

Heritage sites to be restored

By **SOMAN BABY**

INTERNATIONALLY renowned consultants will arrive in Bahrain soon to help restore some of the country's important monuments and heritage buildings. The BD121,000 project is being spearheaded by the Municipalities and Agriculture Ministry with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Work on the year-long project will start within two months, said UN resident co-ordinator and UNDP resident representative Dr Khaled Alloush, who signed an agreement with Municipalities and Agriculture Minister Ali Saleh Al Saleh.

"We are proud to be involved in this vital project that will help the country restore and preserve some of the important monuments and heritage buildings," he told the GDN.

"It will be implemented in two of Bahrain's major cities Manama and Muharraq."

Dr Alloush said the UNDP would carry out in-depth research and appoint the best international consultants and archaeologists available to carry out work in Bahrain.

"We will shortlist consultants and present it to the government for approval," he added.

Dr Alloush explained that many countries have deserted their inner cities, resulting in the demolition of important buildings and sites of historical importance.

"In some other countries, the government buys such buildings and stops families from selling them to private parties," he said.

"I am happy the Bahrain government has taken an important step in protecting its heritage assets."

A study will be undertaken in Bahrain on the possibility of restoring some of the most important monuments.

"Our focus will be on preservation and not demolition," said Dr Alloush.

"If some of the heritage houses are occupied, steps should be taken to help those people."

"The project will develop some vital tourist attractions within the cities."

The project will also involve the training of Bahraini nationals in the area of restoration of heritage sites.

"It will eventually help Bahrain maintain the traditional character of ancient heritage structures in the country," added Dr Alloush.