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Big pay rises on way for Bahrain's academics

MANAMA: Bahrain academic staff have been granted substantial pay rises backdated to January 1. His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa yesterday issued an edict, readjusting remunerations for different academic grades.

The salary bonanza will benefit academic staff at Bahrain University, Bahrain Training Institute, the College of Health Sciences and Bahrain Polytechnic. Professors and associate professors will be paid, respectively, the equivalent of an Under-Secretary and

assistant under-secretary's salaries. Assistant professors will be paid the equivalent of a directorate director's salary. The salaries of other university personnel will be adjusted to be on par with their counterparts in different government positions.

Education Minister and Higher Education Council president Dr Majid Al Nuaimi thanked the Prime Minister for issuing the edict and said it would improve the vital sector by attracting the best candidates to teach in government universities.

Bahrain this morning

Vote delayed

MANAMA: A vote on Bahrain's national budget has been delayed by a week to prevent the budget from being blocked by MPs. Parliament's financial and economic affairs committee chairwoman Latifa Al Gaoud decided to withdraw the budget from discussions in the hope a consensus can be reached. She rejected claims from first vice-chairman Abdulla Al Dossary that she was trying to force through the budget, despite opposition from MPs.
Full report - Page 7

Infant abuse alleged

MANAMA: A baby girl has been admitted to hospital in a critical condition following a heart attack, it was revealed yesterday. She received emergency treatment to activate her heart muscles before being admitted to Salmaniya Medical Complex's intensive care unit, Chief Prosecutor Nayef Yusuf Mohammed said. She was also found suffering from swelling of the brain and haemorrhage and a multi-layered retinal haemorrhage, raising her doctor's suspicions that the month-and-a-half-old baby was being abused. Investigations also revealed injury marks on her body. Her father, who is a doctor working at a private clinic, was detained pending investigation while her mother, also a doctor, was admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for evaluation.
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Patients hold mass protest

MANAMA: A number of sickle cell anaemia patients staged a mass protest yesterday over a decision by the Salmaniya Medical Complex chief of medical staff to administer painkillers every eight hours. "Such a decision is not well-thought-out and may cause further complications among some patients nor does it meet the international treatment protocol for sickle cell crises," they told our sister paper *Akhbar Al Khaleej*. They urged the Health Minister to look into the issue.

Rajab 'not denied medicines'

MANAMA: Reports that activist Nabeel Rajab is being denied medical treatment and medicines was last night dismissed as "totally untrue" by senior prosecutor Osama Al Oofi. He said staff at the Reformation and Rehabilitation Centre confirmed that the detainee is receiving proper medication on a regular basis.
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US RAPPED

MANAMA: Bahrain yesterday slammed a report issued by the US State Department regarding the human rights situation in Bahrain.

The Foreign Ministry expressed dismay over its lack of objectivity and neutrality. The report, which was issued on April 19, "lamentably ignored Bahrain's tangible human rights strides".

"It failed to acknowledge the steps under-

Meddling denied - Pages 6-7
Audience picture - Page 13

taken by Bahrain to promote and protect human rights," the ministry said, denouncing the report for disparaging Bahrain's judicial independence. It deplored the biased presentation which disregarded the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.

The unit in charge of following up implementation of the recommendations detailed progress in the quarterly report published last November.

"The US report has totally disregarded Bahrain's strides, particularly security reforms regarding legal requirements for arrest and detention," said the statement.

The ministry stressed constitutional and legal guarantees on human rights, freedom of expression and assembly. It deplored the report for

Gulf Air slashes losses by 50pc

MANAMA: Gulf Air's restructuring strategy is already paying off dramatically - with losses slashed by 50 per cent in the first quarter.

Bahrain's national carrier yesterday announced a solid fiscal and operational performance for the first quarter ending in March.

The airline is currently three months into the new restructuring strategy driven by its board of directors, led by chairman Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, the Deputy Prime Minister.

Gulf Air reduced overall losses by approximately 50pc compared to the first quarter of last year.

This was realised principally

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through a 21pc fall in year-on-year expenditure driven by reductions in aircraft leasing fees, flight-related charges and staff expenses in addition to the closure of loss-making routes. "Further, consistent with the restructuring plan presented to MPs in November 2012, for the first quarter of 2013 the airline performed 11pc better than forecast. This was due in large part to a top-line revenue performance, realised through network refinement and the aggressive implementation of a series of commercial initiatives," said a statement.



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Festival opens

MANAMA: His Majesty King Hamad has delegated Deputy Premier Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa to open the National Heritage Festival today at Bab Al Bahrain.

The festival, which runs until May 1, will celebrate traditional cafes. The Culture Ministry will launch a smartphone digital map of the iconic Bab Al Bahrain.

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