

Education Ministry restructuring project progressing

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The institutional restructuring project of the Ministry of Education is progressing well.

Deputy Prime Minister and Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training chairman His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa was briefed on its latest developments as he chaired the council's online meeting.

The council was informed on the progress towards goals related to the unified framework of priority government programmes related to education, through the ministry's project.

The main institutional structure, the detailed structures,

and the amendments that have been introduced to the structure, were also reviewed, following the discussions between the steering committee and the project's consulting company, and what was referred to the council in this regard.

The council endorsed the approved amendments and directed to refer the organisational structure of the Education Ministry to the Civil Service Council.

The council also discussed the output of the working teams concerned with implementing the post-school learning strategy (post-high school) and listened to a briefing from the Youth and Sports Affairs Minister about the most prominent proposals and recommendations that some



HH Shaikh Mohammed

work teams related to the Higher Education Council, the institutions of applied education, and the standardised examination system, concluded.

The council approved the recommendations and directed to

begin the legal and administrative mechanisms necessary to implement them.

Virtual classrooms

The council praised the experience of the central virtual classrooms implemented by the Education Ministry in public schools, in light of the report of the Education and Training Quality Authority, and recommended studying the recommendations of the commission's report to generalise the experience at the intermediate level.

The council also praised the virtual classes and distance-learning practices in some private schools, which were included in the evaluation process. It also reviewed the frame-

work for assessing the quality of school practices and education and training practices in exceptional situations for public and private schools.

The council discussed the postponement of the national exams for the sixth and 12th grades for the 2020/2021 academic year.

Virus testing

Meanwhile, the council was briefed on the measures taken for the re-opening of public and private schools in a presentation ahead of the start of the 2020/2021 academic year, including procedures to receive students and teachers in light of the developments of the corona-

virus (COVID-19) pandemic.

HH Shaikh Mohammed was reassured about the process of testing all educational, administrative, and technical staff in schools, in implementation of the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, following the delay to the start of the public school year for two weeks to complete the tests.

HH Shaikh Mohammed called for the continuation of coordination between the Education Ministry and the National Taskforce for Combating COVID-19 to complete the testing process and implement the necessary plans based on the results.

Tourism sector recovery discussed



From left, Al Moayyed, Al Zayani and Dr Follad attending the meeting

● The Tbilisi Declaration calls for tourism industry development in the coming months as the sector remains in crisis: UNWTO

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Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister and Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) Board of Directors chairman Zayed bin Rashid Al Zayani headed the Kingdom's delegation that participated in a virtual meeting of the 112th session of the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) executive council.

BTEA CEO Nader Al Moayyed, and BTEA Tourism Marketing and Promotions Directorate acting director Dr Ali Hasan Follad were also present.

During the meeting, topics related to tourism and the UNWTO were discussed, as well as the "Tbilisi Declaration", which includes measures for the sustainable recovery of tourism, plans and priorities for the sector in particular, and the implications of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Kingdom, represented by the BTEA, was selected last year to be among the members of the UNWTO executive council for the period between 2018 and 2021.

The selection came in appreciation for Bahrain's efforts in developing the tourism sector at the local level, as well as its potential to represent the Middle East with its developing tourism sector, according to a defined strategy, and the Kingdom's prominent position as a global tourist destination that is open to the world.

Value of imports increases

Exports of national origin rise, but total value of exports down: foreign trade report for August 2020

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The value of imports increased by nine per cent, reaching BD428 million during August 2020 compared to BD391 million for the same month in 2019, according to the foreign trade report for last month, issued yesterday by the Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA).

The report encompasses data on the balance of trade, imports, exports (national origin), and re-exports.

The top 10 countries accounted for 74 per cent of the value of imports, with the remaining countries accounting for 26 per cent.

According to the report, Switzerland ranked first when it came to imports to Bahrain, with a total of BD84 million. China was second with BD42 million, while Australia was third with BD36 million.

Central heating boilers emerged as the top product imported into Bahrain with a total value of BD39 million, while air conditioners without refrigeration units was second with BD37 million, and aluminum oxide third with BD35 million.

The value of exports of national origin increased by two per cent to BD190 million dur-

ing August, compared to BD187 million for the same month of the previous year.

The top 10 countries in terms of the value of exports of national origin purchased from Bahrain accounted for 72 per cent of the total value, with the remaining countries accounting for 28 per cent.

Saudi Arabia ranked first among countries receiving Bahraini exports of national origin, importing BD58 million. Meanwhile, the US was second with BD18 million and Oman third with BD11 million.

Unwrought aluminum alloys emerged as the top product exported during August of this year, with BD40 million. Unwrought aluminum (not alloyed) was second with a value

of BD26 million, and semi-finished iron and steel third with BD15 million.

The total value of exports decreased by 20 per cent to reach BD44 million during August, compared to BD55 million for the same month of the previous year.

The top 10 countries accounted for 94 per cent of the re-exported value, while the remaining countries accounted for the six per cent. Saudi Arabia ranked first with BD14 million, the UAE second with BD9 million, and the US third with BD6 million.

Four-wheel-drive cars were the top product re-exported from Bahrain with BD5.3 million. Gold ingots came in second with BD5 million, and



193M

is the value in Bahraini Dinars of the trade balance, the difference between exports and imports, for August 2020 compared to BD149M for the same month in 2019

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Central heating boilers was the top product imported into Bahrain at BD39 million, while air conditioners without refrigeration units was second at BD37 million and aluminum oxide third at BD35 million

cigarettes containing tobacco came third with BD4.2 million.

The trade balance—the difference between exports and imports—reached BD193 million during August versus BD149 million for the same month of the previous year, with an increase of 30 per cent.

Works Minister inspects Eker, Ma'ameer

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Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister Eng Essam bin Abdulla Khalaf, paid an inspection visit yesterday to the Al Eker and Ma'ameer regions, where he was informed about the local citizens' infrastructure and service needs.

Capital Governorate ninth constituency representative MP Ammar Hussain Al Abbas, and Works Ministry Municipalities Affairs undersecretary Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, were also present.

The minister reviewed with Al Abbas the regions' main



Khalaf, second from left, with other officials during their inspection visits

needs, and inspected a number of sites that lack services, such as road pavement, sanitation and rainwater drainage, and municipal services.

He revealed that a number of infrastructure and devel-

opment projects will be implemented in Al Eker.

He also instructed the relevant departments to study and follow up the demands and proposals presented by Al Abbas and the local citizens.

Emergencies response course launched



Dr bin Dainah during the launch

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Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) CEO Dr Mohammed Mubarak bin Dainah

launched the national training course on responding to radiological and nuclear emergencies, with 65 participants from the Interior Ministry, the

Health Ministry and the SCE.

The virtual course was organised by the SCE in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to develop national capabilities in the field of responding to radiological and nuclear emergencies.

Dr bin Dainah stressed the importance of holding such courses to prepare national cadres for responding to these types of emergencies, with teams in security and civil defense, investigations, criminal evidence, and technical support participating.

This is in order to have the best performance in responding to emergencies, in accordance with IAEA standards, he added.