

# Poll participation a boost to reforms



ON September 13, His Majesty the King, Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, amended the electoral law, amending the provisions regarding the election of candidates, from being backed by political societies and associations in the upcoming parliamentary elections, as part of democratic reforms.

The amendment allowed candidates to run in the October 24 parliamentary elections under the banner of one of several associations and societies.

The amendments to the law governing the Shura Council and Chamber of Deputies grant associations and societies the right to have a political role in the parliamentary elections as a transitional stage to enable the National Council to take legal steps for the work of political bodies.

## Support vs opposition

THE associations which are supporting the elections are: the Democratic Progressive Tribune Association (AI Member), the Arab-Islamic Democratic AI Wasat, the National Islamic Forum, the National Action Charter Association, the Bahraini Women's Association, the Islamic Party Association, the Islamic Message Association, AI Shura Islamic Association and the Islamic National Accord Association.

The four associations boycotting the polls are Alwafaq National Islamic Society, the National Democratic Action Society, the National Democratic Society and the Islamic Action Society.

told heads of associations and societies at meeting held that day.

IMM the King also expressed satisfaction with the national associations' positive decision and noble stance to take part in the parliamentary elections.

IMM the King said that this showed the associations' awareness of the national responsibility of

everyone which, he said, further affirmed the people's confidence in the sound and comprehensive modernisation policy initiated by the leadership with their support and the support of political powers.

IMM the King affirmed that taking part in the parliamentary elections would contribute positively to supporting the reforms programme and boosting the Kingdom's democratic process which, he said, was the ideal path to achieve the people's aspirations and promote Bahrain's status among developed countries.

IMM the King stressed that in the coming stage the country would witness further modernisation and development, that would include the setting up of institutions and a state of law with the contribution of the Bahraini people in the political decision-making process based on the National Charter's and the Constitution's principles.

## Democratic structure

**Head of State**  
The head of state is the King.

The King appoints the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and has broad executive and legislative powers. He is the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and the chief diplomat. He appoints the members of the executive branch.

Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa succeeded his late father as Amir on March 6, 1999, and became King on February 14, 2002.

**Relationship between the three branches**  
According to the provisions of the amended Constitution, the legislative authority is vested in the King and the National Assembly consisting of a Consultative Council and an elected number of Deputies. Executive authority is vested in the King and his appointed Council of Ministers.

The King may issue decrees with the force of law, but they must be referred to the Consultative Council and the Chamber of Deputies within a month of their promulgation or, if the National Assembly is not in session, within a month of the first

meetings of its respective chambers. If the two chambers do not confirm them, they retroactively cease to have the force of law.

The Constitution establishes a Higher Judicial Authority to supervise the courts and a Constitutional Court to watch over the constitutionality of laws and statutes.

**Executive Branch**  
The King appoints the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

The head of the Government is the Prime Minister, Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, since 1971.

**Legislative Branch**  
A unicameral National Assembly was established in June 1972 and was dissolved on August 26, 1975. Legislative powers were assumed by the Cabinet.

A Consultative Council (Majlis as-Shura) with 40 appointed members, established on December 16, 1992, has the right to propose legislation.

The amended Constitution, promulgated on February 14, 2002, includes provisions for the re-establishment of a bicameral Parliament and holding of general elections for the 40 members of the Chamber of Deputies.

**Judiciary Branch**  
The judiciary is organised into two branches: the Civil Law Courts and the Shari'a Law Courts.

The Civil Law Courts are authorised to settle all commercial, civil, and criminal cases, and all cases involving disputes related to the personal status of non-Muslims.

The Shari'a Law Courts have jurisdiction over all issues related to the personal status of Muslims, both Bahraini and non-Bahraini.

The Supreme Court of Appeal or Court of Cassation (Malkamat Al Tamyiz) was established in 1989, and serves as the final court of appeal for all civil, commercial, and criminal matters. The personal status cases of non-Muslims may also be appealed to this body.

In December 2000, the Government announced a package of measures intended to ensure greater independence of the judiciary, including the creation of the Supreme Judicial Council to be headed by the presiding judge of the Court of Cassation. Members will include judges from the Shari'a and Civil High Courts of Appeal.



## The mechanics of the elections

BAHRAIN goes to the polls today to elect the first Chamber of Deputies, one House of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly comes into being as a consequence of the 98.4 per cent vote in favour in the referendum of February 2001. The referendum endorsed the amendments to the 1973 Constitution proposed by His Majesty the King, Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, which will now bring true democracy in Bahrain.

The National Assembly will comprise the Chamber of Deputies of 40 members and the Consultative Council of 40 members appointed by IMM the King from a wide variety of senior Bahraini figures.

**ELECTORATE**  
About 243,500 people have registered as voters. Voters of both sexes must be Bahraini citizens and be over the age of 21 years. Slightly more females than males have registered.

**CONSTITUENCIES**  
There are 40 constituencies. Boundaries have been drawn up according to international convention with geographical and population density being two of the main criteria for deciding the constituency boundaries.

**CANDIDATES**  
When registration closed on September 21, 150 people had declared their intention to stand. They included eight women. The candidates had to produce a BHD20 non-refundable deposit which will be donated to charity.

A total of 23 have since withdrawn which has left three constituencies with only one candidate who is therefore elected unopposed. Two of these happen to be PHDs, indicating the standard of many of the candidates.

**VOTING PROCEDURE**  
All Bahrainis carry an identity card with an electronic chip containing personal details. These card details are now included in the voters' list. When a voter presents his ID card at the polling station it will electronically verify his name on the list and at the same time indicate right to vote there and at the same time indicate which booth has voted. A voter will be given a

voting slip after the successful presentation of the ID card and voting then takes place in a private booth. Voting slips are inserted immediately into a sealed box ready for counting. As an additional safeguard against double voting, the voters will present their passports to receive a special stamp to show that they have voted.

**POLLING STATIONS**  
On October 24, 52 polling stations will be open between 8am and 8pm. There will be one polling station in each of the 37 constituencies where voting will need to take place. A total of 15 others are located in places convenient for voters who may not be able to get to their constituency station while it is open.

Each polling station will be staffed by Government employees who have been given extensive training. Each polling station will be supervised by a judge from the Judiciary. The candidates can each appoint an observer to watch the proceedings.

During a visit in September to a polling station being used for training, a parliamentary delegation visiting from the United Kingdom declared the system to be "totally transparent, open and fair" and during a visit by the foreign ambassadors to Bahrain on October 16, they also declared themselves totally satisfied with the system.

**COUNTING**  
Counting will commence at the polling stations under the control of the judge immediately after the polls close. Candidates and their observers may watch. A candidate must obtain at least 50 per cent or more of the votes to be declared the winner on October 24. In the event of no candidate achieving this, the first and second candidates only will go forward to a second round of voting on October 30 at which the one with the highest number of votes will be declared the winner.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RESULTS**  
Results are expected to be declared during the late evening of October 24 or early on October 25.



## Parishes smooth voting

**Allocation of districts in all governorates**  
The Royal Decree No. 29 for 2002 issued by His Majesty the King, Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, stated that Bahrain would be divided into five electoral areas - Capital, Muharraq, Northern area, the Central area and the Southern area.

Each area is divided into constituencies: eight in the Capital area, eight in the Muharraq area, nine in the Northern area, nine in the Central area and six in the Southern area.

Following are the committees to follow up the voting and counting of votes, set based on Order No. 26 issued by the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa.

**The Muharraq Governorate**  
Committee (1) at Al Basateen Girls Primary School, is headed by Muharraq Ahmed Al Hijji, with Madha Al Bardooli as secretary and Ra'ed Al Mahmood as supervisor.

Committee (2) at the Hassan bin Thabit Boys Primary School, is headed by Ibrahim Al Qurainees, with Anessa Al Zayani as secretary and Ibrahim Mohammed as supervisor.

Committee (3) at the Muharraq Girls Intermediate School, is headed by Muharraq Secondary School, is headed by Munzer Al Ghayesh, with Fahyeha Buhazza' as secretary and Jamal Al Abhad as supervisor.

Committee (4) at the Om Al Haniqah Boys Primary School, is headed by Sa'ed Al Mubarak, with Hessaam Al Mar'ari as secretary and Mohammed Al Zayani as supervisor.

Committee (5) at the Om Al Haniqah Girls Primary School, is headed by Sa'ed Al Mubarak, with Hessaam Al Mar'ari as secretary and Mohammed Al Zayani as supervisor.

Committee (6) at the Om Al Haniqah Boys Primary School, is headed by Sa'ed Al Mubarak, with Hessaam Al Mar'ari as secretary and Mohammed Al Zayani as supervisor.

Committee (7) at Al Khawarizmi Boys Primary School, is headed by Abdullaziz Al Nayan, with Lateefa Ahmed as secretary

and Sa'ed Eid as supervisor.

Committee (8) at Al Hidd Girls Secondary School, is headed by Abdullah Abdulhaji, with Noora Mohammed as secretary and Mohammed Shareef as supervisor.

**The Capital Governorate**  
Committee (1) at the Ahmed Al Ounan Boys Secondary School, is headed by Badr Al Saynini, with Abdullhakeem Al Sha'ar as secretary and Mohammed Al Ammar as supervisor.

Committee (2) at Al Maimoon Boys Primary School, is headed by Yasser Abdullrahman, with Jassim Al Sayrafi as secretary and Saleem Al Man'ae as supervisor.

Committee (3) at the Hatten Boys Primary School, is headed by Sami Al Busameet, with Fahyeha Saloom as secretary and Khalid Al Burshaid as supervisor.

Committee (4) at the Bahrain International Exhibition Centre, is headed by Mohammed Muqbel, with Abdullaziz Al Burshaid as secretary and Darwish Mohammed as supervisor.

Committee (5) at the Religion Institute for Boys, is headed by Malallah Al Hamadi, with Yousef Mohammed as secretary and Nasser Al Dossari as supervisor.

Committee (6) at the Om Al Hassam Boys Primary School, is headed by Mohammed Abusous, with Zakeya Al Mohammed, with Batool Abbas as secretary and Adel Al Sha'ar as supervisor.

Committee (7) at Al Ala' Al Hadrami Boys Primary School, is headed by Mohammed Abusous, with Zakeya Al Mohammed, with Batool Abbas as secretary and Adel Al Sha'ar as supervisor.

Committee (8) at Al Bilad Al Qadeem Boys Primary School, is headed by Dr Kamal Abdullrahman, with Abdullrahman Zaman as secretary and Hazza Al Ka'abi as supervisor.

**The Central Governorate**  
Committee (1) at the Isa Town Girls Secondary Commercial School is headed by Sa'ed Abdullrahman with Fareda Khalaf as secretary and Mohammed Al Bayat as supervisor.

Committee (2) at the A'ali Girls

Intermediate School is headed by Yousef Al Akhbari with Zakiya Al Shaikh as Secretary and Mohammed Al Magahi as supervisor.

Committee (3) at the Umama bint Al No'nan Girls Secondary School is headed by Tharwat Hassan with Marjani Jan as Secretary and Isa Shaheen as supervisor.

Committee (4) at the Isa Town Girls Secondary School is headed by Ali Ahmed with Fareda Al Mula as Secretary and Mohammed Al Bayat as supervisor.

Committee (5) at the Umm Al Qur' Girls Intermediate School is headed by Abu Bakir Al Sideeq Amer with Najah Al Khor as Secretary and Ali Ahmed as supervisor.

Committee (6) at the Qarnata Girls Primary School is headed by Majid Abdullatif with Fayeza Al Fayeze as Secretary and Khalid Al Murr as supervisor.

Committee (7) at the Imam Malik bin Anas Boys Primary School is headed by Jamal Ali with Khalid Nayem as Secretary and Ahmed Saleh as supervisor.

Committee (8) at the Salahuddeen Al Aysoob Boys Primary School is headed by Shaikh Mohammed bin Ali Al Khalifa with Fawziya Al Mansoor as Secretary and Abdullhaziz Yaseen as supervisor.

**The Northern Governorate**  
Committee (1) at the Jubaila's Girls Secondary School is headed by Abdullhadi Abdullrahman with Badriya Al Shati as Secretary and Faisal Salman as supervisor.

Committee (2) at the Karana Girls Primary School is headed by Omra Khalafallah with Rabab Mohammed as Secretary and Jaffar Marhoon as supervisor.

Committee (3) at the Ja'ber bin Hayan Boys Primary School is headed by Mohammed Barakat with Ahmed Al Sarrafi as Secretary and Saleh Al Meer as supervisor.

Committee (4) at the Baduyata Girls Primary School is headed by Ibrahim Al Akher with Laith Omra as Secretary and Ahmed Al Madhi as supervisor.

Committee (5) at the Saar Girls

Secondary School is headed by Mohammed Bubshtah with Anessa Ali as Secretary and Hassan Mohammed as supervisor.

Committee (6) at the Hamad Town Girls Primary School is headed by Adnan Al Shami with Makiya Salim as Secretary and Ali Hassan as supervisor.

Committee (7) at the Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas Girls Secondary School is headed by Ahmed Yousef with Sakina Ali as Secretary and Hassan Al Wardi as supervisor.

Committee (8) at Al Abd Al Zahir Girls Intermediate and Secondary School is headed by Sa'ed Al Hayki with Ayesha Abdullhakeem as Secretary and Ali Al Basha as supervisor.

Committee (9) at the Balgees Girls Primary School is headed by Abdullhadi Al Bu Aintum with Marjani Al Tameem as Secretary and Shafeeq Hamada as supervisor.

**The Southern Governorate**  
Committee (1) at the West Rifra Girls Primary School is headed by Khalid Abdullhadi with Badriya Al Mutawa as Secretary and Yasser Al Muhazza' as supervisor.

Committee (2) at the East Rifra Girls Intermediate School is headed by Ali Al Omr with Laitha Ajgor as Secretary and Hassan Jarrah as supervisor.

Committee (3) at the Safra Boys Intermediate and Primary School is headed by Ali Al Harawi with Asmail Sulabbeek as Secretary and Nasir Al Habeeb as supervisor.

Committee (4) at the Zalaq Primary School is headed by Ahmed Shaibeen with Anessa Bubshtah as Secretary and Ibrahim Mohammed as supervisor.

Committee (5) at the Askar Boys Primary School is headed by Salah Al Qatan with Salah Al Koojbe as Secretary and Ahmed Al Alami as supervisor.

Committee (6) at the Hawaah Resort is headed by Mohammed Al Bu Aintum with Ghannai Al Sultani as Secretary and Adnan Al Sadiq as supervisor.