

Bahrain hosted the Israeli foreign minister on Thursday for the highest-level visit since the countries established ties last year and which included a tour of a U.S. naval headquarters to signal common cause against Iran.

Landing in Manama on a plane daubed with an olive branch painting, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid met King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

“His Majesty’s leadership and inspiration have led to true cooperation and our meeting outlined the path forward for our relationship,” Lapid said on Twitter.

Bahrain and Gulf neighbour United Arab Emirates normalised relations with Israel last year in a U.S.-brokered deal known as the Abraham Accords that built on common commercial interests and worries about Iran. Sudan and Morocco followed suit.

“Our opportunities are shared. Our threats are also shared, and they aren’t far from here,” Lapid said in remarks to reporters, apparently alluding to Gulf power Iran.

Touring the Bahrain headquarters of the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet, which has faced off Iranian vessels amid tensions over Tehran’s regional aims, Lapid said: “Our three countries work together because we have similar interests in the region.”

“When we speak about peace, we need to remember that peace must be protected from those who would harm it,” he added, according to his office.

The Fleet said on Twitter that Lapid and his hosts discussed regional maritime security cooperation.

The Sunni-ruled kingdom accuses Iran of stoking unrest in Bahrain, a charge that Tehran denies.

The island state, which quashed an uprising led mostly by Shi’ite Muslim members of its population in 2011, saw some sporadic acts of protest after the Abraham Accords were signed.

On Thursday, Bahraini activists circulated on social media images of what appeared to be small protests in Bahrain. Reuters was unable to independently verify these.

The accords have been denounced by Palestinians as abandoning a unified position under which Arab states would make peace only if Israel gave up occupied land.

In Gaza, the Islamist Hamas group criticised Bahrain for hosting Lapid, who returns to Israel on Thursday evening. Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said this represented “an encouragement” of what he described as Israeli “crimes against our people”.

Lapid’s office said he and his Bahraini counterpart signed deals on cooperation in medicine, healthcare, sports, and on water and environmental conservation. Lapid also inaugurated Israel’s embassy in Manama.

Separately, the first Gulf Air commercial flight touched down in Tel Aviv, launching a twice-weekly direct connection.

*Reporting by Dan Williams, Jeffrey Heller, Nidal Al Mughrabi and Lisa Barrington; Editing by Emelia Sithole-Matarise, William Maclean and Toby Chopra*

### Subscribe to the International Relations Updates by The Kootneeti

\* indicates required

Full Name

Email Address \*

Subscribe

made with  mailchimp



**CERTIFICATE COURSE IN  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

SIX-WEEK ONLINE COURSE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
BY THE KOOTNEETI

**JOIN TODAY!**

team@thekootneeti.com  
courses.thekootneeti.in  
(+91) 120 4565994

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Kootneeti Team*

Facebook Comments