

CAPTAINS CORNER

Foreign investors need to be heard



CAPT. MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

It is a well-known fact that the GCC countries have historically turned to expatriates to work alongside their nationals in building the modern infrastructure of their countries, post the 'seventies oil boom. And yet, expat employees are unfortunately the soft target whenever GCC governments and lawmakers need a bit of chest-thumping to show that they are working for nationalization. Of all the initiatives that the region has seen, perhaps HRH the Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa's successful dismantling of the rigid sponsorship system was perhaps the most effective because it led to the establishment of a transparent development and training channel in Tamkeen while giving foreign workers the right to change jobs, thus levelling the workspace.

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Bahrain has also always topped the table of investor-friendly countries, thanks to a clear and fair legal system and a sizeable pool of educated Bahrainis, willing to work. But this has to now be measured in terms of what support we are giving our investors at the time of pandemic. Attracting investors with our undeniable advantages during good times is the easy part. Keeping them and protecting our goodwill in international business circles is the true test of our ability to remain in the big league where FDI – foreign direct investments – are concerned.

To do this, we need our MPs to draft a clear recovery plan that will include foreign business owners as well. It will be unfair to exclude them from the concessions since many have chosen Bahrain to invest their life-savings in business. They pay VAT and they pay GOSI charges for employees just like the Bahraini business owners do and we must reciprocate by supporting them.

Besides our MPs, we need bodies such as the BCCI to connect with the business community and investors and understand how they are coping and what help they need. Our government is most forward-looking and we need to give them data and inputs on how they can support investors at this critical juncture. The same level playing field that workers today enjoy, must be a measure of success for investors too.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

'A courageous decision'

HM King Hamad's peace vision stems from his firm belief in co-existence, tolerance between nations and people: Foreign Minister



The Foreign Minister during his meeting with the local press
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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa took a courageous decision to reinforce peace in the region, by signing the declaration supporting peace between Bahrain and Israel, Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani has affirmed.

The Foreign Minister pointed out that HM the King's wise vision in this context stems from his firm belief in co-existence and tolerance between nations and peoples, and for peace, security, and stability to prevail in the Middle East.

This came during a meeting of the Foreign Minister with a number of members of the local press.

Also present were the ministry's International Affairs undersecretary Dr Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and National Communication Centre executive Yousif Al-binkhalil, in addition to a number of the ministry's senior officials.

The Foreign Minister expressed his deep appreciation for the local press and their sincere national efforts to enlighten, educate, and inform public opinion about what is happening in the local, regional, and international arena.

He appreciated their prominent role in promoting the Kingdom's march and contributing to building its renaissance, progress, and prosperity in the bright era of HM King Hamad.

The Foreign Minister also pointed out that this fraternal meeting comes in implementation of the directives of HM the King to communicate with writers and inform them of the contents of the declaration supporting peace.

He indicated that the wise vision of HM the King stresses the impor-

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER DR ABDULLATIF BIN RASHID AL ZAYANI

tance of spreading peace, stability, and prosperity throughout the world, and the need to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East as a strategic option, and settling the Palestinian-Israeli conflict according to the two-state solution.

He stated that the vision of HM the King is based on the values of tolerance and co-existence between nations, peoples, and religions.

Authentic values

The Foreign Minister said that

In the declaration supporting peace signed between Bahrain and Israel, the two countries have agreed to seek agreements in investment, tourism, direct flights, security, telecommunications, technology, energy, healthcare, culture, the environment, and other areas of mutual benefit, as well as the reciprocal opening of embassies

Foreign Minister receives GCC delegation



The Foreign Minister, right, with Al Hajraf during their meeting

Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani received yesterday GCC secretary general Dr Nayef bin Falah Al Hajraf and his accompanying delegation.

The Foreign Minister lauded the GCC secretary general's relentless efforts to promote joint-GCC work and boost relations between the countries with the rest of the world, in order to meet the aspirations of the GCC leaders and peoples.

Both sides discussed a number of issues related to this and means of tackling various challenges.

The meeting was also attended by the ministry's Regional and GCC Affairs undersecretary Ambassador Waheed Mubarak Sayyar, the GCC and Arab Countries Affairs assistant undersecretary Ambassador Yusuf Mohamed Jameel, and GCC Affairs Directorate director Ambassador Hasan Ebrahim Saleh, along with several GCC officials.

Bahrain has been known throughout the ages as a tolerant, co-existent and accepting society, adding that these are authentic values that have been rooted in its people, and affirming that peace needs courage, patience, perseverance, sincerity, and faith.

He added that Bahrain, with its historic step, gained the respect of the countries of the world in America, Europe and Asia, and noted that this move is a message from HM the King and the people to the world.

The Foreign Minister explained that the declaration supporting peace is an important step for Bahrain and added that it is not directed against anyone.

Good neighbourliness

He said that Bahrain believes in the principles of good neighbourliness and resolving disputes by peaceful

means, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, and it seeks to make this region safe, stable, and prosperous for the benefit of its people.

He also stressed that security and stability go hand in hand, as there is no prosperity without security, and no security without prosperity.

He said that, during the past decades, the Middle East has witnessed devastating wars and conflicts that have caused the deterioration of the situation of a number of Arab countries, and led to millions of Arab youth losing hope for a better future and a free and decent life.

The Foreign Minister also affirmed that the tragic situation in a number of Arab countries needs to be handled with a new approach—one that helps restore security, stability and peace to the region, and gives people hope for a better future.

For their part, the writers of opinion in the local press praised the important role and the courageous historical step taken by Bahrain by signing a declaration supporting peace with Israel.

They highlighted the great efforts undertaken by the Kingdom to achieve security, peace, and prosperity in the region, and wished Bahrain more tangible achievements in everything that would serve the country and its citizens.

Coast Guard commander receives British commodore



Seyadi with Bassett
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Coast Guard commander Major-General Alaa Abdulla Seyadi received UK Maritime Component Command commodore Dean Bassett.

The meeting discussed topics of com-

mon interest, and ways of cooperation, especially in training and enhancing affiliates' capabilities.

The British commodore visited the Maritime Operations Centre and was briefed on the services provided for seafarers.

Public security chief chairs academic scientific council

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Public Security Chief Lt-General Tariq Al Hassan chaired a virtual meeting of the Academic Scientific Council at the Royal Academy of Police (RAP).

The RAP commander and the council members attended.

The public security chief expressed thanks and appreciation to Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa for his ongoing support to the council and directives to develop training and scientific programmes to meet increasing security challenges.

The programmes aim to help police personnel deal with all



Lt-Gen Al Hassan during the virtual meeting

challenges while carrying out their duties.

The meeting also discussed various other topics, including the RAP academic plan 2020-21 and the courses of the 12th batch of cadets.

He hailed the dedication of the council to utilise modern technology and the attraction of education and training expertise.