

THINKING MATTERS

With Soman Baby



Kerala Chief Minister's Visit- A Jump Starter

What is the reason for this grand reception, befitting a Head of State, for a Chief Minister from just one state of India?

Many people in Bahrain had this question on their minds last week.

But, the answer is simple.

"It is because 20 per cent of Bahrain's population comprises people from this one state of India," according to HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander, First Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Economic Development Board.

It was, in fact, on HRH the Crown Prince's invitation that Pinarayi Vijayan, the Chief Minister of the Kerala State of India visited Bahrain.

And as the Crown Prince says, Keralites make up the majority, among the working population, not only here in Bahrain, but also in all the GCC countries.

The Chief Minister, therefore, had had a very busy schedule, topmost among them being his audiences with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and HRH the Crown Prince.

I was privileged to be at all the three audiences, and found that their discussions were very fruitful.

With all the three leaders talking about the long-standing relations between Bahrain and India, and the Kerala State in particular, expressing their appreciation for the hard work and loyalty of the Malayalee community for generations, and stressing on their beliefs that the relationship will strengthen further, it was clearly a valuable trip.

The Chief Minister also extended an invitation to all the three leaders to visit Kerala.

The welcome accorded to Kerala's Chief Minister and the discussions he had had here with Indian and Bahraini business communities, I believe, are ushering in a new era. An era of rejuvenation of the age-old ties Bahrain has had, with India, and specifically, with its State of Kerala.

During his three-day visit, the Chief Minister also found time to inaugurate the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam.

It was by the dynamic initiative of Shaikh

Khalifa bin Daij Al-Khalifa, President of HRH the Crown Prince's Court that this special visit came to fruition.

It is pertinent, I feel, to mention that just a few months ago, Shaikh Khalifa bin Daij had received a special award "The Bahrain-Kerala Friendship Award" from the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan when Shaikh Khalifa visited Kerala for the Bahrain-Kerala Friendship Summit 2016.

The summit had marked the silver jubilee celebrations of Bahrain Returnees' and Residents' Association (BRAIN) held at Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala State.

Shaikh Khalifa bin Daij Al Khalifa, who received BRAIN's first award, then extended an invitation from HRH the Crown Prince to the Chief Minister to visit Bahrain.

And I am confident that this association is, arguably, the only organisation formed by people who returned to India from any foreign country. And we must make a special note of the fact that it was formed 25 years ago!

Such is the love of Keralite community for this beautiful Kingdom of Bahrain!

One of the highlights of the Chief Minister's visit was the 'Bahrain-Kerala Business Investment Forum' held at the Four Season's Hotel.

Organised by the Bahrain Economic Development Board, this forum had given a unique opportunity for investors of India and Bahrain to discuss bilateral business concerns.

The highlight of the forum was a panel discussion, with Bahraini and Indian business leaders. With the panellists comprising frontrunners from Bahrain who invested in India, and vice versa, it turned out to be a very fruitful interaction.

But, most importantly, when the Chief Minister invited the investors to participate in the fulfilment of 'Nava Kerala Mission' for a new Kerala, there was genuine interest expressed by the investors attending the meet.

This, I think, should remain the main focus - if Kerala wants funding from Non Resident Indians, and from Foreign Investors.

It will secure along with it, warm and cordial relations with a country that is poised to become a power house in business. The Business Friendly Bahrain.



DT News Network

Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced a man to five years behind bars for stealing BD6 from a car cleaner.

The incident happened on September 26, 2012, where the defendant and the other unidentified men assaulted and robbed the cleaner. They also hijacked the car which he was washing.

The cleaner reported the

The defendant and his accomplices reportedly threatened and assaulted the car cleaner with a knife, before driving away with the car

incident to the car owner who, in turn, alerted the police.

"The cleaner told me that they threatened him with a knife and physically attacked him before they drove away

with the car," the vehicle owner said. The car was eventually recovered, but it was partly damaged. Thus, the defendant was fined BD100 for the damages caused to the car.

Body of student to be flown home

DT News Network
Manama

The body of Ansu Jacob, the 15-year-old school girl who committed suicide on Saturday, will be kept at Sacred Heart Church in Manama today at 8.30am to pay last respects, the family sources told DT News.

After the ceremony, the body will be flown to her hometown in Kottayam district of the Indian state of Kerala. The family members will accompany the body which will be taken on Air India Express to Kerala in the afternoon. Ansu, the daughter of Jacob Machukad Kuruville and Kochumol, was set to appear for her board exams in March. The reason for the suicide is yet to be known.

Speak out

Send your comments to letters@dt.bh

This is in response to DT News articles relating to the effects of torrential rain that affected the Kingdom during last two days. It was horrible for the residents here and a rain fall as this was not witnessed

in the Kingdom in last three decades. The efforts of the authorities and emergency services to clean up the city and residential areas is to be lauded. This should be taken as a learning lesson to renovate the drainage system. With the changing climate pattern, heavy rains should be expected in the future.

Farhan Naushad



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