

# Revenue from realty registrations decreases by 42 per cent in 2019

Registration exemption for Bahrainis 'not a feasible option now'

● It is not possible to make any concession to anyone regarding real estate registration fees, says Almaskati.

● A parliamentary proposal for exempting Bahrainis from paying registration fees was sent earlier to the Shura Council.

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Revenue from the registration of real estate projects has come down by 42 per cent, according to the latest government figures.

In 2019, there has been a drop in revenue from 38 million Bahraini dinars last year same time to BD22m this year, which is a 42pc plummet.

Khalid Almaskati, the Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs at the Shura Council, confirmed the drop in revenue, stating that it is not possible to make any concession to anyone regarding real estate registration fees.

This comes after calls were made to exempt the registration fees on real estate projects for Bahrainis.

Mr Almaskati said the drop in revenue means that the government cannot afford further



Revenues from real estate registration has been on the decline.

reduction in revenue from real estate registrations.

A parliamentary proposal for exempting Bahrainis from paying registration fees was sent earlier to the Shura Council. However, this proposal was rejected.

Meanwhile, procedures for real estate registrations have sped up recently.

It has been announced that real estate transactions related



to ownership would not take more than a single working day.

Chairman of the Board of the Real Estate Regulation Authority (RERA) and President of the Survey and Land Registration Bureau (SLRB), Shaikh Salman bin Abdulla Al Khalifa had said that more mechanisms are being implemented to further reduce waiting time.

There were 6,762 transactions in the first quarter of this

year while there were 5,920 transactions last year same time.

Real estate projects in the Seef District and Al Fateh (North Juffair) topped the list of most expensive properties in the Kingdom, according to a recent report.

It also showed that properties in the Capital Governorate are also among the most expensive. This also includes areas like Zinj and Mahooz, especially lands in residential area, as the demand for them is very high.

As for the cheapest lands offered for sale this year, villages of the Western Areas such as Sadad and Demistan topped the list.

Bahrain Real Estate Society President Nasser Al Ahli said that the prices of lands in residential areas had been noticeably soaring last year.

Mr Al Ahli commented that the social housing projects have contributed to the stability of residential lands, pointing out that more investors and developers are interested in investing in such projects.

He had observed this stability has made real estate transactions more stable and profitable.

The expert, however, added the local real estate market is now quiet and that the prices of most of lands in residential areas haven't changed except some of the areas in Muharraq and the Capital Governorate.

## Trio accused of forcing maid into prostitution

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In a dramatic turn of events, a housemaid who escaped her sponsor's house and was forced to practise prostitution by a gang of human traffickers, was rescued from the suspects by the same sponsor she escaped from.

This was recently revealed at the High Criminal Court during the trial of the culprits, an Asian trio consisting of one woman and two men, who are now facing several charges that include human trafficking, restraining the freedom of the victim, forcing the victim to practise prostitution, operating a brothel and more.

The court adjourned the case to December 11, 2019, to announce its final verdict.

The court files said the victim contacted the female defendant after seeing a post on social media network that promised a job with a high salary for expat females.

According to the victim's statement, the female defendant persuaded her to escape her sponsor's house, where she worked as a full-time housemaid for BD100 a month, and promised her a better job with higher pay.

The victim believed the female defendant and agreed to her proposal. The victim told prosecutors that she escaped her sponsor's house and met the female defendant, who took her to an apartment in Salmabad area, where she met the two other defendants.

The two men informed the victim that she will be working as a prostitute in return of certain amounts of money. The victim said she was held in captivity when she rejected the defendants' demands.

She also said she was forced to have sexual intercourse with men in return of money that the defendants received.

The victim added that, after a certain period, she was given a mobile phone by one of the male defendants and she immediately called her sponsor and informed him of what has happened to her.

The sponsor notified the security authorities and a special team was immediately formed. The team raided the apartment, arrested the trio and rescued the victim.

## Over 250kg of illegally caught shrimp seized

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More than 250 kg of illegally caught shrimp were seized by the security authorities, it has been announced.

Interior Ministry confirmed in a statement issued on Saturday that the shrimp was caught by trawling, which is a prohibited fishing method in Bahrain for its humongous harm on the marine environment.

The statement read: "The Commander of the Coast Guard announced on Saturday that Coast Guard patrols seized more than a quarter-tonne of shrimps for being caught through trawling, which constitute a prohibited mode of fishing in Bahrain.

"The shrimps were confiscated, and legal action is being taken."

No further information was available.



The seized shrimp.

## Drunken driver jailed for accident death

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The Minor Criminal Court yesterday sentenced a man to three years imprisonment for driving under the influence of drugs and causing the death of a person.

This was confirmed in a statement posted on the official Instagram page of the Public Prosecution by Traffic Prosecution Chief Prosecutor Shaikh Nayef bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, who confirmed that the

court also fined the defendant BD100 for the crime.

In the statement, Shaikh Nayef said the man risked people's lives, adding that the Prosecution had immediately launched a probe into the incident, which resulted in the death of a girl, interrogated the defendant, remanded him and referred him to the court for trial.

The Chief Prosecutor also explained that the concerned court heard the case and convicted the defendant.

## Bahrain-South Korea trade volume crosses \$750 million

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The bilateral trade between Bahrain and South Korea has already reached \$755 million.

This came as the Rotary Club of Manama (RCM) hosted the South Korean Ambassador to Bahrain, Koo Hyunmo, as the chief guest at its weekly meeting.

Ambassador Hyunmo gave a significant speech addressing the bilateral relations in the past, present and future.

He shared thought-provoking stories about the long historical relationships between South Korea and the Kingdom, highlighting the diplomatic ties which commenced between both nations since 1976.

The ambassador cited the official

visits between the two countries including the visit of the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa to South Korea in 2012, the visit of the South Korean Prime Minister and the Korean Health Minister to Bahrain in 2013 and 2018 respectively, the visit of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) President Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa to Korea, and the visit of the Korean Parliamentary delegation to Bahrain this year.

"Bahrain was renowned for its culture of openness and tolerance as well as its economic prosperity, as it is widely known by its nickname the 'Pearl of the Gulf' by Koreans," he said.



Mr Hyunmo was the chief guest at the weekly meeting organised by Rotary Club of Manama.

Mr Hyunmo spoke to the attendees about the strong economic relations between both countries in several fields, such as construction, energy, oil, chemical products, automobiles and heavy equipment. He also underlined the latest fields of cooperation such as health, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and the

environment.

"All these bilateral economic agreements will serve as a form of 'highway' on which people of the two countries cooperate and facilitate their business."

The ambassador also encouraged the new Korean generations to consider Bahrain as an ideal destination and a perfect starting point to the Middle

East, quoting that Bahrain has been ranked as one of the best places for expatriates and foreign entrepreneurs to live and do business.

"The walls of Arad Fort, the wind turbines of the World Trade Centre (WTC), the turquoise blue waters of the Durrat Al Bahrain, and the flames from oil rigs far offshore of the tranquil desert, all these images come alive in the heart of Bahrain's open-hearted and generous people. Come visit a new world in Bahrain," Mr Hyunmo added.

RCM members have expressed thanks to the ambassador for the interesting information he shared, at the same time, they expressed their honour to have him as the first Korean ambassador to visit RCM.