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Manama, Aug. 15 (BNA): Yasser bin Ibrahim Humaidain, Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs, has affirmed that the signing of the agreements to implement the 72-Megawatt (MW) solar power plant project is in line with the endeavours of the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to support initiatives to address the challenges of climate change.

While patronising the signing ceremony of the deals today, the minister affirmed that the project, which is among the initiatives of the Bahrain"s National Renewable Energy Action Plan, confirms the importance of expanding the use of solar energy to preserve the environment and ensure the sustainability of resources.

The 72-MW solar park is among the development project that would contribute to achieving sustainable economic development for the nation and its citizens, he said, adding that it is within the kingdom"s international commitments.

Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, Chief Executive Officer of the Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), said that the project is consistent with BIC"s plan to expand the use of solar and other sources of renewable energy throughout the year, noting that it will support BIC"s operations during the hosting of regional and global events, and contribute to honouring its pledges to reduce carbon emissions, towards reaching carbon neutrality.

Dr. Fuad Mohammed Al-Ansari, President of the University of Bahrain (UoB), highlighted UoB"s keenness to promote the culture of sustainability, as well as preserve the environment and its resources, noting that the use of solar energy at the UoB"s buildings and facilities is in line with its sustainable development strategy.

He added that consolidating the kingdom"s status as a model based on a sustainable, low-carbon economy is a top priority at UoB, citing the university"s recent launch of a Master of Science programme in sustainable energy transition systems, which is the first of its kind in the kingdom.

Dr. Nasser Qaedi, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) CEO, affirmed that the use of solar energy at the Exhibition World Bahrain is in line with Bahrain"s policies to adopt renewable and clean energy, noting that the project will contribute significantly to reducing traditional energy consumption and preserving the environment, which will lead to strengthening the Kingdom"s efforts to promote sustainable development and ensure the sustainability of infrastructure development in accordance with international best practices.

Shane Chalmers, CEO of Al Dana Amphitheatre, expressed pride in the initiatives that ensure the expansion of the use of renewable energy, noting that the signing of an agreement to install solar panels at Al-Dana Amphitheatre will support the use of solar energy, which is environment-friendly, and contributes to

decarbonisation efforts by using sustainable energy solutions and reducing the total cost of energy.

It is worth noting that the 72-megawatt multi-site solar photovoltaic power project, which is located in Sakhir, comprises rooftop, ground-mounted, car park solar power systems and electric vehicle charging stations at Bahrain International Circuit, University of Bahrain, Exhibition World Bahrain and Al Dana Amphitheatre.

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The Kingdom has edged one step closer to developing a viable alternative energy infrastructure with its implementation of a solar energy project in the Awali Township of Manama. The 5MW, utility-scale photovoltaic solar facility was arranged as a joint venture between the National Oil and Gas Authority (NOGA), the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO), Caspian Energy Holdings and Petra Solar. The project marks one of the Gulf region"s first tendered utility-scale solar project.

The pilot venture is currently in the developmental phase, with the facility"s functionality and cost-effectiveness within the macro energy sector yet to be determined. Pending proper execution, however, the project may serve as a pioneer for the establishment of a local renewable energy market.

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Web: https://www.kary.com.pl/contact-us/
Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com
WhatsApp: 8613816583346