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WHAT'S ON ... AND WHERE 19 - 24

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Di sons' appeal rejected 27

Landmark victory for freedom of the Press

■ *Dr Ghubash ... court blow*

MANAMA: The right of the Press to expose the truth was upheld in a landmark court victory by a Bahraini publisher yesterday.

Akhbar Al Khaleej editor-in-chief Anwar Abdulrahman and former reporter for the newspaper Hisham Al Zayani were cleared of defamation at the end of a long-running trial in the High Criminal Court.

The court also dismissed a compensation claim by Arabian Gulf University president Dr Rafia Ghubash, over an article by Mr Al Zayani which was published in *Akhbar Al Khaleej* in October 2005.

By SARA SAMI

The Press was only exercising its "inalienable role to uncover the truth", the court said in its ruling.

Mr Abdulrahman and Mr Al Zayani were charged by the Public Prosecution with defamation and violating the Press and Publication Law, following a complaint by Dr Ghubash.

She claimed that the column was detrimental and caused her personal distress.

The article highlighted concerns amongst AGU staff about the way it was being run.

The court ruled that there was not enough evidence that it directly targeted Dr Ghubash.

NATO PEACE LINK

MANAMA: Nato (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) launched a Middle East peace push in Bahrain yesterday, calling for a new alliance with GCC countries.

A top official said Nato wanted to build ties with Gulf countries to help create a secure environment in the region.

He also denied that the transatlantic organisation was controlled by the US.

"We are here to offer the hand of friendship to the countries of the region, based on the approach we adopted in Europe after the Cold War," said Nicola de Santis, head of Nato's Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Co-operation Initiative countries section.

By GEOFFREY BEW

"This is a new Nato which is trying to stress that in today's fast changing world we need each other."

The comments were made at a conference called Media in a Changing World: Perspectives from GCC and Nato, which is underway at the Ritz-Carlton Bahrain Hotel and Spa. He was speaking at the first Nato event to be staged in Bahrain.

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Gulf ties hope – Page 5

■ *The Premier with governorate officials and dignitaries*

New-look Muharraq

MANAMA: New premises are on the way for Muharraq Governorate as well as a health centre for its citizens.

Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa yesterday ordered the new constructions during a visit to the governorate.

A study was also ordered into the possibility of building a commercial mall with proceeds to be allocated for charity funds and establishments.

The Premier also gave instructions to speed up development projects such as Dowhat Arad, Arad Fort and Khalifa Bin Salman corniche and complete old schemes like Hidd housing and East Muharraq project and to boost health services in Deer, Samaheej, through Deer Health Centre.

He called on the governorate and municipality to encourage investment in specialised medical complexes and education and instructed them to carry out periodical maintenance and follow-up to preserve the level of public services.

Full report – Page 12

The world this morning
2AM LATEST BREAKING NEWS

Saudi arrests refinery plotters

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia has arrested three members of Al Qaeda, one of whom was involved in plans to hit the kingdom's oil. "One of those held had co-ordinated with elements abroad to hit oil facilities," *Al Arabiya* television station said.

School firebombed

MANAMA: A Molotov bomb has been hurled at Budaiya Boys' Primary School. Interior ministry special security squads rushed to the scene to investigate the incident on Monday night, Education Ministry public relations officer Dr Nabeel Al Asoomi said.

Tubli projects on hold

MANAMA: All further development at Tubli Bay's reclaimed land was yesterday suspended for six months until a new coastal line is drawn up. The Central Municipal Council aims to ensure that the shores, in a protected zone under a Royal Decree issued last August, are open to the public and not part of private property. It decided to halt Dadabhai Group's BD20 million waterfront housing and development project, at its weekly meeting.

Full report – Page 11

Oman closes airport

MANAMA: Plans of scores of airline passengers travelling to or via Oman were disrupted last night as several flights were cancelled and others rescheduled or diverted following the closure of Muscat's Seeb International Airport in anticipation of cyclone Gonu, expected to hit the Omani capital early today, reports *MANDEEP SINGH*. Oman Air cancelled its evening flight from Bahrain while Gulf Air rescheduled its flights, said a spokesman.

Oman faces cyclone fury – Page 2

Libby jailed for perjury

WASHINGTON: Lewis "Scooter" Libby, a former top aide to US Vice-President Dick Cheney, was last night sentenced to 2-1/2 years in prison for lying and obstructing an investigation related to the Bush administration's handling of the Iraq war. He lied to investigators trying to determine who leaked the identity of CIA analyst Valerie Plame in 2003. He was also fined $250,000 (BD94,250) and given two years' probation.

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