

National Day of the United Arab Emirates

Special Supplement



The Daily Star

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MESSAGE

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh
It is a great pleasure that we are observing today in this holy month of Ramadan corresponding to 2nd December, 2000, the 29th anniversary of the establishment of United Arab Emirates comprising seven emirates. By the grace of almighty Allah and leadership of their highnesses the rulers of the seven emirates and in particular by the sagacious, prudent and steadfast leadership of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, president of the country, the United Arab Emirates has emerged as one of the most prosperous country in the community of nations with higher standard of living and become an imitable model for economic and social development. Initiating the famous slogan "The money has no value unless it is used for the benefits of the people" Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan laid the foundation of an advanced nation in a record span of time. He supervised phases of its developments and materialized historically acclaimed achievements with his experience, tireless efforts and care of a father. He also infused modern ideas and visions to traditional values.

The government and people of the United Arab Emirates have been supporting their brothers in Bangladesh since the dawn of its independence and still continued with full cooperation. The Visit of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to UAE in 1974 opened the door of welfare and fraternity for the people of both the countries, which became stronger in the following years through reciprocal visits by the leaders and officials of the two countries. This mutual exchange reached to a climax with the remarkable visit of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan to Bangladesh in 1984. That significant visit resulted in the formation of a joint cooperation committee which was and still is an ideal channel of mutual cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and other fields. As well as the private sector in both the countries has played an effective role in cementing relations between UAE and Bangladesh through investment in various fields of developments. We also appreciate the role and contribution of Bangladeshi nationals working in the UAE in development efforts over there and wish them a happy stay with their brothers in the UAE.

We pray to almighty Allah in this holy month for continued progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and do hope that the existing fraternal relations between the two brotherly countries will further strengthen in the days to come. May Allah enable our leaders to guide their people to further prosperity by their prudent leadership and grant them healthy and prosperous life.

Wassala-Mu-Alaikum Wa rahmatullah

Saeed Mohammad Sultan Al-Za'abi
Ambassador
United Arab Emirates to Bangladesh



H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates : Profile

ON 2nd December, the United Arab Emirates celebrates the successful completion of 29 years as a full member of the community of nations.

Established in 1971, the federation has seven member emirates, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ajman and is located in south-eastern Arabia. Led since its inception by the President, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, it has enjoyed both political stability and the benefits of substantial oil and gas reserves, permitting the Government to implement a major programme of economic and social development that has made the UAE one of the world's fastest developing states. It has, at the same time, made its mark in the international arena, adopting a balanced and coherent foreign policy that has sought to find ways in which the country, with an area of only 83,600 sq km, and with a population of only

around 3 million, can contribute effectively to the pursuit of peace and progress.

During the course of the last year, one key focus of the country's foreign policy has been the continuing struggle to secure the restoration of three of its islands in the Arabian Gulf, Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tumb, which were occupied by Iran shortly before the UAE was established. In the face of an obdurate attitude from Iran, which has refused even to accept that there is an issue of sovereignty to discuss, the UAE has continued to propose either a reference of the issue to the International Court of Justice or a resort to bilateral negotiations, provided that these take place with a definite agenda and a timetable for completion. A three-member committee has been established by the Arab Gulf Co-operation Council, GCC, of which the UAE is a member, to seek to find ways of breaking the diplomatic impasse. While this continues its work, the Gov-

ernment of the Emirates has been reassured during the course of the year by the way in which its approach, founded on the search for a peaceful solution, has continued to win widespread international support.

A belief in collaboration with other countries of a similar approach has continued to characterise UAE foreign policy over the course of the year. A key part of this, of course, has been the pursuit of greater cooperation and understanding between the countries of the Arab world. The UAE supported wholeheartedly plans for the calling of an Arab summit conference to heal the rifts within the member states of the Arab League, and played a full role in the October summit in Cairo, called to discuss the collapse of the Middle East peace process in the wake of the Israeli military assault on the Palestinian people. While making plain its firm opposition to Israeli policy, the UAE continues to support any moves that can bring about

a full and final peace settlement, including the recognition of Jerusalem, a holy city for Muslims and Christians, as the capital of the independent Palestinian state-to-be.

In another step designed to contribute to the re-establishment of cooperation between all of the Arab states, the UAE has also continued to call for the re-integration of Iraq into the Arab fold. While it believes that an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people is ultimately in the hands of their Government, the UAE called during the year for an end to the international sanctions against Iraq.

Concern to help the suffering has also been shown by the continued participation of the UAE Armed Forces in the United Nations peacekeeping force in Kosovo, KFOR. The UAE is the only country apart from members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Russia to be involved in the peace-keeping operation, with a particular focus of its operational activities being the provision of aid for the reconstruction of essential services for the people of Kosovo and their shattered economy.

Substantial amounts of humanitarian assistance have also been provided by non-governmental institutions in the Emirates, with the Zayed Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation and the UAE Red Crescent Society having played a particularly active role, in terms both of emergency relief following natural disasters and of longer-term rebuilding and reconstruction programmes. The International Federation of Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies has ranked the UAE Society among the top seven societies worldwide in terms of its provision of aid, an impressive achievement for a small country. The Government-run Abu Dhabi Development Fund, ADDF, has continued to provide project assistance on concessionary terms. Over the last 30 years, the UAE has made loans worth more than US \$ 3.75 billion to around fifty developing countries in Africa and Asia.

On another level, the UAE, as one of the world's major oil exporters, has recognised its responsibility with relation to the international economy. In concert with other members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, the UAE has increased its daily production of oil, as a way of taking the heat out of the market and counteracting the upward pressure on prices. The UAE Government continues to support a policy designed to bring about a stable pricing structure which takes into account the interests of both the consumers and the producers of this key, depletable, international commodity.

At home, the economy of the United Arab Emirates has continued to grow rapidly over the course of the last year. While the upward trend of oil and gas prices during 2000 has facilitated the Government's investment programme, the success of a programme designed to diversify the economy away from dependence on hydrocarbons has continued, and despite increased oil and gas revenues, the sector now accounts for only around a third of Gross Domestic Product. In 1999, GDP rose by around 10 per cent to US \$ 51.9 billion, up

from US \$ 47.2 billion in 1998, and further substantial growth is expected for the year 2000.

Commerce and tourism activities and manufacturing together now account for around a quarter of GDP, while even agriculture has continued to increase its share, despite the harshness of the country's arid climate.

Substantial progress has been made over the last year in

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A Glimpse of History

MAN probably arrived in the area now known as the UAE at the beginning of the Late Stone Age, around 8,000 years ago. Some of the earliest sites have been found on offshore islands like Merawali and Ghagha, where fine flint arrowheads have been discovered. Evidence from these islands, as well as other important sites, notably Dalma, Akab and Jebel Buhays, indicate that by the late sixth or early fifth millennium BC the people had begun to settle in permanent or semi-permanent communities, capable of organising extensive fishing and even herding domestic animals. Finds of pottery shards at some of these sites of a type known from the Ubaid culture in Mesopotamia show that they had extensive trading links to the northern Gulf - evidence of the early beginnings of the country's continuing tradition of maritime commerce. Pearls were already being harvested and could have been an important export commodity.

EMERGING COPPER TRADE: The earliest large-scale architecture dates back to the period from c 3,200 BC to 2,800 BC, about 5,000 years ago. On the foothills and slopes of Jebel Hafit and Qarn bint Saud, near Al Ain, as well as on the neighbouring Hajar mountains, hundreds of stone tombs from this period have been discovered, showing a sophisticated pattern of construction that could only have been undertaken by a well-organised and settled society. These people, too, traded with Mesopotamia and Baluchistan. The reason for that trade is clear: copper implements and nearby mines show the people were mining and smelting copper. The Jebel Hafit people also grew a variety of crops such as wheat, barley, melons, sorghum and dates, evidence of a fertile climate at this time.

UMM AL-NAR: Umm al-Nar, a port-town and complex of collective graves on a small island adjacent to Abu Dhabi, which appears to have been a

focal point of the copper trade, has lent its name to the Umm al-Nar Period (c 2,500 BC to 2,000 BC). This was the peak of local Bronze Age civilisation with extensive trading links to Mesopotamia and the Harappan culture of Indus Valley, as is evidenced by a staggering array of foreign goods found at archaeological sites from this era. Cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia, written during the last few centuries of the third millennium BC, refer to the import of copper from 'Magan', now understood to have been an area which included the present-day UAE and the Hajar mountains.

Excavations at Tell Abraq, on the border between Sharjah and Umm al-Qaiwain, have revealed a massive structure with several layers of construction dating from around 2,200 BC. Faced with stone and with a massive mudbrick foundation, the fortress would have towered over the nearby shoreline like the original Martello tower on the coast of Corsica. It is the largest Bronze Age building discovered anywhere in the Arabian peninsula and was probably the seat of a local lord in the land of Magan.

Evidence of the Umm al-Nar period has been found all over the country, as at Bidya and Bithnah in Fujairah, at Shimal and Ghailah in Ras al-Khaimah, at Ras Ghannadha and Qattarah in Abu Dhabi, and at Umm Suqeim in Dubai. Finds show that the people in that long-off past enjoyed a sophisticated lifestyle, trading along desert and marine routes with other civilisations hundreds or thousands of kilometres away. It is perhaps no coincidence that at Umm al-Nar the earliest evidence has yet been found of the domestication of that 'ship of the desert', the camel, dating back over 4,000 years.

WADI SUQ: Excavated sites from the Wadi Suq Period (2,000 BC to 1,300 BC) reveal a different pattern of external trade, influenced by changes in the civilisations of Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley. Finds

from this period include some of the finest early gold and silver jewellery to be found in the UAE.

NEW IRRIGATION TECHNIQUES: Iron Age (1,300 BC to c 300 BC) villages from around 1,000 BC have been uncovered at Hill, near Al Ain and on Sharjah's Al Madam plain, revealing evidence of the *salaj* underground water system, an ingenious innovation which permitted agriculture to continue in a climate that was becoming progressively drier. Excavations at a fortified settlement near Sharjah airport from this period yielded the first evidence of the use of iron and writing in the UAE.

GREEK AND ROMAN INFLUENCES: Evidence from the settlement at Milleha, near Dhaid, where pottery from the island of Rhodes has been found show that it was heavily influenced by the ancient Greeks from around 300 BC. At Al-Dur, near Umm al-Qaiwain, an ancient temple dating to around 100 BC to 100 AD has been uncovered, as well as more evidence of substantial international trade - pottery from India and Mesopotamia, glass and coins from the Roman empire.

LATE PRE-ISLAMIC: Trading continued to characterise the lifestyle of the people. Settlements at Kush in Ras al-Khaimah, show evidence of Sasanian links in the fifth and sixth centuries AD, while on Sir Bani Yas island, a major pre-Islamic Christian religious complex has been found. Over on the east coast at Dibba, a great port existed for several hundred years until the early days of Islam, at the beginning of the seventh century. Scattered across the plains behind Dibba are grave stones from a battle in 632 AD, when the forces of Islam finally established their control over the area.

INDIAN OCEAN TRADE: From the beginning of the Christian era to the seventeenth century

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Our Heartiest Felicitation to
His Royal Highness Shaikh
Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan
President of U.A.E.
On the occasion of the 29th
National Day of the
United Arab Emirates



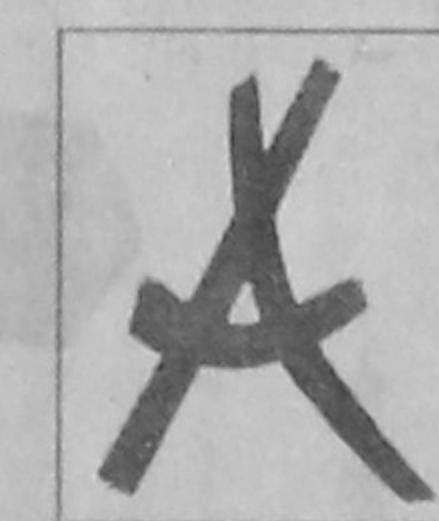
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THURAYA

Greetings on
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of the
United Arab Emirates



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