



57th National Day

THE STATE OF KUWAIT



Kuwait assistance programme in Bangladesh

It is the cardinal policy of Kuwait to stand by its friends throughout the world. The late Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, highlighted Kuwait's global outreach strategy in 1961 when he remarked during the establishment of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, 'Here we are embarking on the tides of change but we will never forget our friends'.

This support comes in the forms of loans and grants that go into the recipient country's development of infrastructure, strengthening of socio-economic status and different sectoral advancement.

With the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Bangladesh in 1974, Kuwait evinced keen interest in providing soft loans to the newly independent country.

All forms of Kuwaiti official assistance to Bangladesh is channeled through Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

Kuwait attaches special importance to all requests from the Bangladesh Government with regard to financing partly or wholly, any development project.

The main thrust of Kuwait Fund's operation in Bangladesh is in three core sectors. Financial

loans have been provided for projects that have been identified as priority projects by the Government of Bangladesh. The sectors where Kuwaiti assistance has been extended are power and energy, communications and agriculture.

So far, Kuwait has provided loans for twenty four (24) development projects amounting to approximately half a billion dollar over a three decade period. These loans have been provided as soft loans with highly flexible terms and conditions and carry about 3 percent or less rate of interest to cover administrative and related expenses.

Most of these loans go in infrastructural development projects that when completed will impact the socio-economic life of the people in particular and the country in general. The projects when completed will promote inter-district connectivity within Bangladesh and on a broader perspective, it will lead to regional connectivity as a result of which Bangladesh stands to reap substantial economic gain. The underlying goal of the projects is to achieve regional peace, harmony and prosperity through greater economic cooperation through connectivity.

In addition to these loans, the Government of Kuwait also provided a grant equivalent to US \$ 10 million to Palli Karma Sahayak

Foundation (PKSF) from its Goodwill Fund to promote food security in Bangladesh.

Kuwait is committed to bring about a qualitative change in the socio-economic life of the people of Bangladesh through implementation of vital projects in different sectors.

Complementing the Kuwait Government's assistance program in Bangladesh, a number



of Kuwaiti Non-Government Organizations have been working hand in hand with different socio-economic Organizations in Bangladesh to ameliorate the suffering of the poverty stricken people. In an effort to eradicate poverty in targeted areas, these organizations have initiated social welfare projects that

go way beyond the original policy of building mosques, financing madrasas and sponsoring orphans. These Organizations have invested around US \$ 350 million on different projects. Some of the major areas where the fundings were channeled are given below:

1. Hospital and Clinics
2. Students Dormitory
3. Clustered Villages
4. Income generating Schemes like supply of cattle, goats, setting small shops, providing sewing machines, providing rickshaws, vans and carts.
5. Supplying seeds, and water pumps to farmers
6. Sinking tube wells for providing safe drinking water
7. Madrasas and libraries
8. Vocational Training Centres
9. Mosques
10. Orphanages and orphan sponsorship

The concerted efforts by the Government and NGOs of Kuwait have served significantly as building bridges of friendship and cooperation between Kuwait and Bangladesh.

Kuwait takes great pride in its role as a partner and facilitator in the development stride of Bangladesh.

An itemized breakdown of the total assistance provided by Kuwait to Bangladesh:

Sl	Name of Project	Year	Amount in KD (1KD=US \$ 3.40)	Status
01	Manu River Project	1975	2,300,000.00	Completed
02	Power supply for Irrigation schemes Stage-1	1975	6,376,025.74	Completed
03	East West Electrical Interconnected project	1978	6,750,000.00	Completed
04	East West Electrical Interconnected Project	1980	3,306,744.63	Completed
05	Eight Rural Areas Electrification	1981	7,825,349.98	Completed
06	Deep Tube wells (North Western Region)	1981	4,618,943.72	Completed
07	Ashganj Thermal Power Project	1982	7,907,147.81	Completed
08	The North West Tube well project	1990	5,000,000.00	Completed
09	Four Rural Areas Electrification project	1993	9,920,173.61	Completed
10	Sylhet-Tamabil-Jaifong Road	1996	7,000,000.00	Completed
11	Rural Electrification Project in Nilphamari District	1997	2,125,353.45	Completed
12	Rural Electrification Project in Shariatpur District	1998	1,707,315.05	Completed
13	Shaikarpur and Doarika Bridges and Access Roads	1998	6,040,436.25	Completed
14	Shahji Bazar Power Station Project	1999	4,748,497.81	Completed
15	Greater Rajshahi Power Transmission and Distribution Project	1999	3,066,700.57	Completed
16	Greater Chittagong Power Transmission and Distribution Development Project	2000	11,199,939.62	Completed
17	Dapdia Bridge	2001	10,000,000.00	Active
18	Sylhet-Jakershirpur Road	2003	8,333,378.37	Completed
19	The Three Bridges Project	2004	8,600,000.00	Active
20	Third Karnaphuli Bridge Project	2005	15,500,000.00	Active
21	Greater Chittagong Power Transmission	2007	4,000,000.00	Active
22	Shikal Baha 225 MW Dual Fuel Power Plant Project	2011	15,000,000.00	Active
23	Lebukhali Bridge	2012	14,000,000.00	Active
24	Improvement of Roads Dhaka N City Corporation		0.00	Pipeline

Freedom of expression and media in Kuwait

MEDIA in Kuwait serves as a watchdog of people's conscience, for respecting the principles and values of the country and upholding the rights of the people.

The constitution of Kuwait upholds the rights of opinion, guarantees the freedom of expression, freedom of press and freedom of communication.

Freedom of Speech is guaranteed by the constitution under Article 36 which states 'Every person will have the right to express his opinion by speaking or writing or otherwise'. Kuwaitis are very proud of always being able to speak their mind. Being outspoken is a characteristic feature of the Kuwaiti people and this freedom has always been something that many in the Gulf region envy them for.

Freedom of Press is also enshrined in the constitution under Article 37 which states, 'Freedom of the Press and of publication is guaranteed'. Media license can only be cancelled by a Court order.

Kuwait has a very large number of newspapers. Modern Kuwait's print media had its beginning in the 1920s, expanding in the 1960s with the emergence of a number of publications. The print media include a variety of daily, weekly and monthly newspapers and magazines with a diversity of opinions. There are 14 Arabic and 3 English newspapers that circulate in Kuwait. These are all privately owned, enjoy a great deal of independence and are diverse in their reporting. However, there are some limitations on this freedom. Although the Press and publications law extend some important protec-

tions to the media, yet the media adheres to self censorship on sensitive issues like religion, public morality and the Amir. The reporting is very lively, even on domestically controversial issues.

Just as Kuwait is geographically bounded by Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Sea, so is the mass media triangularly sandwiched between Kuwait's political and economic loyalty to its citizens, its religious loyalty to Islam and other Arab nations and its dedication to the concept of freedom of speech is fundamental to democracy.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait highlights the role of the Kuwaiti Media when he said 'local media should play a favorable and responsible role in protecting and maintaining the country's national achievements'.

Thus the media is a civilized torch of knowledge, ensuring credibility and integrity. Kuwait News Agency, popularly known as KUNA is the news gate that works as a funnel for information.

Kuwait's electronic media has emerged as a strong medium of information and entertainment. The State owns 9 local radio stations and 5 television stations while there are 16 privately owned television stations. The first radio broadcasts originated in 1951. They provide public programs 24 hours a day.

Kuwait TV originally started in 1957, initially as a private enterprise. Kuwait's satellite channel started transmission in 1992. Use of social media is gaining popularity and Kuwait has the highest percentage, 82.1 percent, social media users in the Gulf region.

The commission for Mass Communications and Information Technology regulates the digital communication like phone, internet, cable and satellite service providers. They regulate online crime like the use of fake identity or hacking into systems.

International news is widely available and a number of foreign media outlets maintain bureaus in Kuwait.

There is an independent Kuwait Journalist Association that upholds the positive interest of the fast growing media. The Cyber Crime Law, passed in 2015, set guidelines for exercising freedom of express on the internet.

A recent study carried by the Gulf Strategic Studies Centre in Cairo revealed that the Press in Kuwait is freely practicing all forms social, administrative and political criticism.

Culture of Kuwait

KUWAIT takes great pride in its rich culture, cherished values and strong traditions.

The Kuwaiti culture is based on Arab culture, traditions and practices that are generally adhered to in the Arabian Peninsula or the Fertile Crescent. The Kuwaiti culture is both Urbans and Bedaw (Bedouin).

Islam has long lasting effect on Kuwaiti culture, traditions and values. Despite the impact of Western education in Urban Kuwait, the average Kuwaiti still steadfastly adheres to the age old customs and values practiced by the ancestors that include among others, a strong respect for elders, family values and respect for guests. They are outspoken and do not hesitate to speak their mind on matters they consider important.

The Kuwaitis take great pride in their hospitality. Guests are treated with great warmth and respect. While family elders enjoy the highest priority in everything, guests are given precedence over the elders as is the custom. However, during meal time, the host waits for the older most to finish his meal before getting up from the table.

An important aspect of the Kuwaiti culture is the traditional greeting that is accompanied by shaking hands and kissing cheeks. It is also customary for people greeting each other to enquire about one's health and that of their family and their work. Usually, the person who enters the room greets first, irrespective of his status, rank and relationship.

Hospitality in Kuwait is often portrayed through the serving of tea and coffee known as Gahwa which has cardamom and cloves as essential ingredients. Nuts, dates and sweets are served with the hot drink. The guest has to shake his gahwa cup two three times if he does not want it to be refilled.

Another important aspect of the Kuwaiti tradition is the humanitarian quality. Imbued by their religious belief, Kuwaitis are well known for the humanitarian services they render or support.

Kuwaiti cuisine plays an important part in the Kuwaiti culture. Food and beverages are very important part of the Kuwaiti hospitality. Guests are invited to sumptuous lunch or dinner of traditional Kuwaiti dishes. Kuwaiti cuisine is an infusion of Indian, Persian, Mediterranean and Najdi

cuisines. The national dish of Kuwait is known as Machboos and it consists mainly of lamb, chicken or fish placed over or mixed in a large mass of well cooked fragrant rice, cooked in well spiced mutton or chicken broth. Food is always prepared and served in large amount and it is customary to invite guests over to share this large meal. Other popular dishes include Qouz, Mutabbag Samak, Jirish, Harees, Margoog and Mumawwash. Traditional flat bread, known as Khubz which are baked in a special oven, are often served with mahyawa fish sauce. The food is generally served in large dishes around which the guests gather and eat out of the dish in the diwaniya. A Kuwaiti meal is never complete unless it is accompanied by dates and some sweet dishes like Zalabia, Khabees, Gaemat.

The Diwanias have existed in Kuwait since time immemorial. In a traditional Kuwaiti house, it is the main reception area where the host receives and entertains his guests. Diwanias are an indispensable feature of the Kuwaiti man's social life. Friends and business associates and other guests gather at a Diwaniya after sun set and carry on social discourse right into the late evening or early morning.

For over two centuries, the diwanias have been serving as a fundamental part of the Kuwaiti society. They facilitate quick communication and consensus on matters both trivial and critical. They are the core of Kuwait's social, business and political life. These are places where the Kuwaitis discuss matters of great interest. These are places where friends get introduced to others. They serve as important platforms for debates, arguments and election campaigns. Undoubtedly, diwanias are the root of Kuwait's consensual political system.

Music is another important cultural component.

Kuwaiti traditional music is accompanied by simple percussion instruments like the small mirwas drums and clapping, along with the traditional Arabic instruments such as Oud, the kanoon and the kaanaan. Other instruments played are the rubabah, tanbarah (string instrument) and habban (bag pipe). Kuwaiti Sawt is a popular music in Kuwait.

Despite strong inroads made by Western culture in Kuwait, the people of Kuwait take pride in their tradition, values and culture.

Education in Kuwait

THE State of Kuwait is located in the Arabian Gulf and has a population of 2,646,314 people. Considering the strategic location of Kuwait in the Arabian Gulf, the Government of Kuwait has placed strong emphasis on education. The 1962 constitution which stipulates that education is assured and promoted by the State reflects the belief that education is a fundamental right of all citizens. Therefore, the education policy seeks to provide opportunity to all children, irrespective of their social status including children with special needs. In recognition of the stride Kuwait made in this field, the UNDP in its 2011 report ranked Kuwait 63rd on the Human Development Index.

That the Government attaches special priority to education can be easily understood from the fact that in 2006, the Government allocated 13 percent of all public expenditure to education.

Kuwait is striving to improve the quality of its education at all levels and for all ages.

The Government of Kuwait is now looking for alternative ways to stimulate employment and income generation. Therefore, it is keen to diversify and improve the skills of its labor force. Consequently, the Government has attached high priority in bringing about relevant reforms in the education sector to meet the need of time.

The development of the Kuwaiti educational system may be attributed, to a great extent, to the wealth that oil resources have brought to the country and this complements the pragmatic policy of the Government to provide International standard education to all endeavoring Kuwaitis.

At the turn of the 20th century, there were very few educational facilities in the country. However, since 1939, with the education sector coming under Government control, 17 schools offering quality education, were set up by 1945. By 1960, some 45,000 students including 18000 girls, enrolled in the Kuwaiti educational system. Schooling was made compulsory in 1965 and in 1967, private school system took a foot hold with Government assistance, in the education system. Kuwait Government provides scholarship to all Kuwaiti Students pursuing academic careers in Universities and institutes in the United States, United Kingdom and some other countries.

Since the early 21st century, the Ministry of Education has sought to prepare a general, long-term education goals upto 2025 in the first phase.

The general education system consists of four levels: Kindergarten or Nursery (2 years), Primary (5 years), Intermediate (4 years) and Secondary (3 years). Primary and intermediate level education is compulsory for all students aged between 6-14. All the levels of State Education including higher education are free. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education are entrusted with the responsibility of developing the education sector.

Students are required to spend 4 years at the intermediate level, upto grade 9 after which they move onto the secondary level which is for 3 years. After completing secondary level of education, a student can go for higher education in a University or may enroll in a vocational college for vocational or technical education. The secondary education system is currently being standardized from the present academic or credit system to a single system.

The importance attached to education by the Government may well be comprehended by the fact that the Government allocates about KD 5.6 million per annum into private educational facilities in addition to allotting land for school construction as well as paying for the distribution of books. The Government is also promoting the use of information technology at school level under its 'Education Net' project that connects every Government school and library in Kuwait to a telecommunication data network.

In addition to the regular educational institutes, there are religious institutes that offer a program of general education at the intermediate and secondary levels along with enhanced Islamic and religious studies. As part of the Government policy of providing equal educational opportunities to all, the Ministry of Education has set up 44 special needs institutes.

Post-secondary education comprises technical and vocational courses offered by the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training while degree programs are offered by Kuwait University and a number of private universities.

Post-secondary education include courses at a PAAET technical college lasting for two and a half years after which students are awarded a diploma certificate.

There are four state supported higher education institutions in Kuwait. These are:

1. Kuwait University
2. The College of Basic Education in PAAET
3. Higher Institute for Theater Arts
4. Higher Institute of Music Arts

Kuwait University a co-educational institution, was established in 1966. It comprises of five campuses. It offers a wide range of academic courses.

The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, established in 1982 to fill the need for vocational and technical training, has two objectives. One is to provide and develop skills of the national labor force to meet the demands of a developing country and the other is to provide training to students to have career beyond the oil industry.

The largest private institute for undergraduate studies is the Arab Open University which accounts for nearly 60% of all private undergraduate students.

There are a number of post-secondary institutes that are recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education. These are:

1. Gulf University for Science and Technology
2. Arab Open University
3. Australian College of Kuwait
4. American University of Kuwait
5. Gulf American College
6. Kuwait-Mastricht Business School
7. Box Hill College Kuwait
8. American University in the Middle East

The Government's aggressive thrust in the education sector has paid off and Kuwait's literacy rate reached 94% in 2005.

Starting with a small number of Quranic schools known as Al-Katatib at the turn of the 20th century, there are now over 1145 schools both public and private spread over 6 districts in Kuwait, at all levels from Kindergarten to Secondary.

Investment opportunities in Kuwait

INVESTMENT is the key to development and progress and the Government of the State of Kuwait is pursuing an aggressive investment policy to meet its development goals. Kuwait has always been a country open to foreign direct investment and is currently further opening up to foreign capital.

Kuwait has introduced new corporate legislation to encourage and facilitate foreign direct investment. The new regulations are part of recent measures that the Government has taken to attract investments as well as foreign companies that will generate employment and help develop their embryonic private sectors as part of the 2015-2020 National Development Plan. The passage of the new Company law, the establishment of an institutional framework for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and the Direct Investment Promotion Law are aimed at enhancing the confidence of investors and increasing investments in Kuwait.

Kuwait is currently laying the ground work for diversifying its economy which has seen it increase the focus on knowledge-based industries.

The new regulations with 337 articles incorporate tried and tested measures including the creation of a 'one stop shop' for incorporation and licensing of new businesses.

In order to ease operating in Kuwait, single share holders are permitted to set up businesses for the first time and transfer shares in companies.

The introduction of the new Foreign Direct Investment Law in June 2013 covers foreign investment in Kuwait. Executive Regulations have been issued in 2014 concerning its application. It has been enacted as a means of supporting the 25 year Kuwait Development Plan which aims at reducing dependency on oil and increasing private sector participation across a broader economic base.

The new law offers foreign investors several incentives, including the ability to own or increase ownership in a Kuwaiti Company to 100%, to operate through a 100% foreign owned branch and to benefit from income tax and customs duty exemptions.

The new FDI regime can be considered for both existing and new operations and investments except for, sectors included in the 'negative list'.

Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) which was set up as per the new regulations as a 'one stop shop' have recently issued a negative list as per the Council of Ministers Decision No. 75 (2015) which excludes the following sectors from the incentives and exemptions of the new FDI Law:

- Extraction of crude petroleum
- Extraction of natural gas
- Manufacture of coke oven products
- Manufacture of fertilizers and nitrogen compounds
- Manufacture of gas, distribution of gaseous fuels through mains
- Real Estate excluding privately operated building development projects
- Security and investigation activities
- Public administration and defence, compulsory social security
- Activities of membership organizations

The current policy to promote FDI focuses on a number of sectors like infrastructure investments, waste-water treatment, communications, banking and financial sectors, information technology and software development, insurance, hospitals and Pharmaceuticals, land and sea freight, tourism and urban development.

Kuwait has a favorable investment climate, particularly after the introduction of investment friendly regulations. The high quality of life, its consistent oil reserves, low energy cost and a sound financial management and solid banking system make it an ideal destination for foreign investors. Further, Kuwait is blessed with a greater percentage of young consumers that guarantees a high demand for quality consumer products and services.

Availing the liberalized investment policy, US tech giant IBM became the first company to set up wholly foreign-owned operations in Kuwait and has embarked upon an ambitious expansion plans in collaboration with local industries. Giants like IBM plan to make Kuwait the hub for sales and services and reach out to the lucrative Gulf Market. Local firms have benefited from the rise in foreign investment. They have entered into partnerships with major IT giants like IBM to transform their business.

Kuwait's revenue from ICT has also soared beyond \$ 28 billion it had earned between 2012-2015.

Legislation on bankruptcy, transparency, public tenders, competitions and commercial licenses is expected to boost trade and attract private investment.