

**Remarks by H.E Mr. Piyush Srivastava,
Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain
Meeting on Food and Agri Sector organized by BCCI for FIEO delegation
[1800-2100 hrs, 02 November 2022]**

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Al Kooheji, Second Vice Chairman, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry;

Mr. Abdul Rahman Juma, Chairman, Bahrain India Society;

Dr. Abdulla Al Sada, CEO, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry;

Mr. Prashant Seth, Joint Director, Head of delegation of Federation of Indian Export Organisations;

Distinguished senior representatives from Ministry of Health and Economic Development Board, Kingdom of Bahrain;

Members of Business community;

Importers, Exporters and representatives of major supermarket chains in Bahrain;

Officials of FIEO and my colleagues from the Embassy

Good evening to you all!

I am very happy to be present in this India-Bahrain networking Meet on Food and Agri sector. If I am not wrong, this is one of the largest delegation in this sector that has ever visited Bahrain. I would also like to thank and congratulate FIEO for mobilizing such a strong delegation to Bahrain.

2. At the outset, let me thank Mr. Abdul Rahman Juma and his entire team of Bahrain India Society for joining as a partner for this event. Bahrain India Society is at the forefront in promoting trade and economic relations between our two countries. I also thank BCCI for supporting the event; they had organized a productive B2B meeting for FIEO delegation in the morning.

3. India and Bahrain enjoy deep rooted trade ties which have kept growing and deepening over time. Our Bilateral trade registered growth of 54% in year 2021-22 and reached to the highest ever level of USD 1.65 billion. Investments from both directions are also increasing. Indian cumulative FDI in Bahrain has reached to approx. \$1.5 billion increasing by more than 35% since 2019. Food and agro products are main component of our bilateral trade. India, traditionally, is a major supplier of rice, meat, sugar, spices, fruits and vegetable to Bahrain. In recent times, Indian processed food products, organic and healthy food items & dairy products are also getting popular in Bahrain due to their high quality and reasonable pricing.

4. However, we aspire to turn the traditional trading relations in this sector into a strategic one. We intend to be a partner of Bahrain towards its food

security efforts which is a focused sector as per the Economic Vision 2030 of Government of Bahrain. There are significant opportunities for investment in food parks in India.

5. Similarly, we invite Indian companies to use Bahrain its base for expanding their business to entire Gulf and MENA region. We also urge them to explore possibilities of Joint Ventures with their Bahraini counterparts. I am happy that representatives of EDB are also present here to give a detailed presentation on benefits and incentives Bahrain is offering for such endeavors.

Distinguished members of business community,

6. India is today becoming a strong sourcing destination for quality food and agro products. India's agricultural and processed food products exports had grown by 20% during 2021-22 to cross USD 50 billion; this has further increased to 30 percent in the first four months of the current Financial Year 2022-23 (April-July).

7. In order to ensure seamless quality certification of products to be exported, the government has recognized 220 labs across India to provide services of testing to a wide range of products and exporters. I thank the Food Safety Department of the Ministry of Health, Govt of Bahrain for agreeing to make presentation on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, food licensing, packaging and labelling requirements in Bahrain related to import of food articles, which, I am sure, will be extremely useful for our exporters.

8. When it comes to health and healthy food, I would like to mention that United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2023 as International Year of Millets. The proposal was tabled by India. Millet is being considered as new age super food due to its nutritional values. It is environment friendly because it requires less amount of water to grow. I am sure, businessperson from both sides will also look at increasing trade in Millet and millet products.

9. I thank all members of business community from India as well as Kingdom of Bahrain for their participation and wish them successful networking event and B2B meeting. I am sure that this will be engaging and will lead to concrete business proposals.

Thank you,