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Facing challenges to

Protecting Bahrain from terrorism and other security threats goes hand-in-hand with winning the hearts and minds of the public, as the Interior Ministry reinvents itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Bahrain's Interior Ministry is adopting a new strategy that combines the latest technology with a more community-focused approach to policing, under the leadership of Minister Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

The aim is to meet the challenge of providing security in an emerging democracy, said Interior Ministry public relations director Captain Hamad Al Khayat.

"It is important to realise that although the process had already begun, the birth of democracy within the Kingdom brought with it a change in philosophy," he said.

"Not only did this cause the government to look again at how the nation should be governed, but it added impetus for us to reconsider how we should go about our policing duties.

"As a result we have tried to embrace modern policing practice in close partnership with the community.

"For too long the Bahrain police force was based on colonial lines, but we like to think now that we are well on the way to becoming a modern police service.

"The very fact that we have changed the



● Police reaching out to the community



colour of our uniform is in itself a symbol of this change."

The Interior Ministry has adopted a three-

pronged approach which combines modern policing techniques with community partnerships; creating an efficient force able to counter terrorism and maintain public order and gearing up to detect, prepare for, prevent and react to any other risk.

The watchwords are: Response, effectiveness, transparency, humanity, accountability and partnership.

Four key layers of security have been identified, which are now being enhanced to safeguard national security.

They are international outreach, border control measures, internal measures and risk, crisis and consequence management.

On the international level Bahrain, in addition to being signatory to international agreements, works closely with and trains with its allies both in the region and worldwide.

In terms of border control, Bahrain is currently striving to strengthen its first line of defence in close co-operation with allied and regional navies.

"We are spending considerable amounts to enlarge and enhance our Coastguard capabilities," revealed Capt Al Khayat.

"I need to stress that the Coastguard is very much on our first line of defence and, in addi-

tion to its other tasks, operates on a daily basis to ensure the security of allied shipping within our coastal waters.

"In addition we have plans to enhance our coastal surveillance radar system by improving coverage and increasing capability. We are also considering an automated AVL (Automatic Vessel Location) system for tracking vessels in coastal waters."

Moves are also being made to form closer ties between each of the agencies involved in protecting Bahrain's borders.

"Following the example of other nations we are considering the feasibility of much closer links between all national agencies involved with border responsibilities such as Customs, immigration, intelligence and policing," added Capt Al Khayat.

"The fact that Customs now comes directly under our ministry (the Interior Ministry) is a good indication that progress is being made."

Bahrain has already enhanced its security at Bahrain International Airport and at the King Fahad Causeway, including the addition of sniffer dogs and scanners that can detect explosives, as part of efforts to toughen up its borders.

It is also using "e-Borders" technology to



Best Wishes to

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa,

His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa

the Prime Minister,

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Deputy Supreme Commander,

and the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain

on the occasion of

National Day

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Waging war on

State-of-the-art equipment is now being used to wage war on criminals in Bahrain.

Among the measures now being employed by the security services is the latest, state-of-the-art TETRA Communications System, along with automatic vehicle and personnel location equipment that allows the Interior Ministry's control centre to monitor all police operations, to increase response times and accuracy.

It is connected to a criminal database, immigration and traffic systems, smart card information, a computerised

fingerprinting system and CCTV – including a downlink from a helicopter.

A new Cyber Crime Centre has been equipped to tackle cyber crime, cyber terrorism, money laundering, paedophilia and help in computer forensics.

The computerised criminal database, known as Project Najem, connects all police stations to a central database that houses information on every crime committed in Bahrain.

There are also plans to increase the use and numbers of CCTV cameras to help with crime reduction, security and traffic management.

In addition, dashboard cameras and automated number plate readers are on the agenda to help tackle crime and enforce traffic regulations.

The Interior Ministry maintains its own special forces to handle specialised tasks such as counter terrorism, crowd control, bomb disposal, searches and maritime and armed response duties – and is stepping up its ability to handle hostage and hijack situations.

"We are training hard to improve these skills for all of the more specialised tasks of countering the hard end of terrorism," said Major