

'Nearly 300 fishermen' arrested for illegal shrimping since 2018

Asian fishermen accused of mainly carrying out illegal shrimping

Bahrain's fish stock has declined almost 90 per cent when compared to that of a little over a decade ago, a study said last year.

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Close to 300 fishermen were caught for illegal shrimping since the ban came in place in 2018, it is learnt.

The statistics revealed by Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister Essam Khalaf, during the parliament session yesterday, showed that 297 illegal shrimpers have been arrested since the implementation of ban.

Lawmakers urged strong action against those who are engaged in this illegal activity.

They also shared complaints of Bahraini fishermen, who claim many Asian fishermen have been found engaging in this illegal activity.

A video was screened before the session, showing Asian fishermen flouting rules and illegally catching shrimp.

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The study has warned that the remaining 10pc will as well soon decline if urgent steps are not



Stocks seized from illegal shrimpers.

taken to preserve the marine resources.

The study conducted by the Marine Resources Directorate within the Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Ministry, has attributed the sharp decline in fisheries wealth to a number of factors.

Among them the prominent one is the Karaaf method, which is heavy fishing near the seabed, especially to catch shrimp.

The process kills many other marine species and small fish. According to the study, the second reason is overfishing.

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6,400

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"This excessive fishing is dangerously affecting the Kingdom's fish stocks."

The experts have predicted many varieties of fish will soon vanish from Bahraini waters and the existing fish stocks will no longer be able to fulfil the consumption requirements of the market.

The study revealed that the number of fish species seen in Bahraini waters has declined from 80 to four in the past few decades.

"The Karaaf fishing method destroys the marine environment as it catches all species at once, not allowing the smaller ones to grow and reproduce.

"If this method isn't stopped, the four species of fish that are marked safe will be reduced and Bahrain will become an importer of fish from its existing status of an exporter," the study warned.

The study recommended the

Government to encourage fish farms while implementing the regulatory procedures mentioned in Law Decree 20 of 2002 to protect marine resources. "What required is a strict regulation while implementing law and inspections to enforce it. The delay in taking these procedures means that the tackling this issue will be more difficult and costly in the future," the experts said.

The Marine Resources Directorate warned that fishing using the Karaaf method endangers the growth of small fish that are caught during heavy fishing near the seabed.

The directorate said that 60-70 per cent of Karaaf catch is small fish, which are usually disposed of by the fishermen.

It also revealed that more than 46,000 metric tonnes of shrimp were caught using the Karaaf method in the last ten years.

The latest official statistics showed that there are around 1,400 non-Bahraini fishermen working under 276 licences meant for shrimping alone.

It means 22 per cent of total expatriate fishermen working in Bahrain are employed in shrimping.

The Kingdom has been implementing a ban on shrimping during the breeding time during the past few years.

Strict punishments for violating the ban include imprisonment, fines and seizure of boats.

Registration plan for bicycles

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Bicycles should be registered with a 'registration number' just like cars and bikes, according to a recent proposal.

The proposal by Head of the Northern Municipal Council, Ahmed Al Kooheji states that due to the large number of accidents involving bicycles, registration numbers must be made compulsory for bicycles.

He said that there have been many bicycle related accidents, which has led to fatalities, which persuaded him to submit the proposal.

Mr Al Kooheji said that an annual fee of BD5 should also be enforced on bicycles.

He pointed out that two bicycle riders died recently in two separate accidents in Budaiya last month.

However, the proposal received a lot of negative feedback and criticism on social media.

"The proposal is impractical, there is no need for registration records for bicycles. This is something that the General Directorate of Traffic should be studying instead of the municipal council," a netizen commented.

Last month, a 13-year-old Bahraini cyclist died after being hit by a vehicle driven by a 19-year-old motorist.

Another fatal accident took place last month as a 32-year-old Bangladeshi cyclist Sapon Nurujjaman was hit by a car.

Car theft suspect arrested

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The Director-General of the Capital Governorate Police Directorate stated that within 24 hours of committing the crime, the directorate's police managed to arrest a 29-year-old Bahraini who is suspected of stealing a car and dumping it in sea.

He explained that, after receiving a report in this regard, the directorate undertook search and investigation operations that resulted in identifying and arresting the suspect.

"He stole the car from a car showroom in Sitra and intentionally dumping it at sea in Karzakan region," the Director-General said.

The official confirmed that necessary legal measures are being taken to refer the arrested person to the Public Prosecution.

Testimonies of defence witnesses in bribery case to be heard today

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Defence witnesses are scheduled to stand before the High Criminal Court today (Wednesday) to testify in a case involving one public servant and four employees in the private sector accused of bribery.

The defendants are accused of forming a cell among them to

expose clients' personal information.

According to court files, the employees of the bank signed a contract with the public servant to provide them with personal information about the clients who approach the bank for loans.

It's said that they were paying him BD300 for his services.

While investigating the case,



The bank's employees were charged with bribing a public employee while the latter was accused of violating his authorities.

PROSECUTORS

police officers found a list of the clients who applied for personal loans and the public employee provided their personal information to the bank's employees, which include a woman and three men.

As per the court files, the woman was the one who proposed the idea of dealing with the public sector employee to her team-

mates who agreed on it.

The public sector employee allegedly demanded to be paid BD10,000 at a later stage for leaking the personal information.

The bank's employees were charged with bribing a public employee while the latter was accused of violating his authorities, according to Prosecutors.

Bahrain's biggest shopping event returns

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Starting tomorrow until January 31, 2020, the halls of the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre will be filled with exciting products from around the world as the Autumn Fair returns for its 31st year.

Held under the patronage of the Bahrain Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, this nine-day retail paradise features over 650

stalls from 16 countries, thousands of potential bargains, and a returning Street Food Market to refresh hungry visitors.

A huge variety of goods will go on sale at this 15,400 square metre extravaganza, including specialty food, fashion, beauty, home décor, technology, toys, textiles and much more.

The outdoor Street Food Market will offer shoppers a selection of culinary delights from some of Bah-

rain's finest traders.

Vendors confirmed for the launch include favourites such as Fourteen Lights Restaurant, Al Shami Al Aseel, Lamaa Foods, McDonald & #39;s, Take Away, New York 973 Burgers and many more.

"With a wide range of products and excellent dining options, the Autumn Fair is the perfect opportunity for friends and family to meet in the new year. Visitors can look forward to discovering bargains,

new-to-market products and old customer favourites from local and international traders in a friendly, festive atmosphere," said Informa Markets project manager Yaqoob Ali.

Entry to the Autumn Fair 2020 remains at BD 1 despite the implementation of VAT in the country. Tickets can be purchased during show opening hours from kiosks at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Children under the age of 12 years will be admitted free of charge. The exhibition will open from 12 pm-10 pm on 23 rd and 24 th January, 10am-2pm and 4pm-10pm from Saturday 25 th to Wednesday 29 th January, 10am-10pm on Thursday 30 th and Friday 31 st January. On 26 th and 27 th January from 10 am-2 pm the exhibition will open to ladies only. For further information visit www.theautumnfair.com or call 17 550033.

Saudi backs UN Conference on Disarmament

Geneva

Saudi Arabia has reiterated its support to the UN Conference on Disarmament backing its constructive efforts to adopt a comprehensive and balanced work programme.

Addressing the Conference on Disar-

mament 2020, Saudi Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva Dr Abdulaziz Al Wasil wished all success of this session in restoring the effective role of the conference to play its role in negotiating the international treaties and agreements in the field of

disarmament.

He stressed the importance of consolidating and supporting all UN multilateral mechanisms, including the Conference on Disarmament to prevent all types of weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation.

He underlined the need to review the factors which caused the conference to falter and, express goodwill and avoid unilateral situations that undermine the chances of achieving collective security.

He urged all countries to show the

necessary flexibility and political will required to re-launch the conference and activate its role, in order to remedy the situation and change the existing situation so that the conference can carry out its responsibilities to enhance international security.