

# National Day of the State of Kuwait

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## Prisoners of Conscience

AS Kuwait enters into the new millennium, the scars of the scourge of a brutal aggression is far from healed. It has been almost a decade now since the treacherous invasion of 1990, and yet many a mother weeps silently as they join the near and dear ones in waiting expectantly for the return of the brave sons of the soil who have been kidnapped and forcibly taken prisoner in Iraq by the occupation forces.

While commenting on this human tragedy the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross opined that it was sad that even after so many years of involvement, there are still 605 Kuwaitis unaccounted for.

These innocent victims of the humanitarian tragedy are prisoners of conscience.

The State of Kuwait attaches great importance to Security Council Resolutions 686 of 2nd March and 687 of 3rd April 1991 and their provisions. These resolutions call upon Iraq to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross in getting all the prisoners of war released.

A Tripartite Commission was formed with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the USA, the UK and France on one side and Iraq on the other side, under the chairmanship of the ICRC.

In the first meeting of the Commission, all participating

members signed a memorandum committing themselves to fully implement the provisions of the Geneva conventions of 1949 as well as the Security Council Resolutions No 686 and 687. They further agreed to submit complete lists of names of POWs and other detainees to facilitate their expeditious release.

Subsequent meeting of the Commission led to an exchange of a number of POWs by both sides. Others were freed during the uprising in Southern Iraq in the wake of turmoil there following the Liberation of Kuwait. Of the 6000 Kuwaiti POWs who returned home during this period, 5772 were repatriated by the ICRC while about 500 found their way home on their own.

In April 1991, all members adopted a specific Plan of Action for the repatriation of the mortal remains and the tracing of the POWs still unaccounted for.

Kuwait made strenuous efforts in compiling documentary evidence on the missing people and soon provided through the ICRC, to the Iraqi side, more than 600 individual files on the missing persons. The documents enclosed included eyewitness accounts and official arrest records. On the other hand Iraq made persistent effort to hinder the work of the

Commission by boycotting the subsequent meetings. This led to a temporary haltage of the Commission work which later reconvened but without Iraqi participation.

An over view of the documents reveal that 69 per cent of the prisoners are of Kuwaiti nationality of both sexes. They are predominantly civilians with many among them being students. Among the military, except for a few, most of them were picked up in a pre-meditated manner from their house or the mosque, when they were off duty and in civilian dress.

It is noteworthy that the number of Kuwaiti POWs represents 0.1 of the Kuwaiti population. The same percentage, that is 0.1 per cent would number in Egypt to 60,000 Egyptians, in Bangladesh to 90,000 Bangladeshis, in the USA to 250,000, in Europe to 650,000 and in China to 1,120,000 people. Almost all Kuwaiti families have lost some one to Iraqi aggression as a prisoner.

A technical sub-committee formed by the Commission, was entrusted with the task of accelerating the search process, facilitating the exchange of information related to the files, implementing all follow-up action based on the results of the search activities and building up mutual confidence among the parties.

Continued on page 9



HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah  
Amir of the State of Kuwait



HH Sheikh Saad Al-Abdallah Al-Salem Al-Sabah  
Crown Prince and Prime Minister

## Kuwait: a Partner in Progress

KUWAIT and Bangladesh are two brotherly countries bound by a common social, cultural and religious heritage.

As members of the Islamic Ummah, the two OIC member countries share identical views and perceptions on various international and regional issues.

Both draw their ideological strength from their complete faith in Allah and His religion Islam which have complemented their effort to forge a world order bordering on international legitimacy and a rejection of the principles of using force terrorism and aggression to bring about any change in the status quo which could lead to instability, insecurity and chaos.

Being members of the United Nations, they adhere to the principles of respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a member, State of the United Nations as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of any country.

The commonality of principles and perceptions on various perspectives of historical and international significance as well as certain identical features of statehood have en-

joined the two nations in a strong bond of fraternity and friendship which have stood the test of time.

Spanning over a period of about two decades and a half since Kuwait first accorded de jure recognition to Bangladesh on 4th November 1973, relations between Kuwait and Bangladesh have undergone a three-phase evolution.

The first phase was between 1973 to 1975 which saw the establishment of diplomatic relations and a mutual effort to boost it. The state visit to Kuwait by the erstwhile Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in November 1974 laid the groundwork for future Kuwait-Bangladesh cooperation.

The second phase was between 1975-1996 and its was a period of growth and consolidation. President Ziaur Rahman visited and stopped over in Kuwait a number of times during his role as a mediator in the Iraq-Iran war. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait visited Bangladesh in 1980 marking the high tide in Kuwait-Ba gla ties.

The exchange of visits led to

long term economic cooperation particularly in the agricultural and power sector. The friendship stood the test of time during the brutal invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The Government of President Hosain Mohammad Ershad and the brotherly people of Bangladesh committed total support to the just cause of Kuwait.

The 1994 visit to Bangladesh by His Highness Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kuwait was a strong reflection of the close and fraternal relations between the two countries. The visit was not only a follow up of the visit made earlier by Begum Khaleda Zia when she was the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, but also a demonstration of the profound appreciation of the Kuwaiti people for the principled stand taken by Bangladesh during the ordeal faced by Kuwait as a result of the treacherous aggression as well as a reflection of the importance and value that Kuwait attaches to its relations with Bangladesh. The visit led to the expansion of economic and other forms of cooperation. Kuwait pledged

Continued on page 9



Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh

While we step into the 21st Century, I would like to recall here the fruitful last decade of the 20th century that saw the emergence of a new world order that shaped the political and economic destinies of all the Nations.

The decade also ushered in a new era of friendship and cooperation between Kuwait and Bangladesh, two brotherly Muslim countries, separated geographically but united through a common bond of religion, culture, values and traditions.

The warm and cordial relations that so happily exist between our two countries received further impetus through the undertaking of collaborative ventures in different fields. The seeds of this fruitful relationship were sown in the early 70s with the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Bangladesh. Kuwait played a pivotal role in ensuring the participation of Bangladesh in the OIC summit held in Lahore in 1974. It has come a long way since then. In this span of two decades and a half, better understanding developed between the two countries as they shared a common perception and outlook on all international and regional issues. Both Kuwait and Bangladesh believe in the principles of respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of a country, be it big or small, weak or powerful. The cooperative ventures are the pillars on which the foundation of a strong relationship has been laid and consolidated under the pragmatic leadership of the two countries. Towards the beginning of the last decade, Kuwait was a victim of a treacherous aggression. In its ordeal, Kuwait drew strength and courage to roll back the aggression from its friends who stood by it despite everything. The government and people of Bangladesh stood by the just cause of Kuwait and contributed to the triumph of right over wrong. In the chequered history of Kuwait's existence as an independent and sovereign coun-

### MESSAGE

try, it pursued a policy of fraternity and friendship to all and malice to none. It strongly advocated and nurtured Pan Arabism and strove for unity and cooperation in the Gulf region through the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The invasion of Kuwait will remain a dark spot in the history of the Gulf and the subsequent triumph of truth and justice brought about by the International coalition, of which Bangladesh was a member too, will remain a stern lesson for those who have scant respect for world opinion. Over the years, Kuwait has made great strides in socio-economic development under the sagacious guidance of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait and the judicious leadership of His Highness Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kuwait. The country now ranks among those, which enjoy a very high standard of living, and its economy remains one of the strongest in the world. Democratic freedom with an elected parliament and a free press and social justice are strong features of this welfare state.

On this day of rejoicing, our heart cries in anguish for those brave sons of the soil who are still held in captivity as prisoners of war in Iraq. Kuwait once again urges world conscience to address itself to this humanitarian issue and exert pressure on the ruling regime in Iraq to free them immediately and unconditionally.

Kuwait will continue to support the development activities in this country both through official and private assistance. I am happy to note that the Bangladeshi work force in Kuwait has increased greatly and I take pride in saying that they are contributing their best in the development work in Kuwait.

The continued exchange of visits by officials and leaders of the two countries, the latest being the visit of a high powered Kuwaiti Armed Forces Delegation indicates the value and importance the two countries attach to their bilateral relations.

On this occasion, I wish to extend my best wishes for peace and prosperity of the brotherly people of Bangladesh. I look forward to the continued growth and consolidation of the cooperative relation between our two fraternal countries to our mutual benefit.

Long Live Kuwait and Long Live Kuwait-Bangladesh friendship.

Allah Hafez  
**Ali Hussain S H Al-Sammak**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kuwait in Bangladesh.

## Foreign Policy of Kuwait

THE cardinal principle on which the foreign policy of Kuwait is based has been enunciated by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait when he declared that, "Kuwait lives under the protection of Islam as its religion, Arabism as its homeland, cooperation as its strategic path, tolerance as its motto, fraternity as its guidance, constitution as its modus operandi, justice as its rule, progress as its responsibility and peace as its goal."

The objective of Kuwait's

pursuit of diplomacy is based on a pragmatic and balanced approach and is conducted in accordance with the government's philosophy and the interest of the State. Kuwait adheres to a policy, which is characterised by clarity, straightforward and quiet diplomacy. It strives to strengthen cooperation with all countries on the basis of mutual respect and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. It advocates the use of peaceful means in resolving all problems between States in accordance with the principles of

right and justice, away from conflicts, sphere of influence and international blocs. At the same time, Kuwait's policy is concerned with the safeguard of her independence and sovereignty and her freedom of political decision. This policy stems from her belief in a common Arab destiny towards the development of relations with its fraternal Arab States. Hence, Kuwait plays a significant role in the progress of the Arab League and its bodies and gives her wholehearted support

Continued on page 9

Our Warmest felicitations to the Brotherly People and the Government of The State of Kuwait on the occasion of their 39th National Day and 9th Liberation Day



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