

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Vinod K Jacob, Ambassador of India to the
Kingdom of Bahrain at the interaction with Bahrain India Society,
25 September 2023**

Chairperson of Bahrain India Society, Mr. Abdulrahman Mohammed Juma, other Members of the Board, my colleague Mr. Ravi Jain, Second Secretary, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to attend today's gathering organized by Bahrain India Society. This is my first speech after presenting my credentials to Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa at Sakheer Palace yesterday and so this will remain special.

In a brief interaction after presenting credentials, His Royal Highness extended the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to the Her Excellency, President of India, Ms. Droupadi Murmu, as well as His Majesty's best wishes for success my diplomatic duties and the furthering of relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and India. HRH the Deputy King also conveyed his own greetings to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and wished me success in performing my diplomatic duties.

Friends,

I have been warmly received by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. They have made my transition extremely smooth. I have had the good fortune of calling on the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Industry, Social Development, Transport and Telecommunications, Oil and Environment and Health, and a whole host of high level officials from other Departments and Agencies.

The leadership and people of the friendly Kingdom of Bahrain have welcomed the recent successes that the Indian Space Research Organization has achieved with the Chandrayaan 3 Mission landing at the south pole of the moon and the Aditya L1 observatory to study the sun. They have also acknowledged the substantive outcome and successful conduct of India's G20 Presidency which culminated in the summit meeting in the second week of September in Delhi. Speaking at the UN General Assembly at its 78th session in New York last week, Foreign Minister H.E. Dr. Abdullatif Al Zayani said that the Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes and endorses the Economic Corridor Project that will link India with Europe through the Middle East region.

Indigenous Guided Missile Destroyer, INS Visakhapatnam and Fleet Tanker INS Deepak also visited Kingdom of Bahrain from 14-17 August and the 77th Independence Day of India was marked in a befitting manner with Flag Hoisting Ceremonies both at the Embassy and on-board INS Visakhapatnam. Earlier this month, we were privileged to receive the 14th

President of India, HE Mr. Ram Nath Kovind and the former Vice President of India, HE Mr. Venkaiah Naidu during their visits to Bahrain.

Friends,

The engagement with the large Indian community has been maintained. In my multiple meetings with them, they have shown their determination to contribute constructively to the healthy development of India-Bahrain relations. We are committed to improving the ease of providing consular services. In August we launched our revamped consular service appointment application 'EoIBh CONNECT' which enables service seekers to book appointments for various consular services being provided through Embassy premises as well as through Outsourced Service Provider at Dana Mall.

I would be remiss if I did not flag some good news on the people to people front, particularly in tourism. According to the BTEA statistics, Bahrain witnessed a 87 percent surge in the number of Indians visiting in the first six months of 2023 with the data showing 5,04,173 arrivals compared to 2,69,302 for the same period in 2022.

As of mid-September 2023, my Embassy issued a total of 3904 visas of which 64 percent were tourist visas. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome more Bahrainis to visit India for leisure, business, education and medical purposes. I hope the new category of Ayush (AY) visa for foreign nationals for treatment under Ayush systems/Indian systems of medicine like therapeutic care, wellness and Yoga will be used by Bahraini friends.

Friends,

Going forward, I feel we must work collaboratively to deepen our economic and commercial engagement.

For instance, in the year 2005, the India-Bahrain bilateral trade was US\$ 575 million which had tripled to US\$ 1.6 billion in 2022. Some of the gains seen last year could be temporary adjustment in the immediate aftermath of lifting of the Covid 19 related restrictions. On the investment front, India has the sixth place in Bahrain with a total of US\$ 1.4 billion. We can explore new ways and new sectors to make progress. We have potential for cooperation and collaboration in IT, big data, fintech, renewable energy and the like.

I would like to flag in this context, the Global Biofuel Alliance launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi along with the leaders of Singapore, Bangladesh, Italy, USA, Brazil, Argentina, Mauritius and UAE on 9 September 2023, on the side-lines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi.

The Alliance intends to expedite the global uptake of biofuels through facilitating technology advancements, intensifying utilization of sustainable

biofuels, shaping robust standard setting and certification through the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The alliance will also act as a central repository of knowledge and an expert hub. GBA aims to serve as a catalytic platform, fostering global collaboration for the advancement and widespread adoption of biofuels.

The global ethanol market was valued at USD 99.06 billion in 2022 and is predicted to grow at a CAGR of 5.1% by 2032 and surpass USD 162.12 billion by 2032. As per IEA, there will be 3.5-5x biofuels growth potential by 2050 due to Net Zero targets.

It is always possible to list out many more such opportunities, but in order to ensure efficient utilization of time, I will conclude here by stating that we invite Bahrain to be a partner in India's growth story.

In particular, I call upon the Bahrain India Society to build on its MoU with the Confederation of Indian Industry signed in March 2023 during the visit of H.E. Mr. Abdullah bin Adel Fakhro, Minister of Commerce and Industry of the Kingdom of Bahrain to India.

I thank you.