



LOCAL AND WORLD REPORT

FOCUS ON BREAKING NEWS THIS MORNING IN BAHRAIN AND ACROSS THE GLOBE

Spotlight on ways to check human trafficking



Ms Al Saud

MANAMA: A Saudi princess on a mission to change attitudes towards human trafficking in the Gulf will give a talk in Bahrain next month.

Madawi Abdulrahman Al Saud will be guest speaker at the annual St Christopher's Day Dinner at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel, Residence and Spa on May 9.

Speaking on the theme "Human Beings are not for Trafficking", she will discuss efforts to change attitudes, policy and legislation towards human trafficking in the region.

Ms Al Saud, who is pursuing a PhD in London on the subject, takes a hands-on role in responding to the needs of victims.

"We are honoured to host this dinner, to have Princess Madawi as our speaker and to highlight the plight of those who are being trafficked in the hope that what has been described as the 21st century's form of slavery will be seriously addressed in the coming years," said St Christopher's Cathedral Dean

the Very Reverend Christopher Butt.

A presentation will also be given by a representative from the Migrant Workers Protection Society.

Tickets for the event, starting at 7.30pm, cost BD15 and are available from the cathedral on 17253866.

Riffa sewer plan on track

MANAMA: Eighty-eight per cent of the East Riffa Sewerage and Wastewater project has been completed, Works Minister Essam Khalaf said. The BD4.2 million project includes the laying of 25km – main and sub – pipes as well as the construction of a pumping station. A total of 700 out of 960 properties have so far been connected to the main network. Delay in the project was due to financial problems.

Fires dealt with

MANAMA: Civil Defence personnel yesterday dealt with two fire-related incidents in Manama and Hamad Town. In the first case, a fire broke out in a house in Hamad Town near Roundabout 10. The Interior Ministry said there were no injuries and that the fire was caused by negligence. Civil Defence personnel also extinguished a fire that gutted a car in Mukharqa, because of a short-circuit.

Polls set for runoff

KABUL: Afghanistan's presidential polls are headed for a runoff after full preliminary results released yesterday showed the front-runners failed to win to a majority and avoid a second round of voting. Former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah garnered 44.9 per cent of the vote, followed by ex-Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai with 31.5pc. The candidates are vying to replace President Hamid Karzai. The preliminary results are to be finalised on May 14 after investigations into fraud complaints.

Scholarships test

MANAMA: General tests for outstanding high school graduates vying for Education Ministry's grants and scholarships will be held tomorrow. Personal interviews for private school students will take place on Tuesday. May 6 is assigned for government female students and May 7 for males. Students with GPA below 90 per cent are not allowed to apply nor sit the aptitude tests.

Boost to Turkish secret service

ISTANBUL: Turkey's president approved a law boosting the powers of the secret service, in a move critics of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan see as a bid to tighten his control in the country in the face of a challenge to his authority.

The law, sent to President Abdullah Gul earlier this week by a parliament dominated by Erdogan's AK Party, gives the secret service more scope for foreign operations and eavesdropping, while offering top agents greater immunity from prosecution.

The secret service is run by Hakan Fidan, one of the closest confidantes of Erdogan, who is locked in a feud with Islamic

cleric Fethullah Gulen, a former ally based in the US whose network of followers wields influence in Turkey's police and judiciary.

Meanwhile, the head of Turkey's Constitutional Court complained of political criticism which he said had traumatised and divided the judiciary.

Hasim Kilic's uncompromising speech was made in the presence of a grim-looking Erdogan.

Kilic said Erdogan's allegations that parts of the judiciary formed an effective "parallel state" in Turkey were "very dire and serious".

Erdogan is keen to avoid renewed tensions ahead of his expected bid for Turkey's presidency in an August election.

Titanic letter sells for \$200,000

LONDON: A letter written by a passenger on the Titanic describing the "wonderful passage" – hours before the ship hit an iceberg – sold at auction yesterday for \$200,000 (BD75,200).

Auctioneer Andrew Aldridge said the handwritten note, which had belonged to a collector, was bought by an anonymous overseas telephone bidder during a sale in Devizes, western England.

The price, which includes a fee known as the buyer's premium, topped the pre-sale estimate of £100,000.

The letter was written by second-class passenger Esther Hart on April 14, 1912. "The sailors say we have had a wonderful passage up to now," she said of the ship's journey from England toward New York.

Her seven-year-old daughter Eva added a postscript: "Heaps of love and kisses to all from Eva."

Hours later the passenger liner described as "practically unsinkable" hit an iceberg and sank,

killing more than 1,500 people including Hart's husband, Benjamin.

The letter, on White Star Line notepaper, was tucked inside the pocket of a sheepskin coat Benjamin Hart gave Esther as he put his wife and daughter in a lifeboat. The family had been trav-

elling from England to Canada, where they planned to settle.

Esther and Eva were rescued, along with some 700 others.

Esther Hart died in 1928. Eva Hart, who died in 1996, became a prominent Titanic survivor, critical of attempts to salvage the ship, which she considered a mass grave.

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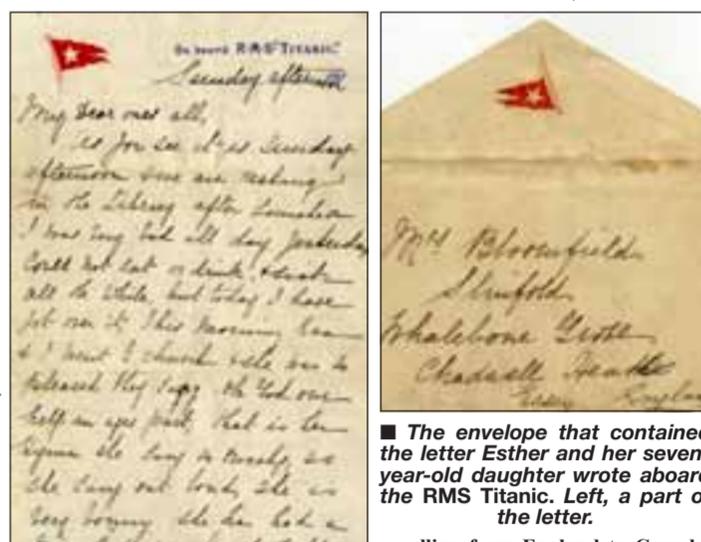
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The envelope that contained the letter Esther and her seven-year-old daughter wrote aboard the RMS Titanic. Left, a part of the letter.