

HM King: Gaza deal marks a ‘day of peace’



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa underscored that the agreement reached to end the war in Gaza marks a day of peace for the Middle East and the world. HM the King was speaking as he received His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, at Al Safriya Palace, in the presence of His Highness Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HM King’s Personal Representative, His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty’s Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs and National Security Advisor, and senior officials. HM King Hamad expressed appreciation to the US President Donald Trump for his efforts in promoting peace in the Middle East and for his role in supporting this historic agreement. He reiterated Bahrain’s firm support for the agreement and stressed the importance of all parties honouring their commitments and responsibilities in its implementation. His Majesty also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the mediators who contributed to achieving this outcome. The meeting discussed topics related to advancing Bahrain’s comprehensive development process and enhancing national achievements for the benefit of the Kingdom and its citizens.

Reforms Ignite Fintech

Bahrain’s flexible framework drives change



Her Excellency Noor bint Ali Al Khulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of the Economic Development Board (EDB), speaks during the Fintech Forward press meet yesterday, flanked by Dalal Buhejji, Executive Director of Business Development at the EDB, left, and Bader Sater, CEO of Bahrain Fintech Bay, right. (Picture credit: Ashen Tharaka)

- Sandbox speeds innovation testing
- International players choose Bahrain
- AI, Gateway Gulf drive transformation

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Regulatory agility and fast-paced policy reforms are powering Bahrain’s fintech transformation, Her Excellency Noor bint Ali Al Khulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of Economic Development Board (EDB), said, stressing that the Kingdom’s flexible framework is helping new technologies move from concept to operation within months. Speaking at a press meet at the venue of Fintech Forward 2025 yesterday, the Minister said Bahrain’s lighter touch regulatory environment, led by the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB), allows startups to test their technologies for up to a year under the national sandbox initiative. “This two-way conversation between innovators and regulators ensures that we stay agile and responsive to market change. When there’s

a demand for reform, the ecosystem acts together,” she said, citing how trust law updates were completed within a month following consultation with the private sector. Bahrain’s model, she noted, ensures that emerging technologies have “a higher chance of success, and that success translates directly into jobs.” The system, which combines innovation with oversight, has helped position Bahrain as a regional leader in fintech governance and talent-driven growth, she explained. During the press meet, in which Bader Sater, CEO of Bahrain Fintech Bay, and Dalal Buhejji, Executive Director of Business Development at Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB), were also present, it was also revealed that Bahrain has been selected by Google to pilot next-generation instant payment technology, targeting the first international transactions by 2026. The project aims to enable near-instant cross-border remittances, a development that could redefine the region’s payment infrastructure. Bahrain’s accessibility to regulators and decision-makers, coupled with its small but advanced financial ecosystem, made it the ideal testing ground for global fintech players, Bader

In 2017, Bahrain launched one of the earliest fintech regulatory sandboxes in the GCC, enabling startups to test innovations under supervision before licensing.

Sater revealed. Her Excellency the Minister said Bahrain’s century-old banking legacy and highly skilled workforce continue to attract international institutions. The financial sector is now 70 per cent Bahraini, with strong female participation and a growing base of tech-trained professionals. “We’re proud that our people are not only shaping the sector at home but also leading it across the GCC,” she said. Global banks have recently chosen Bahrain for digital banking and innovation hubs, with one bank alone planning to recruit 1,000 coders over the next decade for its new tech centre, she noted, adding that upskilling programmes led by Tamkeen are ensuring that the local workforce remains competitive in a rapidly evolving sector. Fintech Growth Sectors H.E. Al Khulaif said Bahrain continues to expand its financial ecosystem through digital assets, wealth management, and insurtech. The Kingdom remains one of the few global jurisdictions with compre-

hensive crypto and digital asset regulations. Having all financial verticals under one regulator allows us to move quickly and coordinate sector growth, she said. AI and Future Focus Turning to future priorities, H.E. Al Khulaif said Bahrain is already embedding artificial intelligence in education, workforce training, and digital services. The government has issued ethical AI guidelines and launched training programmes targeting 50,000 Bahrainis by 2030. She described artificial intelligence as a major disruptor and said Bahrain is positioning itself to lead regional transformation through early adoption, training, and innovation partnerships. Further, the Minister noted that upcoming events such as Gateway Gulf 2025 in November will expand investment opportunities, including in Islamic fintech, AI, and other emerging technologies. Bahrain’s fintech story, once experimental, is fast becoming the region’s blueprint for innovation with purpose.

Bahrain-US military and defence ties



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, highlighted that the longstanding partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the US continues to advance across all fields, particularly within military and defence. HRH Prince Salman made the statement as he met yesterday with Vice Admiral Curt A. Renshaw, the newly appointed Commander of the United States Naval Forces Central Command, the US Fifth Fleet, and the Combined Maritime Forces, at Riffa Palace. HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister affirmed the Kingdom’s commitment to further strengthening joint cooperation and coordination and emphasised the importance of building upon the achievements of existing agreements, most notably the Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA). He extended his best wishes to Vice Admiral Renshaw for success in carrying out his duties. His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Minister of the Prime Minister’s Court, also attended the meeting.

Bahrain-UNESCO close partnership



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, affirmed that the close partnership between Bahrain and UNESCO reflects the Kingdom of Bahrain’s commitment to making culture, education, and technology key pillars of its progress and comprehensive development. HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he met yesterday with Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He affirmed the importance of strengthening cooperation with international organisations to realise the Kingdom’s desired goals of progress and development. HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister noted that the UNESCO King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education stands as a testament to two decades of cooperation between Bahrain and UNESCO. His Royal Highness stressed that this partnership, highlights the Kingdom’s commitment to academic excellence and the furthering of educational outcomes, innovation and opportunity worldwide.

Upgrading healthcare programmes



Lieutenant General Adel bin Khalifa Al Fadhel, Deputy Minister of Interior, received Lieutenant General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, President of the Supreme Council for Health (SCH). The meeting was attended by Shaikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior. The meeting discussed means to enhance cooperation and coordination between the ministry and the SCH in areas of mutual interest, particularly the development of healthcare programmes for ministry personnel, support for public health initiatives, and the use of medical and technical expertise to improve the quality of services provided.