

India in Bahrain 2022

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A MASTER OF TRADE

Abdulrahman Juma is one of Bahrain's most well-regarded businessmen, serving as the Chairman of UNEECO, which is known for providing electrical and electronic engineering solutions in Bahrain, and also as the President of the Bahrain India Society. Bahrain This Month sat down with him to learn more about business relations between Bahrain and India.



Mr Juma is a proud member of one of Bahrain's oldest merchant families, who for the last five generations have conducted trade between Bahrain and India. Training as a mechanical engineer and graduating from a university in the UK, he began his career at BAPCO before starting his own company. It was during this time that he forged strong business relations across the globe.

"I engaged with numerous companies across the world," he says. "Firstly there were Japanese firms, then American, British, Belgian, French and other European businesses. For whatever reason, I mostly missed India and that part of the world, and it wasn't until much later in my career that I was actually approached by Larsen & Toubro, an Indian technology and engineering company, and that's when it opened my eyes to the incredible opportunities in the country."

"When L&T approached me, I asked them and I found their products to be fantastic and high quality. I set up a small factory with them and now our turnover exceeds \$24 million annually. It's an incredible success story and although UNEECO also deals with other companies in similar fields such as light fittings and bus stops, I definitely owe L&T a deep gratitude for being the gateway to the Indian market."

Over the last four decades, Mr Juma has been instrumental in contributing to the growth of business and commerce in the Kingdom, pushing government authorities and consultants hard to implement the same level of international standards here.

Arguably his greatest achievement is promoting cultural relations as the President of the Bahrain India Society. Founded in 2008, its aim is to bring together the two communities to promote cultural, friendship and business amongst other topics.

The BIS is now 145 members strong, including individuals and companies with numbers increasing regularly. The society meets regularly with members, both business and social, which continue to attract both Bahraini and Indian nationals to network.

"The Bahrain India Society continues to be a great success in this regard," Mr Juma says. "Our main achievement recently has been the launch of the book *Gandhi: His Engagements with Islam and the Arab World* written by BIS founder Abdulrahman Al-Jumaili. It was first published in Arabic then later in English, Hindi, Urdu and Malayalam."

"Furthermore, alongside high level meetings with the Economic Development Board, we have helped to set up Indian companies with the American Chamber of Commerce to use Bahrain as a base. We've also hosted some very popular cultural functions too, such as a Bollywood master production."

"I would like to thank all staff at the Indian embassy, in particular the current Ambassador of India Mr. Piyush Srivastava, who is one of the most dynamic ambassadors I've ever encountered and whose energy reflects on us and makes us work harder."

As for the future, Mr Juma believes that the Kingdom is recovering strongly post-pandemic and will continue to forge strong ties with India.

He explains, "I think both manufacturers and consumers have the appetite to resume business as normal. In such a case, trade between India and Bahrain to increase, especially in the electrical field which I specialise in, and also with food and textile products in particular."

Scan the QR code to watch the video interview:



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A PARTNER FOR PROGRESS

Established in 1978, the Bahrain-based company Universal Electric Engineering (UNEECO) considers itself a market leader in providing electrical and electronic engineering solutions in the Kingdom. A large portion of the firm's success comes from its products imported from around the world, including India.



UNEECO, which established its first assembly plant in Salalah in BIMP at Bahrain's AI Hail Industrial Area.

products since 2009. L&T by Schneider Electric India Pvt. Ltd., an Indian technology and engineering company, approached UNEECO's UPS Division – a gateway to a relationship that now turns over more than \$91.5 million annually.

Other companies associated with the UPS Division include PI Global, Phoenix Electrical, Meritex, Elcom, Kopa Electronics and many more, providing products such as electrical components, cables, terminals and accessories.

UNEECO's Chairman, Mr. Abdulrahman Juma said: "We are continuously impressed overall with the quality and durability of Indian products, and their reputation continues to be improved and recognised. They consistently meet global standards in terms of quality and value for money."

"We are very happy to continue working with them into the future and appreciate that they are more flexible than our competitors when it

UNEECO's Director, Mr. Jayashanker Vemurathan, explained: "We have proudly worked with Indian companies since 2009. We use Indian products to build some of our products including LV power, control panels and distribution boards, in addition to providing capacitor panels to our customers."



The UPS Division has been involved in several recognisable projects and developments using its extensive portfolio of international products. Imports from India in particular were put to use on some of Bahrain's biggest development projects. These include, AI Salal Resort, SWA, Pile Project, Abraj Lulu Project, Mall of