

HRH Prince Salman affirms strong Bahrain-UAE ties

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His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister, affirmed that the long-standing historic relationship between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the UAE has contributed to the cooperation and joint coordination between the two countries in various fields.

HRH Prince Salman yesterday received the UAE Minister of State for Defense Affairs and member of the UAE Cabinet, His Excellency Mohamed bin

Mubarak Fadhel Al-Mazrouei, at Riffa Palace.

His Royal Highness highlighted the depth of the ties between the two countries and their peoples, thanks to the support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and the President of the UAE and Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, His Highness Shaikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister thanked the leadership, government and people of the UAE for their sincere condolences and conveyed



HRH Prince Salman with H.E. Mohamed bin Mubarak Fadhel Al-Mazrouei

the greetings of HM the King and his greetings to HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and HH Shaikh Mohammed bin

Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Defense.

The Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces also conveyed the condolences of HM the King and his con-

dolences to HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed and HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid for the fallen servicemen of the UAE and wished a speedy recovery for those who were injured.

H.E. Al-Mazrouei conveyed the greetings of HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid to HM the King and His Royal Highness. HE Al-Mazrouei also expressed their condolences for the loss of Major Abdullah Rashid Al Noaimi, who lost his life in a terrorist attack, along with several servicemen from the UAE, while carrying out training missions in Somalia.

Fission Fix?



MP Muneer Suroor

● **'Nuclear power will cut electricity costs and diversify energy supply'**

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Forget solar panels and windmills, a Bahraini lawmaker has a bolder, and slightly radioactive, solution to the country's energy woes - uranium and nuclear reactors!

That's right, MP Muneer Suroor is proposing we go full-on Homer Simpson to tackle those pesky electricity bills.

Now, before you start picturing mushroom clouds blooming over Manama, hold your horses. The MP's vision is purely peaceful - think sustainable, eco-friendly nuclear power, not Cold War fallout.

He claims this atomic approach would not only slash electricity costs for citizens but also free the government from its energy subsidy burden. Plus, it would diversify the nation's energy mix, weaning us off those unreliable, expensive conventional methods.

Of course, the internet, ever the voice of reason, and sometimes sarcasm, wasn't exactly glowing with enthusiasm. Some folks worried about the hefty price tag of such a nuclear adventure, while others questioned where exactly we'd stick these glowing behemoths in the tiny island Kingdom. One social media wag even demanded nuclear weapons to complete the atomic arsenal (because why not, right?).

So, will Bahrain be trading flip-flops for Geiger counters anytime soon? The jury's still out. But one thing's for sure - MP Suroor's proposal has sparked a lively debate, proving that sometimes, the most outlandish ideas can get the conversation flowing, even if it's slightly radioactive!

No More Limits

Council of Representatives approves major upgrade to unemployment aid

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The Council of Representatives yesterday passed a crucial amendment to the Kingdom's unemployment insurance laws, ushering in a new era of support for job seekers across the country.

During yesterday's session, lawmakers convened to address the pressing need for reform in Decree Law No. 78 of 2006 concerning unemployment insurance. The proposed changes mark a significant departure from the status quo, with sweeping alterations aimed at bolstering coverage and ensuring fair compensation entitlement for those in need.

Among the key revisions, the amendment abolishes the previous cap on compensation duration, providing a lifeline for individuals facing prolonged periods of unemployment. Additionally, the prescribed con-

It is important not to deprive individuals of their entitlement to compensation and the need for compassion and understanding in times of economic hardship."

- MP JALAL KADHEM

tributions for compensation entitlement have been extended, reflecting a commitment to safeguarding financial security for the jobless.

However, perhaps the most notable aspect of the amendment is its focus on addressing the plight of repeated claimants. Recognising the cyclical nature of unemployment for many individuals, lawmakers have crafted provisions aimed



at breaking this cycle and providing sustainable support for those in need.

The proposal received overwhelming support from several Members of Parliament, including MP Jalal Kadhem, a vocal advocate for the rights of the unemployed. Kadhem passionately argued for the importance of not depriving individuals of their entitlement to compensation, emphasising the need for

compassion and understanding in times of economic hardship.

Expanding coverage

In a bid to broaden the scope of beneficiaries, Kadhem proposed expanding coverage to include those who voluntarily leave their jobs for valid reasons. Highlighting the challenges faced by many workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, he stressed the importance of ensuring support for all individuals facing unemployment, regardless of the circumstances.

Furthermore, Kadhem called for the utilisation of unemployment funds to bolster insurance coverage, offering a potential solution to long-standing deficiencies in pension funds. By reallocating resources to support the unemployed, lawmakers aim to provide much-needed relief to those who have been waiting for employment opportunities for years.

Play Probe

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Bahrain's Ministry of Education ignited a whirlwind yesterday, announcing a probe into a private school and the immediate removal of its entire administration and board of directors. This unprecedented action followed a student play deemed inappropriate by the ministry.

According to the ministry, a group of students performed a theatrical scene containing 'inappropriate insinuations', violating Bahrain's educational values and regulations. Specialised teams deemed this performance a threat to the school's mission, prompting swift action.

The ministry removed the school's leadership to ensure accountability and prevent similar incidents.

"Providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for all students is paramount," said the ministry in a statement. It added that their focus extends beyond schools, urging parents to exercise stricter control over children's online content accessed through various digital platforms.

Valentine's Day brings busy times for florists

Zahra Ayaz
TDI | Manama

Love is in the air as Valentine's Day arrives, and the busiest people in town are the florists. With a surge in demand for red roses, flower shops are working tirelessly to fulfill pre-orders and meet the high expectations of customers.

According to Mr. N.K. Jayan, Manager of Bahrain Flowers, the demand for red roses is exceptionally high this year. Customers are not only interested in purchasing roses but also adding on extras like stuffed toys, gift items, and customised packaging. Pre-orders have been pouring in since last week, and the shop has even received online orders through their website.

"It's a quite busy week for us, and we see a lot of sales during this time," said Mr. Jayan. "We have also partnered with Talabat to cater to customers who prefer delivery. Prices for roses range from a minimum of BD5 and go up to BD50 depending on the quantity."

To avoid last-minute rushes, people have been reserving flowers in advance. Fortunately,



Flowers, stuffed toys and gift items are selling briskly during this time of the year



A staff of Rasha Flowers

Bahrain Flowers has managed to stock up enough to accommo-

date the high demand.

Another major player in the

market, Rolanda Flowers, is not only selling to customers but also acting as a wholesaler for other stores. Abdul Malik, HR of Rolanda Flowers, emphasised the significance of Valentine's Day for their business.

"For us, two days are very important: Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. Red roses are the classic choice for Valentine's Day," he stated. "In addition to roses, customers have been looking for lilies and sunflowers. Many are requesting custom packages that include roses, teddy bears, chocolates, and balloons."

The majority of flowers in the Kingdom are imported from



A staff of Rolanda Flowers

countries like Kenya, Holland, Colombia, Singapore, and others. Malik also mentioned that their business has seen a boost from customers ordering through Instagram.

Meanwhile, Rasha Flowers has been experiencing a hectic period, with their stores adorned in a red-themed ambiance. Josh from Rasha Flowers said, "We currently have over a thousand red roses available, and the majority of our products have already been sold. In addition to roses priced at 600 fils for one and it goes up to BD60 we have rose petals priced at BD3.5, various decoration items, gift cards, and heart-shaped helium balloons, all of which have been in high demand."

As the oldest flower shop in Umm Al Hassam, Rasha Flowers has witnessed consistent demand year after year. By the end of the day, they are always sold out, and their staff members are busy taking orders.