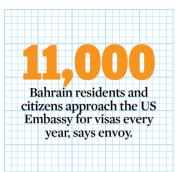
news of bahrair

'Kingdom among fastest emerging tourist destinations for Americans'

50,000 Americans visited Bahrain last year, says American envoy

TDT | Manama **Mohammed Zafran**

and leisure tourism have The Ritz Carlton. increased in the recent years dor Justin Siberell said.



for the Savvy Travellers', organised by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain (Ammericans coming to the cham) in coordination with the Kingdom for business American Embassy yesterday at

"We have a vibrant American with last year's number reach- community here and we have ing 50,000, American Ambassa- many Americans who are coming to visit here as well. More He was speaking at an event Americans are coming to Bahtitled 'Innovation in Tourism rain as a tourism destination, - Building the Tourism Sector be it from the United States or other countries."

Speaking about tourists from the Middle East region to the United States, he said, "According to the United States national tourism office, we have nearly 77 million international visitors and about 1.2 million came from this region. The tourism industry is a vital component of the American economy."

he said, "Each year, more than visas. We have taken significant



Mr Siberell speaking at the event.

11,000 people including Bahrai- strides over the last year to ease In terms of citizens and resi- nis and residents of the King- the visa process to make it even dents of Bahrain visiting the US. dom visit the embassy seeking more streamlined.

We have adopted an interview waiver programme since last year. I hope to see more visitors from the **Kingdom to the United States** in the coming years.

MR SIBERELL

years."

America Week that is being CEO of Visit Bahrain Kyriakos "We have adopted an inter- held, he said, "It's an annual Zarkadas.

celebration intended to draw attention to the diversity of American business, technology, and innovation in Bahrain. The Discover America Week will run until October 24.

"During the week, we are featuring a number of activities to draw attention to American brands, entrepreneurship, technology, services, and other sectors. We are very proud of the many American firms that have been part of Bahrain's growth."

The event also featured a number of speakers including CEO of the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority view waiver programme since (BTEA), Shaikh Khaled bin Hulast year. I hope to see more mood Al Khalifa, BTEA Tourism visitors from the Kingdom to Marketing and Promotion Dithe United States in the coming rector Yousef Al Khan, Bahrain Travel and Tourism Society Describing the Discover Chairman Jehad Ameen and

'9.1 million tourists visited Bahrain this year'

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ith 9.1 million tourists during the first nine growth, it emerged.

This is a 5.7 per cent increase period.

Khalifa, the Chief Executive Of- ket Bahrain. ficer of the Bahrain Authority for Tourism and Exhibitions.



"I think it is time for the tour- launched international ism industry to take the econ- tourism offices in seven omy forward," he said, adding countries "Bahrain is maintaining excel-

visiting the Kingdom lent tourism numbers this year". weekend destination, peo-He was also speaking at the months of this year, the tourism 'Innovation in Tourism - Buildsegment is witnessing a strong ing the Tourism Sector for the tend the average length of Savvy Travellers' event.

"Our tourism strategy is based nights. compared to the numbers from on four As: Awareness, Attracthe last year during the same tion, Accessibility and Accommodation. We have worked Bahrain's tourism sector has closely with the Economic Deshowed further growth this year velopment Board to create the with more tourists coming to the tourism brand. Now we have a country and longer stays, said unified message on what Bah- chief. "For stopover visas, Shaikh Khaled Bin Humood Al rain offers and how we can mar-

Bahrain tourism brand, we

"Bahrain is no longer a ple now spend more time here. Our aim now is to exstay of the tourists to four

Free transit visas

Bahrain will be issuing transit visas to tourists for free, according to BTEA we will ensure that the cost will be covered by the BTEA "As a result of creating the and free of charge for the tourist."

He also added that steps are being taken to reduce the waiting time at King Fahad Causeway.

"Eighty-three per cent of the people that enter Bahrain come through the causeway, so it is important to make sure the traffic flow there is smooth. We will be making more arrangements to reduce the waiting times at the causeway."



Our tourism strategy is based on four As: Awareness, Attraction, Accessibility and Accommodation.

SHAIKH KHALED

Bridge 19 naval drill continues

A Saudi naval vessel commander said the drill aims to accomplish a high standard of organisation and coordination.

Manama

he second stage of the joint marine drill (Bridge 19) kicked off on Sunday with the participation of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force and Saudi Eastern Fleet.

The periodically joint drill between the two bilities and raising the operational performance countries reflects the solid military relations and Bahrain's interest to reinforce military cooperation with Arab and friendly countries.

It also targets upgrading combat performance, organisational level and generous hospitality.

improving capabilities and leadership competencies, in addition to establishing military cooperation and coordination and the exchange of expertise.

The Bridge 19 Drill Commander said the drill comprises a number of exercises aimed at strengthening military cooperation with the Saudi forces, unifying concepts and exchange of expertise, as well as training on the latest systems to achieve maritime integration level.

A Saudi naval vessel commander said the drill aims to accomplish a high standard of organisation and coordination.

It also contributes to boosting combat capabetween the two forces.

He extended appreciation to the Bahrain Defence Force, Bahrain Naval Force for the high

