



● Mr Khalaf with Bahrain-India Society Board Chairman Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala, Indian Ambassador Mohan Kumar, businessmen, dignitaries and other senior officials.

# 'DEVELOPING' A FUTURE

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The Alba and Nuwaidrat roundabouts will also be developed as a multi-level interchanges connecting Estiqlal Highway to the Bahrain Qatar Causeway approach roads. When completed, Bahrain will have two major road arteries with uninterrupted traffic flow: From the Saudi Causeway entry point to Hidd industrial area and from the Bahrain-Qatar Causeway entry point to the Saudi Causeway, connecting two major economies in the region through Bahrain. With the Mina Salman Interchange and the upgrade of King Faisal and North Manama Causeway the ring road around Manama will see major improvements in capacity, easing traffic flow, congestion and improving traffic times.

Modern relations between Bahrain and India are deepening. Mr Khalaf said that the ministry has identified specific business opportunities to develop and enhance future needs of the citizens. A good recent example is the project to develop the Mina Salman Interchange. The contract for this project was awarded to an internationally working Indian company, AFCONS.

The Ministry of Works is the construction arm of the government, he said. It plays a prominent role in supporting the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. "We have a vision that mandates us not only to be professional but also socially responsible," Mr Khalaf said.

"Our main areas of



● Participants at the luncheon.

responsibilities can be outlined under the following six main headings: roads planning, construction and maintenance; planning, construction and maintenance of the sanitary network; development and maintenance of public buildings – such as schools and hospitals; project management of strategic projects such as transportation hubs and sports facilities and all government reclamation works; testing and approval of building and related materials for quality management and assurance purposes, coordination of operational planning between all infrastructure-related bodies to ensure accountability," he added.

He also said that in order to achieve more economic growth it is imperative for Bahrain to have world-class infrastructure with modern, fully equipped ports, airport, roads and sanitary networks.

Khalifa bin Salman Port at Hidd, the expansion of Bahrain's International Airport by provision of remote aircraft aprons, and delivery of Khalifa Sports City are among the major development projects under the ministry.

"Sitra Causeway and Umm Al Hassam Underpass revamp have reduced the time taken to commute. The work on Isa Town Flyover has also been completed. Other major road works have begun at the North Manama Causeway around the King Faisal Highway and beyond," he said.

"The Village Rehabilitation programme started in 2004 and so far 17 villages have been completed. The scope of the programme is to complete the villages' sewage network, in liaison with the Electricity and Water Authority, reconstruct all roads and lanes and provide street lightning and footpaths to enhance safety," Mr Khalaf said.

The opening of Roads Programme is one of the main programmes under Roads budget. He said that the Ministry of Works provides graded roads (unaspalted) for new areas, once the development in the area reach 30 per cent.

Building more roads alone, however, is not enough. Car volume is increasing and with that the volume of traffic. Statistics' learn that Bahrain has over 450,000

registered vehicles representing an average annual growth of 9pc per annum (compared with 2002 data). This amount to an average vehicular ownership of 2 vehicles per household and public transport ridership levels is as low as 5pc of total person trips per day.

The Ministry of Works has therefore taken the initiative couple of years ago to study how to create an effective public transport system.

"A huge part of our work comprises upgrading sanitary system. Today, more than 91pc of the population is connected, and we will exceed this in the coming years. We have plans to employ the most advanced recycling processes to recover the bulk of reusable wastewater – which will ease the water stress in the country," the minister said.

The Sanitary Engineering sector has begun implementing two strategic plans: the National Master Plan for Sanitary Engineering Services and the Privatisation Strategy and Implementation Plan for Sanitary Engineering Services.

"The Privatisation strategy and Implementation

Plan will serve as the roadmap for sanitary engineering. Its primary focus will be the privatisation of the Muharraq, the Tubli and other sewerage treatment plants. The Sanitary Treatment Plant at Muharraq is to be a flagship privatised project, which will be operated by a partner over the coming 20 years," he added.

"The development of a Sewage Treatment Plant for the Muharraq catchment area will be developed within 30 months to treat effluent of 100,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day initially increasing to 160,000m<sup>3</sup>/day by the year 2030.

He also explained that the main priority of the ministry going forward will be to decentralise sewage treatment and build more stations to serve the citizens in all five governorates.

"With a vision to achieve the best solution for the capacity issues at the Tubli Sewage Treatment Plant – which is the largest in the country – authorities have decided to upgrade and operate it through a private developer.

"Bahrain has been reusing treated wastewater successfully for about 20 years, for landscaping municipal gardens, highways, hedges and for growing fodder crops," he added.

He explained that once completed, 100 per cent of the effluent in the country's main wastewater facility at Tubli will be treated to the highest standards and will be used for agriculture and landscape irrigation.

The ministry is current-

ly carrying out a survey to measure how well it is meeting the needs of the residents of the country, by interviewing 5,000 people across Bahrain. "The ministry can only help Bahrain achieve its 2030 vision if it listens and responds to its customers," Mr Khalaf said.

"We can all speak about our successes – but real recognition comes from others. Over the past few years, in addition to ISO Certification, we have won the international Palladium Balanced Scorecard Hall of Fame Award for our Strategy Execution. Our e-service delivery earned us the Best e-Government Project too. Our website won the highest recognition (the Pan Arab Web Award) from the Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO). Different areas of the ministry also received recognition, for example the Asian Council for Human Resources Development awarded us for our Human Resource initiatives and management practices. In the area of communications our PR Consultants, Hill & Knowlton, won in the Government Communications Category at the Middle East Public Relations Association Awards for their work with our ministry. And the Khalifa bin Salman Port developed under the high-level project management of our Strategic Projects Directorate won the best construction project award from MEED magazine," Mr Khalaf said.