

Indian expats are visiting Bahrain in a large number

The kingdom is fast becoming a favourite tourist destination for affluent Indians

● A boost for Bahrain tourism industry

● BTEA has put India on the priority list

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama



“More Indian weddings are taking place nowadays, and Bahrain has grown to become a popular tourist destination for Indians, giving us the opportunity to offer visas and tickets, and expand our business.”

- HARIS PT, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TRAVEL KNITS

Indians come to the Kingdom for greener pastures, seeking jobs to support their families back home. But now, they are embracing the Kingdom in the form of tourism.

Increasing Indian arrivals can boost the Kingdom's tourism sector as they add thousands of high-net-worth individuals and potential tourists despite

slowdown trends in Europe and West Asia.

The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibition Authority (BTEA) has also put India on the priority list

by maintaining an office in the country to collaborate with travel agents and tourism players.

The outstanding relations between Bahrain and India will also be an impetus to this tourism upswing drive.

Haris PT, Managing Director of Travel Knits, told The Daily Tribune: “More Indian weddings are taking place nowadays, and Bahrain has become a popular tourist destination for Indians, allowing us to offer visas and tickets and expand our business.”

“To develop Bahrain as a tourist destination, the tourism sector should work with GCC nations.

“A single visit visa for the gulf countries can attract more tourists to Bahrain. This can help tourism to the entire GCC like most tourists visit many European countries when allowed to

travel with one single Schengen visa. Right now, Saudi Arabia is also promoting tourism in a big way. If a tourist can get a single visa to travel to different GCC Countries will be a game changer.”

Shailesh Kumar, another agent, said that business is booming and that many Indian tourists are travelling to Bahrain.

“It also depends on when the holiday begins, especially since many want to bring their families to Bahrain during Ramadan. I've seen more individuals travelling to Bahrain than returning to India,” Kumar said.

Recently, the BTEA has promoted Bahrain as a unique destination. The Kingdom will welcome 14 weddings in the first quarter of this year.

Stage set for Portuguese artist exhibition starting today



Baroque-inspired sculptures at BACA exhibition

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Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) will launch today at 7 pm the exhibition of the Portuguese artist and sculptor Miguel Rodrigues at the Art Center.

The exhibition, under the patronage of Chairman of the National Council for the Arts Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, and in cooperation with Bahrain Gallery, is about the Portuguese Baroque era and its history as a subject of reflection.

Miguel created pieces of art characterised by the baroque style by adding modern touches.

Expired food destroyed by Inspection Directorate



The seized materials end up at dump sites
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The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has destroyed expired foodstuffs.

Assistant Undersecretary for Control and Resources Abdulaziz Al Ashraf said that following a complaint that a company was selling foodstuffs after altering their expiration dates.

Following an investigation,

3,704 boxes of expired dates and date molasses were seized in five different locations.

The case was referred to the Public Prosecution, and judicial rulings were issued against the violator to confiscate and destroy the seized materials.

The ministry has a zero-tolerance policy regarding commercial frauds that affect people's wellbeing, safety and health, Al Ashraf said.

LMRA inspection campaigns in full swing

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The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) conducted three inspection campaigns in the Capital Governorate on a number of shops and work sites.

The campaigns resulted in reporting violations related to the Labour Market and Residency laws. The cases were referred for legal action.

LMRA noted that the first campaign was in coordination with the Nationality, Passports



An expat's status is being checked by LMRA personnel

and Residence Affairs (NPRA) and the Governorate's respective Police Directorate.

The other campaign was conducted in coordination with the General Directorate of Crime Detection and Forensic Evidence of the Ministry of Interior.

The Authority also conducted an inspection campaign by the LMRA Enforcement sector.

The LMRA renewed its call on the society to support the government efforts in addressing illegal labour practices.



Book on Bahraini heritage

National Archives Centre Chairman Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi yesterday received researchers Bashar Al Hadi and Rashid Al Jasim. They presented to Dr Al Nuaimi a copy of their book “Bahrain Noukhadas” in which they cite the names of divers, featuring photos and documents. Dr Al Nuaimi praised the researchers' efforts in compiling their valuable book which aims to conserve an aspect of Bahraini heritage.

Fil-Am Fontanilla a witness to growing Bahrain-Philippines ties

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Orlando Fontanilla, the Public Officer of Filipino American Association of Bahrain, came to the Kingdom in 2001 when he was deployed as a US military serviceman at the US Naval Base in Juffair.

He shared his views as he looked back on significant experiences how their organisation observed the growing partnership between the two countries.

It was in 2002 when Fontanilla, together with eight other colleagues in the Navy, realised the need to establish an organisation.

“I was elected as president of Fil Am Bahrain. It was during that time when members were exclusively military personnel and their dependents who were working in the base, until



Fontanilla with fellow US military servicemen and the Filipino community

the membership was opened to Filipino nationals outside the camp,” said Fontanilla, who works as Mobilization & Personnel Readiness Officer at the US Naval Base.

Fil Am Bahrain initiated the line of communication to the Philippine Embassy, coordinat-

ing all their activities of community charities and outreach programs to then Philippine Ambassador Eduardo Maglaya.

“As the president of the organisation I represented the group in various meetings and gatherings including invitations to grace many occasions



Orlando Fontanilla with Philippine Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Anne Jalando-on Louis

and formal gatherings with the Bahrain government,” Fontanilla narrated.

“I observed the strong ties between the leaders of both countries, on one occasion on the celebration of Philippine Independence Day wherein the

leaders turned to be very appreciative of the presentation on Philippine cultural numbers in the program, including the Filipino food served.”

Cultural presentations have, indeed, broadened the connections and created common understanding and mutual appreciation.

When he returned to Bahrain for another assignment, Fontanilla observed that the relationship became stronger as work opportunities for Filipinos in Bahrain had tremendously expanded. Juffair was a boomtown, buildings were being built here and there, the confidence and growth were captivating.

Engrossed with the Philippines' economic partnership with Bahrain, it grows with the fact that the Filipino work force

are well-loved by the employers because they are hardworking and their dedication for work are incomparable.

On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the Philippines and Bahrain diplomatic relations, Fontanilla congratulated both countries for the milestones they have achieved.

An officer of Filipino American who has been very proud of his motherland, the Philippines, Fontanilla claimed, “I am a US national now, there is a part of me being a full-blooded Filipino, I am always proud to be called Filipino-American.”

Fil Am Bahrain works on the preservation and promotion of Filipino heritage aside from holding events for fundraising, as well as participating in year-round activities for charities.