

# Call to 'regularly' update breastfeeding indicators

'Bahrain among 21 countries in the world that don't have regular updates'

Staff Reporter  
TDT | Manama

A group of researchers is urging many countries including the Kingdom of Bahrain to update breastfeeding indicators as it is important to protect and evaluate the progress of breastfeeding promotion efforts.

According to researchers associated with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the last time Bahrain updated its breastfeeding indicators was in the year 2002 and since then there have been no surveys or infant data studies related to this.

The Kingdom's neighbours including Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia last carried out a survey on breastfeeding indicators in the year 2017, offering valuable insights into the matter, which helps in devising the right strategies.

"Seventy-one percent of the countries had updated their indicators since 2015, and 16 per cent have collected breastfeed-



The World Breastfeeding Week is regularly observed in the Kingdom from August 1 to 7

ing indicators for more than two decades. Updates were conducted annually, every three or five to nine years. The other 21 countries had no regular updates, or these had been discontinued," the researchers said.

"Breastfeeding rates were estimated from mothers of children of different age groups: newborns followed up to eight weeks after birth, children up to 12 to 15 months, children under 24 months or children under

three to under six years. In eight surveys, the population sampled was women who had a child in the prior three to five years," they added.

According to International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Bahrain has made progress regarding Child Health over the past years, as neonatal, infant and under-five mortality rates steadily declined. "This is a consequence of the ministry of health's priority: to provide the



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maximum levels of health care including primary health care, especially for children below six years of age.

"Nevertheless, the lack of data on breastfeeding remains con-

cerning and the few data available show an extremely low rate of exclusive breastfeeding under six months. It remains complicated to draw conclusions on recent progress regarding early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding under six months and continued breastfeeding at two years."

On the flip side, the network also praised the Kingdom's authorities for taking the right measures.

"In an effort to improve breastfeeding rates in the 1990s, the Bahraini government developed a policy to support breastfeeding. A decree was issued, which concerns the control of marketing and promotion of breastmilk substitutes. This decree was then followed in 1996 by ministerial order No. 5 which established a national committee for breastfeeding. The committee was re-organised in 2008 and 2011, but it remains unclear what its mandate is and whether it meets regularly," the network observed.

## Life sentence upheld in human trafficking case

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The Bahraini man who was sentenced to life in prison for encouraging domestic workers to run away from their original sponsors and then trafficking them has had his life sentence upheld by the Cassation Court.

The defendant was sentenced to 10 years in prison but the High Appeals Court increased his sentence to life in prison due to his major role in the crime.

According to court files, the defendant was among 19 arrested for setting up a criminal network to encourage domestic servants to flee from their sponsors, and then hold them up in apartments, where they force them into prostitution.

The defendant was the mastermind of the network, and his co-suspects revealed that they deceived the victims by offering them high salaries in order to agitate them to depart from the families they are working for.

As per the case records, the defendant recruited several men to guard the apartments to ensure that no one from the victims would manage to break away.

Seventeen of the defendants were sentenced to 10 years in prison.

# Bahrain ranks first amongst GCC in Anti Money laundering says Bahrain Chamber Report

Report commissioned by BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY reveals that the economic recovery path is on the right track.

The report shows that in Q2 2022, "The growth and GDP contribution of economic sectors where real GDP and nominal GDP increased by 6.95 pcs and 22.97 pcs, led by growth in the hotels, restaurants, and transport and communication sector and Manufacturing and Natural Gas sector is the highest contributor to GDP in Q2 2022 at 17.07%.

"The trade exchange increased by 9 pcs between Bahrain and GCC in Q3 2022 compared to Q3 2021, whereas 29.5% increase in the volume of trade between Bahrain and Oman in Q3 2022 compared to Q3 2021.

"China maintains its position as Bahrain's top import partner in Q3 with a total import value of 567 million USD. The top imported commodity was smartphones, with a total value of 33.7 million USD. This commodity accounts for 6% of

total imports from China.

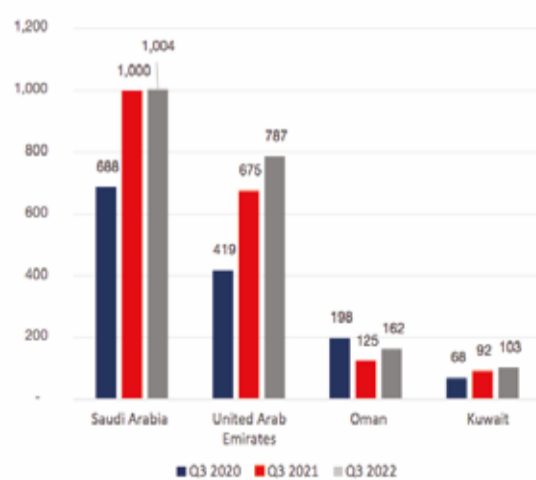
"Saudi Arabia has maintained its position as the largest export market for Bahraini commodities in Q3 2022, with the total value of exports reaching 792 million USD. The top exported commodity was agglomerated iron ores and concentrated at 229 million USD," the study highlighted.

"The consumer price index increased by 4% in August 2022 compared to August 2021, with the most significant changes occurring during that time period being a 10.4% increase in the food and nonalcoholic beverages group, a 15.1% increase in the hotels and restaurants group, a 6.4% increase in the transportation group, and a 5.5% increase in the furnishings, household equipment, and routine household maintenance group.

"The Restaurants and Hotels sector witnessed the highest increase in prices in August 2022 at 15.1%, compared to the same month in the previous year. The second highest sector with a y-o-y increase is Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, reaching 13.4%.

"The number of Bahrainis in the public and private

Trade volume between Bahrain and GCC countries



Country	Q3 2020	Q3 2021	Q3 2022	% Change from 2021 to 2022
Saudi Arabia	688,419,983	1,000,193,023	1,004,315,576	0.4%
United Arab Emirates	418,701,158	674,572,903	786,882,641	16.6%
Oman	197,796,823	125,419,039	162,370,974	29.5%
Kuwait	68,322,403	92,112,829	103,236,685	12.1%

Source: Information and e-Government Authority

sectors increased by 3.2% and 4.3% respectively in Q2 2022 compared to Q2 2021. The number of employed non-Bahrainis also increased by 8% in Q2 2022 compared to Q2 2021.

"Worker remittances are defined as payments made by

migrant workers and residents of a country to relatives in their home country. Remittances to beneficiaries in their country of origin are classified as for more than a year, regardless of their legal status. Remittances from workers increased by 4.5%,

rising from 248.8 million BHD in Q2 2021 to 259.9 million BHD in Q2.

"The outflow of worker remittances in the GCC amounted to about 127.2 billion USD in 2021, compared to about 116.5 billion USD in 2020, registering a growth of 9.2%. This is after the total remittances declined over the last four years.

"Interest rates on business loans increased in general during Q2 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. The interest rate in the Manufacturing sector increased from 2.12% in Q2 2021 to 4.67% in the same period in 2022,

"It also increased in the Trade Sector from 4.91% in Q2 2021 to 5.87% in Q2 2022. The interest rate, however, decreased in the Construction and Real Estate Sector from 6.99% in Q2 2021 to 5.15% in Q2 2022.

"The number of ATM withdrawal transactions in June 2022 was about 1.18 million, a 2.2% decrease from the 1.20 million registered in June 2021. There was also a decline of 7.9% in the number of ATM withdrawals in April, from around 1.29 million in 2021 to 1.19 million in 2022.

"The number of POS

transactions in all sectors increased significantly in the second quarter of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. POS transactions increased by 74% in June 2022, from 8.2 million in 2021 to 14.3 million in 2022.

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According to the IMF, "The global economy is expected to slow down from 6.0% in 2021 to 3.2% in 2022 and 2.7% in 2023. Global influences on the growth rate include significant slowdowns in the world's largest economies, with the contraction in the US GDP in the first half of 2022, and a euro area contraction in the second half of the year.

Lockdowns and the real estate crisis in China have also impacted global economic growth."

Complete report is available on the Bahrain Chamber website and mobile application in English and Arabic.