, allowing visitors to follow the butterflies' growth and life cycle firsthand.

It is a testament to the farm's commitment to sustainability and to creating an experience that is both enchanting and enlightening.

Precision

The bee farming section remains a marvel of organisation and natural precision. Neatly aligned beehives host various species, each hive operating as a self-contained kingdom.

Builder bees meticulously construct the hive, forager bees tirelessly gather nectar, and guards vigilantly defend the colony's entrance.



High ranking bees maintain a protective circle around the queen, safeguarding the heart of the hive.

On rare occasions, a wandering bee from a neighbouring hive may spark a brief clash between colonies, yet the intricate social order persists undisturbed. Honey harvesting relies on a traditional technique.

Smoke gently calms the bees, allowing honey to be collected safely.

The queen bee produces royal jelly, a prized product renowned for its purity and exceptional value.

Feature

Jumaa has recently introduced a truly unique feature to the farm.

He creates intricate 3D wax sculptures, shapes and even personalised names, which are then placed inside the hives.

The bees produce honey directly on these three-dimensional designs, turning each sculpture into an edible, artistic creation.

This innovation has made the farm one of a kind, combining craftsmanship, creativity and natural processes in a way that is entirely new in Bahrain.

Adding to the farm's allure is a fresh-water spring that emerges beside the sea, producing naturally sweet water amidst the surrounding saltwater.

2,485 illegal fishing traps and nets seize

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The Ministry of Interior announced that the Coast Guard seized 2,411 illegal fishing traps and 74 illegal fishing nets during October and November 2025, bringing the total number of violations to 2,485.

The Coast Guard affirmed that these efforts are part of an intensified campaign to ensure that fishermen comply with applicable laws and regulations, while safeguarding Bahrain's marine environment and natural resources.

Violators face the necessary legal measures.

EWA and UoB launch solar power project

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The Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), in collaboration with the University of Bahrain (UoB), has announced the launch of a significant solar power project on the university campus.

The announcement was made in the presence of His Excellency Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, President of the Electricity and Water Authority; H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, Minister of Education and Chairman of the UoB Board of Trustees; Dr. Fouad Al Ansari, University President; and other senior officials.

One of the largest renewable energy initiatives in Bahrain's education sector, the project aims to diversify energy sources,



H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma and H.E. Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, along with Dr. Fouad Al Ansari at the agreement-signing ceremony

es, reduce reliance on natural gas, and lower pollution levels.

The system will feature 64,606 solar panels on parking lots (24.7 MW) and on the ground (21.5 MW), with a total capacity of 46.2 MW and an expected annual output of 70 GWh. It is projected to cut carbon emissions by 35,000 tons per year.

H.E. Kamal said that the project, costing approximately BD9 million, will serve as a model for future renewable energy initiatives supporting Bahrain's sustainability goals.

He emphasised the collaboration between government institutions and the university's role in maximizing available space for clean energy.

Filipino-American team clinches women's volleyball title

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The Filipino American Association of Bahrain Volleyball Team recently clinched the Pinoy Bahrain Volleyball League (PBVL) 3rd Season Women's Championship title during the tournament held at A'ali Sports Club, A'ali Bahrain, marking a proud and triumphant milestone for the Filipino sporting community in Bahrain.

For the Filipino community in Bahrain, this was more than just a game; it was a celebration of strength, passion, and the unbreakable spirit of teamwork.

When the final whistle sounded, signaling the end of a thrill-

ing match against the formidable Black Diamond, the Filipino American Association of Bahrain (Fil-Am Bahrain) Volleyball Team erupted in jubilant celebration.

The atmosphere pulsed with excitement and collective pride, each serve and spike echoing the team's unwavering spirit and determination.

Recognition

AJ Versoza was named the Most Valuable Player (MVP), a recognition that highlights her outstanding performance and decisive role in leading the team to victory.

This win was not merely about



Victorious Filipino American Association team

executed spike spoke volumes of the countless hours invested in refining their craft.

The path to their triumph was paved with intentional team-

the team led by Captain Ball, RB Torres showcased a style of volleyball that was both exhilarating and precise.

Each save, block, and flawless-

ly executed spike spoke volumes of the countless hours invested in refining their craft.

The path to their triumph was paved with intentional team-

work and a disciplined training regimen. According to player Madz Despi, who is also the Vice President External of Filipino American Association of Bahrain, "Our team concentrated on enhancing our fitness and teamwork during training sessions," she shared, underscoring their methodical preparation.

Strategies

"Coach Mark Sales guided us in developing strategies for various opponents, while we made sure our communication and morale stayed strong. Everyone was genuinely motivated and committed to performing at their best."