

# Municipalities have not surveyed underground wells since 1980

Oversight report reveals lack of inspection and monitoring

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A recent oversight report from the Bureau of Financial and Administrative Control has revealed a noteworthy negligence in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture's assessments of underground wells in Bahrain spanning the last forty years, said a report published by our sister paper, Al Ayyam.

In response to the report, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, in collaboration with the Capital Secretariat and the three municipalities, has explained that a public tender was initiated in November 2022 for a well survey project.

However, the bids received exceeded the allocated budget, and the bidders did not meet the tender conditions. Consequently, the ministry plans to reissue the tender in coordination with the Survey and Land Registration Authority to leverage their expertise in the field.

The oversight report also highlights the Ministry's discontinuation of monitoring the quality and characteristics of



groundwater extracted from production wells since December 2020. This lack of oversight poses potential implications for public health and safety.

In response, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture has stated that it is currently developing a draft ministerial decision that would require the industrial and commercial sector to submit certified laboratory reports on the quality of groundwater used in their facilities.

Additionally, the ministry aims to provide field inspectors with a device capable of analyzing

the percentage of dissolved solids in water (TDS) and its pH during their visits.

Another significant finding in the report indicates that the Ministry has failed to take action against owners of groundwater wells who have not installed meters to measure the amount of water extracted, which is a violation of Article 20 of the Groundwater Law.

The Ministry has affirmed its commitment to address this issue and hold well owners accountable for installing meters and ensuring compliance with regulations.

Moreover, the report reveals that the ministry has stopped taking readings from the 2,480 mechanical groundwater well meters since March 2022, making it impossible to determine the quantity of water being withdrawn from these wells.

To rectify this situation, the Ministry has pledged to resume regular meter readings and emphasised the importance of encouraging well owners to install smart meters for streamlined data collection.

The report also highlights the Ministry's failure to inspect licensed groundwater well sites since January 2020. With a total of 2,660 unmonitored wells, the ministry's inability to identify potential violations poses a significant threat to Bahrain's groundwater resources.

In response to these concerns, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture has initiated a restructuring process for all its departments. With the issuance of Decree No. (15) Of 2023, the ministry aims to strengthen its human resources and enhance its capacity to effectively carry out inspection tasks.

## MP urges corrective action on violations for improved efficiency

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MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen stressed the critical need for addressing the reported violations in the Financial and Administrative Audit Bureau's report for the year 2022-2023.

"This would raise the efficiency of government work and reduce violations," Dr Al Dhaen said, adding that it would significantly contribute to sustainable development, in line with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and reform project.

Al-Dhaen commended the Financial and Administrative Control Bureau for its exemplary oversight and professionalism, evident in the unqualified opinion on all final accounts and financial statements of the ministries and government agencies under its purview for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2022. This included the unified final account of the state and the reserve account for future generations.

Emphasising the report's significance in enhancing oversight and serving as a crucial reference for MPs in their



MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen

oversight responsibilities, she underscored the potential for improving and evolving the government's operational framework under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, and Prime Minister.

Dr. Al-Dhaen stressed the necessity to diligently address violations and undertake essential measures against violators, advocating for adherence to principles of transparency, control, and the preservation of public funds.

## Shura chairman calls for peace, international intervention for Palestinian Rights

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Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh, Chairman of the Shura Council, yesterday voiced Bahrain's steadfast commitment to the rightful claims of the Palestinian



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, at the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit in Saudi Arabia.

people, in line with the two-state solution, international legitimacy resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Al Saleh highlighted the imperative of peace as a strategic pathway ensuring regional populace protection, particularly for the Palestinian community, necessitating an international and humanitarian intervention to quell escalating conflicts.

In this regard, he commended the speech delivered on behalf of HM King Hamad by

The Shura Chairman highlighted the kingdom's call for the establishment of an independent international committee, as put forth in HM's speech, to oversee the safety of Palestinians, conduct an impartial investigation into the rising violence, facilitate the release of prisoners from both sides, and assess the extent of damages. This effort reflects Bahrain's unwavering commitment to devising avenues and mechanisms to safeguard innocent civilians.

## Shura to review response to Royal Speech, amend Arab Charter on Human Rights

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The Shura Council will today review a report responding to the Royal Speech delivered by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The report, by the committee chaired by Jamal Muhammad Fakhro, the First Deputy Speaker of the Council, will be considered during the second session of the sixth legislative term of the Shura and Representatives Councils.

The committee comprises several members, including Dr. Jihad Abdullah Al-Fadil, the Second Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council, and others such as Dr. Jamila Muhammad Redha Al-Salman, Khaled Hussein Al-Maskati, Dalal Jassim Al-Zayed, Reda Ibrahim Monfardi, Reda Abdullah Faraj, Sabika Khalifa Al-Fadala, Talal Muhammad Al-Mannai, Abdul Rahman Muhammad Jamsheer, and Dr. Abdulaziz



Abdullah Ajman.

The Council will also discuss a report presented by the Human Rights Committee concerning a draft law for amending the Arab Charter on Human Rights, aiming to rename the "Arab Human Rights Committee" to the "Arab Charter Committee for Human Rights." The amendment aligns with the decision made by the Council of the League of Arab States at the ministerial level.

## Countries extending aid to Gaza!

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The Egyptian Red Crescent has released an official statement detailing the generous humanitarian aid contributions from various countries to support the people of Gaza.

Leading the charge, Bahrain, under the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, dispatched an impressive 79 tons of aid to Gaza. This substantial contribution sets the stage for the collective international effort that unfolds.

Algeria, Brazil, Britain, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), France, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela have all responded to the urgent call for assistance.

Together, these nations have amassed a staggering total of nearly 9,000 tons of aid. The contributions span a range of crucial resources, including food, medical supplies, and re-



lief materials that will provide much-needed relief to the beleaguered population of Gaza.

Egypt, at the forefront of aid provision, has exemplified its commitment by dispatching a monumental 6,944.29 tons of aid to Gaza.

This substantial contribution underscores the country's unwavering support for its neighbors in times of distress.

The collective efforts of these countries signify a resounding message of compassion and solidarity.

As the international community rallies to address the dire situation in Gaza, hopes are rekindled for a brighter future. The aid serves as a lifeline for the vulnerable population, offering them a glimmer of hope amidst the challenges they face.

## Bahrain Riders Club



The Bahrain Riders Club, in collaboration with the King Hamad American Mission Hospital, organized a special lecture and discussion titled "Men's Health Awareness." The event, held on Friday at the auditorium of the King Hamad American Mission Hospital in A'Ali, welcomed club members and fellow riders. The lecture and discussion centered around key topics: Psychological health, Suicide prevention, Testicular cancer, and Prostate cancer. Hospital consultants, Dr. Monish Cherian (Consultant Urologist) and Dr. Vivek Mathew (Psychiatrist), presented and engaged with participants on these vital subjects. This event coincided with the International Day Against Men's Disease and the 'November Movement,' an annual initiative dedicated to raising awareness throughout November to reduce the incidence of reproductive diseases and prostate cancer in men. The Bahrain Riders Club regularly organises such sessions in conjunction with international forums to conduct educational campaigns aimed at reducing the occurrence of childhood cancer, breast cancer in women, and reproductive diseases in men.