



National Day of the State of KUWAIT

25th February 2011



State of Kuwait

Since ancient times, Kuwait has served as the gateway to the Middle East because of its geographical location. Kuwait has drawn upon the accumulated wisdom of countries around the world to power its own growth. In a few decades, after the discovery of oil, a nation of fishermen and traders has transformed into one

of the richest and developed nations in the world — offering state-of-the-art amenities, secure infrastructural facilities and technical excellence — and is respected around the world.

The Kuwaitis' pride in their history, heritage and national progress has given rise to an identity which is uniquely Kuwaiti. An

identity which is worthy of emulation by all nations in the world.

The centuries have changed; the traditions have not. The country has modernised, but its people's links with their heritage are as strong as ever. Kuwait's wealth — Black Gold — may be buried underground, but its spirit is still vibrantly free and alive.

Foreign Policy

Kuwait's Foreign Policy is governed by its belief in mutual respect, equality and non-interference in internal affairs of other nations. Kuwait is a strong advocate of resolving international disputes amicably by peaceful means and in compliance of principles enshrined in international treaties and laws.

Its policy is characterised by transparency, clarity and quiet diplomacy. It strongly believes in maintaining Kuwait's independence and sovereignty of its lands, wealth and its people and accords the same respect to other sovereign nations.

It seeks international cooperation and mutual respect. It advocates a new world order based in international law; a world which rejects aggression and terrorism and respects human rights.

To foster and cement international relations Kuwait maintains embassies and consulates around the world which function under the guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Discovery of Oil

The first exploration well was drilled in Bahrah when a geological exploration was carried out. Oil was first discovered in Burgan in 1938. Because of the Second World War exports did not start until 1946. As oil exports increased, Ahmad — named after HH the Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah — was created near the oil fields as a township for oil company personnel.

The oil embargo in 1973 resulted in substantially improved oil prices. In 1975 the government took 100 per cent control of the State's oil resources. The resulting massive inflows of funds were spent on developing the country's infrastructure and in improving living standards.

Modern infrastructure rose from the arid desert as roads, ports, factories, power generating stations, and desalination plants came into being. The population increased as thousands of foreign technical advisors and workers arrived to service the huge development schemes. Many Kuwaitis, members of a privileged minority, found themselves in new roles as importers, contractors, landlords and government officials.

The government's role in the economy and administration naturally increased under the impact of the new wealth and development. Modern business laws were promulgated. A new administrative order was devised as the government expanded. Though Shura (consultation) had always been a part of political life in Kuwait since the reign of the first Al-Sabah ruler, the government began developing a new style of constitutional rule.

Though Kuwait had been an independent political entity for more than two centuries, it gained international recognition as a sovereign state in June 1961. A few weeks later Kuwait joined the Arab League. In 1963 the country became a member of the United Nations.

The State of Kuwait's Constitution was ratified on November 11, 1962. Its National Assembly was convened under the Constitution on January 29, 1963.

The Rulers of the Al-Sabah Dynasty

1. Sheikh Sabah I Bin Jaber: 1756-1762
2. Sheikh Abdullah I: 1762-1812
3. Sheikh Jaber I: 1812-1859
4. Sheikh Sabah II: 1859-1866
5. Sheikh Abdullah II: 1866-1892
6. Sheikh Mohammad I: 1892-1896
7. Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah: 1896-1915
8. Sheikh Jaber II: 1915-1917
9. Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak: 1917-1921

10. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah: 1921-1950
11. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah: 1950-1965
12. Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah: 1965-1977
13. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah: 1977- 2006
14. Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah: 15 Jan 2006- 29 Jan 2006
15. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, The present ruler, who ascended the throne in January 2006.

The importance of the Arabian Gulf and Kuwait in history or in the international relations and international trade in particular stretches back to the old distant ages. The present land of Kuwait was located within the Arabian middle lands of the State of Kendah which emerged during the period from the third to the fifth century A.D.

The archeological excavation commenced by the effort of the Danish mission in Failaka Island in 1958, proved that an ancient historical civilization existed in Kuwait. The present land of the State of Kuwait is connected in the west to the Arabian Peninsula which is an inseparable part of it. Also from the sea side, it forms as a part of the Arabian Gulf Coast. On that basis, the ancient and middle history was firmly related to the Arabia Peninsula, its residents and the Gulf area.

How Historians reveal Kuwait?

Historians mentioned that the Macedonian Alexander (the Great), the great Greek conqueror and leader, when invaded the east and discovered a sea way between Al-Sind River and Shatt Alarab through the gulf in 326 BC. He stayed with some of his soldiers in Failaka and discovered in the Island "Ikariues" stone, where Greeks wrote on it, along with other many antiques. It is a historical proof that certifies the emergence of an old civilization in Kuwait that was contemporary to the ancient eastern civilizations.

One of the historians stated that, the land of Kuwait witnessed a day of the war between Al-Harith bin Amro bin Hajr Al-Kindi and the King of Al-Munathira, Al-Munthir bin Maa Al-Samaa Al-Lakhmi who defeated Al-Hareth at Wara Island in the pre-Islamic époque.

In addition, the coasts of the Gulf witnessed the first clash in the onset of Islam between the Persians and the Muslims during the period of Caliphate Abu Baker Al-Sideeq in 12 AH., 633 AD. in Kadhima (That Al-Salasil) which was known later as Kuwait.

At the end of the 9th century to the end of 11th Century AD., the region of Kuwait was integrated with a great part of Arabian Peninsula within the strong State of Al-Karamitah which threatened the Abassied Caliphate in Baghdad. After the collapse of that State, which many historians described as "the first socialist state in the history", a group of local and tribal emirates emerged and continued to the end of the 15th Century. The port of Kazdhema on the coast of Kuwait served as the nautical gate to the east side of Arabian Peninsula during that period.

Kuwait's emergence as an independent political entity dates back more than 380 years ago, to 1613. This has been established by new research initiated by the Kuwaiti government after the liberation of the country from the Iraqi invasion. According to Dr Abdallah Al-Ghoneim, the President of the Centre for Kuwaiti Research and Studies the new research proves that Kuwait existed as early as 1613 and not 1752 as formerly believed.

This was substantiated by other evidence also. In a letter found in the British archives, addressed by Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah in 1913 to the British Political Resident, the former says "Kuwait is a land of the poor in which our grandfather Al-Sabah dwelled in 1613." Evidence also includes a letter sent by Oman's Imam Naser Bin Murshed in the 1730s to the Kuwaiti government, appealing for help against the Portuguese. Kuwait had then sent two ships loaded with weapons and ammunition.

In the 17th century, the Bani Khalid were the overlords of eastern Arabia and their domain

stretched from Kuwait to Qatar. In about 1672 Barrak Bin Ghuraif, the Amir of the Bani Khalid, built his kout (a small house in the shape of a fortress situated near water) in Qurain, a small fishing community. This may have been in the area in Kuwait City known today as Wattiya.

The Utub, a federation of Arab families, were driven out of Al-Aflaj in central Arabia by the drought in the 17th century. They learned sea-faring and then scattered into various Arabian Gulf ports before coming to Kuwait in the early 18th century. They settled here under the suzerainty of the Bani Khalid.

Family disputes within the ruling Bani Khalid in 1722 gave the Utub in Kuwait a chance to practice some independence. After 1752 further internal disputes among the Bani Khalid and the rise of the Wahhabis, their bitter enemies in central Arabia, gave the Utub of Kuwait de facto independence. In about 1756 they elected Sabah Bin Jaber as the Amir of Kuwait to administer justice and the affairs of the town.

As the regional influence of the Bani Khalid waned, Kuwait's lack of protection made the rise of a strong local power necessary. The Utub had changed from nomads to settlers since their move from Al-Aflaj and the first Al-Sabah was chosen by the other families as their leader.

HH the Amir's fifth son, HH Sheikh Abdullah-Al-Sabah was selected to succeed his father. Under his stable rule, Kuwait transformed into a prosperous and influential independence. In the later part of the 18th and early 19th centuries Kuwait became a major port of call on several international trading routes.

Pearls were Kuwait's only natural resource and each year hundreds of pearling ships such as sambuks made for the lucrative pearl banks to return at the end of summer. Shipbuilding and using imported materials, became an important industry. In winter, large trading dhows set out for India to return with merchandise (and mail) which was loaded onto desert caravans bound for the Mediterranean. Caravans from southern and eastern Arabia also passed through Kuwait on their way to Syria. Kuwait's markets were crowded with Bedouins selling their products and services or buying imports for resale in the interior.

HH the Amir, Sheikh Jaber I Al-Sabah (1812-1859) ruled in consultation with the merchants of Kuwait, and managed to maintain good relations with all the major powers of the day. However, as Kuwait prospered throughout the 19th century its independence came under threat from regional and European powers. To counter growing Turkish ambitions, HH the Amir, Sheikh Mubarak (1896-1915) signed treaties with the global powers of that time. The country prospered greatly under HH Sheikh Mubarak's rule. Hundreds arrived to settle in Kuwait, attracted by its orderly administration and increasing commercial activity.

But trade declined sharply in Kuwait from the 1920s onwards due to the worldwide recession, Kuwait's reduced importance as a major link in 20th century international trade routes, and because of hostilities from the Ikhwan, tribesmen from the interior of Arabia, who were only finally defeated in 1930. Kuwait's pearling industry, which once boasted 800 pearling ships, almost disappeared with the introduction of Japanese cultured pearls and the worldwide fall in demand for luxury goods following the Wall Street Crash of 1929. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, Kuwait underwent a transition from a small Emirate to an internationally influential modern state because of the oil boom.

The Origin of Kuwait



Our Warmest Congratulations

to the

People of the State of Kuwait

on their 50th

National Day

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