

Her Excellency Ms. Asako Okai, Ambassador of Japan to Bahrain

As 2026 brings renewed pressure on the foundations of international law amid geopolitical rivalry, technological disruption, and transnational risks, Japan warns that unilateralism and coercion are eroding the norms essential to global stability. In conversation with **Mahir Haneef, Her Excellency Ms. Asako Okai, Ambassador of Japan to Bahrain**, outlines why diplomacy, multilateral cooperation, and responsible governance of emerging technologies remain indispensable to safeguarding peace, trust, and shared prosperity.

As we embark on 2026, humanity faces a critical juncture. International law and humanitarian principles, diligently built over a century, now face the unsettling reality of their very foundations being threatened. The global landscape is complex and volatile, marked by unilateral attempts to alter the status quo by force, erosion of the rule of law, reliance on coercion over dialogue, and widening geopolitical divides. Thus, diplomacy must be reaffirmed as the only sustainable path to peace and stability.

Beyond geopolitics, escalating climate change, cyber threats, disinformation, and the destabilizing potential of non-state actors continue to threaten societal stability and trust. Concurrently, rapid technological advancements, especially in AI, offer immense opportunities, yet their development must be responsibly guided to address ethical concerns, privacy, and potential misuse, such as in autonomous weapon systems. Faced with these multifaceted and transnational issues, it is clear that no single nation can address them alone; robust international cooperation and multilateralism are therefore indis-

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pensible frameworks for collective action. Open and inclusive global economic systems, fostering equitable growth, are necessary. While geopolitical pressures necessi-

tate supply chain reorientations, upholding free trade principles remains vital. These shifts must strengthen, not undermine, the foundations of an open global economy, ensuring exchange and innovation thrive.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), unanimously adopted at the UN in 2015, powerfully testify to humanity's capacity for collective ambition. Though their 2030 achievement faces challenges, these foundational goals must not be discarded. Their critical state makes their principles even more vital, urging us to recall this spirit of unity and transform pledges into tangible action.

Against this backdrop, Bahrain, a champion of international law and peaceful co-existence, stands as a reliable partner, now serving at the UN Security Council. Japan remains resolute in its commitment to a rules-based international order, dialogue, and multilateralism. This stems from its profound dedication to peace and consistent efforts to uphold the rule of law at every level. Japan has also long provided development cooperation genuinely tailored to the needs of its partners. Through such concerted, mutually respectful efforts, we must collectively forge a future where peace and prosperity prevail for all.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Daily Tribune)

Tamkeen approves 2026-2030 strategy

● Empowering more than 44,000 Bahrainis through employment and career development initiatives

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His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Minister of the Prime Minister's Court and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), yesterday chaired the Board of Directors meeting and approved the Fund's 2026-2030 strategy.

His Highness underscored the essential role played by the private sector in the Kingdom, emphasising its impact on Bahrain's growth and development.

He further highlighted that close collaboration between the government and the private sector is critical for the realisation of national plans and the Kingdom's comprehensive development, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

His Highness outlined the



HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman chairs Tamkeen's Board Meeting

importance of continuing to empower national talent and broaden professional development opportunities, while supporting private sector enterprises through enabling initiatives that contribute to the Kingdom's growth and development.

These efforts aim to enhance competitiveness, strengthen sustainable economic participation, and expand access to high-quality employment opportunities for national talent.

The Fund's strategy centres on four key priorities: prioritising areas with the highest returns for the economy and Bahrainis; supporting the design of career pathways through initiatives that link skills with available labour market opportunities; adopting innovative approaches to stimulate private sector growth and access to financing; and delivering

New strategy aims to strengthen the role of private sector enterprises by implementing initiatives that support their growth and advancement.

programmes that enhance the Fund's operational effectiveness and efficiency, while further strengthening governance.

Review

During the meeting, His Highness directed a review of all the Fund's programmes to ensure their alignment with the new strategic priorities and to enhance their impact on the private sector, thereby contributing to the national economy's

growth.

Additionally, the Board of Directors congratulated Her Excellency Maha Abdulhameed Mofeez, Chief Executive of Tamkeen, on the issuance of the Royal Decree renewing her appointment. Her Excellency expressed her gratitude for her reappointment, reaffirming her commitment to achieving the Fund's key objectives of enhancing the national economy through initiatives that support the private sector and develop national talents.

The Board also thanked the team responsible for developing the Fund's strategy for the coming years and ensuring its alignment with current and future market needs, reflecting Tamkeen's commitment to providing supportive programmes and initiatives that align with national trends and labour market requirements.

Milestone event

ISB set to host historic Annual Cultural Fair to mark Platinum Jubilee

Pradeep Puravankara
TDT | Manama

The Indian School Bahrain (ISB) is finalizing preparations for its Annual Cultural Fair, a landmark event organized in celebration of the institution's prestigious Platinum Jubilee.

Presented by Star Vision Events, the fair will take place on January 15 and 16, 2026, and is expected to be the largest cultural gathering in the school's 75-year history.

To heighten community excitement, the school has unveiled an impressive range of raffle prizes.

Prize

The grand prize is a brand-new silver MG ZS car from Zayani Motors, followed by 4-gram and 2-gram gold coins from Joyalukkas.

Other major prizes include a 600-litre refrigerator, home theatre systems, and various premium Philips home appliances.

Entry tickets are priced at BD2, making the event accessible to the wider community while raising funds for essential student welfare and staff support initiatives.

The fair features a star-studded entertainment lineup, beginning on Thursday, January 15, with a live concert by world-renowned musician and composer Stephen Devassy.

The festivities continue on Friday, January 16, with a series of student cultural pro-



The fair will take place on January 15 and 16, 2026 as the largest cultural gathering in the school's 75-year history.

grams followed by a high-energy performance from popular playback singer Rupali Jagga and Abhishek Soni.

Extensive preparations are currently underway to ensure a seamless experience for the thousands of alumni, parents, and visitors expected to attend.

The official raffle draw is scheduled for January 18 and will be conducted in the presence of ministry representatives to ensure full compliance with regulations.

ISB Hon. Chairman Adv. Binu Mannil Varughese and Fair General Convener R. Ramesh have called upon the public to support the event wholeheartedly.

They emphasized that this fair is more than just a cultural extravaganza; it is a historic milestone that celebrates decades of educational excellence while providing vital assistance to students and staff.