

30pc of Bahrain populace could face water shortage in six years

Kingdom one of world's most water stressed countries, says report

● **Population growth and urbanisation trends have placed considerable pressure on the country's natural resource base, according to the report.**

● **The country will need to expand non-conventional water sources significantly to meet demand to 2025 and beyond, it added.**

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

Up to 30 per cent of the Kingdom's population could face water shortage by 2025 if continued action is not taken to prevent a water crisis, according to a report.

Although Bahrain currently experiences a comfortable level of water security at the moment, more continuous effort is required to ensure to avert water crisis, according to a report titled 'Bahrain Food and Water Security' published by Future Directions International, a not-for-profit strategic research institute.

Bahrain currently experiences a comfortable level of trade-

based food security; however, it is vulnerable to supply disruptions and price risk, the report states.

"Bahrain is one of the most water stressed countries in the world; up to 30 per cent of the population could face water shortages by 2025," the report pointed out.

"Eighty-nine per cent of the population lives in urban areas and it is quite likely that Bahrain will be close to completely getting urbanised by 2025.

"Population growth and urbanisation trends have placed considerable pressure on the country's natural resource base.

"Water consumption is much higher than available natural water resources and food demand far exceeds the production capacity of domestic agriculture.

"Projected population and income growth will exacerbate the mismatch between demand and supply and require the country to secure alternative sources of food and water," the report said.

"Bahrain is one of the world's most water stressed nations and its groundwater abstraction is unsustainable in the mid to long-term.

"The country will need to expand non-conventional water sources significantly to meet demand to 2025 and beyond. Food supply is derived from both domestic and external sources;



The desalination plant in Hidd.

89

per cent of the Kingdom's population lives in urban areas, according to the latest population studies.

approximately 92 per cent of Bahrain's food products are imported.

"Trade-based food security is intrinsically linked to the country's economic stability and wealth. In order to finance food imports a stable, diversified economy is paramount.

"Limited natural resources will constrain any significant expansion of domestic food production

and Bahrain's dependence on food imports is likely to increase by 2025, exposing the country to a high degree of price and supply risk."

"Limited, erratic rainfall and high evapotranspiration rates characterise this arid country. The total annual surface run off is approximately four million cubic meters and there are no rivers, perennial streams or lakes.

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REPORT

"The three key water sources in Bahrain are groundwater, desalinated water and treated wastewater. The expansion of the latter two will be crucial in reducing groundwater abstraction and meeting long-term water demand," the report observed.

"The over-abstraction of aquifers has caused deterioration in groundwater quality in some parts of the country. Salinisation, increased water pollution and the drying of freshwater springs in the north are all the consequence of unsustainable groundwater withdrawal.

"There is an urgent need to curb abstraction and protect groundwater resources. In order to achieve this Bahrain will need to expand the production of alternative water sources, particularly the reuse of treated wastewater."

Alert call after plastic fragment found in fish stomach

TDT | Manama
Harpreet Kaur

Experts have warned over the dangers of plastics adversely affecting the marine life as well as entering the food chain after an image of plastic fragments discovered from a fish's stomach went viral on social media network.

In October last year, a global study revealed plastic had been detected in the faeces of people across Europe, Latin America and Asia with researchers claiming to show for the first time the widespread presence of plastics in the human food chain.

Speaking to Bahrain, Ruqaya Hashem, Co-Founder of Cleanup Bahrain, said: "The source of the picture that was circulated in Bahrain is still unclear but this photo was taken by a citizen after purchasing the Grouper fish from the local market.

"It is time to highlight the reasons why we have carried out clean-up campaigns on a regular basis, especially coasts and public places. The focus is on the dangers of plastics that fly daily from place to place and eventually plastic reaches our sea. The intensive use of these materials destroys marine resources and ultimately affects our health.

"The seas and oceans are filled with pollution to a frightening extent and plastic make up for a



An image of a fragment of plastic cup found in a fish's stomach that went viral.

large portion of it. Cleaning up what has ended up in our environment seems like an impossible mission to complete due to the severe damage that has been done.

"We need to shift our actions to immediately protecting it from waste dumping and pollution. We need to further educate people about the importance of recycling and embed it within our younger generations. Stricter

regulations need to be in place for any environmental violations."

"We were unable to establish a reliable connection between nutritional behaviour and exposure to micro-plastics," lead author Philipp Schwabl, a researcher at the Medical University of Vienna, was quoted by a newspaper.

In earlier studies on animals, the highest concentrations of micro-plastics were found in the stomach and intestines, but

smaller amounts have also been detected in blood, lymph and the liver.

"There are initial indications that micro-plastics can damage the gastrointestinal tract by promoting inflammatory reactions or absorbing harmful substances," Schwabl said.

"Further studies are needed to assess the potential dangers of micro-plastics for humans."

Micro-plastics have been found in tap water, bottled water, fish and mussel tissue, and even in beer," he added.

"It is therefore inevitable that at least some of these things will get into our lungs and digestive system."

Asian held for receiving drug pills packed in envelopes

TDT | Manama

In a rare case, an Asian man brought banned narcotic pills to the Kingdom in envelopes sent via air cargo, it was revealed. According to court files, the defendant received 2,000 pills in nine separate envelopes, which were detected through the X-ray facility at Bahrain International Airport after arriving via the air cargo.

"The envelopes stirred suspicions, therefore I marked them. I left them aside so they can be inspected through the X-ray facility to determine their contents," the customs official who uncovered the attempt told prosecutors.

"After we knew the contents of the shipment, we texted the supposed recipient. When he arrived, we asked him what the

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CUSTOMS OFFICIAL

enveloped included.

"He told us that there were clothes and other personal belongings. He claimed that the shipment was sent to him by his brother," he added.

The Asian man was arrested as soon as the envelopes were opened in front of him as they were found to have different items than the ones he claimed.

"He later told us that his friend had contacted him and requested him to receive the shipment and deliver it to someone in Manama," the official stated.

Bahrain, UAE sign parliamentary deal

Abu Dhabi

Speaker of the Council of Representatives Fawzia Zainal, here yesterday, met the UAE President of the Federal National Council, Amal Al Qubaisi, and signed a co-operation agreement aims to set principles for parliamentary co-operation and unifying visions on various issues.

Ms Zainal highlighted the Bahraini-UAE relations pro-

moted by keenness of HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the UAE President HH Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Nahyan to further strengthen them in various fields in the interest of the their people.

Mr Al Qubaisi said the royal reforms in Bahrain is an unprecedented step at political, economic and democratic levels.

She commended the bilateral relations and took pride in the Bahraini, UAE achievements in the field of women's empowerment.