

Saudi remains Bahrain’s largest GCC trade partner

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Saudi Arabia remained Bahrain’s largest GCC trading partner in 2023, according to a Bahrain Chamber report.

The UAE ranked second, with the report tracking Gulf trade flows in metals, manufacturing inputs and gold.

The recent publication on trade relations between Bahrain and GCC States 2025’, is based on 2023 figures.

It shows Bahrain’s exports to GCC markets led by heavy metal goods, while gold bullion tops the list of GCC imports into the Kingdom.

Record

Among Gulf partners, the UAE recorded trade with Bahrain worth \$3.225 billion, the report said.

Oman followed at \$517.7 million, then Kuwait at about \$498.9 million, while trade with Qatar stood at \$81.8 million.

On the export side, iron ores and concentrates came first at \$1.170 billion.

Crude aluminium alloys followed at \$416.5 million, then semi-finished products of iron or steel at \$253 million.

Imports

On imports from GCC states, gold bullion led at \$537 million, according to the report.

Unmixed crude oil was next at \$79.5 million.

The report also cited a lift in GCC trade with the world in recent years.

Exports

It put GCC exports at \$656.5 billion in 2018, rising to \$962.9 billion in 2022, while imports moved from \$444.1 billion to \$581.3 billion.

Total GCC trade with the world in 2022 was about \$1.544 trillion, compared with \$1.100 trillion in 2018.

Bahrain’s trade with Saudi Arabia rose by 32 per cent between 2019 and 2023, the report said.

Smart parking

Bahrain introduces new digital system to pre-approve mobile food truck sites

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Mobile food trucks in Bahrain will be directed into bookable, pre-approved sites under an electronic system being prepared by the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, the Minister, His Excellency Wael Al Mubarak, has told Parliament.

“An electronic system will be launched that enables the food-truck owner to apply to reserve the desired site,” he said in a written reply to MP Jalal Kadhem.

He added that initial locations have been identified across the country and that the process will be announced once procedures are completed and applications can be received.

H.E. Al Mubarak said his ministry’s role is to set the rules for where mobile food vehicles can park and trade under Decision No. 38 of 2020, while the operating licence for the activity is issued by another government body.

Approval

He said owners must also obtain approval from the Capital Municipality or the rele-



H.E. Wael Al Mubarak

“The Ministry’s role is to set the rules for where mobile food vehicles can park and trade under Decision No. 38 of 2020, while the operating licence for the activity is issued by another government body.”

– H.E. Wael Al Mubarak, Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Minister

vant municipality to operate on property owned by, or allocated to, the municipalities.

Site rules in the reply require written consent from the property owner and ban parking



MP Jalal Kadhem

within the street right-of-way or directly in front of residential buildings.

Trucks must keep 50 metres from junctions, roundabouts and traffic lights and leave at least one metre between their vehicle and others in every direction.

The reply also calls for safe electrical connections, proper waste disposal, compliance with Civil Defence rules, and steps to avoid noise affecting nearby buildings.

Property

For sites in residential zoning, H.E. Al Mubarak said the property must provide parking within its boundaries and trading hours are limited from 6 am until midnight.

Trucks must leave outside

those hours, with no equipment or furniture left behind in the neighbourhood.

The rules also set a minimum distance of 20 metres from neighbouring buildings, allow non-fixed tables and seating by agreement with the owner, and permit the use of a silent generator.

For non-residential properties, the trading period is agreed with the owner.

Agreement

Non-fixed seating and fencing can be used by agreement, while permanent structures require a building permit submitted in the property owner’s name, with written consent, and in line with planning rules.

The minister said 18 mobile food vehicles have been approved for licensing within properties owned by Municipalities Affairs.

In the same reply, H.E. Al Mubarak gave new figures on street vendors, putting the total number of licensed street vendors across Bahrain at about 31.

The ministry issued 10 licences in 2023, seven in 2024 and 14 in 2025, and Muharraq Municipality suspended one licence for breaching planning conditions and criteria, he said.

Expat loses case over forged Covid test

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A court has dismissed an objection by an Arab expat against a one-year jail sentence issued in his absence over a forged Covid-19 test result said to be from the Ministry of Health.

The High Criminal Court ruled the objection was to be treated as if it had never been filed after the defendant failed to attend the hearing set to consider it, without an acceptable excuse.

In its reasoning, the court cited Article 291(3) of the Criminal Procedure Law, which states that if an objector does not attend any of the sessions fixed to hear the objection, the court must deem it as though it did not exist.

The case stems from an incident at the King Fahd Causeway.

A security officer on duty received a phone call from the Saudi-side health office reporting that the defendant had arrived with a forged Covid-19 test.

A duty supervisor took custody of the document and the defendant, then checked the result at the clinic on the Bahraini side.

The court said checks found the certificate did not match any record in the national health system.

Unity and festive spirit shine in Christmas celebrations

TDT | Manama

Filipino organizations in Bahrain celebrated the Christmas season with separate gatherings held on different dates and venues, highlighting unity and festive spirit within the community. The Fil-Am Volleyball Team held its Christmas party on December 18 at the Party Hall of Fontana Suites.

Players, supporters, and guests enjoyed an evening filled with games, entertainment, and shared meals, strengthening camaraderie and teamwork among team members.

Earlier, on December 12, Samahan ng mga Overseas Filipino Workers sa Bahrain (SOS



Filipinos celebrate Christmas with food, fun and strong sense of fellowship

Bah) hosted its Christmas party at Pars Hotel. The celebration brought together officers and members for a joyful program

featuring performances, gift exchanges, and messages of appreciation and solidarity.

Both events reflected the



warmth of the Christmas season and underscored the strong sense of fellowship among Filipinos in Bahrain, as commu-

nity organizations continue to promote unity and mutual support among overseas Filipino workers.

Casino Park reborn as Muharraq’s green heart nears completion

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

More than a construction milestone, the transformation of Casino Park in Muharraq is emerging as a statement of urban renewal.

During a site visit marking the completion of 60 percent of development works, His Excellency Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, underscored the project’s strategic value as one of the city’s most historic and centrally located public spaces.

Standing at the crossroads of residential neighbourhoods and commercial activity, the park is being reshaped to serve as a modern, inclusive refuge for families, walkers and visitors.

The minister confirmed that works are progressing steadily, with completion scheduled for the first half of 2026, positioning the project among the ministry’s flagship public facility initiatives.

Al Mubarak emphasised that the redevelopment is guided by a clear philosophy.

Public parks, he noted, are no longer ornamental additions to cities but essential components of healthy urban life.

The renewed Casino Park is designed to respond to the everyday needs of residents while preserving its historical identity as one of Muharraq’s oldest green spaces.

The project is being delivered through coordinated efforts between engineering and technical teams, whose work the minister praised as a reflection of insti-



H.E. Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak being briefed about the project

tutional commitment to quality, safety and long-term sustainability.

Community

From the local governance perspective, Abdulaziz Ahmed Al Naa’ar, Chairman of the Muharraq Municipal Council, de-

scribed the project as a qualitative leap for the city’s public realm.

He stressed that the council continues to support developments that strengthen Muharraq’s appeal and provide welcoming environments for families, adding that Casino Park

holds a special place in the collective memory of residents.

Echoing this sentiment, municipal council member Dalal Al Muqahwii highlighted the social and recreational importance of the park, noting that ongoing works demonstrate serious investment in modern, accessible

public spaces.

She affirmed that the council is closely monitoring progress, recognising the park’s role as a social anchor within the district.

Design

Spanning 23,158 square metres, the renewed park is being equipped with a comprehensive range of facilities.

These include modern, safety certified children’s play areas with rubber flooring, a multi-purpose sports court, upgraded pedestrian paths, enhanced lighting and extensive landscaping.

Dedicated walking zones, a warm up fitness area, service buildings, public amenities and organised parking are all integral to the design, supported by security cameras to ensure visitor safety.