

**SPEECH BY H'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE BANQUET IN HONOUR OF THE KING OF
BAHRAIN, HIS MAJESTY KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL-KHALIFA**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi : 19-02-2014

Your Majesty, King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa,
King of the Kingdom of Bahrain,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Your Majesty, King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa and the distinguished members of your delegation on your first state visit to India.

Your Majesty, the mists of time have not been able to obliterate the origins of Indo-Bahraini relations. Indeed, there is archaeological evidence of our ties going well back to the second millennium B.C. Legend has it that for Indian traders who plied the trade route between the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Indus Valley, Bahrain, then known as Dilmun, was a halting-point where they refreshed themselves and prepared for the arduous journey further ahead. This was, naturally, also an occasion for cultural and other exchanges including the flourishing trade of Bahraini pearls and dates and Indian spices. India and Bahrain are thus two countries who share a glorious past and a dynamic present. Ours is, indeed, a long standing friendship based on civilisational ties and we both value this immensely. We have, in recent times, expanded our ties of trust and understanding into a comprehensive relationship across the full spectrum of political, economic, commercial and people to people contacts.

Your Majesty, Bahrain has generously embraced a large number of Indian expatriates and encouraged them to flourish and prosper, which we deeply appreciate. On their part, Indians

in Bahrain have worked with dedication and sincerity to contribute wholeheartedly to the development and progress of their host country. They provide an organic link with India and act as a strong bridge in the furtherance of our partnership.

Propelled by the vitality of our close contacts, we have built a multifaceted and mutually beneficial partnership. I am conscious of the fact that Your Majesty is accompanied by a high-powered business delegation. I am confident that the delegation will have fruitful talks with their Indian counterparts. Over the past two decades India has made important strides in economic growth and technological innovation. Our economy is resilient; and despite the global economic downturn, India remains a sound investment destination. We welcome, with open arms, our Bahraini friends, both from the private as well as the public sector, to invest in India.

India rejoices at the progress and prosperity achieved by Bahrain and remains committed to be a dependable partner in your developmental projects. Our companies, with rich experience in executing complex and large infrastructure projects, are most interested in contributing to such projects in Bahrain. There is vast potential for our bilateral cooperation based on our inherent strengths and complementarities, including in areas such as healthcare, environment, education, information technology and renewable energy sources.

Your Majesty, India and Bahrain both desire to see enduring peace and stability in the Gulf and West Asia. Security cooperation has added a new dimension to our multifaceted relationship. This reflects our shared vision that our cooperation is necessary for countering extremism and maritime piracy that directly affect our nations and our peoples.

We deeply value your personal contribution to the strengthening of our close relations. I once again welcome you

and your distinguished delegation to India and wish you a comfortable stay. I am confident that your visit will lead to several new mutually beneficial initiatives and enhanced cooperation between our Governments and our people in the years to come. Please accept, Your Majesty, our best wishes for your personal well being and the progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Bahrain.
