Indian

nationals

form the

largest expatriate

community

Kingdom

in the



A vibrant diaspora integral

ndians are known to have come to Bahrain as early as 3,000 BC when ships plied between Harappan settlements, Oman and Bahrain en-route to Mesopotamia in pursuit of trade.

It is said that it was a group of Indians from Saurashtra that built the Anzac Temple in Dilmun (a cuneiform reference to Bahrain at the time). Indian scholar Romila Thapar interprets Dilmun as the 'sacred

In more recent times, Indian merchants had established themselves in Bahrain towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Others moved to Bahrain from Baghdad and Basra regions in today's Iraq. At the initial stages they traded dates but gradually shifted attention to purchase and exports of the famous Bahraini pearls.

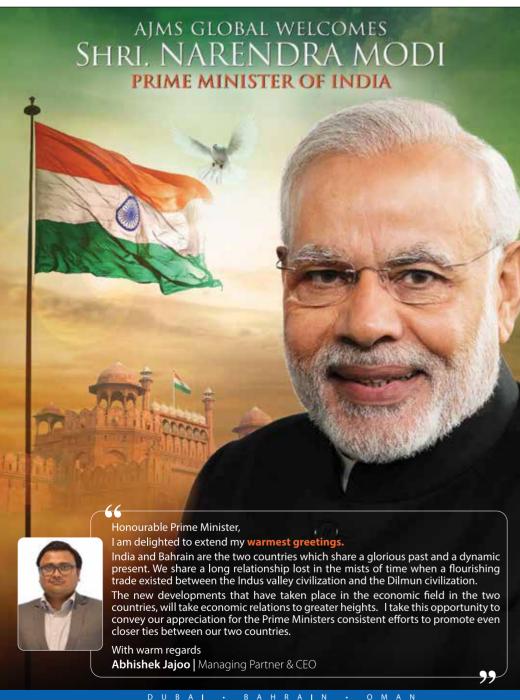
These merchant families came from the province of Sindh and Kathiawad region of Gujarat. By around 1925, around 2500 Indian families had settled in Bahrain.

Most of them were involved in small time retailing.

The discovery of oil in 1932-45, led to immigrant manpower gravitating towards the oil inopment activities.



dustry and its off shoot devel- Indian Community celebrates Holi festival in the Kingdom.



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With the subsequent exstart business or take up sectors. jobs as managers, salesman, assistants and workers.

patriates, nearly 290,000 Mohammed Dadabhai. Indian nationals form the nationalities.

Today 65-70pc of the Indian ing opportunities in Bahrain. pansion of the Bahraini expatriate workforce is em-

Of the nearly 517,000 ex- men including Ravi Pillai and tions. The top Bahraini busi-

Pakistanis, Filipino, Indone- up jobs as storekeepers, chemsians and Arabs of different ists, carpenters, barbers, etc.

The Indian workforce is nant blue-collar labour force, management cadres. by far the largest of the ex- there is a sizeable number of patriate workforce. Keralites doctors, engineers, chartered reputation in terms of their constitute approximately accountants, bankers, man- conduct, loyalty, higher pro-65 per cent of the Indian agers and other professionals ductivity and non-involvement community. The other ma- who play a vital role in Bah- in local affairs. There is a prefjor groups are from Andhra rain's socio-economic devel- erence amongst Bahrainis to Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kar- opment. Professionals, such as employ Indians over others. nataka, Maharashtra, Goa doctors, engineers, account- With the largest expatriate

Today there is hardly any economy, Indians started ployed in the construction, established Bahraini business emigrating to Bahrain to contracting and maintenance organisation that does not have a senior or middle level The Kingdom hosts many Indian employee playing an prominent Indian business- important role in its operaness houses such as Al Zayani, The retail and other business Al Moayyad, Fakhro, Kanoo, largest expatriate commu- activities include provisions, Koohejis, Ahmed Mansour Al nity in Bahrain along with hardware, jewellery, electron- Ali, Abdullah Nass, Mohammed Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, ics, etc. Some others have taken Jalal as well as companies like ALBA, BAPCO, GPIC, banks and finance companies etc. have In-In addition to the predomi- dians in their senior or middle

Indian labour enjoys a good

'Little India' celebrates

bution to the history of Bah-

is where the Indian relationship between the two while being an attraction site to community's contri- countries is highlighted.

ittle India' in Bahrain rain is documented and the back to the Indian community locals and cultural tourists, was This project, which is give inaugurated on December 19,



Shaikha Mai speaks after inaugurating the 'Little India' project.