

Is Bahrain's Date Palm Farming Using Excess Water?

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TDT | Manama

Some farms are cutting water. Others are still pouring in more than they need.

In Bahrain, where every drop counts, a new study forces a difficult question into the open: are we overwatering one of the Kingdom's most iconic crops?

Research led by Dr Abdelhadi Abdelwahab Mohamed, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Desert Farming Techniques and Soilless Agriculture, points to a clear answer. Yes, and by as much as half.

Over two years, Khalas date palms were tested under reduced irrigation. Water was cut by up to 50 percent. The result did not match expectations. Yields did not fall. For years, the belief has been simple.

More water means more production. This study directly challenges that idea, showing that excess water does not necessarily translate into higher output.

The scale of overuse is not minor. A single palm is often assumed to need around 50 cubic metres of water each year. The study indicates it may require far less. Cut that figure in half across farms, and the savings quickly multiply into thousands of cubic metres per hectare, every year.

System

The surprise lies not in the technology, but in the outcome. Whether using traditional bubbler systems or more advanced subsurface methods, yields remained largely unchanged.

In the second year, smart



Dr Abdelhadi Abdelwahab Mohamed

volume-based irrigation was introduced. Water was measured, controlled, and delivered exactly where needed. Yields rose sharply in some cases, not because more water was used, but because waste was eliminated.

During a field tour by The Daily Tribune across Bahraini farms, the shift was already visible.

These systems are no longer limited to date palms. Farmers are applying the same precision-based irrigation to vegetables and other crops, maintaining stable growth while using less water under the same harsh conditions. The change is no longer theoretical. It is happening on the ground.

Bahrain's conditions make the



A farm's reduced irrigation system

overirrigation wastes more than just water. It can damage the soil, weaken plants, and increase long-term costs.

Future

Experts and investors are exploring ways to scale date palm production using advanced technologies such as tissue culture, aiming to enter global markets and compete with leading producers.

But there is a line that cannot be crossed. If Bahrain wants to compete globally in date palms, it cannot afford to waste water locally. Researchers are calling for locally tailored crop coefficients and wider adoption of smart irrigation systems designed for Bahrain's climate.



This is not just about farming. It is about a simple truth. Using more does not always mean producing more.

issue more urgent. Much of the soil is saline and alkaline. Water itself often has a high salt content. Under these conditions,

Crackdown Clears 28 Illegal Structures



Illegal structures and waste materials removed by Southern Municipality and Ministry of Interior teams

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A coordinated municipal operation in Dar Kulaib has cleared illegal structures, waste and environmental hazards affecting residents, as part of ef-

orts to improve public order and living conditions.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Southern Municipality removed 28 unlicensed animal pens and cleared 125 loads of waste and fertilizer from Block 1048 during a field campaign.

The action followed repeated complaints from residents about odours, insects and rodents linked to unauthorised structures and encroachments on public land.

Southern Municipality Director General Eng. Isa Abdulrahman Al Buainain said the opera-

tion is part of an ongoing inspection plan to address violations across the governorate through continuous field monitoring.

Public space regulations prohibit the unlicensed occupation of roads and open areas to ensure safety, traffic flow and urban order.

No Staff, No Breaks

Entrepreneur Runs Solo Daily

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A Bahraini entrepreneur, Sayed Ali Maher Alsadadi, 26, has turned his early passion for cooking into a hands-on business journey, launching his own restaurant Oda burger after gaining experience across food trucks, restaurants, and the hotel industry.

His interest began at age 14 and gradually developed into a clear ambition, pushing him to eventually take a bold step and resign from his job despite uncertainty about the challenges ahead. Rather than following a typical concept, he introduced a unique idea by naming his sandwiches after cars, reflecting his personal hobby and helping the brand stand

between him and his partner, he focuses on food preparation and quality, ensuring every order meets his standards. Despite the ongoing pressure of running a small operation, he remains committed to quality above all. Motivation, he says, comes from his parents' advice about hard work and self-reliance.

Looking ahead, he aims to expand the business and build a team of Bahraini staff. He reflects that, if given the chance, he would have started with a larger space that includes indoor seating, remaining optimistic about what the future holds.



I knew I had to take the step, even without knowing the challenges ahead

SAYED ALI MAHER ALSADADI

IPU Elects First Female Secretary-General



Anda Filip of Romania as the new Secretary-General of the IPU, third from left. Below, Bahrain's delegation.



The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) elected Anda Filip of Romania as its new Secretary-General, marking a historic milestone as she becomes the first woman to assume the role in the organisation's history.

Filip secured 229 votes during the election held at the 217th session of the IPU Governing Council, conducted alongside the 152nd IPU Assembly in Istanbul, Turkey.

The parliamentary delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain participated in the voting process as part of the international parliamentary gathering. The delegation included First Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council H.E. Jamal Mohammed Fakhro, along with Shura Council members H.E. Hala Ramzi Fayeze and Dr. Bassam Ismail Al-Ban Mohammed.