

Terror cell bust

Interior Ministry clarifies confusion regarding case; trial of 18 suspects adjourned to next week

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The High Criminal Court yesterday adjourned the trial of 18 defendants, who are accused of joining a terrorist group and plotting attacks in Bahrain, to September 28 to hear the defence arguments.

This was mentioned in an announcement issued by the Public Prosecution yesterday, quoting Terror Crime Prosecution chief advocate general Dr Ahmed Al Hammadi, who confirmed that the defendants were arrested in January of this year.

The announcement ended "local and regional confusion" that emerged yesterday when two local dailies here reported that the Interior Ministry had foiled the attempt of an Iran-backed terrorist group which planned to carry out attacks on vital spots in Bahrain and assassinate guards of VIPs.

The reports mentioned that the group was commanded by fugitives in Iran and it was named after the assassinated major general of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Qasem Soleimani, and also added that the group had planted an explosive device on Budaiya Highway targeting a foreign delegation.

Despite the fact that no such announcements were made by the Interior Ministry to endorse the reports, they soon reached regional and international news agencies and websites, making headlines as if the bust recently took place.

The ministry clarified the matter on the same day and said in an announcement that



The main defendants, based in Iran and receiving financial and logistical support from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, have set up a group to commit terrorist acts in Bahrain and have recruited the other suspects as members. The defendants collected funds for their terrorist operations and acquired explosive and inflammable devices, materials, and tools used in making them.

TERROR CRIME PROSECUTION CHIEF
ADVOCATE GENERAL DR AHMED AL
HAMMADI

it has "received questions and inquiries" regarding the news. "The case goes back to the beginning of this year, 2020, and is currently being heard in court, and therefore is not new," the Interior Ministry affirmed.

The ministry criticised the "inaccurate and inappropriate" reporting of the news and urged all media outlets to "adhere to professional standards in the field", stating: "Publication of

the details of the case in such an inaccurate manner and in this way affects the progress of the case in court. It would have been more appropriate for the newspaper to consider the correct and realistic timeframe."

The ministry's statement added: "The way the news was presented has caused confusion locally and regionally. The security authorities are committed to preserving the security of the homeland. The Kingdom of Bahrain also aspires for security and peace to prevail throughout the region, and for the world to realise that Bahrain is a country of tolerance, co-existence and openness to others, as this is essential for achieving world peace. This is what needs to be pointed out and explained. May God protect Bahrain."

Tying loose ends

Meanwhile, the statement issued by the Public Prosecution yesterday clarified several details with regards to the case.

In the statement, Dr Al Hammadi confirmed that nine of the defendants are in police custody, while the remaining nine defendants are at large.

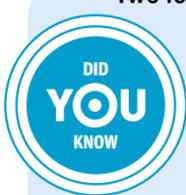
"The probe has revealed that the main defendants, based in Iran and receiving financial and logistical support from the IRGC, have set up a group to commit terrorist acts in Bahrain and have recruited the other suspects as members," Dr Al Hammadi said.

"The defendants collected funds for their terrorist operations and acquired explosive and inflammable devices, materials, and tools used in making them.

"Some of the defendants had received training in the use of firearms and explosives as their terror acts included exploding bombs and targeting security forces."

The chief advocate general added: "Based on the evidence against them, the prosecution referred the defendants to justice. Their case was reviewed by the High Criminal Court, where the defendants appeared in the presence of their lawyers."

Two local dailies were criticised for "inaccurate and inappropriate" reporting, after publishing articles on foiled terrorist attacks and assassinations as if they took place recently, when in fact the case goes back to the beginning of this year and is currently being heard in court



Condolences expressed

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The Indian Community Relief Fund (ICRF) expressed its sincere condolences last night to the family of Lynn Al Wazzan following her passing.

"Mrs Al Wazzan was a leading figure in many charity initiatives and especially to ICRF medical camps, consistently from the year 2002 onwards," the ICRF said in a statement, praising Al Wazzan for her great support to the Indian community in Bahrain.

"Her generous contributions have helped us to support thousands of underprivileged Indian labourers," the statement added.

"Her good deeds will be terribly missed by the community. May her soul rest in peace. May God help her family to get



Al Wazzan

through these most difficult times."

The statement was made by ICRF chairman Aruldas Thomas along with general secretary John Philip and advisor Bhagwan Asarpota, on behalf of ICRF.

Bahraini drowns while diving at sea

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A Bahraini died yesterday after drowning at sea, the Ministry of Interior announced.

The ministry stated last night that the Coast Guard has initiated an investigation after a 51-year-old citizen drowned while diving with a group of other individuals, reportedly off the coast of Sitra.

The ministry said that the competent authorities have taken the necessary measures in the case.

No other information was made available.

ISB warns of illegal fund-raising activities

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Indian School Bahrain (ISB) cautioned yesterday against a group of individuals who have been attempting to illegally raise funds under the pretext of helping students.

"Please be informed that the ISB hasn't authorised anyone to collect money on behalf of the school," said ISB honorary chairman Prince Natarajan in a statement.

"It's learnt that these individuals, who have no connection with the school, are collecting money without giving receipts. ISB cannot be held responsible for the illegal transactions of these individuals.

"Collecting funds as donations without proper approval is illegal in the Kingdom of Bahrain. "ISB has a proper grievance redressal system which should be followed by all parents. If any well-wishers are interested in contributing funds to ISB as part of their charitable initiatives or corporate responsibility, they are kindly requested to approach the principal or the academic team.

"In such cases of philanthropy, the school will provide proper receipts to the contributors."

The statement added: "The school is giving much-needed financial assistance to many deserving children, including

providing them with computers and tabs to attend online classes. Around 1,000 financially distressed students were given fee waivers last academic year.

"The school has so far received more than 1,500 applications from parents for their wards' study assistance in this time of COVID-19."

The school warned of "stringent action" against anybody caught illegally collecting money in the name of the school or its students.

"It's hereby informed that ISB is bound to take stringent action against those who illegally collect money, misleading the parents and community members," it said in the statement.

Six detained for stealing cigarettes worth BD22,000

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Six Asians have been detained for stealing packets of cigarettes worth BD22,000 over a certain period, the Ministry of Interior announced yesterday.

The Southern Governorate Police director-general reported the arrests, said the ministry.

The individuals were between the ages of 32 and 37.

The director-general noted that an investigation into reported cases led to identifying and arresting the suspects.

They used to steal the packets from vehicles assigned to distribute them by damaging the doors.

The stolen items and tools



The six Asians who were arrested with the stolen packets of cigarettes

used to commit the crimes were taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution, the ministry added.

Legal proceedings are being

Housing loan payments to be postponed for financially affected citizens

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Housing Minister Bassem Hbin Yacoub Al Hamar held a meeting yesterday with Mithaq Parliamentary Bloc members to discuss citizens' requests and the mechanism to meet them through housing projects.

The meeting discussed the issue of postponing housing installments, where the minister appreciated the government's keenness to ease the economic effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on financially affected citizens, and requested them to submit documents that

prove their financial status to postpone the installments.

The Housing Minister stressed his keenness for further cooperation with the legislative branch to achieve citizens' requests, referring to the ministry's continuous efforts to implement its housing projects plan and to provide alternative immediate housing services for citizens.

They reviewed the Union of Beneficiaries' case and discussed mechanisms to accelerate the pace of its application on projects of ownership apartments, as the minister confirmed that the ministry is working with the Housing Bank to speed up the implementation of the union programme in various residential projects.



Officials during their meeting

Six dealers arrested, drugs worth BD18,000 seized

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Six men were arrested for drug-dealing and 2,400 grammes of narcotics worth BD18,000 in their possession had been confiscated, the Ministry of Interior announced.

The ministry said that the Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science director-general reported that anti-narcotics police detained the individuals, who are aged between 24 and 39.

The director-general noted

that investigations and information collected led to identifying and arresting the suspects, and the drugs and money were eventually seized.

Legal proceedings are being taken and referred to the Public Prosecution.

Alternative penalty programme resumes

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The alternative penalty programme has resumed at the Northern Governorate.

A training course to rehabilitate convicts was held at Budaiya Sports and Cultural Club.

It took place in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs.



The programme taking place