

Summit invites sent

HIS Majesty yesterday invited Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to attend the 33rd GCC Summit in Bahrain on December 24-25. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal received Bahrain's Ambassador Shaikh Humood bin Abdulla Al Khalifa who presented the invitation. His Majesty also invited Sultan Qaboos of Oman. Omani Deputy Premier for Cabinet Affairs Fahad bin Mahmood Al Saeed received Bahrain's Ambassador Mohammed Saleh Al Shaikh Al who presented the invitation.

President greeted

HIS Majesty yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso on his country's National Day.

King's speech hailed

HIS Majesty was yesterday congratulated by Minister of State for Human Rights Affairs Dr Salah Ali on Human Rights Day. The minister also hailed national stances embedded in the royal address to the world, in which he reiterated support to protect and promote human rights.

Princess thanked

HRH Princess Sabeeka yesterday received a letter of thanks from Table Tennis Federation chairperson and Bahrain Olympic Committee member Shaikha Hayat bint Abdulaziz Al Khalifa for patronising a ceremony to honour sportswomen as part of Bahrain Woman's Day festivities.

Education forum

EDUCATION Minister Dr Majid Al Nuaimi yesterday opened a regional workshop on education. He said over 36 per cent of Bahrain's students are enrolled in technical schools. The Centre of Excellence for Technical and Vocational Education is holding it in co-operation with Unesco at Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Institute of Technology. Representatives of 19 Arab countries and 11 experts are taking part.

Skills contest opens

THE Education Minister yesterday opened the first national skills competition hosted by Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Institute of Technology. Eighty-two contestants from public and private sectors are taking part with projects, including welding, web and graphic design, robots, cars, office applications, computer networks and electricity. A panel of 66 experts will select the winning team which will take part in the third GCC Skills Competition in Bahrain from March 8-17 next year.

Success report

THE Minister of State for Electricity and Water Affairs yesterday received Global Gulf chief executive Nirad Licado who outlined plans to issue a special eReport on Bahrain's economic achievements.

Projects for retirees

AL Hekma Society for Pensioners has launched service and investment projects for retirees. They were discussed with His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander and include a tourist, medical and recreational resort and an investment project for low-income people, reports our sister paper *Akhbar Al Khaleej*.



■ Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, wife of His Majesty King Hamad and Supreme Council for Women president, yesterday patronised the inauguration of a photographic exhibition, *Hamad: Years of Giving*, compiled by Bahraini artist Abdulla Al Khan and organised by the Culture Ministry at Bahrain National Museum. It includes the King's portraits since his childhood, his accession, reform project and official visits.



■ BDF Commander-in-Chief Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa yesterday received US Under-Secretary of State for Defence Michael Vickers and discussed co-operation and issues of mutual concern.



■ National Guard Commander Lieutenant-General Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday patronised a graduation ceremony for the first batch of special forces commanders and the opening of National Guard Museum of Ancient Weapons at its shooting complex. He also presented them with certificates and honoured top achievers. The batch displayed its skills and combat readiness.



■ Health Minister Sadiq Al Shehabi yesterday received leading international anaemia expert Dr Graham Sergeant who arrived in Bahrain to assess services for sickle cell patients. He also met MPs Khamis Al Rumaihi and Ali Shamtoot and discussed efforts to alleviate patients' suffering.

Bahrain's stability 'important for US'

US House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia chairman Dan Burton said Iran's attempts to work with dissidents in Bahrain to undermine its stability is something Washington must be concerned about.

He was speaking during a hearing on Iranian influence in the South Caucasus and surrounding region.

Mr Burton, who toured the region in September, said Bahrain officials are seeking to resolve problems even though

they and the US know from intelligent sources that Tehran is stirring things up there.

"Since we have great relationship with Bahrain's government, I think it is extremely important that we try and work with it as long as we have our Fifth Fleet there.

"It is in the interest of the US that we do everything we can to try and solve issues in Bahrain without giving Iran the ability to undermine and destroy that government," Mr Burton added.



■ Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ghanim Al Buainain yesterday received US Chamber of Commerce executive vice-president and chief operating officer David Chavern and discussed co-operation.



■ Minister of State for Information Affairs and the government's spokesperson Sameera Rajab yesterday received National Evangelical Church pastor and Bahrain Society for Tolerance and Interfaith Co-existence head Reverend Hani Aziz, who hailed religious freedom in the kingdom.



■ A total of 222 couples yesterday tied the knot in a mass wedding, patronised by parliament chairman Dr Khalifa Al Dhahrani at Shikhan Al Farsi Hall, Riffa. The UAE president's representative in the Western Province and UAE Red Crescent head Shaikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan sponsored and attended it.



■ A cyclist died yesterday morning after he was hit by a speeding car on Shaikh Jaber Al Sabah Road, near Nabih Saleh. He could not be identified as he did not carry any identification cards. "He was hit by a 36-year-old Bahraini," said an Interior Ministry official. A Bahraini man was injured in a three-car collision in the ensuing traffic jam.