

## THINKING MATTERS

With Soman Baby



### Bahrain: A Story of Growth and Coexistence

“Bahrain is at the forefront of the global development race according to performance indicators in all fields of work,” said His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at a celebration, in Sakhir Palace on 16 December.

This came from the event commemorating the 46th National Day, and the 18th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne.

It is a statement which rings true and strong, when we consider the recent advances this country has been making on many fronts.

It is a statement which announces loud and clear that the records of growth and achievements, which this nation has been witnessing lately, are indeed admirable.

The king's speech prompts me to add my two fils worth to the modern developmental story of Bahrain.

Having been a resident of this beautiful Bahrain for 39 years, and having witnessed the rapid growth of the country from a vantage point, as a long term journalist in this country, how can I contain myself without expressing my feelings?

But, before I give my feelings, first let me give some facts; hard facts from a global perspective.

In the UN Human Development Report 2016, Bahrain is listed among countries with 'Very High Human Development', on the HDI (Human Development Index).

Compare the overall 1990-2015 average annual HDI growth of Bahrain(0.40), as per the report, with the top three countries in the world, and we will understand Bahrain's resilience. Norway (0.45), Australia (0.32) and Switzerland (0.39) are at the top of the table.

According to World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business Report 2017" released recently, only UAE, ranked 21, is better placed than Bahrain in the Arab region.

Bahrain is at 66. Followed by Oman at 71, Qatar at 83, Saudi Arabia at 92 and Kuwait at 96. And when you consider that this ranking is out of 190 countries, Bahrain's ranking is no small achievement.

Bahrain was also ranked No.1, among expat destinations, by Expat Insider 2017 Survey. 9 out of 10 expats said they are happy with Bahrain as a place to work, as a place to raise a family and as a place that makes foreigners feel welcome.

More than 12,500 respondents representing 166 nationalities and living in 188 countries or territories have given us this report's findings. So, what more can we say about the way Bahrain is able to meet the needs of its people?

As an expat myself, one of the best features of Bahrain, I have found, is its spirit of peaceful coexistence and its spirit of tolerance towards people of different nations, cultures, languages and traditions.

I had written earlier too, in this column, that the leadership of this country is very open unlike that of some other countries in the region.

The fact that, along with mosques, we can see churches, temples, gurudwaras and even a synagogue here, tell us the beauty of Bahrain, when it comes to embracing diversity.

Bahrain's respect for other cultures and communities is evident in the fact that scores of social organizations are registered for expat groups, with the government's Labour and Social Development Ministry.

On education, health, housing, commerce, banking, telecommunications and several other sectors, Bahrain is marching forward boldly into the future; A future which the country is preparing to meet with its Economic Vision 2030.

Referring to the national day celebrations, the king had said that there is "no better occasion than this to affirm our commitment to our national principles based on unity, depth of belonging and tolerance of coexistence, which protect Bahrain against the forces of destruction and division."

And that should be the nation's aim. To promote unity and coexistence. And to fight against the forces of destruction and division.

# Edifice maintenance: Phase 2 completed

DT News Network  
Manama

Phase 2 of the maintenance works taking place at the National Charter Edifice in Sakhir has been completed, according to Assistant Undersecretary of Corporate Municipal Services and the Building and Maintenance Acting Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Raed Al Salah.

The works comprised of maintaining the fountain and the exhibition hall at the building. Al Salah was accompanied by Building Maintenance Director Huda Abbas and a number of engineers from the Ministry.



The Ministry has put in place a plan to maintain the edifice over phases to preserve it for future generations

The BD196,765 maintenance works were awarded to Al Moayyed Contracting. According to Al Salah, the maintenance works included providing new water insulators

for the VIP Halls 1 & 2 roof sinks, the upper and lower sinks and water channel, new flooring for the VIP Halls 1 & 2 sinks, the lower and upper sinks and water channel, inspecting the central water system electromechanical extensions and implementing new pumping system, filters and under-water lighting.

By maintaining the edifice, the Ministry seeks to prolong its life span and ensure sustainability. Due to the importance of the National Charter Edifice, the Ministry has put in place a plan to maintain the edifice over phases to preserve it for future generations and draw local and international attention in line with HM the King's vision.

### Ex-Bahrain resident is dead



Varghese Oommen  
DT News Network  
Manama

Former Bahrain resident Varghese Oommen (Joy) passed away in his hometown in the Indian state of Kerala. He was 82. He is survived by his wife Daisy and children Dr Anoop and Asha. He was a former employee at Awal Press in Bahrain. He was staying at Sana building and was active in Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam, the Indian club and Mar Thoma church Bahrain. Funeral service will take place on Tuesday 10.30am at Peroorkada Ebenezer Mar Thoma church cemetery.

### SCW attends workshop

Manama

The Supreme Council for Women took part in a two-day regional workshop in Amman. Arab League organized the event in cooperation with Jordan's National Committee for Women's Affairs and the UN for Women.

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