

# '10 per cent drop' in car loans after implementation of VAT

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● Car imports to the Kingdom also declined by 6.6 per cent in the first half of 2019, according to another report.



Car sales have dropped since the implementation of VAT.

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Car loans issued by different banks in the Kingdom dropped by more than 10 per cent after the implementation of Value Added Tax (VAT) since the beginning of the current year, latest figures showed.

According to the statistics released by the Central Bank of Bahrain, auto loans have declined by 10.3pc in the first half of 2019, in comparison with the same period last year.

VAT was implemented on January 1, 2019, at a rate of five per cent and it covers 95 commodi-

ties including foodstuff, automobiles and utility services.

The drop in car loans is directly linked to decline in car sales and according to a recent report, the implementation of VAT has had an impact on the automobiles market.

"Other than declining sales, the pattern in the choices of customers when it comes to buying cars have been changing since the implementation of VAT," the report said.

The report also mentioned that 'user car purchase' have also increased over the period.

**19,900**  
cars were imported through Khalifa bin Salman Sea Port since the beginning of the year to the end of June.

Quoting several individuals involved in the automobile sale business, the report said that the first month of 2019 has witnessed

"slower market movement".

However, a few car dealers witnessed higher sales as they themselves bore VAT charges to attract customers to buy new cars.

Car imports to the Kingdom also declined by 6.6 per cent in the first half of 2019, according to another report.

The figures, the report said, are in line with a significant drop in new car registrations through the General Directorate of Traffic.

The report showed that 19,900 cars were imported through Khalifa bin Salman Sea Port since

the beginning of the year to the end of June 2019 while a total of 21,200 cars were imported in the same period of 2018.

The introduction of a value-added tax (VAT) in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in 2018 had a "significant impact" on car industry sales, a top automobile official was quoted by Reuters.

"There has been a pretty significant impact on car sales since the implementation of VAT in the region," Crystal Worthem, marketing director at Ford for the Middle East and Africa said.

Worthem said the impact, which included lower consumer appetite to purchase new cars in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, resulted from the introduction of VAT, along with other aspects such as the rise of fuel prices in Saudi Arabia.

"I believe that at the end of last year, we were anticipating a bit of an impact but not as significant because we anticipated a much deeper curve of when oil prices would go up," Worthem said.

The new tax is aimed at helping to diversify the nations' sources of revenue.

## HRH Premier congratulates BBS chairman on re-election

Manama

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa has sent a cable of congratulations to the Board of Directors Chairman of the Bahrain Bar Society (BBS), Lawyer Hassan Ahmed Bedaiwi, on his re-election to his post.

HRH Premier stressed that Bedaiwi's re-election as BBS chief reflects lawyers' confidence in him.

The Prime Minister lauded the advanced level reached by the legal profession in Bahrain, wishing BBS' board chairman and members every success in serving the nation.

HRH the Prime Minister received a cable of thanks from BBS' board chairman in reply to his congratulations to him on his re-election.

Lawyer Hassan Ahmed Bedaiwi extended, on behalf of BBS board, sincere thanks, appreciation and gratitude to HRH Premier for congratulating them on their win over the phone.

He noted that HRH Premier's call has had a positive impact on them, and proves the Prime Minister's constant interest in everyday events in Bahrain.

He pledged to support HRH Premier's 'constructive' efforts to enhance Bahrain's progress, and said that he is looking forward to meeting him soon.

## Amazon awards certifications to employees of five government entities

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Teresa Carlson, Vice President, Worldwide Public Sector at Amazon Web Services (AWS) - responsible for strategy, operations, sales and business development, awarded the AWS specialised certifications in the field of Information, Communication, and Cloud Computing to a group of outstanding employees from five public sector entities, out of 400 employees joined the training programme, in the presence of Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA) Chief Executive, Mohamed Ali AlQaed.

The five entities honoured were the Ministry of Education, National Oil and Gas Authority (NOGA), Polytechnic University, National Health Regulatory Au-



Ms Carlson with winners of Amazon awards and participants at the AWS Global Summit.

thority (NHRA), and iGA.

The ceremony was part of AWS Global Summit 2019, which was held yesterday.

Mr AlQaed congratulated the employees for their efforts in completing the Amazon training

courses, praising the active role played by these entities in adopting cloud computing in order to achieve the greatest possible use of the technology.

He expressed his sincere thanks to the Ministers and con-

cerned officials for their guidance in supporting this direction by the government, which aims to strengthen the performance of the IT sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

He praised the co-operation

between iGA and Tamkeen in implementing a range of joint programs through the Professional Certifications Scheme, which includes many cloud computing certifications.

He urged other government

entities to adopt the Cloud-First policy in line with the advanced and innovative approach being taken in the region, especially since the Kingdom has also launched, in co-operation with AWS, the first Cloud Data Centre of its kind in the Middle East.

The Centre will enhance the readiness of the ICT sector while creating new opportunities and paving the way for further productivity growth at a lower cost.

In 2017, iGA launched the national project across all government entities, with the aim of migrating the IT infrastructure to cloud computing systems, making this technology the preferred choice for the operation and management of government organisations' systems, saving effort, time, and expenses.

## NHRA to hold first Bahrain Health Regulatory Conference

Manama

The National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), an independent regulatory body providing provision of healthcare in Bahrain, is holding its 'First Bahrain Health Regulatory Conference' 2019 on November 28-30 at the Gulf Convention Centre here.

The conference is being organised by Education Plus in collaboration with PowerUp and Perfect Solutions Advertising, with the support of government health entities, the private sector and other professional, industry-related societies in the Kingdom.

The first edition of the conference will also feature a comple-

mentary exhibition to showcase various stakeholders.

The three-day conference will feature keynote speakers, lecture presentations, panel discussions, networking, and workshops on health regulation schemes in addition to providing business opportunities for investors in the healthcare industry.

The Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohamed Bin Abdullah Al Khalifa stated, "Health regulations are implemented in the Gulf such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the GCC countries. There have been a lot of transformations in the health regulations introducing various systems such as in

insurance, technology and others. Health regulations are a hot topic which all stakeholders have to look at, interact and do their best to comply. The conference will provide a place and platform for the stakeholders to learn the best applications, opportunities, issues and what the role of everybody is in providing solution."

Speaking on the occasion, NHRA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Mariam Al Jalahma added, "The organisation of such event is in line with the national Economic Vision 2030 in relation to improving the health sector and making Bahrain a hub for medical tourism. When you think about the health care sector you think about the health regulations. In health



Health regulations are a hot topic which all stakeholders have to look at, interact and do their best to comply.

LT GENERAL DR SHAIKH MOHAMED

regulations, it is very important to make the patients feel safe and professionals making their acts right. At the conference, many experts will be talking in this field in relation to improving professional regulations, requirements and qualifications required to ensure in bringing the best practices in the country. Also, we will be discussing the accreditation and importance of accreditations in ensuring the quality of services provided in the country."

NHRA's first conference aims to discuss and explore the regional and global health regulation schemes. The conference aims to bring together healthcare providers, the pharmaceutical industries, healthcare organisations, pa-

tient safety, medical educators and accreditation standard experts from the region and the globe to share insights on implementing and managing health regulations.

The conference aims to attract key healthcare professionals from Bahrain and the GCC region and beyond. It also aims to bring together entities which play a significant role in the regulation of the healthcare sector including, Government healthcare decision makers, health reform and health regulation experts, pharmaceutical and drug company owners, public and private healthcare providers, investors and interested experts in healthcare business, technology experts and solutions providers.