

New India e-visa plan to boost Bahraini tourists

By SANDEEP SINGH GREWAL

THE number of Bahrainis travelling to India is expected to increase in the coming months as Indian authorities plan to ease immigration procedures by including the kingdom in its e-tourist visa scheme.

Launched in November 2014, the scheme was initially available to citizens of 113 countries, with 37 more nations being added to the list in February this year.

The Tourism Ministry has now sent a proposal to the Home (Interior) Ministry to extend the facility to 36 more countries.

If accepted, 186 nations will be able to access online visa to travel to India.

Among the countries that have been shortlisted are Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, the Maldives, Italy, Nigeria, Turkey, Iran, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Morocco.

"India has always been a popular destination with close



■ A screenshot of the Indian e-tourist visa website ... Bahrainis will soon be able to use the service

to 11,000 Bahrainis travelling last year," said an Indian Embassy spokesman.

"In the first six months of this year a total of 6,200 visas were issued for Bahrainis and we expect more people to travel to India this year."

Indian Tourism Ministry Secretary Vinod Zutshi said the e-visa has proved to be a "game-changer".

Stating that the e-visa initiative had received a "great response" from visitors, Mr Zutshi said in the first six months

of this year 471,909 tourists availed of the facility compared to 126,214 during the corresponding period last year, registering a growth of 273.9 per cent.

In June alone this year, 36,982 visitors travelled to

India on e-visas compared to 15,557 in June last year, posting a growth of 137.7pc.

Under the scheme, an applicant receives an email authorising him or her to travel to India after it is approved and he or she can travel with a print-out

of the authorisation.

On arrival, the visitor has to present the authorisation to immigration authorities who will stamp the entry into the country.

"If the e-visa is extended to the 36 countries, it will lead to an increase in footfalls from such countries," said Mr Zutshi.

A statement by the Tourism Ministry said in May this year the e-visa facility proved most popular with the US, drawing the maximum number of tourists (23.22pc), followed by the UK (14.16pc), China (6.91pc), Australia (5.59pc) and France (4.10pc).

New Delhi was the favourite port of arrival in June with 42.15pc using the airport, followed by Mumbai airport which was used by 22.94pc of the tourists.

Others that followed were Bengaluru (9.95pc), Chennai (9.80pc), Hyderabad (3.76pc), Kochi (3.52pc), Kolkata (2.72pc), Ahmedabad (1.16pc), Tiruchirapalli (1.15pc) and Thiruvananthapuram (1.08pc).

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Bahrain Polytechnic to announce results

BAHRAIN Polytechnic will announce the results for the second semester of 2015-16 today.

The result will be available on the self-service banner (SSB), said chief executive Dr Mohamed Al Aseeri, adding that the institute has taken all the necessary measures to ensure the accuracy of the results.

Enrolments, progression and results manager Huda Alhalwachi urged students to view their grades on SSB and ensure that they check all emails sent by the polytechnic.

Students can appeal academic decisions four days after the announcement of the results and no late or incomplete applications will be accepted by the end of July 20.

The registry directorate will provide students with details on how to register for the next academic year, 2016-17, which will be communicated by email and the official website.

Talks focus on Pakistan ties

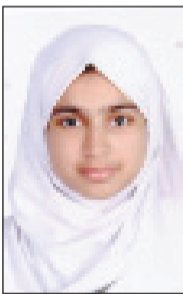
STRENGTHENING relations between Bahrain and Pakistan topped the agenda of the first meeting of political consultations in Islamabad.

The talks, attended by Bahraini and Pakistani officials, explored ways to enhance co-operation in political, economic, military, health, education, cultural, tourism and communication fields.

On behalf of Bahrain, Foreign Ministry assistant under-secretary for Arab and Afro-Asian affairs and organisations Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa Al Khalifa chaired the meeting, while additional secretary (Middle East) Tasawar Khan attended the meeting on behalf of Pakistan.

The Bahraini delegation held several meetings with officials at the Pakistani Foreign Ministry, Trade Ministry, and Health Ministry to discuss enhancing bilateral relations.

Girls outshine boys in exams



■ Eman Khalid



■ Tahira Mukhtar



■ Zainab Sultan



■ Taha Tabassum



■ Saad Akbar



■ Aqib Khan



■ Aiman Sharif



■ Faiza Younas



■ Eisha Ali



■ Muzammil Qadeer



■ Shahbaz Younas



■ Nauman Shah

GIRLS of Pakistan School, Bahrain performed better than the boys in the second part of the annual Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination conducted by the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Islamabad.

Their overall success rate was 88 per cent, while it was 91pc in Science and

77pc in Arts.

Of the 198 students who took the two-part exam, 145 students passed, leading to an overall result of 73pc, which is higher compared to previous years.

In the Science stream, Eman Khalid scored top marks (964), followed by Tahira Mukhtar (921) and Zainab Sultan (920).

Among the boys it was Taha Tabassum with 814 marks, followed by Saad Akbar (799) and Aqib Khan (772).

In the Arts group, the top girls were Aiman Sharif (765), Faiza Younas (747) and Eisha Ali (634); the top boys were Muzammil Qadeer (781), Shahbaz Younas (646) and Nauman Shah (568).