Bahrain EDB Concludes High-Level UK Visit to Strengthen Investor Engagement

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A delegation from the Bahrain Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB), led by H.E. Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development, Chief Executive of Bahrain EDB, has successfully concluded a strategic five-day visit to the United Kingdom. Reinforcing the longstanding economic relationship and bilateral ties between Bahrain and the United Kingdom, the visit forms part of Bahrain EDB's ongoing international outreach programme designed to deepen engagement with investors, businesses, and strategic partners.

Through a series of high-level meetings and roundtables, which brought together industry leaders, family offices, and key stakeholders to explore opportunities for collaboration and investment, the delegation showcased opportunities for investment across the Kingdom's priority sectors, highlighting the island nation's role as a gateway to the region and beyond.

In London, H.E. Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif met with Lord Jason Stockwood, United Kingdom's Minister of State for Investment, to discuss opportunities to further strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and investment ties. The meeting focused on identifying new opportunities for collaborations across priority sectors, particularly in light of the recently signed UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement.

As part of the programme, Bahrain EDB hosted four roundtable discussions. The first, organised in collaboration with the Global Diplomacy Institute, brought together healthcare founders and sector leaders to discuss opportunities for growth, market expansion, and investment across the region. The session highlighted Bahrain's value proposition as a strategic base for companies seeking access to GCC markets. The second invitation-only session, held in partnership with EMIR Intelligence, convened senior executives from the financial services, technology, manufacturing, and tourism sectors. The conversations focused on regional market dynamics, emerging opportunities, and areas for potential collaboration, providing participants with insights into Bahrain's business environment and sector strengths.

Additionally, a roundtable hosted in collaboration with the Asian Media Group brought together a select group of multisectoral investors to discuss cross-border investment opportunities and the growing UK-GCC economic relationship.

In partnership with Campden Wealth, Bahrain EDB hosted a dedicated family office event focused on strengthening existing relationships and exploring new avenues for investment and partnership.

Alongside these engagements, in partnership with the Rashid Equestrian & Horseracing Club (REHC), Bahrain EDB attended the Debenhams July Festival at Newmarket, one of the UK's leading horse racing events, leveraging the Festival to strengthen relationships with investors as well as showcase the Kingdom's investment offerings and potential business synergies.

This year marks REHC's 50th anniversary, where the 2026/2027 racing season signals a major breakthrough for Bahrain's horseracing landscape in view of the Bahrain International Trophy attaining Group 1 status—the Kingdom's first race to achieve this distinction. Together with an expanded international racing programme, this achievement further reinforces the island nation's growing position on the global horseracing stage.

The visit underscores Bahrain EDB's continued commitment to fostering long-term investment ties between Bahrain and the United Kingdom. It also comes at a significant moment for bilateral and regional economic relations, with growing momentum expected to further strengthen ties and create new opportunities for business collaboration between Bahrain, the UK, and the wider Gulf region.

Al Salam Bank Expands "Tanweer" Program to Support Early Youth Development and Financial Awareness Among Future Generations

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Al Salam Bank has announced the launch of a new edition of its "Tanweer 2.0" Program, reaffirming its commitment to youth empowerment and the development of future generations by providing early learning opportunities designed to strengthen financial awareness, workplace readiness, and practical understanding of the banking sector among young students in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Building on the success of previous editions, this year's program introduces an expanded format by opening participation to the wider public for the first time, allowing eligible students to register directly for the initiative. The program is specifically designed for students in Grades 11 and 12, with participation available to students who hold, or open, an Al Salam Bank Youth Account. This year, the program will welcome 200 participating students as part of the Bank's continued efforts to create meaningful developmental opportunities for Bahrain's youth.

The Tanweer Program has been designed to provide students with early exposure to professional work environments while equipping them with a stronger understanding of essential financial concepts, banking fundamentals, and the importance of developing practical skills from an early stage. Throughout the program, participants will engage in structured learning experiences, interactive sessions, and guided exposure to different aspects of the banking environment aimed at building confidence, awareness, and long-term career readiness.

Muna Al Balooshi, Chief Human Resources Officer, Al Salam Bank

By extending the initiative beyond previous editions and opening registration to a broader segment of students, Al Salam Bank continues to strengthen its role in supporting youth development initiatives that contribute to building a financially aware and future-ready generation capable of contributing positively to Bahrain's long-term economic development.

Commenting on the launch of the program, Muna Al Balooshi, Chief Human Resources Officer at Al Salam Bank, said: "At Al Salam Bank, we believe that investing in young people begins well before they enter the workforce. Through initiatives such as Tanweer, we aim to provide students with early exposure to practical learning experiences that help strengthen financial awareness, build confidence, and encourage future ambition. Expanding the program this year to a wider group of students reflects our commitment to creating more meaningful opportunities that support youth development while preparing future generations with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in an increasingly dynamic world."

As part of its broader commitment to education, youth empowerment, and community development, Al Salam Bank continues to invest in initiatives that create lasting social impact and contribute to nurturing a future generation equipped with the knowledge, awareness, and capabilities required to support Bahrain's evolving economy and long-term development ambitions.

Bahrain Awards $2.13bn in Projects

Regional project activity slows, while Bahrain keeps major developments on track

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Mohammed Darwish

Bahrain has more than $33 billion worth of projects waiting to be awarded, even as new figures showed contract awards across the Gulf fell sharply in the second quarter after the Iranian war hit business activity across the region.

Projects worth about $2.13 billion were awarded in Bahrain during the three months to June, according to Kamco Invest, leaving a pipeline of schemes at the bidding stage or awaiting award valued at roughly 15 times that amount.

Across the GCC, the value of contracts awarded fell by 25.4pc from the previous quarter to $59.4 billion, down from $79.6 billion in the first three months of 2026.

Saudi Arabia was the only Gulf state to record quarterly growth, with contract awards rising by 160.4pc to $30 billion. Every other market recorded a decline.

Qatar saw the sharpest fall. Contract awards dropped to $931 million during the quarter from $9.3 billion in the opening three months of the year.

Oil was the only sector to post quarterly growth across the Gulf. Awards climbed by 269pc to $13.7 billion, while every other sector recorded lower totals.

Kamco Invest said the quarterly fall stemmed mainly from the economic effects of the Iranian war, which slowed project activity across the region.

The annual picture was stronger. GCC contract awards rose by 30pc from $45.7 billion in the second quarter of 2025 to $59.4 billion in the same period this year.

Saudi Arabia and Oman led that rise. Saudi awards climbed by 53.6pc to $30 billion, while Oman recorded the fastest annual increase, with awards jumping to $5.9 billion from $1.3 billion a year earlier.

Kuwait's awards rose by 49.1pc to $2 billion. The UAE recorded a 5.4pc annual fall to $20.5 billion, while Qatar's total dropped by 40.8pc to $931 million. Bahrain also recorded a year-on-year decline, although the report did not give a separate value.

Figures compiled by MEED showed the downturn spread beyond the Gulf. Monthly contract awards across the Middle East and North Africa fell from $35.5 billion in February to $19.2 billion in March, before easing further to $16.3 billion in April and $16.8 billion in May after the outbreak of the war.

Oil projects drove the annual rise in Gulf awards, with contracts worth $13.7 billion compared with just $986 million a year earlier.

Construction remained the biggest market, with awards rising by 27.6pc to $21.9 billion.

MEED estimates the Gulf's future project market at $2.05 trillion. Saudi Arabia accounts for more than half of that total, with the UAE holding a 26.1pc share. Construction represents the largest slice of the pipeline at 39.5pc, followed by transport at 16.3pc and power at 15.6pc.