

Kingdom greets Poland on Constitution Day



HM the King

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday sent cables of congratulations to Poland President Andrzej Duda



HRH Prince Salman

on his country's Constitution Day.

HM the King wished the Polish leader abundant health and happiness on the occasion.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister also sent a similar congratulatory message to Poland counterpart Matthews Murawiecki.

Bahrain-US defence cooperation discussed



HH Shaikh Nasser

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National Security Advisor, Royal Guard Commander, Major General HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, met virtually yesterday with Commander of the United States Marine Forces Central Command, Lieutenant General Carl Mundy.



Lt. Gen. Mundy

HH Shaikh Nasser praised deep-rooted relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the US and their perpetual growth at all levels. He also lauded distinguished relations of friendship between both countries and growing cooperation mainly in the military and defence field.

'A noble message and sound directives'

● **Royal keynote address praised by Shura head**

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Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh has affirmed that His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's keynote address marking the World Freedom Day carried a noble message and sound directives that consolidated Bahrain's deep-rooted approach of co-existence and mutual respect among all.

Al Saleh expressed pride in HM the King's confirmation of the cooperation between the executive and legislative branches, especially in discussing the law on regulating press, printing and publishing in order to meet the aspirations of the media community in Bahrain.

He stressed that the royal directives are essential for continuing to develop the national legislation and laws.

The Shura Chairman also lauded HM the King's directives to prepare a new and comprehensive law to combat hate speech, extremism and contempt for religions in expressing opinion in all its conventional and new forms.



Al Saleh

Al Saleh indicated that the royal keynote address has emphasised the key role played by the print, audio, visual and electronic media in promoting the concepts of co-existence and human rapprochement.

He praised the national responsibility shown by the national media institutions, particularly during the spread of the coronavirus, as partners to Team Bahrain, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Al Saleh added that the media in Bahrain has, for more than eight decades, played a crucial role in preserving the national identity and consolidating the values of loyalty and belonging to the nation.

He noted that HM the King's Reform Project and the National Action Charter represented a new beginning for the media in Bahrain.

HM King hails media key role in pandemic

Bahraini press a 'highly trusted source of information' for the nation and the world during these uncertain times

● **Kingdom joins World Press Freedom Day celebrations**

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has praised the significant role of the Bahraini press in disseminating right information for the nation and the world to confront the coronavirus pandemic challenges.

This was HM the King's special tribute to the media during his address on World Press Freedom Day celebrated yesterday.

His Majesty noted that Bahraini press has consolidated its status as a highly trusted source of information for citizens and residents during these uncertain times.

"The coronavirus pandemic, and the global challenges it imposed, demonstrated the significance of the Bahraini media as an active partner within Team Bahrain led by the dear son, the Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa," HM King Hamad said.

"Through its commitment to publish verified information in confronting misleading rumors and false news, deepening societal awareness of precautionary and preventive measures, and stimulating voluntary and humanitarian work, the press contributed to spreading reassurance, preserving public health and safety for all citizens and residents, and highlighting the Bahraini honorable model in playing the crisis and its repercussions, internally and



HM the King receives Information Minister Ali bin Mohammed Al Romaihi who presented a book entitled "This is Bahrain", a comparative study prepared by the Ministry's News Department

externally."

When Bahrain set up the National taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in early February, the Bahraini media was among its components.

The taskforce was well aware that confronting the increasingly ominous virus required expert management of the crisis and medical and biological expertise, but also a robust media that people could trust and rely on the information it provides around the clock.

It was a monumental responsibility for the local media. The confusion and lack of information in the early weeks of the pandemic was used by some as a fertile environment for jokes, rumours, allegations, misinformation, disinformation and malinformation.

Some of the "creative ideas" and "wild imagination" in making up stories and doctoring pictures for false narratives were driven by malicious intentions that invested in crises, fear and anxiety, while others were stimulated by a distorted sense of play and an aberrant idea of fun.

It was unfortunate that the

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- HM KING HAMAD

"exponential leap in technology" to make the world a better place was matched by an abuse of the same technology to disseminate misinformation and disinformation and ravage the world.

The Bahraini press, guided by HM the King's trust in its patriotism, sense of responsi-

bility and aptitudes, and driven by the "can-do" attitude and think-ahead strategies of HRH Crown Prince Salman and Team Bahrain, uncompromisingly set aside all sensational reports and news and dealt solely with trusted sources.

For Bahrain, the best way to confront the tsunami of misinformation, disinformation and malinformation was to draw up a communication strategy that boosts awareness among the masses, hold regular media conferences to provide updates, promote proven facts, motivate the media to handle such crises responsibly and encourage people to assess claims via fact-checking sites.

By building trust between the state, experts, the media and the public, the strategy has succeeded in tackling the potential to tap into people's emotions troubled by fear and uncertainty.

The Bahraini press has succeeded in strengthening its status as a trusted source of sheer facts, verified information and substantial reports. Now building on the experiences of the last few months, it is looking into the future where online reporting, the use of data and infographics, the posting of digital reports under new norms are establishing new values for journalism.

As Bahrain joins the international community in celebrating World Press Freedom Day, its journalists look with special pride at the special patronage they have been generously accorded by HM the King, the strong support they have been given by HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister and the deep trust they have been conferred by the nation.

'Moving stronger and steadier'

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More than 80 years after the publication of the first Gulf newspaper, and 21 years after the establishment of the BJA, the Bahraini press is moving forward stronger and steadier in the service of the nation.

Bahrain Journalists Association (BJA) stressed that the Bahraini press is committed to defending the nation's gains and achievements and determined to boost the status of the Kingdom under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

"As we celebrate alongside the international World Press Freedom Day, we look forward to the concretisation of the new press law that has been referred to the parliament for debate," BJA President Ahdeya Al Sayyed said.

"The amendments to the ex-



Al Sayyed

isting law empower the press to keep pace with major global developments and consolidate trust in the media capabilities to serve the people and the nation."

World Press Freedom Day is an occasion to thank all those who strengthened the status of the press in the Kingdom and helped it move forward despite the vast array of challenges, she said.

"COVID-19 has changed life as we knew it, but with time, the Bahraini press knew not



only how to adapt to the new situation, but also to gain from it, enrich its experience and ap-

titude in confronting crises and tracing its way forward into the future," she said.