

**Embassy of India**  
**Kuwait**

**India-Kuwait Bilateral Relations**

India and Kuwait enjoy traditionally warm and friendly relations, rooted in history and sustained people-to-people contact. The year 2020-21 marks 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between two countries. India has been a natural trading partner of Kuwait and until 1961 Indian Rupee was the legal tender in Kuwait. Till the discovery and development of oil, Kuwait's economy revolved around its fine harbour and maritime activities which included ship building, pearl diving, fishing and voyages to India on wooden *dhow*s carrying dates, Arabian horses and pearls that were traded for wood, cereals, clothes and spices.

**Political Relations**

India– Kuwait high-level contacts are outlined below:

- **VVIP visits from India to Kuwait:** Vice President Dr. Zakir Husain visited Kuwait in 1965. Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi visited Kuwait in 1981 and Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari visited Kuwait in 2009.
- **VVIP visits from Kuwait to India:** Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited India in 1964, the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited India in 1980 and again in 1983 (for the NAM Summit), HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited India in 2006 and the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah visited India in November 2013.

**Recent Exchanges:**

**From India:**

- Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, paid an official visit to Kuwait from 09-11 June, 2021. He called on Prime Minister

of Kuwait and delivered a letter from Hon'ble PM addressed to HH the Amir of Kuwait. He held a meeting with Foreign Minister of Kuwait on 10 June. Minister of Commerce of Kuwait also joined during the meeting with FM of Kuwait. An MoU for 'Cooperation in the Recruitment of Domestic Workers' was signed in presence of EAM & Kuwaiti FM. Both Ministers launched the joint celebration of India-Kuwait establishment of 60 years diplomatic relations. EAM unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in the Chancery premises. Regional HOMS conference was held during the visit in which Indian Ambassadors from UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Iran participated.

- Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, visited Kuwait on 11-12 October 2020 to offer condolences on the demise of late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.
- Minister of State of External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan paid an official visit to Kuwait on 14-15 September 2019 and met Minister of State for Economic Affairs of Kuwait and also held bilateral talks, on a wide range of issues, with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kuwait.
- Hon. EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj paid an official visit to Kuwait on 30-31 October 2018 and called on the Amir H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister H.H. Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah; and held wide ranging discussions with H.E. Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kuwait.
- Gen. V.K. Singh (Retd), Minister of State for External Affairs visited Kuwait from 10-11 January 2018 and met Minister of State for Social Affairs. He had earlier visited Kuwait from 6-7 September 2016 and met Deputy PM and Interior Minister, Deputy Foreign Minister, Minister of Social Affairs & Labour and Governor of Farwaniya Governorate.
- Shri M. J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Kuwait on 13 February 2018 to attend International Conference for reconstruction of Iraq (ICRI) hosted by Kuwait. Earlier he led a 10 member delegation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting (JMC) on Economic, Trade, Scientific and Technological Cooperation

between India and Kuwait, held in Kuwait on 18-20 September 2017.

- National Security Advisor, Shri Ajit Doval, led a five member official delegation to Kuwait for the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Kuwait Security Cooperation Dialogue from 13-14 March 2017.

#### **From Kuwait:**

- H.E. Sheikh (Dr.) Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, State of Kuwait visited India on 17-18 March 2021. A Joint Statement on establishment of a Joint Ministerial Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers was issued during the visit.
- A delegation led by President of the Kuwaiti DGCA, Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah participated in the Global Aviation Summit in Mumbai on 15-16 January 2019.
- H.E. Ms. Hend Barak Al Sabeeh, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare visited India and held delegation level talks in New Delhi on 26 October 2018.
- The Kuwaiti Army Chief of State Lt. General Mohd. Al Khoder visited India from 18-21 September 2017 and met Minister of Defence, Mrs. Nirmala Sitaraman and other senior officials to boost defence cooperation between the two countries. A 15 member Higher Command Course delegation from the Army War College visited Kuwait from 24-28 September 2017 on a study tour.
- The Prime Minister of Kuwait accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Oil Mr. Mustafa Jassem Al-Shimali, Minister of Commerce and Industry Mr. Anas Khalid Al-Saleh, senior officials and business leaders had visited India from 7-10 November 2013.

#### **Dialogue Mechanisms**

- **Joint Commission:** A Joint Statement on establishment of a Joint Ministerial Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers was issued during the visit of FM of Kuwait to India in March 2021. Earlier, following the visit of the Amir of Kuwait to India in 2006, both sides agreed to set up an 'India-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission on Economic and Technical Cooperation'. The 2<sup>nd</sup> JMC meeting was held in New Delhi in July 2008. The 3<sup>rd</sup> JMC meeting was held in Kuwait from 18-20 September 2017. Shri M. J. Akbar, Minister of State of External Affairs headed the Indian side during the JMC.

- **Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs):** The Fourth Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) between India and Kuwait were held in Kuwait in August 2018. Earlier the 3<sup>rd</sup> FOCs were held in New Delhi on 16 November 2016, 2<sup>nd</sup> FOCs were held in Kuwait on 11 September 2014 and 1<sup>st</sup> FOCs between India and Kuwait were held in New Delhi on 7 May 2012.

### **India- Kuwait Bilateral Agreements:**

- Prominent amongst the various bilateral agreements signed are: Reciprocal Protection of Investment (2001); Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (2004); Extradition (2004); Juridical and Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial Matters (2005); MoU on Labour, Employment and Manpower Development (2007); Scientific and Technological Cooperation (2009); Cultural and Information Exchanges (2009); Education and Learning Cooperation (2009); MoU on Medical Cooperation (2012); Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons (2013); MoU between Foreign Service Institute and the Saud N. Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute (2013); MOU on S&T Cooperation between CSIR and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR); MoU on Sports & Youth Affairs (2013); MOU on cooperation between KISR and Ministry of Earth Sciences (2014); MOU between ISRO and KISR (2015). MOU between Office of CAG and State Audit Bureau of Kuwait (2016). The Protocol amending the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income between India and Kuwait, on 15 January 2017. Agreement on mutual exemption from visa requirements for holders of Diplomatic, Official and Special Passports(concluded in October 2018). Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Recruitment for Domestic Workers(initialled in October 2018).

### **Commercial Relations:**

- Historically, India-Kuwait relations have always had an important trade dimension. India has consistently been among the top ten trading partners of Kuwait.

- Bilateral trade for FY 2020-2021 stood at US\$ 6.27 billion, registering a contraction of 42.3% on yoy basis on account of sharp drop in prices of petrol. Indian exports totalled US\$1.05bn and imports at US\$5.21billion (POL imports of US\$ 4.14 billion in price terms). India's exports to Kuwait included food items, cereals, textiles, garments, electrical and engineering equipment, ceramics, machinery and mechanical appliances, cars, trucks, buses, tyres, chemicals, jewellery, handicrafts, metal products, iron and steel, etc.
- Hon'ble Minister of Education of the State of Gujarat led a delegation from the State to participate in an Exhibition and a Roadshow titled "Study in Gujarat", which was organized by the Embassy in association with the State of Gujarat on 15 January 2020.
- The Embassy has been organising trade and business promotion events as well as state facilitation events, in a hybrid format in view of COVID-19 pandemic. Events on sectors such as agricultural products, marine products, textile, automobile etc have been recently held.
- **Indian companies in Kuwait:** Indian PSUs like TCIL, LIC (International), LIC Housing Finance, New India Assurance Company, Oriental Insurance Company, Air India Ltd. (Air India and Air India Express) have offices in Kuwait. During recent years, Indian EPC companies viz. Larsen & Toubro, ShapoorjiPallonji, Punj Lloyd, Simplex Projects, Essar, Kalpataru etc. were awarded EPC contracts worth over US\$ 6 billion in Kuwait.
- **Kuwaiti Investment in India:** So far, investments in India are over US\$ 5.5 billion, majority of which is by Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), which had been invested in companies like GMR Infrastructure Ltd, Interglobe Aviation's (Indigo Airlines) IPO, Bombay Stock Exchange and Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. Other significant Kuwaiti presence in India includes those by Alghanim Group of Kuwait; the KAPICO group; National Aviation Services; Agility Logistics, Hasibat Holding Co, KGA Group, KCIC, KIPCO, Global Investment House, Kuwait Finance House etc. India related funds launched in Kuwait include India Fund (October 2005); Tijari India

Fund (December 2006); India Equity Fund (January 2007); Kuwait Indian Holding Company; India Private Equity Fund; 3rd Real Estate Islamic Fund (May 2007); and Mayur Hedge Fund (August 2008).

- **Hydrocarbon sector:** Kuwait remains a reliable supplier of crude oil & LPG to India. During the visit to Kuwait of Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in October 2020; delegation level talks were held between the two sides to strengthen bilateral engagement and cooperation in the oil domain. Mr. Nizar Al-Adsani, CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) accompanied by two members of KNPC attended the PETROTECH-2016 at New Delhi from 5-7 December 2016. The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the India-Kuwait JWG on Hydrocarbon was held virtually on 16 June, 2021.
- **Civil Aviation:** Air India operates flights between Kuwait and Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Goa & Hyderabad; Air India Express has flights between Kuwait and Kochi, Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram & Mangalore; Indigo Airlines operates flights to Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Kochi and Mumbai, while Kuwait Airways has flights from Kuwait to Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kochi, Mumbai & Thiruvananthapuram, Jazeera Airways operates flights between Kuwait and Delhi, Kochi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad & Hyderabad.
- **Science and Technology:** India and Kuwait have signed an S&T Agreement in April 2009. Director General of Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research (KISR) led a two-member delegation to India in October 2019 and held fruitful discussions with various research institutions, including ISRO, CSIR, IISc. An 8-member delegation from KISR visited India from 25-26 May 2015 and held meetings with CSIR. An 8-member delegation from CSIR and Ministry of Earth Sciences visited Kuwait on 14-16 April 2014. A delegation from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) visited India from 18-22 November 2013 and signed a Programme of Cooperation with Department of Science & Technology and an MOU with CSIR.

**Medical cooperation:**

- India and Kuwait have signed an MOU on Medical Cooperation on April 23, 2012 at New Delhi. A Joint Working Group on Medical Cooperation was set up and its first meeting was held in Kuwait in November 2013.
- There is a sizable presence of Indian doctors and nurses in Kuwait who are regarded highly for their professionalism.
- **Cooperation during COVID-19 pandemic:** During COVID-19 crisis, bilateral cooperation between India and Kuwait has been strong. An Indian medical team travelled aboard a special aircraft from India to Kuwait in April 2020 to help fight COVID-19 in Kuwait.
- A consignment of 200000 doses of Covishield vaccines manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII) reached Kuwait on 1 February 2021.
- During the second wave of COVID-19 in India, Kuwaiti cabinet issued a statement in support of India and offered to send liquid medical oxygen to India over many cycles of an air and sea bridge. A Kuwaiti aircraft reached India on 4<sup>th</sup> May with the first consignment of medical assistance, which was followed by Indian Naval Ships, INS Kolkata, INS Kochi, INS Tarkash, INSTabar& INS Shardul carrying substantial amounts of liquid medical oxygen (LMO), oxygen cylinders concentrators, and other medical equipment to India.

### **Cultural Relations:**

- Historically, India-Kuwait relationship has been anchored in and nurtured by close cultural contact and mutual exchange. The Embassy has been promoting Indian culture and heritage through various programs and initiatives. During the year 2020-21, Embassy organized celebrations of International Yoga Day, Constitution Day, Ayurveda Day, 551<sup>st</sup> Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Devji, PravasiBhartiya Divas, National Youth Day and initiated year-long celebration on the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NetajiSubhash Chandra Bose and India@75. Programme for Cultural and Information Exchanges (2013-16) was signed in 2013. A “Festival of India in Kuwait” was held in Kuwait in 2009.
- A 4-member delegation from Kuwait attended the two day 'International Conference on Yoga for Body and Beyond' organized by the Ministry of AYUSH from 22-23 June 2016 at New Delhi. A three-member Kuwaiti delegation led by Assistant Director General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr. Bader Al-

Duweesh participated/ represented the Kuwaiti Information Minister Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah in the World Cultural Festival, organized by the Art of Living Foundation from 11-13 March 2016 in New Delhi.

- **Youth Affairs & Sports:** A two-member Youth Delegation from Kuwait visited India from 9-15 March 2016 under the Youth Exchange Programme.
- There are around 300 Indian associations registered with the Embassy. These associations organize regularly socio-cultural programmes for the benefit of their members.

### **Indian Community in Kuwait:**

- The presence of approximately one million Indian community members in Kuwait (the largest expatriate community in Kuwait) form an important dimension of our bilateral ties with Kuwait. They are present in all segments of society in Kuwait and are considered largely as disciplined, hardworking, and law-abiding.
- About 50000 Indian students study in 24 Indian schools in Kuwait.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy website: [www.indembkwt.gov.in](http://www.indembkwt.gov.in);

Embassy's Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com / indianembassykuwait](https://www.facebook.com/indianembassykuwait/);

Embassy's Twitter account: @indembkwt; @indian\_icn; @IndianIbn; @Indian\_IPN; @thematic\_lib

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**10 July 2021**