

\$200,000 deal to boost democracy

BAHRAIN is to sign a \$200,000 (BD75,600) agreement with the United Nations to further strengthen its parliamentary system.

Under the project, UN experts will work with members of the new parliament after the forthcoming elections, said UN resident co-ordinator and UN Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative Sayed Aqa.

"UNDP will share half of the cost of the project, the document which will be signed shortly," he told the *GDN*.

"The project is important for Bahrain, where democratic reform processes are

By SOMAN BABY

being implemented successfully.

"By imparting technical skills and knowledge to the parliamentarians, we hope to ensure that the citizens reap the benefits of democracy."

Under the project, a number of workshops and study tours will be conducted for MPs.

Similar tours were organised for MPs in the past two years, when they visited their counterparts in countries such as Morocco and Malaysia, said Mr Aqa.

"We want to strengthen this initiative



■ Mr Aqa

under the new project to effectively support the newly elected parliamentarians," he added.

UNDP will also support the establishment of the Bahrain Institute for Political Development.

"This is a project mandated by His Majesty King Hamad to provide support to all candidates,"

said Mr Aqa.

"Details of the two-year project are now being worked out. The idea is to promote the true spirit of democracy through an awareness campaign."

UNDP is also involved in a project to

train civil servants in e-learning.

"The objective is to create knowledge workers in government institutes through the best use of information technology," said Mr Aqa.

"The project is aimed at training people beyond IT so that their managerial and strategic planning capability will be enhanced.

"In the long run, it will help the government to reduce its dependence on foreign consultants."

Mr Aqa said the project would be implemented in co-ordination with the Civil Service Bureau.