

## **India-Bahrain Bilateral Relations**

### **Summary**

India and Bahrain enjoy excellent bilateral relations characterized by cordial political, economic, cultural and people to people contacts. Bahrain has genuine warmth towards India and this comes out in the interactions. Bahrain is keen on seeking greater economic engagement with India as Bahrain recognizes the importance and potential of the growing Indian economy and its Look East Policy in recent times has India as a major pivot. Presence of close to 340,000 Indian nationals who comprise nearly a quarter of the total population of 1.5 million in Bahrain is an important anchor of our bilateral relations.

### **History**

2. Our bilateral trade and commercial exchanges go back about 5,000 years, tracing their origins to the period of Dilmun Civilization in Bahrain & Indus valley civilization. Ancient Bahraini traders are believed to have carried out flourishing trade of Bahraini pearls with spices from India with many of Bahrain's prominent figures having had close Indian connections. When Bahrain was a British protectorate, Indian Rupee was a legal tender in the country.

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Diplomatic Milestone</b>
1	12 October 1971	Establishment of Diplomatic Relations
2	January 1973	Opening of Indian Embassy in Bahrain
3	March 2007	Opening of Embassy of Bahrain in New Delhi
4	July 2018	Opening of the new building of Embassy of India, Bahrain

### **Political relations**

3. The bilateral relationship is marked by regular high-level visits and exchanges. PM's visit to Bahrain in August 2019 following King Hamad's visit to India in 2014 has elevated our bilateral ties to newer heights.

#### **(a) Major high-level visits:**

<b><u>Incoming Visits [To India]</u></b>			<b><u>Highlights</u></b>
a)	Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, <b>Late Amir</b> of Bahrain	April 1981, 1983	
b)	Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, <b>Late Prime Minister</b>	January 2004	
c)	His Royal Highness Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, <b>Crown Prince (CP)</b>	(i) March 2007  (ii) May 2012  (iii) March 2013	(i) Official visit from March 19-22, 2007 at the invitation of Hon'ble Vice President of India.  (ii) Official visit from May 30-31, 2012 at the invitation of Hon'ble Vice-President of India, heading a delegation of Ministers, senior officials and businessmen to Delhi and Mumbai. An Agreement for Exchange of Information with respect to Taxes and a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the area of Information & Communication Technology [ICT] were signed during the visit.  (iii) Visit to Kerala from 17-18 March, 2013.
d)	His Majesty <b>King</b> Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa	February 2014	First state visit, accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising members of the Royal family, Deputy Prime Minister, Speaker of House of Representatives and Shura Council, key Cabinet Ministers including around 130-member strong business delegation.  Three bilateral MoUs were signed, namely the establishment of a High Joint Commission; cooperation in the field of Youth & Sports and cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute, MEA (India) and the Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Bahrain). Six commercial MoUs were also signed.

<b><u>Outgoing Visits [From India]</u></b>			<b><u>Highlights</u></b>
a)	Shri Giani Zail Singh, <b>Late President</b> of India	1983	
b)	Shri Krishnakant <b>Late Vice President</b> of India	March 1999	To convey condolences on demise of Amir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa
c)	Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble <b>Prime Minister</b> of India	24-25 August 2019	At the invitation of Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi, paid a State visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain on 24-25 August 2019, the first-ever state visit by an Indian Prime Minister. His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa bestowed Bahrain Order - First Class on PM in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain. PM met with the King, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, and the Crown Prince of Bahrain, and addressed Indian community in Bahrain. PM also laid foundation stone for the redevelopment of 200 year old Sri Krishna (Hindu) Temple. An agreement on Cultural Exchange Programme for the year 2019-23 and MoU between NPCI and BENEFIT for Launch of RuPay Card in Bahrain were signed. Two statements of intent were also signed and exchanged during the visit for collaboration in the areas of Space Technology and ISA (International Solar Alliance). A Joint Statement was also issued.
d)	Shri Om Birla, Hon'ble <b>Speaker</b> of Lok Sabha, India	9 -15 March, 2023	Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla led a parliamentary delegation comprising nine MPs, Secretary General of Lok Sabha and senior officials from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to attend the 146 <sup>th</sup> IPU from 09-15 March 2023. Speaker held meetings with Chairman of Shura Council and Speaker of Council of Representatives (Lower House)

**(b) Recent Ministerial / Official visits:**

<b><u>Incoming Visits [To India]</u></b>	<b><u>Highlights</u></b>
--	--------------------------

a)	Foreign Minister of Bahrain	<p>(i) March 2011 and February 2015</p> <p>(ii) 6-8 April 2021</p>	<p>(i) Former Foreign Minister H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al-Khalifa, visited India in March 2011; and again in February, 21-23 2015 for the first High Joint Commission meeting.</p> <p>(ii) Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, visited India from 6-8 April 2021 to co-chair the third High Joint Commission meeting with Hon'ble EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar.</p>
b)	Minister of Industry and Commerce	<p>(i) May 2016</p> <p>(ii) 14-18 March 2023</p>	<p>(i) Then Bahrain's Minister for Commerce, Industry &amp; Tourism H.E. Zayed bin Rashid Al Zayani visited India leading an EDB delegation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bahrain India Forum organized jointly by IISS and EDB at New Delhi in May 2016.</p> <p>(ii) Minister of Industry and Commerce of Bahrain H.E. Abdullah bin Adel Fakhro, visited Delhi and Mumbai from 14-18 March 2023, accompanied by a more than 60 - member Bahraini business delegation. Hon'ble Minister and Bahraini delegation participated at the CII - 'Partnership Summit' in New Delhi and also held meetings with FICCI, Indian PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. FICCI in association with BCCI organised Bahrain - India Business Forum for the delegation which was attended by the Minister. Two Private MoUs were signed between Bahrain India Society and CII; and between SME Development Society of Bahrain with SME Chamber of FICCI.</p>
c)	Transportation & Telecommunication Minister of Bahrain	12-14 March 2023	Transportation and Telecommunication Minister of Bahrain, H.E. Mohammed bin Thamer Al Kaabi accompanied by H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla, Undersecretary for Political Affairs, MoFA visited India from 12-14 March 2023.

d)	Interior Minister of Bahrain	1- 4 December 2015	Bahrain's Interior Minister, H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa held an official visit to India from 1-4 December 2015. During the visit, an Agreement on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Trafficking in Illicit Drugs, Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances and Precursors Chemicals was signed.
e)	Minister of Labour and Social Development of Bahrain	February 2016	Minister of Labour and Social Development Jameel H.E. Humaidan visited India in February 2016 to participate in the Make in India Week held at Mumbai.
f)	<p>Other recent visits of officials include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary (Political Affairs), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bahrain, to co-chair the 5<sup>th</sup> round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) with Secretary (CPV &amp; OIA) on 28 March 2022.</li> <li>Chief Executive of Economic Development Board of Bahrain Mr. Khalid Humaidan visited India from 04-11 September 2022 and held meetings in New Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad with top Indian companies.</li> <li>CEO of National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) visited India to attend iPHEX and Global Regulators Conclave organized by Pharmexcil, New Delhi in September 2022.</li> </ul>		
<b><u>Outgoing Visits [From India]</u></b>		<b><u>Highlights</u></b>	
e)	External Affairs Minister	<p>(i) 6 - 9 December 2013</p> <p>(ii) 6-7 September 2014</p> <p>23-24 January 2016</p> <p>14-15 July 2018</p>	<p>(i) Former EAM H.E. Shri. Salman Khurshid paid a bilateral visit to Bahrain from 6 - 9 December 2013.</p> <p>(ii) Former EAM H.E. Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Bahrain on 6-7 September 2014 for the inaugural "Diaspora Engagement Meet" organized by the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC) and CII. She again visited Bahrain from 23-24 January 2016 to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Arab-India Cooperation Forum (AICF). She visited Bahrain for the third time on 14-15 July 2018 to co-</p>

			<p>chair the 2<sup>nd</sup> High Joint Commission meeting. During the visit, the then EAM also inaugurated the then newly constructed Indian Embassy complex on 14 July 2018 in the presence of H.E. Foreign Minister of Bahrain. MoUs for cooperation in the field of renewable energy and healthcare were signed along with an Agreement on exemption from short stay visa for holders of Diplomatic and Special/Official Passports.</p>
		(iii) 24-25 November 2020	(iii) EAM H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Bahrain on 24-25 November 2020 to convey condolence on the demise of Late Bahraini PM Prince Khalifa and appreciation for the care taken of the Indian community during COVID-19 were well received. He called on His Royal Highness Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain, and met H.E. Foreign Minister of Bahrain and Deputy PM (son of the late PM). EAM also virtually interacted with members of Indian community.
f)	Home Minister	23-25 October 2016	Home Minister H.E. Shri Rajnath Singh visited Bahrain from 23-25 October 2016 on an official visit. On the sidelines, the 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the Joint Steering Committee was held on 25 October 2016.
g)	Minister of State for External Affairs (MoS)	(i) 30 August to 01 September 2021  (ii) 04-05 May 2023	(i) During his first official visit from 30 August to 01 September 2021, MoS H.E. Shri V. Muraleedharan called on His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and other high ranking officials and dignitaries. MoS also met with the Indian community including prominent Indian businessmen and Indian community leaders as well as those working in the education and healthcare sectors. MoS also interacted with the members of Indian Universities Alumni Society (IUAS). MoS also took part in an Indian community event to mark the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations  (ii) During the second visit from 04-05 May 2023, MoS met Ministers of Labour & Minister

		<p>of Social Development, Minister of Finance and National Economy and President BACA (Bahrain Authority of Culture and Antiquities). He also met and held official talks with Undersecretary (Political Affairs), at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain. MoS also interacted with a cross-section of Indian community in Bahrain; Heads of Indian Associations, Members of Indian Medical Fraternity and social workers in Bahrain in separate dedicated interactive meetings. MoS inaugurated the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of 'Indo-Bahrain Dance &amp; Music Festival' organized by Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam as part of the yearly flagship Azadi Ka Amrit Mahostav Iconic Week Celebrations in Bahrain.</p>
h)	<p>Other visits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister of State H.E. Gen. V.K. Singh visited Bahrain from 13-15 January 2017.</li> <li>• Minister of State H.E. Shri M.J. Akbar visited Bahrain on 8-9 December 2017 to participate in the 13<sup>th</sup> Manama Dialogue 2017.</li> <li>• On the invitation of His Royal Highness Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Crown Prince of Bahrain, Kerala Chief Minister H.E. Shri Pinarayi Vijayan visited Bahrain from 9-11 February 2017 to attend the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS).</li> <li>• Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff (DCNS) Vice Admiral Sanjay Mahindru visited Bahrain from 26-29 July 2022, to discuss on modalities on India joining Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) as an Associate Partner.</li> <li>• H.E. Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, Secretary (CPV &amp; OIA), Ministry of External Affairs of India (MEA), visited Bahrain from 29-31 May 2023 to co-chair the 6th FOC with Undersecretary (Political Affairs), MoFA Bahrain &amp; joined by Undersecretary (Consular Affairs), MoFA Bahrain.</li> </ul>	

**(c) Telephonic conversations / Other meetings and Summits:**

- Prime Minister:
  - On 01 December 2023, on the sidelines of the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP) Summit in Dubai, UAE, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi

met His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

- PM held a telephonic conversation with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on 6 April 2020. PM also spoke to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain on 1 February 2022.
- PM met Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani on sidelines of the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit in Johannesburg on 23 August 2023 and conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain on the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3.
- **Voice of Global South Summit** : H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain participated via a recorded video message in the Concluding Leaders' Session of Voice of Global South Summit 2.0 held on 17 November 2023. Bahraini Minister of Oil and Environment H.E. Dr. Mohamed bin Mubarak bin Daina virtually represented Bahrain in the Energy Ministers' Session of the "Voice of the Global South Summit" on 13 January 2023.

### **Bilateral Institutional Mechanisms**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Last edition held</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
i.	High Joint Commission (HJC)	3 <sup>rd</sup> High Joint Commission, held on 07 April, 2021, New Delhi, India	External Affairs Minister, India Foreign Minister, Bahrain	India and Bahrain signed an Economic and Technical Co-operation Agreement in April 1981 during the Amir's visit to New Delhi. India-Bahrain Joint Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (JCETC) established under this agreement met four times (1986-New Delhi, 1991-Bahrain, 1998-New Delhi and 2007-Bahrain). This mechanism has since been replaced by a "High Joint Commission" and upgraded to the level of EAM, after MoU on the establishment of HJC was signed during His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's visit to India in 2014.

ii.	Foreign Office Consultations (FoC)	6 <sup>th</sup> Foreign Office Consultations, held on 30 May 2023 in Manama, Bahrain	Secretary, MEA, India  Undersecretary for Political Affairs, MoFA, Bahrain	Six rounds of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) have taken place so far- 1st in 16-19 November 2004 in Delhi; 2nd on 23 October 2011 in Bahrain, 3rd on 20 October 2014 in New Delhi, 4th on 14 November 2016 in Bahrain; 5th on 28 March 2022 in New Delhi; 6th round of FOC was held on 30 May 2023 in Bahrain.
iii.	Security Dialogue	2 <sup>nd</sup> Security Dialogue, held on 21 October 2016, New Delhi, India	Dy. NSA, India National Security Advisor, Bahrain	Bilateral Security Dialogue mechanism was set up based on the decisions taken at the 1 <sup>st</sup> HJC meeting.
iv.	Joint Steering Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of Joint Steering Committee, held on 07 October 2021	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, India  Chief of Public Security Ministry of Interior, Bahrain	Joint Steering Committee was constituted pursuant to the MoU on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Trafficking in Illicit Drugs, Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances and Precursors Chemicals, signed on 02 December 2015 between India and Bahrain.
v	Joint Committee on Labour and Manpower	1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of Joint Committee on Labour and Manpower, held on 08-09 February 2017, New Delhi	Joint Secretary, Overseas Indian Affairs-I, Ministry of External Affairs, India.  Chief Executive Officer, Labour Market Regulatory Authority, Bahrain.	Joint Committee on Labour and Manpower (JCLM) was established pursuant to the MoU on Labour & Manpower Development, signed between two countries in June 2009 to streamline the process of recruitment of Indian workers by the employers in Bahrain as well as addressing the issues/problems faced by the Indian workforce in Bahrain.
v	India-Bahrain Joint Working	1 <sup>st</sup> Joint Working Group (JWG)	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health, India	JWG on Healthcare was set up pursuant to MOU for

	Group (JWG) on Healthcare	on Healthcare, held virtually on 22 February 2022	Director, Acting Undersecretary for Public Health, Ministry of Health, Bahrain	cooperation in the field of Healthcare on July 2018. 1st India-Bahrain Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting on healthcare cooperation was held virtually on 22 February 2022.
v	Joint Working Group (JWG) on Renewable Energy	1 <sup>st</sup> Joint Working Group (JWG) on Renewable Energy, held virtually on 04 February 2021	Joint Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, India  President, Sustainable Energy Authority, Bahrain	JWG on Renewable Energy was held in pursuant to MoU for cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy between India and Bahrain signed in July 2018. First JWG under the MoU took place in February 2021.

### **Multilateral Institutional Mechanisms**

4. **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** Bahrain joined ISA as its 86<sup>th</sup> Member on March 2022 as it deposited the Instrument of Accession on the sidelines of the 5<sup>th</sup> Foreign Office of Consultations held in New Delhi on 28 March 2022.

5. **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF):** India joined CMF as Associate Partner in July 2022 and as a full member in 2023, which was announced in the Joint Statement of fifth Annual India – US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue on 10 November 2023.

### **Recent developments:**

6. **Joint Action Plan:** : On 13 November 2023, Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, Government of India and Bahrain Customs signed a Joint Action Plan (JAP) regarding Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the respective Authorised Economic Operators Programmes.

### **Cooperation on COVID-19 matters**

7. Both countries have had excellent cooperation in dealing with COVID and its aftermath. The Govt. of Bahrain provided food, medical and other necessary support to the Indian community, besides providing free COVID 19 vaccination to all in Bahrain, including the Indian community. Bahrain provided 40 MTs of liquid medical oxygen and facilitated COVID-19 related supplies to India in the month of May 2021, during the second COVID wave. The Govt. of India gifted 100,000 doses of 'Made-in-India' COVISHIELD vaccines to Bahrain on 28 January 2021. Govt. of India also provided 1.5 million Hydroxychloroquine tablets on commercial basis and facilitated travel of nurses and medical professionals to Bahrain, besides keeping supply lines open for Bahrain and other GCC countries for essential trade, food products and medicine etc.

## **Culture, Education & Youth:**

8. **Culture:** The Cultural and People to People relations between the two countries date back centuries. The 200 year old Shreenathji temple is a testament to this. A **Cultural Exchange Programme 2019-2023** was signed between India and Bahrain during PM's visit to Bahrain in 2019. Within the ambit of CEP 2019-2023, several cultural festivals were held. Three editions of Indo-Bahrain dance and music festivals were held in 2022, 2023 and 2024. The Golden Jubilee of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Bahrain was celebrated in association with Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities (BACA), and MoFA, Bahrain from October 2022 to October 2023, including performances, stalls depicting Indian culture and seminars. Indian cultural troops also participated in cultural festivals of Bahrain.

9. **Golden Jubilee Celebrations:** Golden Jubilee of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kingdom of Bahrain was celebrated with a series of events in 2021-22. The celebrations started with the visit of INS Kochi from 15 – 18 August, 2021 and with the launch of Golden Jubilee Logo on 19 September, 2021. On 12 October 2021, Hon'ble EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar met and exchange greetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani on the occasion of Golden Jubilee of India-Bahrain diplomatic relations on the sidelines of CICA Conference. The main week of celebrations was held from 12 to 19 October, 2021 at the historic Little India in Bahrain/Bab-al-Bahrain in association with Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities (BACA) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Celebrations began on 12 October with historic event of illumination of Bab Al Bahrain in Indian tricolour and Qutub Minar in Bahraini national colours. The festival was jointly inaugurated by H.E. Shaikha Mai bit Mohammed Al Khalifa, President, BACA; H.E. Mr. Tawfeeq Al Mansoor, Undersecretary, MoFA; and Ambassador. The events organized included seminars, webinars, cultural programmes, art exhibitions, poetry meets, and stalls showcasing handicrafts, food and cuisines etc. Two major events were held in 2022, a Multilingual Poetry Meet 'Sadaqatu Dosti Ka' hosted at the Embassy in December 2022 with poems from Indian and Bahraini poets in Hindi, Arabic, Urdu and English; and an "Indo-Bahrain Art Exhibition" held in Dana Mall, Manama to bring together 50 Artists from India and Bahrain.

10. **Youth:** H.E. Minister of Youth and Sport Affairs of Bahrain held two virtual meetings with H.E. Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports of India on 16 September 2021; and with H.E. Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship of India on 23 December 2021. Both sides agreed to increase cooperation in the field of sports and youth exchanges and cooperation in the field of training/internship, start-ups and upskilling and reskilling. A 3-member youth represented Bahrain as a guest country in the Y-20 Summit held in Varanasi from 17-20 August 2023.

11. **Education:** A number of prominent Bahrainis had studied in India in the past. Bahrain also has eight Indian schools with around twenty-two thousand students. Both sides are now working to further intensify cooperation in the field of Education.

## **Bilateral Agreements / Memorandums of Understanding / Statements of Intent**

12. Following Agreements / MOUs / Statements of Intent have been signed between the two countries:

- a) Air Service Agreement (April 2000)
- b) MoU on Cooperation between Ministry of External Affairs, India and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain (January 2004)
- c) Agreement on Juridical and judicial Co-operation in Civil and Commercial Matters (January 2004)
- d) Extradition Treaty (January 2004)
- e) Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (January 2004)
- f) Agreement for Media Co-operation between Prasar Bharati and Bahrain Radio & TV Corporation (March 2007)
- g) MoU on Labour and Manpower Development (June 2009)
- h) Agreement regarding Exchange of Information with respect to Taxes (May 2012)
- i) MoU on Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (May 2012)
- j) MoU on the establishment of a Joint High Commission (February 2014)
- k) MoU on cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, India and the Diplomatic Institute, Bahrain (February 2014)
- l) MoU for cooperation in the field of youth and sports (February 2014)
- m) MoU between Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre and Bahrain Economic Development Board (September 2014)
- n) MoU between Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre and the Bahrain India Society (September 2014)
- o) MoU on Water Resources Development and Management (February 2015)
- p) Agreement on Cooperation in combating international terrorism, transnational organized crime and trafficking in illicit drugs, narcotics and psychotropic substances and precursors chemicals (December 2015)
- q) Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons (January 2016)
- r) MoU for cooperation in the field of Healthcare (July 2018)
- s) MoU for cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy (July 2018)
- t) Agreement on Exemption from Short Stay Visa for Holders of Diplomatic and Official/Special Passports (July 2018)
- u) MoU on Cooperation in the exploration and uses of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes (March 2019)
- v) Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 2019-2023 (August 2019)
- w) MoU between BENEFIT and NPCI for Launch of 'RuPay Card' in Bahrain (August 2019)
- x) Statement of Intent on collaboration of Kingdom of Bahrain with International Solar Alliance (August 2019)
- y) Statement of Intent on collaboration between Indian Space Research Organisation and National Space Science Agency in the area of Space Technology (August 2019)

### **Trade and Economic Relations**

13. India-Bahrain bilateral trade and commercial exchanges go back about 5,000 years

tracing their origins to the period of Dilmun Civilization in Bahrain and Indus valley civilization in India. Ancient Bahraini traders are believed to have carried out flourishing trade of Bahraini pearls with spices from India. In contemporary times, these relations received fresh impetus from the oil boom of the early seventies. Oil exports from Bahrain and relative prosperity and higher standard of living in Bahrain boosted its share in global trade of goods and services, including to/from India. Bahrain Government's policy of industrial diversification also played an important role in enhancing economic cooperation between India and Bahrain. Bilateral trade in 2023-24 has reached USD 1.7 billion. India is among the top five trading partners of Bahrain. Bilateral trade figures are as under:

Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
India's Export	471.71	556.82	742.14	559.09	528.25	899.90	965.25	909.42
India's Import	290.69	431.12	539.63	421.50	547.49	753.29	1014.50	829.44
Total	<b>762.40</b>	<b>987.94</b>	<b>1281.77</b>	<b>980.59</b>	<b>1075.74</b>	<b>1653.19</b>	<b>1979.75</b>	<b>1738.86</b>

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, GoI)

14. **Major items of exports to Bahrain are:** agri products (Rice, boneless meat, shrimp, sugar, fresh fruits and vegetables), machinery & engineering goods, medicaments (recent addition), jewellery, polymers, private cars, ships, boats and floating structures.

15. **Major items for imports from Bahrain are:** urea, methanol, mineral fuel, mineral oils & products, iron ore, aluminum, copper and bridge sections.

### **Indian investment in Bahrain**

16. Bilateral investments have increased from both directions in the recent time. As per the data of Economic Development Board of Bahrain, India is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest investor in Bahrain. Cumulative Indian investment in Bahrain has reached approx. \$1.5 billion increasing by more than 35% since 2019. Financial services accounts for the highest investment value. Other important areas of investment are real estate, hospitality, health, IT and education. 38 Indian commercial agencies, 32 branches of prominent Indian companies and more than 7500 Indian owned/India Joint Venture companies registered in Bahrain as on October 2020.

### **Bahraini investment in India**

17. Bahrain's investments into India have also shown increasing trend recently. As per DIPP statistics, total cumulative investment from Bahrain to India from is about USD 185

million (in December 2013, it was only at USD 31.55 million). The main sectors of Bahrain's investment into India are real estate, information technology and engineering.

### **Indian Expatriate Community**

18. The Indian community in Bahrain is the largest expat community in Bahrain. The presence of a large Indian expatriate workforce at all levels from unskilled to professionals continues to remain an important anchor of India-Bahrain bilateral relations.

19. While there were only 90,000 Indian nationals working in Bahrain in the year 2000, the number has since increased to over 340,000 comprising of 200,000 from Kerala, 50,000 from Tamil Nadu, 40,000 from Andhra Pradesh & Telangana, 25,000 from Karnataka and rest from Punjab, Rajasthan, UP, Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat. In addition to about 2/3rd being skilled and semi-skilled workers and labourers, there is a sizeable number of businessmen, CEOs, CFOs, doctors, nurses, engineers, chartered accountants, bankers, managers, teachers and other professionals who play a vital role in the Bahrain's socio-economic development.

20. Bahrain launched 'Little India in Bahrain' project in November 2015 to acknowledge and mark the contribution of Indian community to the history and progress of Bahrain. Under the project, exterior of various buildings were restored and renovated, as well as a small public space. The main event of the Golden Jubilee of Diplomatic relations was held at the renovated 'Little India in Bahrain' in October 2021. Bahrain also hosts a 200 year-old Shreenathji Temple in Bahrain at the heart of Manama which is the oldest Hindu temples in the region. PM Shri Narendra Modi had inaugurated the renovation of the temple during his visit in August 2019, which was earmarked as a special project by Bahraini Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in September 2023. Bahrain has also approved allocation of land for a new BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in January 2022.

#### Useful References:

Website:- <https://eoi.gov.in/bahrain/>

Twitter:- <https://twitter.com/IndiaInBahrain>

Facebook:- <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInBahrain/>

Instagram :- [indiainbahrain](https://www.instagram.com/indiainbahrain)

\*\*\*

**June 2024**