

Security, trade on agenda in Swaraj Bahrain visit today



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Counter-terror cooperation and trade and economic cooperation will be high on the agenda when External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj pay a two-day official visit to Bahrain from Saturday.

The main objective of her visit is to co-chair the 2nd High Joint Commission (HJC) meeting with Bahraini foreign minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa covering a range of issues including, inter alia, political, economic, security and cultural ties.

The first meeting of HJC was held in New Delhi in

February 2015.

During the visit, Swaraj will also meet with the Bahraini leadership to discuss bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest and inaugurate the new Chancery-cum-Residential complex.

She is expected to call on Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Bahrain Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Bilaterally, India enjoys close and multifaceted ties with Bahrain, underpinned by regular exchange of high-level visits and extensive people-to-people contacts.

Bahrain is an important partner for India in the Gulf region.

There are 3,50,000 Indian nationals, the largest expatriate community in Bahrain, and more than 3000 Indian-owned/joint ventures which have been contributing to the development of Bahrain.

According to the External Affairs Ministry, the visit would provide an opportunity to further cement mutually beneficial ties between the two nations.

India is Bahrain's fifth largest trading partner.

When Bahrain's Oil Minister Shaikh Mohammed Anuj Khalifa Al Khalifa had visited Delhi in April this year, he had fruitful discussions relating to possible long-term arrangements with major Indian petrochemical companies for exploration and commercial extraction of oil in the recently discovered Khaled Al Bahrain Basin.