



His Majesty congratulates US President

Manama

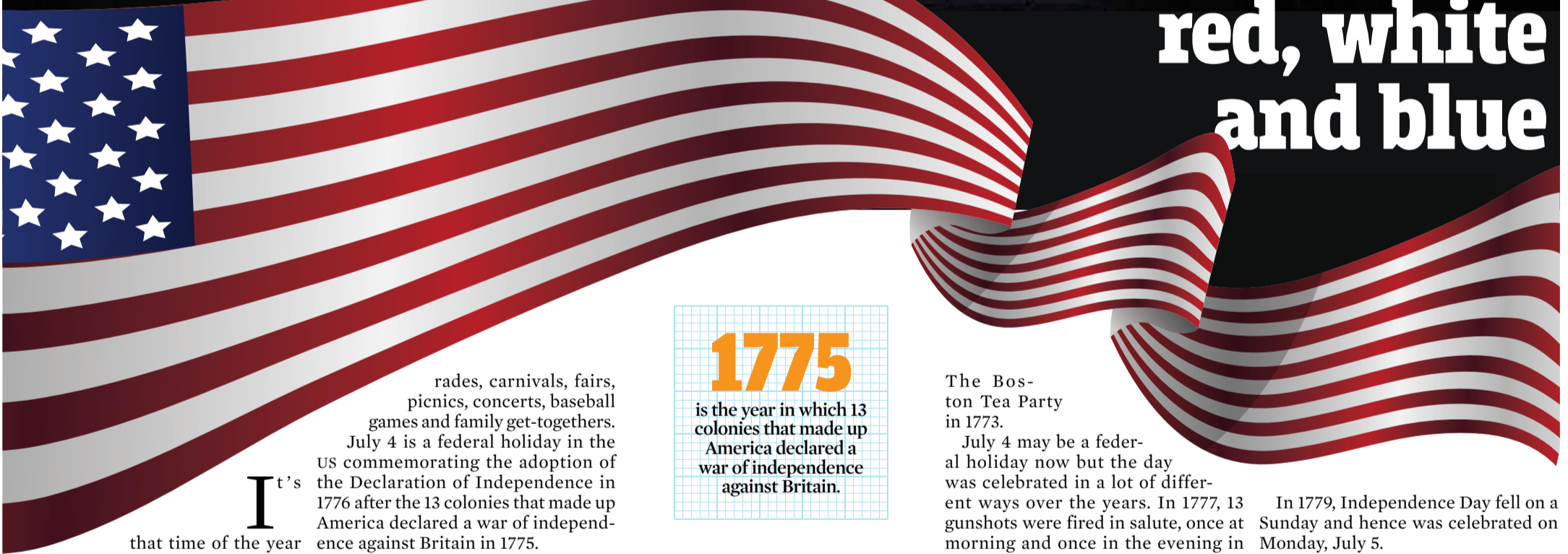
His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa sent a cable of congratulations to US President Donald Trump on his country's Independence Day.

HM the King praised the steadily progressing relations between the two countries and peoples,



wishing President Trump abundant health and happiness and the American people further progress and prosperity.

America decks up in red, white and blue



1775

is the year in which 13 colonies that made up America declared a war of independence against Britain.

It's that time of the year again as the United States deck up in shades of red, white and blue to celebrate its Independence Day.

Citizens are known to go all out to celebrate the nation's biggest holiday and often host barbecue parties and shoot fireworks.

The day is also associated with pa-

rades, carnivals, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games and family get-togethers. July 4 is a federal holiday in the US commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 after the 13 colonies that made up America declared a war of independence against Britain in 1775.

The Congress, in fact, voted to declare independence on July 2, but the same was adopted two days later.

The British lived in America since 1587 and the Americans accused them of exploiting their resources like tea and tobacco. Such were the tensions between the Americans and the British

that founding fathers, the head of the Sons of Liberty organisation, and a few other people are said to have boarded three ships in the Boston Harbour and threw 342 chests of tea into the waters.

Violence broke out after the move and the incident came to be known as

The Boston Tea Party in 1773.

July 4 may be a federal holiday now but the day was celebrated in a lot of different ways over the years. In 1777, 13 gunshots were fired in salute, once at morning and once in the evening in Bristol, Rhode Island.

The same year, Philadelphia hosted an official dinner for the Continental Congress, complete with toasts, 13-gun salutes, speeches, prayers, music, parades, troop reviews, and fireworks. Even ships at the port were decked with red, white, and blue.

In 1779, Independence Day fell on a Sunday and hence was celebrated on Monday, July 5.

In 1781, the Massachusetts General Court was the first state legislature to recognise July 4 as a state celebration.

In 1870, the US Congress decided that Independence Day would be an unpaid holiday for federal employees. July 4 has been a paid holiday in the nation since 1938.

Bahrain, a true partner for the US

The Fourth of July is a special day for all Americans. It is a day in which we gather with family and friends to celebrate the birth of our country, often with barbecues and fireworks. I would like to convey my best wishes to all of my fellow Americans celebrating the Fourth of July in Bahrain.

The Bahraini-US partnership is stronger today than ever before. We remain grateful to Bahrain for hosting US Navy Central Command and the US Fifth Fleet, the lynchpin of our security partnership. Bahrain has been a true partner for the

United States as we work together to ensure security throughout the region.

Since our bilateral Free Trade Agreement entered into force in 2006, bilateral trade between our two countries has increased over 140 per cent. This has provided tremendous opportunities for Bahraini and American businesses both. Bahraini merchandise exports to the United States have almost tripled since the FTA came into force, increasing from \$360 million in 2005 to almost \$1 billion in 2017. US exports to Bahrain have increased as well, providing good jobs for



Bahraini workers and iconic brands to the Bahraini market.

Hundreds of Bahrainis will travel to the United States this fall to study at American colleges and universities. More than three hundred Bahrainis have participated in US Embassy-sponsored exchange programs in the last five years alone. Last week, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo announced that Bahrain had achieved a Tier 1 ranking on our annual Trafficking in Persons report. This is a remarkable achievement and reflects the commitment and determina-

tion of the Bahraini leadership to combat human trafficking. The US Embassy has been proud to support these efforts.

As we celebrate America's birthday, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government and people of Bahrain for their support and friendship. The United States' partnership with Bahrain makes this important day even more special for all Americans in Bahrain.

(Justin Siberell is the US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain)