

BTEA Powers Bold Tourism Vision at SPIEF

People placed at centre

● Talent powers tourism future

● Cultural skills get focus

● Strategy aligns with Vision 2030

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Bahrain is placing its people at the heart of its tourism strategy, with a renewed focus on skill-building, cultural storytelling, and workforce development to power the Kingdom's rise as a sustainable global destination, according to BTEA CEO Sarah Buhejji.

Speaking at the 28th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), Buhejji highlighted Bahrain's approach to tourism as one that blends national identity with global com-



A session during the 28th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum

petitiveness. She stressed that developing Bahraini talent is essential to achieving long-term sector growth and enhancing the visitor experience.

Homegrown strength

Buhejji participated in a panel titled 'Professionals for Tourism and Hospitality: Investing in Human Capital, Education,

and International Cooperation', where she laid out initiatives aimed at nurturing local talent and equipping citizens to represent Bahrain's story to the world.

She underscored how cultural openness and authentic hospitality are among the Kingdom's most valuable tourism assets, emphasising that empowering Bahrainis to share those values

is central to BTEA's 2022-2026 Tourism Strategy.

"Our people are the carriers of our culture," Buhejji told the forum, reinforcing the idea that tourism success is inseparable from community engagement and national pride.

Global showcase

At Bahrain's national pavilion

at SPIEF, BTEA spotlighted key investment projects and tourism offerings, including sustainable hospitality developments. The pavilion also hosted expert lectures, bilateral meetings, and the 'Gulf Pearls' culinary experience by Bahraini Chef Yusuf Qamber.

Bahrain's traditional craftsmanship also featured prominently, with a dagger and sword exhibition held in collaboration with the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities and Depaj Factory. The exhibition will continue through June 29, offering international visitors a deeper look into Bahrain's cultural heritage.

Strategic relations

In a separate panel on 'Russia-Bahrain: Bilateral Relations', Buhejji explored opportunities for cooperation in tourism and culture as both countries mark 35 years of diplomatic relations. She reaffirmed Bahrain's commitment to positioning itself as a regional hub for sustainable,

experience-driven tourism.

"Our goals go beyond visitor numbers. We are building a tourism model that is inclusive, rooted in our values, and representative of who we are," she said.

As Bahrain looks to the future, its tourism sector appears increasingly anchored not just in infrastructure, but in its people.



Tourism employs nearly 8% of Bahrain's workforce, with the sector identified as a key non-oil driver of economic growth under the national Vision 2030 strategy.

ISB@75 Chess Championship begins with grand opening and record participation

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The ISB@75 Chess Championship, organised to mark the Platinum Jubilee of The Indian School Bahrain (ISB), kicked off yesterday with a grand opening ceremony at the Jashanmal Auditorium, Isa Town Campus. The two-day event is held under the patronage of the Bahrain Chess Federation and in collaboration with Arjun's Chess Academy (ACA).

The event was inaugurated by Bahrain Chess Federation President Anmar Ibrahim Ahmadi, who attended as the Chief Guest. Also present were ISB Chairman Adv. Binu Mannil Varughese, Vice-Chairman and Member - HSSE & Sports Dr. Mohammed Faizal, Member - Transport



Mohammad Nayaz Ullah, Principal VR Palaniswamy, ISB Platinum Jubilee General Convener Prince S. Natarajan, Vice-Principal (Senior School & Academic Administration) G. Satheesh, ACA CEO Arjun Kakkadath, Staff Representative Parvathi Devadas, Physical Education

teachers, and community leaders. The championship opened with a Free Chess Workshop, accessible to students and enthusiasts across Bahrain. The session was led by expert coach Janelle Dela Cerna.

With nearly 250 players and 60 school teams registered, the

ISB@75 Championship is shaping up to be one of the largest chess tournaments ever held in Bahrain.

The Interschool Team Chess Championship began this morning, featuring school teams competing in Under-12 and Under-19 categories. Schools are permit-

ted to field multiple four-member teams, with matches played under FIDE Rapid Rules using the Swiss League format. Trophies and certificates will be awarded to the top three teams in each category.

Later in the day, the Open Rapid Chess Tournament wel-

comed players of all ages. Prizes will be distributed across several categories, with special honours for the top 10 performers. All matches are being conducted in line with official FIDE regulations. The championship will conclude with a grand finale scheduled for 8:00 PM tonight.

Annai Tamil Mandram marks International Yoga Day with special session

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To mark International Yoga Day, Annai Tamil Mandram, a Bahrain-based social service organisation, in collaboration with the Indian Club, hosted a special yoga session yesterday at the Indian Club's Indoor Hall.

The event began with a welcome address by Mr. Arul Ganesan, Assistant Treasurer of Annai Tamil Mandram.

Led by Yoga Master Mr. Saminath Sekar, the session featured several qualified instructors who guided participants through a series of yoga postures, breathing exercises, and meditation techniques, foster-



ing an environment of calm and mindfulness. Mr. Senthil G.K, President of Annai Tamil Man-

dram, honoured the instructors with certificates of appreciation and gifts for their contributions.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Mr. Palanichamy, General Secretary

of the organisation.

Participation certificates, gifts, and refreshments were distrib-

uted to all attendees, marking a successful and engaging celebration of holistic wellness.