

# Herbal medicines registry call

A BODY that regulates drugs coming into the GCC wants to create a unified database of herbal medicines permitted by all Gulf countries in hopes of controlling prices.

The GCC Central Committee for Drugs (GCC-DR) also plans to closely monitor the consumption of the herbs in all six states in order to take unified action against any side-effects in future.

Committee members discussed introducing unified pricing for alternative medications as part of an ongoing scheme during their 67th meeting in Bahrain yesterday, but said the herbs needed to be classified first.

"At present we do not have

By RAJI UNNIKISHNAN

central registration for herbal medicines, which has to be addressed prior to unifying the prices of these medicines," said National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) chief executive Dr Baha Eldin Fateha.

"Central registration is important because, without this practice, it is now taking a long time to individually price these medicines before releasing it to the market.

"Once we have the central registration of these drugs in place, then automatically the price unification can be applied.

"As of now, each country individually registers these drugs and prices for the same medi-



■ Dr Fateha



■ Price reduction for vitamins underway

cine which vary in different member states.

"By registering them centrally with date and price, there is also no need to re-register these medicines over and over, which will also save time."

Dr Al Fateha said they will monitor herbal medicines introduced in the GCC market for

any side effects.

"We are talking of liquid and capsule medicine originated from natural herbs in this category and if there are any side effects spotted by one member country, it could be alerted to the other," he explained.

"This will help in calling for



■ Unified and reduced prices for herbal medicines under study

a unified action."

The committee also discussed the registration of generic medicines and vitamins, said Dr Fateha.

"When we talk about generic medicines, we are very strict in ensuring that these medicines have proven their efficacy in par with branded medicines," he added.

The meeting will end today and committee members will discuss price reduction of herb-

al and generic medicines and vitamins, said Dr Fateha.

The NHRA announced in January a reduction in the price of the most commonly used medications, as part of a multi-phased plan to unify the cost of medications across the GCC.

Prices of antibiotics, skin medication and drugs used by HIV/Aids patients are also due to be reduced in October.

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■ A truck loaded with sand overturned on Shaikh Isa bin Salman Highway near Adhari Park yesterday causing major tailbacks and leaving the driver seriously injured. Traffic was at a standstill for almost an hour following the crash at around 2pm and tailbacks stretched all the way to Mina Salman industrial area. The driver was taken to Salmaniya Medical Complex, where he was said to be in stable condition. Above, police control traffic after the accident. Picture: JAYACHANDRAN

## Last day for film contest submissions

By AHMED AL OMARI

TODAY is the last day for people to enter a short film competition with BD400 up for grabs for the winner.

Participants have to create a 14-second film showcasing the BMW M4 Coupe, which is on display at the Euro Motors showroom in Sitra.

People can submit their entry by uploading it to Instagram using the hashtag #m4bahrain and mentioning @BMW\_EuroMotorsBH.

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■ A BD1,000 donation has been made to the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) by BBK in support of expatriate workers in Bahrain. The cheque was presented by BBK support group general manager Jamal Hijris to MWPS chairwoman Marietta Dias at the bank's headquarters in Manama. Above, Ms Dias, third from left, receives the donation from Mr Hijris, fourth from left.