

# Bahrain Builds Arab Housing Bridges

● **Urban planning, 50,000 homes top Baku's agenda**

● **Regional housing cooperation sealed at global forum**

● **Gulf ministers align on social housing goals**

● **Sustainable cities drive Arab ministerial talks**

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Bahrain's Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, Shaikha Amna bint Ahmed Al-Rumaihi, conducted a series of high-level bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the 13th World Urban Forum (WUF13), currently underway in the Azerbaijani capital Baku from May 17 to 22.

The meetings brought together ministers and senior officials from several Arab nations, as well as the head of the United Nations' leading human settlements body. Discussions focused on deepening cooperation in urban planning, social housing policy, and the exchange of best practices across the sector.

## Housing Reform and Urban Sustainability

Central to the discussions was the exploration of joint initiatives in sustainable urban development and advancing housing services across the region. Participants reviewed key themes emerging from WUF13's sessions, examining how global urban policy debates can strengthen national housing strategies and support implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The talks also addressed the regulatory framework governing the real estate sector, focusing particularly on expanding the private sector's role in housing delivery—whether through government-partnered residential projects, citizen financing schemes, or increasing overall housing stock to meet growing demand.

## Bahrain's Housing Strategy

Minister Al-Rumaihi outlined Bahrain's current housing delivery roadmap, guided by a Royal Directive to accelerate residential projects and provide 50,000 housing units. The strategy encompasses ownership service projects within existing housing cities, public-private partnerships through the Government Land Development Rights Programme and the Private Land Development Rights Programme, and diversified financing options offered in collaboration with the Housing Bank.

The Minister also highlighted Bahrain's flagship urban regeneration initiatives, including the Muharraq City Development Project and the historic Manama Souk District revitalisation — both

central to the Kingdom's broader ambitions for heritage-sensitive urban development.

## Regional Vision

Delegates exchanged views on internationally recognised best practices for managing rapid urban growth and developing infrastructure that can ensure quality of life for

future generations — a theme running throughout WUF13's programme.

The forum, held biannually under the auspices of UN-Habitat, convenes governments, cities, civil society, and the private sector to advance the global urban development agenda.



## Commends Emergency Response



Bahrain's ministerial committee for development projects and infrastructure on Wednesday praised defence and security authorities for their rapid response following damage caused to the Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company facility after the Iranian attack.

The committee, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, announced that maintenance work was complete and damage was successfully contained through the coordinated efforts of defence, security and relevant government agencies.

Members also thanked residents living near the facility for their cooperation during the emergency response and repair operations.

The remarks came during the committee's 304th meeting, where ministers reviewed a series of infrastructure, environmental and municipal development projects across the kingdom.

At the start of the meeting, the committee extended congratulations to HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa ahead of Eid al-Adha, wishing Bahrain and the Arab and Islamic nations continued prosperity and development.

The panel welcomed a memorandum of understanding signed between the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture and the National Initiative for Agricultural Sector Development to provide training programmes for entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector.

The committee also praised a joint inspection visit by the ministers of municipalities affairs and works to review progress on the first phase of the Manama waterfront redevelopment project, including King Faisal Corniche.

## 55 Ministry Personnel Depart for Mecca



General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior, received members of the Ministry's Hajj mission before they departed to perform the holy pilgrimage. The gathering was attended by the Deputy Minister, the Chief of Police, and the Ministry's Undersecretary.

His Excellency welcomed the delegation—comprising 55 Ministry personnel—and personally reviewed all travel procedures and facilitations arranged for their journey. He stressed the importance of meeting all the delegation's needs and requirements, with particular emphasis on ensuring adequate medical care to allow members to complete their religious rites comfortably and with ease.

The Minister reaffirmed the Ministry's longstanding commitment to sending a group of its staff annually to perform this sacred duty, wishing them an accepted pilgrimage and a safe return to their homeland.

Members of the delegation expressed their sincere gratitude to the Minister for granting them this opportunity and for the comprehensive arrangements he personally directed, as well as for his attentiveness to their individual needs.

## Strengthening Volunteer Culture



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Minister of Youth Affairs H.E. Ms. Rawan bint Najib Toufiqi received on Wednesday Rashid Dhafer Al-Jalahmah, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nasser Al-Khair Authority, along with a number of the Authority's board members.

During the meeting, the Minister commended the

prominent role played by Nasser Al-Khair Authority in embedding the values of charitable and humanitarian work, strengthening community initiatives, and highlighting the contribution of young people to voluntary and developmental efforts — all of which reinforce a culture of giving and national responsibility.

The Minister also praised the dedication shown by the Authority's chairman

and board members in leading its operations and delivering its humanitarian and community programmes. She noted that the Authority's achievements reflect the board's commitment to translating its goals into impactful initiatives that serve society and entrench the values of volunteerism.

The meeting included a review of the Authority's key programmes and initiatives, as well as discussions on ways to develop future areas of joint cooperation — with the aim of expanding the scope of youth and community work, amplifying its positive impact, and cementing the role of young Bahrainis as a principal partner in the nation's development journey.

## Global Health Transformation

79th World Health Assembly opens at UN headquarters in Geneva

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The State Kingdom of Bahrain participated on Wednesday in the opening session of the 79th World Health Assembly held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, where member states gathered to discuss global health priorities.

The Bahraini delegation was led by Ambassador Abdullah Abdul Latif Abdullah, Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

The assembly, convened under the theme "Reimagining global health: a shared responsibility," brought together representatives from across the world to address current and emerging health challenges and to reinforce international cooperation in the health sector.

During the general debate, Am-



bassador Abdullah delivered Bahrain's statement, expressing the kingdom's appreciation for the work of the World Health Organization in promoting equitable access to safe and healthy lives, while addressing both present and future public health challenges.

He said the theme of this year's assembly reflected an urgent global need to reshape health systems in response to evolving challenges, stressing that safeguarding human health is a shared responsibility that begins at the national level and extends through international partnerships.

## Bahrain Buzzes for World Bee Day

A sweet celebration of nature, food and the tiny creatures that feed the world



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Hasan Barakat

Bahrain marked World Bee Day at Tubli's Safia Kanoo Centre for the Arts, where the Bahrain Garden Club transformed an afternoon into a buzzing blend of education, community and tasting tables lined with golden jars.

At the heart of it was a striking reminder: bees pollinate three-quarters of the world's crops. Lose them, and food shelves begin to empty. Engineer Irina Averinos

delivered the wakeup call — warmly, and with honey cake on the side. She urged attendees to plant year-round flowers, ditch pesticides, and build "insect hotels" in their gardens to give pollinators a safe home. Buying local honey, she added, is one of the simplest acts of environmental solidarity anyone can take.

The message landed sweetly. Guests sampled honey varieties, swapped gardening tips, and left with something rarer than a full stomach — a reason to look twice at the next bee they encounter.