

Bahrain mourns Queen as flags fly at half-mast



TDT | Manama

Bahrain's flags were flown at half-mast all over the Kingdom yesterday as part of three-day mourning declared by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to pay respect to Queen Elizabeth-II, the longest-serving monarch of the UK, who took her last breath at Balmoral Castle in Scotland on Thursday.

Buckingham Palace had said she has been suffering from "episodic mobility problems" since the end of last year.

As the news of her demise sent shock waves across the world, Bahrain, which enjoyed a deep and emotional relationship with the 96-year-old Queen, felt its reverberation quite strongly.

It also sparked a deluge of condolences from all across the Kingdom for the late Queen, with HM King calling it a 'huge loss' to humanity.

The world has lost "a great symbol of humanity, wisdom and tolerance" with the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, said His Majesty King Hamad.

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, said that Her Majesty's defining contributions were instrumental in fostering close and distinguished relations between the Kingdom and their people.

British Embassy opens condolence book

In a tweet, British Embassy in Bahrain, @UKinBahrain, said it

would open a condolence book at the British Embassy.

The book opens daily from Sunday till the 19th of this month from 10 am to 2 pm.

"A public condolence book at the British Embassy will be open daily from Sunday 11 - Monday 19 September (exclusive of weekends) from 10 am to 2 pm. No mobile phones and no parking within the Embassy," the tweet reads.

The Embassy has also opened an online condolence book at <https://www.royal.uk/>.

Symbol of humanitarian values

Recalling the efforts of the late HM Queen Elizabeth II over the past seven decades, Shura Council Chairman, Ali bin Saleh Al-Saleh, said the Queen's dedicated endeavours helped strengthen the long-standing friendly relations between Bahrain and the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Fawzia bint Abdulla Zainal, described Queen Elizabeth as a "symbol of humanitarian values, tolerance and love for her country and people, as well as the entire world."

She asserted that Bahrain had lost a great leader, who had played a key role in boosting the friendly relations between the two kingdoms.

Rest in Peace

"Rest in Peace Your Majesty," HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of

HM the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, posted on his Instagram account.

A walk down the memory lane

One would have to walk back at least two centuries or more to see the origin of the deep-rooted ties bonding Bahrain and Britain. It rose to new heights with the signing of an agreement in 1816 to strengthen and protect joint interests. The deal went official in 1820 with the signing of the "General Maritime Treaty" which found new strength in 1861, 1880 and 1892.

These agreements consolidated the alliance, independence, and interests and strengthened the position of Bahrain as a strategic centre for commercial traffic. It also ensured security and stability in the Gulf region.

Thus, over the past 206 years, Bahraini-British relations developed in remarkable ways. Not just officially but through friendship and rapprochement between the two royal families.

These ties enhanced the understanding and coordination between the two Kingdoms on bilateral, regional and international interests and diplomatic relations.

Boosting this further was the first official visit of Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II to Bahrain in mid-February 1979 during the times of late HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

In 1986 - the British Crown Prince Charles, Prince of Wales at the time, paid his second visit to Bahrain as part of a GCC tour.

The third visit of Charles III was on 26 February 2007, as part of a ten-day Gulf tour. Accompanying him on that tour was his wife, Princess Camilla. Charles held fruitful discussions with His Majesty the



King, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister. The visits reflected the strength of diplomatic relations and the great position enjoyed by Bahrain in European and International circles for its balanced foreign policy.

In 2016, Bahrain celebrated the 200th anniversary of Bahraini-British relations. The same year, HM King attended the international Royal Windsor Horse Show, during which the book "Celebrating 200 Years Together: The Bicentenary of British-Bahraini Relations Paperback" was launched.

His Majesty made several visits to Britain afterwards, strengthening bilateral ties across various fields, the most recent being in May 2022 at the invitation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for the Royal Windsor Equestrian Festival.

All these led Bahrain and Britain to sign several agreements, cooperation protocols and MoUs raising the level of partnerships and bilateral coordination in several fields.

Then came the turning point in the relationship in 1935, when Britain moved its

naval base in the Arabian Gulf to Bahrain, launching a new era of relations and partnership. The signing of the "1971 Friendship Treaty" took the ties to new heights.

Bahrain is now the regional headquarters for British companies, commercial and financial institutions, British banks and banks with international activity with hefty capital and investments.

Agreements to encourage and protect investments signed in 2006, cooperation between the Bahrain Stock Exchange and the London Stock Exchange in 2007, and the two mem-

oranda of understanding between the governments in the customs sector in 2008 and many others stand testament to the deep-rooted historical relations between the two kingdoms, leadership, government and people.



Recalling over two centuries of solid relations