

big story

In pursuit of future food security

Bahrain unveils new time plan for the implementation of the royal food security initiative

● The new plan puts food production on the fast track

● Envisages improved participation of private sector

● To use advanced agricultural models in hydroponics and fish farming

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The Minister of Works, Municipal Affairs and Urban Planning yesterday announced an integrated time plan for the development of hydroponics and fish farming in the Kingdom to expand local production.

The plan, Minister Essam bin Abdullah Khalaf said, will boost local production of vegetables to 20 per cent and increase the contribution to achieving auto-sufficiency in fish from 50 to 62pc.

The move falls in line with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's initiative that aims at boosting local production to help reduce Kingdom's reliance on imports and ensuring future food security.

Rising food consumption

According to a report by Food Navigator, Bahrain's food consumption is expecting a jump from 0.8 million MT in 2018 to 1.0 million MT by 2023, which



Minister of Works, Municipal Affairs and Urban Planning Isam bin Abdullah Khalaf said the implementation of the initiative would boost the contribution of local production



The ministry will spare no effort to put the royal directives into action to fulfil the royal aspirations and to benefit the Kingdom

ESSAM BIN ABDULLAH KHALAF DURING YESTERDAY'S MEETING.

also points out that the Kingdom only met 11.0pc of its food consumption needs from production in 2016 compared to 16.2pc in 2011. "Instead, the total volume of food imports in Bahrain grew 7.8pc between 2011 and 2016, when compared to 5.3pc increase in Saudi Arabia and 3.1pc increase in the UAE."

This should be read along with the population projection of Information and eGovernment Authority, which says that the population here will reach 2,260,000 in 2032.

Encourages private sector

The new policy thus encour-

ages the participation of Bahrain's private sector in agricultural production, which is expected to eventually boost local production and reduce the Kingdom's reliance on food imports.

The move follows the national strategy to improve food security which includes allocating multiple sites for fish farming, boost financing for agriculture, livestock as well as in agricultural projects in Bahrain and abroad.

Bahrain's "strategic project for national food production" initiative primarily aims at developing the capacity of national food industries, increase the proportion of local production, and preserve

the expertise of professionals in this area.

The project identifies six sites for agricultural production spread over four governorates in the Kingdom and three land and sea sites for aquaculture. HM King also gave directives to allocate part of Ras Haiyan area for aquaculture investments.

"The ministry will spare no effort to put the royal directives into action to fulfil the royal aspirations and to benefit the Kingdom," said Essam bin Abdullah Khalaf during yesterday's meeting.

Using innovative technologies

The meeting reviewed the proposals to expand advanced agricultural models in hydroponics and fish farming and support Bahraini youth with innovative technologies.

Yesterday's discussions also follow Bahrain's signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the UAE to exchange expertise and experience in food security.

Global food security index

The Global Food Security Index, which considers the core issues of affordability, availability, and quality across a set of 113 countries, ranks Bahrain 50th on the index. The index published earlier by the Economist Intelligence Unit counts access to financing for farmers, availability of micro-nutrients, agricultural import tariffs, the proportion of the population under the global



His Majesty the King gave directives to allocate required lands and set up government companies for agriculture and fishing projects as outlined in the "strategic project for national food production" initiative

poverty line, and presence and quality of food safety net programmes as Bahrain's strengths.

The index also recommends improving nutritional standards, as well as public expenditure on agricultural Research and Development.

Govt financial subsidies service now available on Bahrain.bh

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The Information & eGovernment Authority (IGA) yesterday announced the launch of the Government Subsidies service on the National Portal, bahrain.bh.

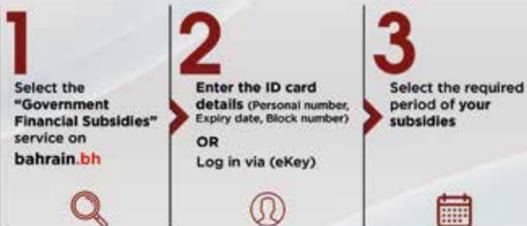
The move, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour & Social Development, allows eligible citizens to conveniently check online the types of subsidies available to them and disbursement dates from relevant government entities.

Citizens looking to benefit from the Government Subsidies service can visit bahrain.bh and register via their eKeys or ID cards.

Once logged in, users can access the details of the subsidies, print the statement, or receive it by email.

For more information or any other inquiries, visit the National Portal bahrain.bh or call the National Contact Center on 80008001

How to benefit from the "Government Financial Subsidies" eService



Former French PM key speaker at Int'l Day of Conscience celebrations in NY

● The United Nations adopted HRH Premier's initiative to mark the International Day of Conscience in April 2019

Paris

Former French Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, will be a key speaker in the celebration to be held by Bahrain on April 6 in New York as part of the International Day of Conscience.

The global event was adopted by the United Nations following an initiative submitted by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa to announce April 5 as an "International Day of Conscience" to motivate the international community to resolve conflicts peacefully.

The announcement was made as Shaikh Hussam bin Isa Al Khalifa received Dominique de Villepin, as part of the on-going preparations to celebrate the International Day of Conscience.

Shaikh Hussam expressed



Shaikh Hussam bin Isa Al Khalifa receives Dominique de Villepin, as part of the on-going preparations to celebrate the International Day of Conscience.

thanks to Dominique de Villepin for his participation as a key speaker in the celebration, praising his wide experience in the international field.

Dominique de Villepin lauded HRH Premier's launch of the International Day, valuing highly the goals of the initiative aimed at ensuring that the entire humanity enjoys peace

and security.

Shaikh Hussam indicated that HRH Premier's initiative was in line with the Prime Minister's belief in the importance of the 'conscience culture' in boosting the country's sustainable efforts.

The United Nations adopted HRH Premier's initiative to mark the International Day of Conscience in April 2019.

Lane closures

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The Ministry of Works announced closing one and two lanes in stages on both directions on King Hamad Highway at its junction with Avenue 96 for resurfacing works. The closure is from Thursday at 11 pm to Saturday at 5 am.

Muaskar Highway

Works on Muaskar Highway, near its junction with Riffa Avenue, necessitate the closure of one lane for the westbound traffic to Riffa. One lane will remain open. The closure is effective from Thursday at 11 pm to Saturday at 5 am.

Sh. Khalifa Bin Salman Highway

Lanes on stages of Sh. Khalifa Bin Salman Highway will remain closed for works of Saar Flyover.

On Friday and Saturday, from 12 am to 10 am, a slow lane for southbound traffic will be closed. Two lanes will remain open.

On Friday from 12 am to 10 am, a fast lane for northbound traffic leading to Manama will be closed. Two lanes will remain open.