

Bahrain national day

In appreciation of deepening ties with Japan

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AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF
BAHRAIN

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain celebrates the 42nd National Day, the 41st anniversary of the diplomatic relations with Japan, the 14th anniversary of the Accession to the Throne of H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the eighth anniversary of the Bahrain Embassy in Tokyo.



On this occasion, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Tokyo has the honor to renew, on behalf of the government and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain, its heartfelt greetings and good wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the government and the people of Japan.

This August, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe became the first prime minister of Japan to visit the Kingdom of Bahrain. Prime Minister Abe was welcomed by H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, prime minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, other officials of the government as well as the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

I am also delighted to pronounce that the Kingdom of Bahrain has enjoyed a strong relationship with Japan since the early years of independence. Over the years, the Kingdom of Bahrain has been an important focal point and friendly host for Japanese companies and enterprises.

Since I was appointed as the first ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Japan, our embassy team's main mission has been to enhance the Bahrain-Japan partnership, cultivate Japan's interest in our region, and introduce genuine and productive cultural exchanges between the people of both countries. To this end, I must say with pride and gratitude that we have been achieving remarkable progress so far, with the kind assistance and cooperation from our precious friends, associations and companies in this beautiful and friendly country.

The nation of the Kingdom of Bahrain, with the democratic reforms of H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the premiership of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and the economic vision of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, is managing the global challenges of the third millennium by working in harmony and peace with all the

nations of the Middle East, the Arab World, the Islamic countries, and the rest of the East and the West, which is why the country is so often called the "Pearl of the Gulf" region.

Finally, the team at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Japan would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the sovereign of the country, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the prime minister, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, for their vision and support in initiating this new era of Bahrain-Japan relations.

Modern and open society

For most of the Japanese people staying in the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain is an ideal destination for vacations. Sunny, sandy beaches, beautiful green parks, fresh air and vigorous markets await them. The modern and liberal atmosphere of this democratic society must be remarkably appealing to Japanese visitors. The legendary "Garden of Eden" in the Old Testament and "Eternal Land" in the Great Epic of Gilgamesh are the exact words for this paradise on Earth.

The Kingdom of Bahrain today is rapidly changing. H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has an ambitious vision of investing in human resources to further develop the country's status as a cultural, financial and technology center, in a democratic constitutional monarchy. In fact, women's roles in society are large and education is open to the entire nation. Educational centers are striving hard to provide state-of-the-art knowledge and technology to future generations.

Bahrain is a place that is continuously changing. There are numerous small and large-scale luxurious development projects being undertaken. You may know about the Bahrain International Circuit, the host of the fourth race on the Formula One Grand Prix schedule. There are also artificial island resorts, surrounded by emerald green seas that are increasingly becoming alluring destinations for relaxing vacations, as well as large-scale inland resorts themed with water park amusements, wildlife safari parks, luxurious hotels and shopping malls, that will make all visitors feel at home, regardless of the length of their stay. Moreover, there is the 25-km-long King Fahd Causeway linking Bahrain to Saudi Arabia. And to further facilitate access to the kingdom, the construction of another even larger causeway connecting Bahrain to Qatar is under way, which will be the longest in the world upon

completion.

Your choice of the Kingdom of Bahrain as a regional base of business, as a destination for a vacation or as your second home after retirement will enrich your life with more fascination and energy.

Strong business history

Japan and the Kingdom of Bahrain have traditionally maintained a very solid friendship. The relations between Japan and the Kingdom of Bahrain date back to 1934, when the first Bahraini oil shipments to Japan began after the discovery of oil in Bahrain in 1932. In May 1972, diplomatic relations between Japan and Bahrain were established and since then, the relationship between the two countries has become profound. In fact, Japan's imports from the Kingdom of Bahrain have been increasing during the past years, with the main source of imports being petroleum products and aluminum.

The Kingdom of Bahrain, which is located at the heart of the Gulf region, is the gateway to the Middle East market as it has access to every market in the region by air, sea and road, quickly and efficiently. This strategic location provides Japanese companies with the fastest access to markets with high purchasing power for their goods and services.

It is noteworthy that Bahrain's economy has long been the freest in the region for 19 years and has steadily improved its ranking worldwide. Today the Index of Economic Freedom ranks the country as 12th worldwide, ahead of G-7 economies. Furthermore, Bahrain gives approval to foreign companies to retain 100 percent foreign ownership and to benefit from the region's lowest taxes. In addition, the country has bilateral trade and economic agreements with more than 40 countries, as well as a free-trade agreement with the United States.

With the support of such environments, 26 Japanese companies have their bases in Bahrain and have been expanding their business in the region. To name a few in the financial services sector, in addition to existing names like Nomura Securities, Daiwa Securities and Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ, which chose Bahrain because it has the most historical and sophisticated financial center in the Middle East, Orix Corp. has come to Bahrain as a new face with an equity participation in Medgulf, the biggest insurance company in the Middle East, whose head office is located in Bahrain. In the manufacturing sector, Toyota, Yokogawa, Sasaki, Toshiba Power Systems, Fuji Electric,



Constant change: The Bahrain World Trade Center in the capital Manama includes office towers, shopping malls and a five-star hotel. (Right) The VIP Tower at the Bahrain International Circuit Sakhir, Bahrain, is home to the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix. EMBASSY OF BAHRAIN

Yamato Kogyo, Ebara, Teikoku Electric MFG, Yakult, DIC and SBI Pharmaceutical have chosen Bahrain as it is a gateway to the Middle East market. Moreover, many projects have been accomplished by Japanese companies, including petrochemical, aluminum, gas, telecommunications, pellet and steel plant projects. I am confident that the presence of Japanese companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain will provide further opportunities for our economic relationship to prosper.

Following the visit of H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to Japan last year, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations, H.R.H. Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa visited the country this year, and has strengthened the relationship between Japan and Bahrain through exchanging memorandums of understanding in various fields, including diplomacy, oil exploration, economy, education, medicine and culture.

To conclude my remarks, I wish continuous prosperity and happiness to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as the country of Japan and its people, continuing progress in all fields for both countries, and the continuance of the special relationship tying both of our nations.

Role of EDB
The Economic Development Board (EDB) is a dynamic pub-

lic agency with an overall responsibility for formulating and overseeing the economic development strategy of Bahrain, and for creating the right climate to attract foreign direct investment into the kingdom.

One of the roles of the EDB is to provide leadership by uniting all the kingdom's shareholders and to attract inward investment into Bahrain as well as marketing the Kingdom of Bahrain abroad, while working closely with its embassies across the world to promote business investment opportunities.

The EDB Japan Office is the first point of call for Japanese businesses considering investment in Bahrain. The EDB offers an investor facilitation service to first-time investors, which includes understanding the objectives of investors, providing them with information regarding the relevant procedures for setting up business and helping them to form a network of contacts in Bahrain. Working across gov-



ernmental ministries and bodies, the EDB can facilitate easy entry to the Bahraini market, and can provide ongoing support and advice.

Contact the EDB Japan Office to discuss how to take the first step toward enjoying the advantages of investing in Bahrain and accessing fast-growing markets right across the Middle East. Please visit <http://www.bahrainedb.com/> for more information.

Congratulations
to the People of the Kingdom of Bahrain
on the 42nd Anniversary of Their National Day

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