

Ministers hold meeting with SCW Secretary-General

Manama

A joint work meeting was held between Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan and Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) Hala Al Ansari.

The meeting was attended by officials from the Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Ministry, the Labour and Social Development Ministry and SCW.

Discussions focused on ways of boosting the role of the family



The meeting in progress.

reconciliation offices at the Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Ministry through integration with the family guidance offices at the community centres of the Labour and Social Development Ministry to settle family disputes before reaching courts.

The meeting also shed light on ongoing preparations to open the family reconciliation offices at Sitra and Muharraq community centres.

Implementation of a training plan for the staff of the family reconciliation offices and the social guidance centres was also reviewed.

'Collaborative initiative aims to further enhance entrepreneurship ecosystem'

Initiative aims to create a common platform to support entrepreneurs



A segment of the audience.



A panelist discussion in progress.

● The forum included keynote speeches, research presentations, thematic plenaries and a stakeholder consultation roundtable.

● It discussed and elaborated on many themes including the shaping of business ecosystems.

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Mohammed Zafran

The Collaborative, a initiative to help researchers from academia, start-ups, and corporate work together towards the development of Bahrain, was launched yesterday.

The initiative was launched at the Second Digital Business Ecosystem Research Forum, which was organised by the University of Bahrain.

It focused on researchers and practitioners, who explore information systems and digital entre-

preneurship in the Kingdom and across the region.

On the sidelines of the event, the event's chair, Dr Noora Al Ghatem said: "The initiative was launched to create a common platform, where we can work together with the industry and public sector researchers while helping the entrepreneurs and the ecosystem.

"It was launched because we saw that there was a need for us to work closely with industry and government. We came up with the idea for researchers from various sectors to come together in a platform and we defined the

areas where we should work on together, whether it is by devel-



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DR AL GHATEM

oping mutual studies or developing courses.

"We even aim to include researchers from outside Bahrain who are experts in various fields," she added.

The forum included keynote speeches, research presentations, thematic plenaries and a stakeholder consultation roundtable.

It discussed and elaborated on many themes such as the shaping of business ecosystems, implications of these ecosystems for global scaling of start-ups in the GCC, building collaborative capacity to support start-ups, and how to link research on the topic

to practice.

The topics discussed included public and private sector collaboration and ICT projects, digital entrepreneurship and ecosystem, national ICT initiatives and programmes, ICTs for socio-economic development and ICT and social innovation.

Many panel discussions were held during the event and the topics discussed included 'A Prospective View of Global Scalability of Startups', 'Unpacking Social Innovation in the form of Digital Entrepreneurship' and 'Linking Theory to Practice towards Meaningful ICT Innovations'.

Lawsuit against EWA's VAT decision adjourned

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The Second Supreme Civil Court of Appeal yesterday adjourned a lawsuit filed by Bahraini lawyer against the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), urging to scrap its decision to impose taxes on its customers, to September 2.

This came after the same court previously announced that it would issue its final verdict on June 25 this year.

The court earlier rejected the case, but Mohammed Al Thawadi, the plaintiff, appealed against the court's judgement, as he insisted that EWA's decision, which came into effect on January 1, 2019, to impose Value Added Tax (VAT) on its customers is unconstitutional.

In the trial, EWA, which was represented in the court by the State Cases Authority, claimed that the appellant has no interest to file the lawsuit, but Mr Al Thawadi quoted a statement of Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulhussain Mirza, affirming that "the increase in electricity and water fees is subject to government approvals".

The authority is the sole provider of such services in the country without competition, contrary to the conditions of imposing the tax on commodities.

MR AL THAWADI

As reported earlier by Tribune, Bahraini Lawyer Mohammed Al Thawadi appealed against the verdict of the High Administrative Court, announced on February 26 this year, to reject the lawsuit he initiated against EWA, as he claimed that the authority's decision to impose Value Added Tax (VAT) on subscribers by the beginning of this year is unconstitutional.

The lawyer insisted that the decision is unconstitutional, stating that Articles 15 and 17 of the Constitution of the Kingdom, which stipulate that taxes should only be imposed through a legislation.

Mr Al Thawadi justified his decision to complain against EWA by stating that the authority is the sole provider of such services in the country without competition, contrary to the conditions of imposing the tax on commodities.

He also accused EWA of not adhering to the Unified GCC VAT Agreement, which he quoted some of its provisions saying: "Article 29 did not stipulate the imposition of taxes on electricity supply services, but on the contrary, it gave each state the right to exempt some sectors in accordance with local law.

"Additionally, Article 30 expressly stipulated the exemption of government bodies from paying taxes, and therefore it is not permissible for the authority to collect taxes."

In his appeal, the lawyer also demanded a clarification from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, to confirm if commercial establishments are permitted to provide electricity and water supplies in the Kingdom, as alleged by the authority, and the conditions required to obtain such a permit.

BD500 fine for jumping five red light

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A Bahraini man's attempt to evade paying BD500 in traffic fines was foiled by the court, which gave him two options; either pay the fines in the court immediately or face jail.

This occurred at the Traffic Court yesterday, when the man attended the session after he objected a verdict that was previously issued against him.

The man was earlier ordered to pay BD500 for crossing five red signals (BD100 for each offence).

Documents of the case show that he came to know about his fines during his visit to the General Directorate of Traffic.

He objected the order and decided to take the matter to the court. But, traffic surveillance cameras and his statements proved that he had committed the same offence five times in different locations.

The man pleaded to the judge to reduce the fines, claiming that it's beyond his financial capacity and that he is broke.

However, the judge decided to uphold the previous order and demanded him to pay the BD500.

Thinking that he would be allowed to

leave the court room, the man told the judges that he will pay on another date, but the latter informed him that he will be immediately taken to jail if didn't pay the amount instantly.

Interestingly, out of his fear of detention, the man paid the full amount instantly before leaving the court room.

As Law 23 of 2014 came into effect few years back, stricter punishments against traffic violators have been introduced.

This includes fines and imprisonment for offences such as crossing a red light, driving under the influence or driving without licences.

