

## 'Protecting Kingdom's supreme interests'



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INTERIOR MINISTER GENERAL  
SHAIKH RASHID BIN ABDULLA AL  
KHALIFA

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Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa asserted that the establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel comes to protect the supreme interests of the Kingdom.

The move doesn't mean neglecting the Palestine cause and the rights of Palestinians, but it is to reinforce the security of Bahrainis and the solidity of their economy, he said, adding "if Palestine is our Arab cause, then Bahrain is our fateful cause".

The Interior Minister affirmed that the Kingdom has been standing with the Palestinian cause since the beginning of the Palestine-Israel conflict, and the decision won't clash with Bahrain's stand towards the Arab Peace Initiative and international decisions.

He said that after 73 years of the Palestinian cause, the threats have moved to Arab countries, in which their security situations have changed in different ways.

Unfortunately, the chances of peace solutions have reduced. He said that fateful challenges have reached the region and cannot be ignored or overlooked.

The Interior Minister commented: "The regional situation makes us deal with ongo-

ing threats for the past years, in which most of them were deterred. It isn't wise to see the threat and wait for it to reach us if we can in any way avoid it."

He continued that Iran has chosen the behaviour of imposing domination in many forms, and it is an ongoing threat to Bahrain's internal security.

"We are a state that is determined to develop our national capabilities, and our old and modern strategy is based on strong allies to confront potential threats," he said.

The Interior Minister added that there is no doubt that cooperation on such a project would reinforce the depth of strategic partnership with the US, which takes Bahrain as the headquarters of its Fifth Fleet Command.

He highlighted that the current general economic situation that impacts Bahrain and negatively affects the economic and social life gives more responsibility to the state to provide security and decent living to people.

"It isn't part of our strategic views and capability to adopt stands and then take opposite procedures later, because we are in a geographical, security, and economic situation that requires a swift response, as any delay would have major circumstances," he said.

## Preserving human rights in Kingdom discussed



Khoury, centre, with Nardi, left, during their meeting

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National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) chairperson Maria Khoury received US Embassy chargé d'affaires Margaret Nardi.

The chargé d'affaires was briefed on the efforts made by the NIHR during the pandemic to inform citizens and residents through informative messages, tweets, and the institution's visits and follow-ups to isolation and quarantine

centers, to monitor the procedures taken by authorities in providing medical services to infected patients.

The chairperson highlighted the precautionary measures taken by the Kingdom to preserve human rights according to international standards.

Nardi expressed her appreciation for the efforts made by the NIHR to preserve human rights in the Kingdom, and wished Bahrain further progress and prosperity.

## Extend housing loans deferral call

National Action Charter Bloc appeals for three-month extension to serve national efforts in combatting COVID-19 repercussions

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A parliamentary bloc in Bahrain's Council of Representatives yesterday called for exempting citizens from paying the installments of their housing loans to the government for an additional three months.

The seven-member National Action Charter Bloc said in a statement issued yesterday that extending the six-month deferral period, which was implemented by the government in April this year and ends by the beginning of November, would serve the national efforts exerted to combat the repercussions of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The bloc cited Article 78 of

**“The extension of the postponement of housing services installments for an additional three months will have a great impact on citizens and will reduce their financial burdens amidst the spread of coronavirus.”**

NATIONAL ACTION CHARTER BLOC STATEMENT

Resolution 909 of 2015, with regards to the housing system, stating that it grants the Housing Minister the jurisdiction to postpone the payment of installments for a period of up to two years in certain circumstances, such as disasters or any circumstances that require this procedure.

They said the article provides a great and smooth legal possi-

bility for the ministry to proceed with postponing the payment of installments in the current challenging circumstances, which have resulted in difficult economic conditions for many Bahraini families who are benefiting from housing services.

"The extension of the postponement of housing services installments for an additional three months will have a great

impact on citizens and will reduce their financial burdens amidst the spread of coronavirus," the statement mentioned.

It is worth noting that the bloc is headed by MP Mohammed Alsisi Al Buainain, and consists of MPs Isa Al Dossaryu, Bader Al Dossary, Ammar Al Bannai, Ghazi Al Rahma, Fatema Al Qatari and Yousif Al Thawadi as members.

The MPs appreciated the efforts devoted by Team Bahrain and the relevant authorities, headed by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to combat the spread of the pandemic and to safeguard the society from its impacts.

## Bahrain, Korea investment cooperation discussed

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Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister Zayed bin Rashid Al Zayani received yesterday Korean Ambassador Hae Kwan Chung.

The Industry Minister congratulated Ambassador Chung on the occasion of his appointment to his post in Bahrain.

During the meeting, they re-

viewed bilateral relations and ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries in all fields, especially in the industrial, commercial and investment sectors.

The Industry Minister stressed the ministry's keenness to develop joint relations, and highlighted the role that the private sector can play in contributing to achieving common goals.



Al Zayani with Ambassador Chung

## Transportation Minister chairs BAC board meeting

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Transportation and Telecommunications Minister and Gulf Air Holding Group chairman Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed headed the Bahrain Airport Company (BAC) Board of Directors meeting.

BAC CEO Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalah and other board members were present.

Following the revision and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, the board reviewed and the audited financial results for 2019, raising recommendations for shareholder approval at the Annual General Assembly.

BAC's executive management updated the board on the company's financial performance and the impact of the corona-



Mohammed chairing the meeting

virus (COVID-19) on airport operations.

Attendees were also updated on the Cargo Village project, its strategic importance to the development of cargo and logistics operations at the airport, and its key role in the development of the Kingdom's logistics sector.

They discussed the achieve-

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**The expansion of Bahrain International Airport is one of the largest infrastructure development projects in the history of Bahrain, at a total cost of \$1.1 billion**

ments made during the first phase of construction of the new Passenger Terminal, which is one of the largest green buildings in the Kingdom.

This stage was completed according to a strict schedule and without disruptions to operations at the existing terminal.

The Transportation Minister thanked the board members for their dedication to developing the civil aviation sector in the Kingdom and increasing the country's non-oil revenue, in line with Bahrain's Vision 2030.

He also praised BAC's executive management and employees on their efforts to prepare for the on-schedule launch of the new terminal, and noted their ability to conduct airport operations smoothly and effectively despite difficult global circumstances.

He added that the second phase of construction represents a major achievement for the Airport Modernisation Programme.

## East Hidd Town construction progress inspected



Officials during their inspection of the housing projects

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Housing Minister Bassem bin Yacoub Al Hamar

confirmed that the development of East Hidd Town is witnessing remarkable progress due to the ministry's efforts to

quicken the pace of work on construction projects to meet His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's plan to build 40,000 housing units for citizens.

The Housing Minister, the ministry's undersecretary Shaikh Khalid bin Hmood Al Khalifa, and a number of officials and site engineers made an inspection tour and confirmed that 90 per cent of the Bu Shaheen neighborhood project's second phase is complete, which consists of 398 housing units; 100 per cent of construction work is complete for 740 housing units in Qlaiaa neighborhood; and 91 per cent

is complete in Umm Al Sawali neighborhood, which consists of 375 housing units.

The Housing Minister noted that the ministry and all relevant bodies are coordinating to provide the town with the needed facilities and services, as mentioned in its general plan.

The progress stems from the government's keenness to maintain housing projects to provide a decent living for citizens by adopting the best modern design standards for road networks, sewage, and bridge networks, as well as providing green spaces and walkways.