

Bahrain National Day Special

Turning year's challenges into opportunities

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AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF
BAHRAIN



On this auspicious occasion of the 49th anniversary of the National Day of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the 48th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Japan, I am honored to convey, on behalf of the leadership, government and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain, my sincere and best wishes of continued good health, prosperity and happiness to their majesties, the emperor and empress, the imperial family, the government and the people of Japan.

I also extend my heartfelt felicitations to the King of Bahrain, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa; Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and Prime Minister His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa; and the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Japan are well established, with continued enthusiasm from both sides to strengthen ties in various fields to benefit both countries and their peoples. In February, Bahrain and Japan exchanged diplomatic notes on the mutual exemption of visas for diplomatic and special passport holders. Moreover, the fifth political consultation and the fourth security dialogue between the two countries were successfully held online in October.

The signing of Abraham Accords between my country and the State of Israel emanates from the Kingdom of Bahrain's

long legacy of a cohesive society where all religions have coexisted side by side since ancient times. The signing affirmed that the kingdom would remain a cradle and a home for peace and harmony — as it has been throughout its history. Furthermore, it is a historical move toward establishing peace in the Middle East and a brave exceptional step to enhance regional security and stability.

Bahrain, in common with most other nations, is affected by the coronavirus pandemic and has taken swift and decisive action to minimize the impact on its people and the business community. Bahrain has set up a dedicated National Taskforce to tackle the spread of the virus and took immediate measures to ensure that testing and quarantine facilities were set up without delay.

As part of the response, the government of Bahrain is supporting individuals and companies through a comprehensive \$11.4 billion economic stimulus package. The measures include extending Bahrain's liquidity fund initiative, interest rate reductions, loan restructuring and salary support, rent decreases and grants and utility relief for businesses.

What the current pandemic has done is catalyze a digital evolution that was already underway. The kingdom has been pursuing progressive new strategies that revolve around emerging technologies as part of its ongoing efforts to diversify its economy and reduce its dependence on oil. One great achievement of these strategies is the shifting of the entire functioning of the government to the cloud which has enabled



King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
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Bahrain to be able to respond effectively to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Bahrain's relatively advanced digital infrastructure has performed impressively in helping reduce the impact of COVID-19 on financial institutions housed in Bahrain.

The Bahrain International Circuit successfully hosted back-to-back Formula One races despite the exceptional challenges



Bahrain Fort, shown here illuminated at night, is one of three Bahraini sites that has been designated UNESCO World Heritage status. EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

presented by COVID-19. This achievement came as a direct result of the skill and efforts of the kingdom's event organizers, medical professionals, military and security personnel and government agencies.

In conclusion, I wish the best for continued progress in all fields for both countries, and further solidification of the special relationship tying both of our nations together.

I am very confident that our relations, for years to come, will see further enhancement of strong ties between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Japan.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Above: The iconic Bahrain World Trade Center in Manama with Isa bin Salman causeway in the foreground. Left: Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa House is an impressive example of Gulf Islamic architecture.
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to the People of
the Kingdom of Bahrain
on the Anniversary of
Their National day



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