

Bahrain starts work on \$3b causeway

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Manama: The Bahrain government on Sunday said that the new \$3 billion (Dh11 billion) Friendship Causeway, linking the country with Qatar, will be the longest in the world.

The new causeway, construction work for which has already started, is expected to boost the economy of the island nation.

Billed as the world's longest marine causeway, the new link will be one of the most important infrastructure projects in the region. Once the bridge is completed in about four years' time, it will boast more than 40km of twin carriageway, running across 22km of viaducts over the sea and 18km of embankments.

Travel time between Bahrain and Qatar by car is expected to be reduced from the current four-and-a-half hours to around 30 minutes.

Shaikh Mohammad Bin Eisa Al Khalifa, chief executive of Bahrain's Economic Development Board (EDB), yesterday hailed the start of the construction of the Friendship Causeway in the New Year. This new link will help boost Bahrain's role as an ideal access point for international companies to develop their businesses in the Gulf.

Shaikh Mohammad said: "The Friendship Causeway will strengthen Bahrain's position as the best place in the Middle East for companies to develop their businesses across all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies. As a location for international companies, Bahrain is one of the most mature and well established free markets in this rapidly growing economic region".

"Bahrain has a strong history of working closely with our neighbours and it is already linked by the very successful King Fahad Causeway to Saudi Arabia.

"The completion of this second causeway will be a welcome addition to Bahrain's impressive air, sea and road links and will provide many new opportunities for companies based in Bahrain to further develop their businesses, not only in Qatar but right across the GCC."

The causeway will also provide a connection for future high-speed freight and passenger rail lines between the countries. There are also plans to extend the route to link Istanbul and Turkey to Muscat in Oman.

EDB is a public agency with an overall responsibility for formulating and overseeing the economic development strategy of Bahrain and for creating the right climate to attract direct investment into the Kingdom.

The Bahrain EDB is also responsible for attracting inward investments.