

**Interview with Bahrain TV**  
**Marking the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bahrain-Indian Relations**  
*[Monday, 11 October 2021, 1100 hrs]*

**Q.1. The Kingdom of Bahrain and Republic of India enjoy deep-rooted outstanding relations that spans over 50 years. Tell us more about the history of those relations and their stages of development?**

**A.1.**

- Thank you for having me over at this prestigious Bahrain TV channel on this momentous occasion of Golden Jubilee of diplomatic relations between India and Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Our relations are rooted in history and close cultural, trade and people to people connect, going back to thousands of years to the period of Indus valley and Dilmun civilizations. Bahraini traders were having flourishing trade of pearls with spices from India. Indian families have come to Bahrain and settled over here as early as over two centuries ago.
- With regular high level interaction and exchange, these relations have developed into strong bilateral partnership across diverse areas of bilateral, regional and multilateral interests.

**Q.2. How do you value the keen interest of Bahrain and India's leaderships to bolster relations between the two countries?**

**A.2.**

- The visionary Leadership of our two countries have guided our relations through regular dialogues and bilateral visits.
- The landmark visit of His Majesty the King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to India in 2014 set the roadmap for our present bilateral engagement. Prior to that, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince visited India in 2012. More recently, the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to Bahrain in August 2019 provided further boost and diversified our relations to new and strategic areas.
- The strong commitment and the guidance and constant support of our Leaderships has taken our bilateral relations to greater heights, deeper engagement and broader bilateral Cooperation.

**Q.3. How did the official exchanged visits result in further enhancing Bahraini-Indian relations?**

**A.3.**

- Bilateral visits and interactions are cornerstone of successful diplomatic relations. It is no wonder then that our bilateral relations are characterized by regular high level and official exchanges and visits. Even during the times of Covid-19 pandemic when travel was not easy, this trend continued.
- In the last one year alone, the Hon'ble External Affairs Minister of India and Minister of State for External Affairs visited Bahrain. H.E. the Foreign Minister of Bahrain visited India. Our Ministers of Oil and Youth Affairs & Sports have held virtual meetings.
- In addition, the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Bahrain High Joint Commission, as well as bilateral mechanisms in the area of health, renewable energy and security and counter-terrorism have also met.

**Q.4. How do you value the constant cooperation between the two countries in various fields?**

**A.4.**

Our bilateral cooperation today is strong and multi-faceted and covers all areas of political, security, economic, trade, cultural and educational domains.

**Q.5. Can you further expand on the joint trade and economic relations?**

**A.5.**

- Bilateral trade and economic relations have has been a key area of our bilateral relations. Our trade relations go back to centuries. Both sides are working towards further intensifying these.
- The various measures taken by both governments for post-Covid economic revival have opened up new opportunities.
- The positive signs in our trade and economic relations are already visible. Bilateral trade for this year so far is about 40% more than last year and is expected to be well over US\$ 1 billion. With cumulative investment of over US\$ 1.25 billion. India is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest investor in Bahrain. Bahraini investment into India have also shown increasing trend.

**Q.6. The INS Kochi made its way to the Kingdom of Bahrain recently marking the 50th anniversary of joint relations, can you tell us more about that and what is further planned for this occasion?**

**A.6.**

- This year is a milestone in the journey of our diplomatic relations. It is the 50<sup>th</sup> year. Accordingly, both sides have planned to celebrate it in a befitting manner throughout this year as well as during the course of next year. We have already launched the logo in September 2021. Both governments have decided to illuminate one of their national monuments in each other's national colors. We will see tomorrow the illumination of the historic Qutub Minar in India in Bahraini colors; and the iconic Bab-Al-Bahrain in Indian tricolor.

- I thank Bahraini Authority for Culture & Antiquities and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our business community for putting together a week long celebrations at Cultural Hall and 'Little India in Bahrain', with events involving Indian and Bahraini artists, display of handicrafts, cuisine and seminars showcasing the rich heritage of our two countries as well as the historic connect and contemporary bilateral relations. One of the highlights is the classical folk fusion performance by the Indian troupe led by Maestro Jaywant Naidu who has travelled from India to Bahrain to join in these celebrations. I look forward to participation of our Indian community and Bahraini friends as well as you all, the members of media, in these celebrations.

- The Golden Jubilee of our diplomatic relations is an occasion to re-commit ourselves to work towards further strengthening the long standing dynamic partnership between India and Kingdom of Bahrain.

**Q.7. As part of its goals, the embassy launched several initiatives to consolidate mutual relations. Can you tell us more about them?**

**A.7.**

We are celebrating our strong historical bonds of friendship with involvement of people of our two countries. The Golden Jubilee of our diplomatic relations is also an occasion to recommit ourselves to work towards further strengthening the long standing dynamic partnership between India and Kingdom of Bahrain.

**Q.8. How do you see the relationships progressing and what are the embassy's future plans to further enhance them in all fields?**

**A.8.**

Our bilateral relations have steadily progressed and today our bilateral cooperation covers all important areas of our development priorities as well as issues of mutual concerns in the regional and multi-lateral fora.

**Q.9. From your point of view, what are the main fields that can witness upcoming cooperation between the two countries?**

**A.9.**

Our bilateral cooperation has diversified to the new and strategic areas of space, maritime security, Fintech and renewable energy. I see a lot of opportunities and huge potential for further cooperation in areas of health and pharma, energy, IT, Big Data, infrastructure and food security.

**Q.10. Bahrain has become a model for the way it's dealing with the pandemic by providing all related services for free for citizens and residents including tests and vaccination. How do you value that and how did it further bolster joint relations?**

**A.10.**

- Kingdom of Bahrain is among the countries who have successfully dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic. The Government of India and in fact, the global community, has acknowledged and praised Bahrain's constant efforts and initiatives in this direction. The way the Kingdom has treated its expat population, of which Indians form the majority, at par with their citizens in terms of medical facilities, tests and free vaccination is exemplary.

- Our two countries have closely cooperated and collaborated in dealing with the pandemic. His Majesty the King and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India held telephonic conversation in April 2020 and discussed the same. Our Foreign Ministers as well as the health, civil aviation and other concerned authorities have been in regular touch in this regard.

- Without going into details of our bilateral cooperation on fighting this pandemic, which I am sure you all are aware, I would highlight that this has once again shown resilience of our bilateral ties. It has strengthened our cooperation in health, \_\_\_\_ Besides the welfare of Indian community, the Government of Bahrain facilitated in their travel back home and now back to Bahrain, and supported India with supply of oxygen during the 2<sup>nd</sup> severe pandemic wave. India, on its part, has ensured that the supply lines remained open to Bahrain and the Gulf

countries, and supplied necessary medicines, vaccines and facilitated travel of medical professionals. The continued Air Bubble arrangement between our two countries has ensured uninterrupted travel of people of both sides.

**Q.11. The Indian community here in the Kingdom has a highly valued contribution to the development of Bahrain. Can you tell us more about that and how do your government and Bahrain's government collaborate in this field?**

**A.11.**

- Government of India is proud of Indian diaspora abroad, \_\_\_\_\_ value their contribution to the national development as well as the vibrant and dynamic Indian community in Bahrain is an important link in our bilateral ties. Their contribution to the development of the Kingdom and in promoting our bilateral economic, trade and cultural ties is acknowledged by the Leadership of both countries.

- I am glad to see their enthusiasm and active participation in various bilateral events including these special golden jubilee celebrations. The participation of Indian community and Bahraini friends makes these celebrations complete and meaningful. I look forward to their participation at various events scheduled at 'Little India in Bahrain' as well as cultural performances by the renowned Indian troupe led by Jaywant Naidu in Cultural Hall.

- While speaking about our community, let me also add that the success of our community in Bahrain is a result of Kingdom's visionary policies of tolerance and co-existence which has provided an environment to our community in which they not only excel professionally, but also enjoy comfortable social and family life.

- I take this opportunity to convey our appreciation and thanks to the Leadership and the Government of Bahrain for providing such environment and ensure welfare of the Indian community in Bahrain.

**The video of the above interview by Ambassador can be seen at**

**<https://youtu.be/qyVuR7O1X2E>**