

Medical graduates honoured

Bahrain has celebrated the inaugural graduation ceremony of its new, state-of-of-the-art medical university.

A total of 72 young medical professionals made up the first batch of graduates from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland-Medical University of Bahrain (RCSI-MUB), Muharraq.

The university's first graduation, held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, was attended by a number of other high profile figures including, Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Shura Council chairman Ali Saleh Al Saleh, Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company chairman Talal Alzain and US Ambassador Adam Erel.

Officials from RCSI (Dublin), the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and the National University of Ireland also flew in for the occasion.

Among those to collect awards was Minister of State for Defence Affairs General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, who was made an honorary Doctor of Science for his service to the country and in recognition of support to the university by the Bahrain Defence Force's Royal Medical Services.

Special awards were also presented to School of Medicine graduates Dr Ayman Bukannan and Dr Zainab Fawzi Harb during the ceremony.

Valedictorian Dr Bukannan picked up the Highest Aggregate Marks Gold Medal, as well as Senior Cycle 2010 Silver Medal.

Dr Harb landed the Senior Cycle 2010 Bronze Medal and Final Medicine Gold Medal.

Meanwhile, nursing graduate Asma Ahmed Al Najjar received the School of Nursing Bronze Medal, while Aysha Isa Al Muhaisen received both Silver and Gold Medals.

The new graduates join a long list of distinguished people who have graduated from the RCSI and honorary fellows - including the late Amir His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, His Majesty King Hamad and Prince Khalifa.

Other famous honorary fellows include Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Nelson Mandela and Irish president Mary McAleese.

Citibank customers set for comfortable landing

Citibank Bahrain has launched a complimentary unlimited airport lounge access privileges scheme

across more than 70 international airports for all its Ultimate credit card members in the Kingdom.

The new initiative will see that every card holder will have access to the lounges, regardless of what class or airline passengers are travelling in.

The move is aimed at complimenting customers' fast-moving and international lifestyles and providing customer centric products and services.

New maps planned for Bahrain

Bahrain's Survey and Land Registration Bureau (SLRB) and Bahrain-based International Consortium (ICON) have joined forces to produce a series of official maps of Bahrain.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the two parties to provide what is hoped will be a meaningful, enduring and productive partnership between the public and private sector.

Falling in line with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, the SLRB is continuing to implement new initiatives to deliver improved service to customers in government, private companies and individual citizens.

Several factors influence the implementation strategies including the ongoing rapid development of the kingdom and its consequent increase in the demand for appropriate infrastructure.

Fundamental to the development of infrastructure are survey control, topographic mapping and secure land ownership.

As the national mapping organisation of Bahrain, the SLRB is responsible for these activities.

ICON operates all across the Gulf region and works in conjunction with Germany's market-leading provider of customer-oriented cartography, Kartographie Huber.

Using the spatial data that is to be provided by the SLRB, ICON will incorporate the art of cartography to produce the highest quality thematic maps of the kingdom.

Any interested public or private sector party and individuals may also commission ICON to develop specialised maps based on the official SLRB data.

Possible applications include tourist maps, GIS and LIS systems, maps of newly developed areas, road maps, and even interactive online maps showcasing Bahrain to visitors worldwide on the Internet.

Bahrain moves into next generation

A nationwide Next Generation Network (NGN) platform is to be launched in Bahrain to help accelerate the country's national development priorities and boost its presence in the Gulf region.

Cisco and Bahrain Internet Exchange (BIX) have agreed to work on the project, which has been backed by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and minister responsible for the telecommunications sector Shaikh Ahmed bin Ateyatala Al Khalifa.

The deal is the first of a number expected to be made between Cisco and BIX in the coming months.

Qatar set for gas boost

Qatar's two liquefied natural gas (LNG) producers Qatargas and RasGas have approved a \$1 billion project to recover some 600,000 tonnes of gas at Ras Laffan industrial port.

The project, which would produce enough LNG to power over 40,000 homes, is expected to be completed in late 2013 or early 2014.

It would collect boiled-off gas from LNG ships to be used as fuel, or for reprocessing at LNG plants and would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions at Ras Laffan.

Bahrain to receive dangerous goods

Bahrain has been chosen as a key regional hub for the transshipment of dangerous goods in the Middle East.

The demand for the secure shipment of dangerous goods is of paramount importance as international governments increasingly recognise the need to ensure safe passage for products, flight personnel, passengers and the general public.

Based at Bahrain International Airport, TDB Solutions has secured the sole franchise for Hazgo operations in the region.

Hazgo specialises in the domestic and international issues of dangerous goods logistics.

It offers regulatory training, logistics and packaging solutions for the safe and efficient transport of dangerous material.

Bahrain was chosen as a key hub due to its strategic location within the Gulf and its excellent air and road links to Saudi Arabia.

OHC looking to Bahraini expansion

The Oetker Hotel Collection (OHC) is seeking major expansion in Bahrain and around the Middle East.

OHC is part of the German Oetker Group, a major conglomerate with more than 24,000 employees and a turnover of in excess of \$13 billion.

The company acquired its first hotel in Germany in 1941 and now has a further three hotels in France but it is now looking to take its total number of properties to 15 and is targeting the GCC as a potential market for up to 70 per cent of its business.

The company has already committed to developing Le Bristol Abu Dhabi by 2012 and is in discussions about bringing its presence to Bahrain.

The company launched its expansion roadshow at The Capital Club at Bahrain Financial Harbour and also visited UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

OHC also announced that regional hospitality veteran Samir Daqqaq is spearheading the expansion strategy as OHC's senior vice-president (development) for Middle East and Africa.

ISPs united

Bahrain's Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have come together to sign a world-first agreement to protect children from any threat or misuse.

The unique Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drawn up and signed in conjunction with the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and is aimed at adequately protecting children from threats that might emerge through the misuse of the Internet.

Bahrain's ISPs pledged to communicate with each other, the TRA and with all relevant government bodies on any potential risk to the safety of children and young adults.

They have also agreed to liaise and assist all relevant government bodies in the investigation and prosecution of people who commit crimes against children through use of the Internet.

The MoU also stipulates that they will provide educational material of any relevant protection and control mechanisms for each subscriber on a regular basis regarding child safety and the Internet.

In addition, the ISPs will suggest technical means to subscribers to enhance security on their access to their services, including information about the tools available to them to control access and how to implement protective measures.

They have also pledged to work with the TRA on any Internet risk found in the future, work to develop and implement appropriate international best practices for online child safety.

ISPs will meet twice a year to discuss ongoing initiatives and share best practices.

Bahrain rugby celebrates good health

Bahrain RFC has formally concluded the 2009/2010 Arabian Gulf campaign with its annual End-of-season ball at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Looking back on a magnificent year on the field of play-during which the club's first team was beaten only twice all year and stormed to their first league title in 13 years, club officials paid special thanks to the players and in particular, head coach Jim Rowark.

Lock Mark Burnell, hooker Gert Olivier, flanker Mark Hooker and full-back Jaco Lourens were all recognised for their performances over the course of the campaign, while Andrew Wilkie was also honoured for his contribution to the club throughout the year.

The 2009/2010 was also a hugely successful one on the field for Bahrain, with the highlight coming in the form of the club's 'Festival of Rugby' back in April.

As well as playing host to the Arabian Gulf's memorable victory over Hong Kong in the HSBC Asian Five Nations, the festival also comprised a number of charity events held in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Club vice-chairman Mehdi Honar organised the event in support of the trust that has helped his daughter Persia over the last two years in her battle against Ewing's Sarcoma.

Through a charity dinner and exhibition match involving international rugby legends, Mr Honar

managed to raise over BD20,000 for the worthy cause.

Business groups join forces to promote UK ties

The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and the Bahrain British Business Forum (BBBF) have announced a deal to strengthen business ties between Bahrain and the UK.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two parties, with the focus on outlining areas for improving co-operation and mutual interest.

Also aiming to attract investment to Bahrain, the move will see the two groups working closer together by organising seminars and conferences as well as arranging trade delegations to the UK and British business missions to Bahrain.

The MoU was signed by BCCI chairman Dr Essam Fakhro and his BBBF counterpart Khalid Al Zayani during a special meeting.

Both men highlighted their delight in launching the partnership.

Causeway set for revamp

Facilities at the King Fahad Causeway, which connects Bahrain to Saudi Arabia, are set to undergo a major BD2 million renovation.

Causeway authority officials have revealed that project is part of a wider expansion scheme that was announced during Ramadan of last year.

It involves increasing the number of departure lanes from 10 to 17 and the number of arrival lanes from 13 to 18 on both sides of the border and also includes the establishment of a commercial centre on the Bahrain side of the bridge.

As well as restaurants and shops, the BD800,000 centre is expected to feature medical facilities to serve travelers and causeway staff.

Jobs boost for Bahrainis

A new initiative to find jobs for unemployed Bahrainis has been launched with the backing of regional recruitment company Gulf Connexions and publishing and marketing organisation Al Hilal Group

The first service of its type in Bahrain, jobs4bahrainis.com aims to provide employers with access to Bahraini talent, while enabling Bahrainis to search for job opportunities within their specialised or preferred employment sectors.

Organisers are planning to get colleges, universities, training centres and recruitment professionals on board to support the site, which offers opportunities to everyone from school-leavers to experienced professionals.

The website will advertise jobs from all over the world and there is no charge to add your CV.

Young athletes soar in Bahrain

Bahrain's Southern Governorate volleyball team closed out the 44th International Children's Games (ICG) in Bahrain in perfect style by securing the country's second gold medal in the history of its participation.

Over 1,300 athletes, aged between 11 and 15, from 31 countries worldwide descended on Bahrain for the latest chapter of the games, widely recognised as the Olympics for children.

Three days of competition in almost 20 events was played out in front of an enthusiastic crowd at Bahrain University's Roman Theatre in Sakhir, with the support of the General Organisation of Youth and Sport (GOYS).

Bahrain, the first Arab country to take part in the competition, made history this year by also becoming the first Arab host of the games, which are sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Among other Bahrainis to win medals over the course of the games were the Manama soccer team, the Muharraq handball team, local sailors Faisal Abdulaziz and Dawood Abdulla, and Bahraini table tennis duo Elyass Ahmed and Rashid Khalid.

All participants meanwhile received certificates and other souvenirs to commemorate their visit to Bahrain at a closing ceremony which also saw the handover of the ICG flag and torch to the delegation representing next year's ICG hosts, Lanarkshire from Scotland.

Present at the ceremony were ICG president Torsten Rasch and GOYS president Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa.

Bahrain land data on track

Bahrain has become the first country in the Middle East to electronically track all of its land deals through the Survey and Land Registration Bureau (SLRB).

The completion of the Radio Frequency Identification Deployment (RFID) project by telecoms giant Motorola is said to use one of the most advanced technologies of its kind.

Implementing the new technology is expected to enable authorities to track and trace the movement of files in a thorough manner, while eliminating the risk of errors.

It is also hoped that the system will help to bring about cost reductions, create best practices and ensure both centralised and de-centralised filing.

Each file is labelled with RFID tag inlays as an effective and long-lasting solution to provide maximum functionality for high-performance reading and writing and efficient radio frequency communication.

Bahrain to return Ivory Coast trip

A Bahrain delegation comprising representatives of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation Investment and Technology Promotion Office (Unido-ITPO), the Islamic Development Bank Group, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the Saudi Fund for Development is to visit Ivory Coast as part of a 'need assessment mission'.

The main aim of the project will include assessing and, if necessary, proposing a full-fledged investment promotion programme for the country such as project identification, investor survey,

capacity building and promotion of opportunities.

The possibility for representatives of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organisations to join the trip has also been left open.

Initial details of the mission were announced during a Press conference at the Ritz-Carlton Bahrain Hotel and Spa following a request by Ivory Coast Industry and Private Sector Promotion Minister Moussa Dosso.

He appeared alongside Housing Minister and Arab Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship and Investment Training board of trustees chairman Shaikh Ibrahim bin Khalifa Al Khalifa.

Mr Dosso was in Bahrain as part of a high-ranking delegation on a three-day visit to learn about the Bahrain-Arab Model for Enterprise Development.

It was co-headed by Mr Dosso and Minister of State for Financial Affairs Bernard Yao.

During the stay, the delegation held talks with top Bahraini officials, including Industry and Commerce Minister Dr Hassan Fakhro, Shaikh Ebrahim and Unido-ITPO head Dr Hashim Hussein.

Spype launches base in Bahrain

Internet phone software pioneer Skype has launched its Middle East headquarters in Bahrain.

The move comes as the company aims to expand its business in the Middle East and North African region, with Bahrain seen as the perfect gateway through which to do this.

Although the unique service, which allows users to make free voice and video calls via the Internet to other Skype users, has been available for use in Bahrain for nearly the past three years, it still remains blocked in the UAE, Oman and Kuwait.

Senegal calls on Bahrain for help

The government of Senegal has enlisted the help of Bahrain in helping to develop its Islamic finance industry.

Senegal-based SYM International Finance Corporation, in partnership with the government of Senegal, has taken part in a forum in Bahrain as part of its efforts to assist the government to promote the Senegal Financial Services Centre and attract more private investments.

Leading bankers from the country gave a comprehensive presentation on the centre to more than 40 financial services practitioners, with emphasis on its structure, actors, general regulatory framework, business activities and main products.

The forum was co-ordinated by the Bahrain government, through the Foreign Ministry, with the

assistance of the Central Bank of Bahrain and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Bahrain Association of Banks was in charge of technical and logistical organisation of the event.

The Senegalese government, through the ministries of Economy and Finance, Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, was fully involved in the organisation of the event, in collaboration with SYM International Finance Corporation.

The Senegal Embassy also played a crucial role in the preparation of the event and co-ordinated on behalf of the Senegal side diplomatic, technical and logistical organisation of the event.

Bahrain going digital

Bahrain is to switch to digital terrestrial television broadcasting (DTTV or DTT) by December 2011.

The plan has been approved by the Cabinet, chaired by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

The Culture and Information Ministry submitted a proposed four-phase scheme to introduce DTTV technology and was instructed by the Cabinet to allocate the necessary budget.

