

# India-Bahrain in new era of bilateral ties

Dr Shaikh Abdulla praises the role of the Indian community in the Kingdom's development march

● His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's visit to India in February 2014 enhanced long-standing ties

TDT | Manama

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bahrain will add a new momentum to the solid relationship and co-operation between the two friendly countries, said Dr Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"The visit is of exceptional importance" to the Kingdom, Dr Shaikh Abdulla said explaining the historical ties and strategic relations between the two countries.

Recalling the historic visit of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to India in February 2014, the Undersecretary stressed that this laid the strong foundation for a close



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DR SHAIKH ABDULLA BIN AHMED AL KHALIFA  
UNDERSECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OF  
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

and long-standing partnership between the two countries.

India, the Undersecretary said, has made remarkable achievements in many economic and technological fields, while pointing out the need for enhancing the prospects of fruitful and constructive co-operation.

In this regard, Dr Shaikh Abdulla highlighted the role

played by Bahraini-Indian Joint Committee in boosting bilateral ties.

"Kingdom under the leadership of His Majesty the King is moving forward steadily to establish strong and diverse partnerships with friendly countries," said Dr Shaikh Abdulla.

Modi's visit, the Undersecretary said, underlines the vital

status of Bahrain in the international arena, thanks to the wisdom of its leaders and stability of its positions and economy in line with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030.

Dr Shaikh Abdulla praised the role of the Indian community and its contribution to the development of Bahrain while taking pride in the efforts exerted in the field of expatriate care.

## Bahrain aims 50pc jump in Indian tourists: official

PTI | Kolkata

Bahrain is aiming a 50 per cent jump in tourist arrival from India, with the Kingdom fast rising as a wedding spot for Indians, a top Bahraini official has said.

During a roadshow held in the India state of Kolkata, Country Manager of Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority Sunil Mathapati said the Kingdom is expecting to host tourists from West Bengal during the Durga Puja, the biggest festival of the state.

"We have witnessed a growth of 43 per cent in tourist arrivals from India in 2018 and we are aiming to increase it by 50-56 per cent by this year-end," Mathapati said.

While the travel time between Kolkata and Bahrain is now six hours, with two airlines having stop-overs, efforts are on to cut down the travel time, the tourism official from Bahrain said.

"We have proposed a direct flight from here by Gulf Air which will reduce the air time to four hours and improve connectivity," Mathapati said.

Asked if it would not be too late to hard sell Bahrain to Bengalis planning vacations during the Durga Puja festival this year, Mathapati said, "I think people are still open for a new place, to try new destinations even at this hour."

"We would like to call people in Bahrain from Kolkata

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SUNIL MATHAPATI

COUNTRY MANAGER OF BAHRAIN TOURISM & EXHIBITIONS AUTHORITY

for involvement in some activity, dance, food festival and likewise. That should be starting from October," he said. Bahrain has various tourist offerings such as Bahrain Fort, Al Fateh Grand Mosque, Riffa Fort, Old Houses of Muharrag, Gravity skydiving and lots of water sports.

Bahrain is also becoming a wedding destination for Indians, he said adding that 18 weddings from the country had been hosted in the Gulf nation between September and March this year.

Ten more, including one from Kolkata, are also lined up from September till January, he said.

Though the tourist season in Bahrain is throughout the year, the peak time is from September to May, Mathapati said.

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