Bahrain royal family to meet opposition

Bahrain's ruling family, which makes up at least half the Cabinet of the Gulf kingdom, is to hold talks with opposition protesters demanding political reform and a more direct say in government



King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa
Ruler since 1999, wields ultimate
authority. Has made slow progress
on unilaterally initiated reforms

Al Wefaq: Largest Shi'ite opposition group, has withdrawn its 18 members of parliament in protest at police violence



Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa: Prime Minister, has governed country since 1971. Protesters demand his resignation

Haq Movement: Secular nationalist Shi'ite group, denies legitimacy of king's 2002 reforms, calls for constitutional monarchy



Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa In charge of all economic matters and more open to reform. Will hold discussions with opposition

Al Asalah, Al Menbar: Islamist Sunni groups, linked to Muslim Brotherhood. Want alcohol ban

Source: Wire agencies

Pictures: Getty Images

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