

BDF shield for the nation

● The King writes in the visitors' book



His Majesty King Hamad opened the Shaikh Isa Royal Military College, as the Bahrain Defence Force celebrated its 41st anniversary in February this year.

The ceremony was attended by HRH the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and HRH Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, who is Deputy Supreme Commander, BDF Commander-in-Chief General Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and other key officials.

The King, who is Supreme Commander, praised the BDF as a "school for values and noble principles, a path towards development and progress."

He described the BDF as a model institution incorporating advanced science and technology for "the nation to remain free, strong and developed".

The college is named after the late Amir, HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

"We are all proud that this landmark edifice bears the name of the late Amir in recognition of his contribution to the country's development and progress," the King wrote in the VIP visitors' book.

"The late Amir was the founder of the BDF. He was the one who sowed the first seed."

The reform project, the King said, was an inclusive and multifaceted process as it incorporates civil, military, political, economic, develop-



● BDF troops demonstrate their skills

mental and cultural aspects of life.

He paid tribute to all those who contributed to the establishment of the BDF, armed with patience, dedication and resolve to overcome challenges.

The King also attended a military air show by Bahrain Royal Air Force and bestowed the Bahrain First and Second Class medals on BDF officers.

A documentary film highlighting the college's departments and construction was broadcast.

Earlier, the King patronised a joint Royal Bahrain Naval Force diving and special forces graduation ceremony, on board the ship Manama.

He presented certificates and awards of appreciation to outstanding graduates and wished them success.

Bahrain made military history last year, when it became the first Gulf country to take command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 152, the multinational naval coalition

patrolling and protecting the southern and central Arabian Gulf.

The Royal Bahrain Navy took command for three months on March 4, then made history again on June 5, when it handed over to the British Royal Navy – the first time the British had commanded the task force.

CTF 152 is a multi-national group of 20 countries that patrols the area as part of maritime security operations.

Under Bahrain's watch, the task force conducted more than 300 "interaction patrol" exercises, which are aimed at generating support and awareness among commercial vessels of efforts to ensure a safe environment at sea.

It also informed local mariners of the coalition's presence and commitment to maritime security, as well as conducted bilateral and multinational exercises with coalition partners.

The BDF, which combines air, land and naval forces, not

only protects the nation, but also provides some of the

region's best medical services, all of which are free to Bahraini citizens.

The BDF Royal Medical Services Hospitals Health System offers the region's largest network of primary care physicians, specialty care physicians, skilled nursing, elderly health, behavioural health, rehabilitation and home care services, managed care and insurance pro-

grammes and occupational health and wellness schemes.

Nearly 4,000 physicians and employees comprise BDFRMS Hospitals Health System.

The BDF Hospital is 400-bed complex caring for inpatients, outpatients and emergency patients and is the second largest hospital in Bahrain, after the Salmaniya Medical Complex.



On the occasion of the Kingdom of Bahrain's

National Day

we wish to convey warmest greetings and all good wishes to

His Majesty King Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa

His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa
The Prime Minister

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa
Deputy Supreme Commander

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● A flypast and guard of honour mark the opening of the academy by the King