

HM King receives annual reports of Shura, Representatives councils

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday received the annual report of the Shura and Representatives councils for the first session of the sixth Legislative Term.

The report was presented by Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, and First Deputy Chairman of Shura Council, Jamal Mohammed Fakhro, at Al Sakhir Palace today.

The Speaker and the Shura's First Deputy extended their condolences and those of the members of the two councils to HM the King over the loss of BDF servicemen as a result of the act of aggression while they were valiantly performing their duty defending the southern borders of Saudi Arabia, within the Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy

in Yemen, as part of the Operation Decisive Storm and Operation Restoring Hope.

They hailed the heroic sacrifices of the BDF servicemen, which will always be remembered by the nation.

HM King Hamad expressed his thanks for their sentiments, affirming pride in the national efforts, achievements and stances of the legislative branch.

HM the King praised the Speakers' sincere patriotic positions and the aspirations of citizens, enhancing Bahrain's position and reputation in international parliamentary forums.

HM King commended the advanced cooperation between executive and legislative branches that aims at serving Bahrain's development.

The initiatives and proposals included in the annual report were also commended by HM



HM the King with the Council of Representatives Speaker and the Shura's First Deputy

the King. HM the King said that development will always be prioritised, to meet the interests of

citizens and create opportunities for them. HM added that the people of Bahrain have demonstrated in many occasions their

dedication and loyalty to their nation, standing together to serve Bahrain.

HM the King said he took pride

in the efforts of Bahraini men and women in all sectors.

HM the King noted that Bahrain has ties and close cooperation with the world, which it is keen to strengthen and develop to serve its interest and growth.

The Speaker and the First Deputy expressed gratitude to HM the King for his directives and support for the legislative branch, which reflects in its achievements and contribution to further driving development.

Al Musallam expressed pride in presenting the annual report on the HM the King.

He highlighted that the royal directives by HM the King are top priorities for parliamentary and national action, providing incentives for to deliver more achievements to serve the nation and citizens within the framework of the comprehensive development process.

The priest who just wouldn't die

Mahir Haneef
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Have you ever felt that twinge on your spine as you go through a near-death experience? A Christian priest met death face to face twice and is now traveling the world to tell about God's intervention in his life.

Alexander J Kurien, hailing from a remote rural village in Southern India called Pallipad, had moved to the United States in his teens and had later joined a Christian monastery in a remote part of Greece at Mount Athos a few years later. While there, a tree fell on him, causing several discs on his spine to get damaged. Being bedridden for nine months and having lost hope of a natural recovery, the doctors finally decided to do a surgical resection of his four discs, to be replaced by metal parts, in the hope of making him stand upright again. But this meant he could lose mobility forever.

Remembering the night before the surgery when he was 20-21

years old, Kurien said, "My pillow was soaked wet from crying while praying. I hadn't harmed anyone or spoken ill against anyone until then, so why am I being punished, I kept asking during the prayers. I dreamt of Mother Mary and a saint appearing in my room. The Mother caressed me from top to bottom. They took me up from the bed. I bowed to the Mother and they placed me back in the bed.

Faith reaffirmed

"At 7am, two doctors and the orderlies came to take me for surgery on a stretcher. The doctor was consoling me by holding my toes when he sensed a movement in the toe. They helped me get up from the bed and I found that I can stand again, after being bedridden for nine months. By 3pm that day, I could check out of the hospital and go back to the monastery. It was after this incident that my faith got reaffirmed and strengthened."

Many years passed by and Kurien had by then joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the US as a



Father Alexander J Kurien

senior advisor after doing an MBA from the University of Tampa. He had also passed the course from India to become a priest. As part of his government job to go to different countries and set up embassies there, Kurien went to Iraq.

While traveling in a red zone in Iraq as part of a convoy for security reasons, the rebels attacked the entourage, which consisted of two army vehicles, a dummy car with a driver, and the car carrying Kurien, two bodyguards, a translator, and a driver. A missile hit below the car in

which Kurien was in, throwing the car ten feet up in the air. When it landed, the rebels shot his bodyguards sitting on his two sides in the rear seat as well as the translator and the driver.

Pretending to be dead

A shard of glass had pierced Kurien's forehead into the skull and blood was gushing. The rebels began checking each car to kill those remaining alive and setting the vehicles on fire. He pretended to be dead, just like the two bodyguards, now dead,



"Sitting in the car, I had thought, where is God, I'm about to die. When I look back, the presence of my God was felt there in downtown Baghdad when the attackers opened the rear door of my vehicle and they got distracted by the sound of the approaching helicopter. God was right there. I can now say that it is only because of God being there with me in Greece and Iraq that I'm now alive."

- FATHER ALEXANDER J KURIEN

sons had died in the attack and only Kurien walked out alive. The injury to the forehead left him deaf on the right ear and he has not been able to chew food ever since but can only swallow.

'God is with me'

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Father Kurien, a senior priest of the Syrian Orthodox Church, was in Bahrain to attend an ecumenical conference at St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Cathedral in Manama.

(To be continued: Priest who defied death talks about super-human abilities)

BDF Chief of Staff visits five injured servicemen in Saudi

Riyadh

Lieutenant General Theyab Lbin Saqr Al Nuaimi, Chief of Staff of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), visited the five injured servicemen, who were admitted at a Saudi hospital.

This came as the BDF Chief of Staff met with Lieutenant-General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al Ruwaili, Saudi Arabia's Chief of General Staff.

The meeting highlighted the historic military cooperation between BDF and Saudi Arabia's Armed Forces, reviewing joint military efforts and defence cooperation areas.

Lieutenant General Al Nuaimi valued the efforts of Saudi Arabia's health sector and services, and extended appreciation to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, and Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul-



Lieutenant General Al Nuaimi holds talks with Saudi Arabia's Chief of General Staff

laziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, for their sincere support and standing by Bahrain.

The BDF Chief of Staff conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces; His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Com-

mander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister; and Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief of the BDF, expressing their appreciation for their valor and dedication in performing their national duty alongside fellow BDF servicemen within the Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, as part of Operation Decisive Storm and Operation

Restoring Hope.

He prayed to Allah the Almighty to rest the soul of the fallen serviceman in eternal peace and to give their relatives patience and fortitude, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.



The meeting highlighted the historic military cooperation between BDF and Saudi Arabia's Armed Forces.

Bahrain keen to bolster UK trade cooperation



Shaikh Salman holds a meeting the Lord Mayor of London

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Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, yesterday met with the Lord Mayor of the City of London, the Rt. Hon Alderman Nicholas Lyons.

Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa stressed Bahrain's commitment to reinforcing joint Bahrain-UK ties and development, by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and supported by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, and Prime Minister.

The minister highlighted the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to strengthening the long-standing bilateral partnership towards common aspirations and goals.

During the meeting, issues of common interest, and the latest regional and international developments, were reviewed.

The meeting was also attended by the CEO of Mumtalakat, Shaikh Abdulla bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, and the Chief Executive of the Bahrain Economic Development Board, Khalid Humaidan, and other officials.