

NATIONAL DAY OF United Arab Emirates



The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

DECEMBER 2, 2008



Founder President of the United Arab Emirates
Late His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin
Sultan Al Nahyan



His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed
Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates



His Highness Sheikh Muhammad Bin
Rashed Al Maktoum
Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai

MESSAGE

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

It is a great pleasure that we are observing today, the 2nd December 2008, the 37th anniversary of the establishment of the United Arab Emirates. By the grace of Almighty Allah and sagacious leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and His Highness Sheikh Muhammad Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister & Ruler of Dubai, and their Highnesses the Rulers of the Emirates and in particular by the charismatic leadership of His Highness Late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the United Arab Emirates has emerged as one of the most prosperous countries in the comity of nations with higher standard of living of its people and become an inimitable model of economic and social development. It is worth mentioning that Sheikh Zayed, who used money for the benefit of the people, laid foundation of an advanced nation in a record time with his tireless efforts and care of a father, infusing modern ideas into traditional values.

The government and people of the United Arab Emirates are strongly bound by brotherly relations with Bangladesh since the dawn of its independence. The visits paid by leaders of both the countries from time to time opened the door of friendship and fraternity more widely for the people of the two countries. The bonds of fraternity was further strengthened by the remarkable visit of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan to Bangladesh in 1984, which resulted in the formation of a joint committee for bilateral cooperation in economic, social and cultural fields. The private sector in the two countries has also played an effective role in cementing bilateral relations between UAE and Bangladesh through investment in various development sectors. We also appreciate the role and contribution of Bangladeshi nationals working in the UAE in development sector and wish them a happy stay with their brothers in the UAE.

We pray to Almighty Allah for continued progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and its people and do hope that the existing bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries will be strengthened further in the days to come.

Wa Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu



Khalfan Battal Ali Al Mansouri
Ambassador of the United Arab
Emirates to Bangladesh

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National Day Report

2nd December 2008

ON 2nd December, the United Arab Emirates marks its 37th National Day at the end of a year of steady progress at home and the emergence of an international economic crisis that poses major challenges for continued growth in the year ahead.

The seven emirates that make up the UAE, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ra's al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain, lie in the south-eastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. In treaty relations with Britain from 1820, the emirates came together to form the UAE federation on 2nd December 1971, coinciding with the British withdrawal from East of Suez. Led, until November 2004, by its founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE then embarked on a major programme of economic growth and of infrastructural development that has subsequently seen it become one of the most advanced countries in the world in terms of its per capita income, life expectancy and social stability.

That development has been funded to a large extent by the UAE's ample resources of

hydrocarbons, with the fourth largest oil and the fifth largest proven gas reserves in the world. It would not have been possible, however, had Sheikh Zayed not had the vision to devote oil and gas revenues to development, not just of the infrastructure but also of the country's people. Today, led by President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh bin Rashid Al Maktoum, its inhabitants enjoy access to modern housing, health care, education and other services while the UAE has emerged, thanks to its numerous ports and airports, as a major commercial and financial trading hub for the entire region.

One aspect of that development, however, has been a rapid rise in population, from less than half a million in 1971 to nearly five million today. Much of the increase comes from expatriates who have flocked to the country to take part in its economic growth and to benefit from the employment and other opportunities that has provided. Today, around four-fifths of the population are expatriates, from over 150 other countries around the world.

One focus of government attention over the past year,

therefore, has been the need to ensure that the national identity of the country's citizens, the Emiratis, is preserved and protected, for the present and for future generations. That is a task that all would concede is difficult, but one that is, at the same time, essential and it will remain an issue of importance in the years ahead as the UAE seeks to consolidate its identity as an Arab and Muslim state.

Early in 2008, a new Cabinet was formed to take on the task of tackling the challenges that lie ahead. These include the need for an improvement of government performance and a special Ministerial Council for Services has been created to ensure that the necessary services are delivered to the population in a coordinated, timely and effective manner. One feature of the new Cabinet was an increase in the number of women ministers to four, higher than in any other country in the Arab world, an indication of the way in which the national programme of increasing the empowerment of women is producing results. Over twenty percent of the members of the country's parliament, the Federal National Council, are also women, while during the year, the first two women ambassadors and the first female

Emirati judge were also appointed. In November, the country's hosted a summit of the Arab Women Organisation, bringing together women's leaders from throughout the Arab world.

The rapid growth in population has been accompanied by a rapid rise in demand for services, with one area of particular concern being the need to ensure that adequate supplies of electricity are available, as well as water -- largely provided by power and desalination plants, since the UAE has an arid climate with little annual rainfall. Although most power stations are currently fuelled by gas, the government has decided that for the future it will be necessary to diversify and it has, therefore, embarked on a major programme of planning to develop nuclear power stations, through the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation in collaboration with the United States, Britain and France. The programme is being carefully designed so that only peaceful uses of nuclear energy are involved, and agreements have been signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, to ensure that all the internationally-agreed safeguard are put in place.

At the same time, the UAE is also actively investigating alternative energy sources. The World Future Energy Summit, held in Abu Dhabi at the beginning of 2008, brought together leading firms in the field, and, through the UAE's own future energy company, Masdar, the latest inventions in the field will be used in the building of a special 'Masdar City'. The Zayed Future Energy Prize, launched during the year, will encourage yet more innovation in this important field.

Another aspect to receive attention during the year has been that of culture. The UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi, is now well-placed to become a future global 'cultural hub', with several major museums being planned for Sa'adiyat Island, including branches of the world-famous Louvre, in Paris, and the Guggenheim, as well as a Sheikh Zayed National Museum to cater for the country's own history, heritage and environment.

Environmental issues have continued to receive much attention, thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Environment, established in 2006, and local agencies in each emirate, in particular the Environment Agency -- Abu Dhabi, EAD. This institution took the lead during

the year in promoting, in association with Britain, a new international agreement on conservation of endangered birds of prey in Africa, Asia and Europe, already signed by nearly 30 countries. Another international initiative was the creation by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi of the Mohammed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, a body will support efforts to conserve individual endangered species world-wide.

In terms of the economy, the UAE benefited during the first half of the year from the rapid escalation of oil prices to record levels, although these have now fallen back to early 2007 levels. In the view of the UAE Government, the higher prices of mid-2008 were largely fuelled not by the fundamentals of global supply and demand, but by speculation. The government continues to work, in association with both other producers and consumers, to seek a proper balance between supply and demand and to achieve a world oil price that provides producers with adequate returns while, at the same time, permitting importing countries to obtain supplies at a price that their economies can absorb.

Our Heartiest Felicitations on the National Day of
United Arab Emirates



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