

India-Kuwait Bilateral Relations

India and Kuwait enjoy longstanding friendly relations bolstered by historical and people to people links. Till the discovery and development of oil, Kuwait's economy revolved around maritime activities which included ship building, pearl diving, fishing and voyages to India on wooden dhows carrying dates, Arabian horses and pearls that were traded for wood, cereals, clothes and spices. Until 1961, Indian Rupee was legal tender in Kuwait.

2. India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Kuwait following its independence from British Protectorate in 1961. Prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations, India was represented by a Trade Commissioner in Kuwait.

3. The relationship was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership' during the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December 2024.

High Level visits:

4. The following high- level visits have taken place between India and Kuwait:

- (i) Head of State/ Government (HOS/ HOG) visits from India to Kuwait include Vice President Dr. Zakir Husain (1965), Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi (1981) and Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari (2009). Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Kuwait on 21-22 December 2024.
- (ii) HoS/ HoG visits from Kuwait to India were by Crown Prince and Prime Minister H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah (1964); Amir H.H. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (1980) and again in 1983 (for the NAM Summit); Amir H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (2006); Prime Minister H.H. Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (2013), Amir H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jabar Al Sabah on a private visit (2017).
- (iii) The Ministerial visits from India to Kuwait in the last few years include that by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar on 08 July 2026, 18 August 2024 and June 2021; Minister of State of External Affairs Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh on 13 June 2024; Minister of Oil and Natural Gas of India Shri Hardeep Singh Puri on 17 December 2023 to convey condolences on the demise of the late Amir H.H. Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; Minister of State of External Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan in August 2023; Minister of Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, in October 2020; Minister of State of External Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan in September 2019 and EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj in October 2018. An all-Party delegation from India,

led by MP Shri Bajjayant Jay Panda visited Kuwait on 26-27 May 2025 in the wake of Op Sindoor.

- (iv) Ministerial visits from Kuwait to India in the last few years include that of H.E. Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs (December 2024), Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs (March 2021) and H.E. Hend Barak Al Sabeeh, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare (October 2018).
- (v) **Telecons:** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held a telecon with Kuwait's Amir H.H. Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah on 9 June 2026. Prime Minister also held telecons with the Crown Prince H.H. Sheikh Sabah AlKhaled Al-Sabah Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on 3 and 18 March 2026 to discuss regional developments in the wake of the US- Iran conflict. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had telecons with Kuwait's Foreign Minister, H.E. Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on 28 February 2026 and 13 April 2026.

Bilateral Agreements / MoUs:

5. Around 30 bilateral agreements / MoUs have been signed in diverse areas. During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December 2024, the MoU on Cooperation in the field of Defence, Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 2025-2029 and Executive Programme for Cooperation in the Field of Sports (2025-2028) were signed. Kuwait signed the Treaty of International Solar Alliance (ISA) in Dec 2024 and ratified the agreement in May 2025. An MoU between Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) of India and Kuwait was signed on 08 July 2025 and an MoU on Civil Aviation was signed on 15 July 2025.

Bilateral Mechanisms :

6. **Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC):** During the visit of Foreign Minister of Kuwait to India in December 2024, the Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Joint Committee for Cooperation (JCC) at the level of Foreign Ministers was signed. Under the JCC, 7 new Joint Working Groups (JWGs) were setup in areas of trade, investments, education and skill development, science and technology, security and counter-terrorism, agriculture and food-security, and culture, in addition to the existing 3 JWGs on Health, Manpower and Hydrocarbons.

7. **Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs):** Seven rounds of FoCs have been held so far, the last being held in New Delhi on 26 August 2025.

8. **Cooperation during COVID-19 pandemic:** India and Kuwait demonstrated a shared sense of solidarity during the Covid-19 pandemic. An Indian medical team visited Kuwait in April 2020. A consignment of 2,00,000 doses of Covishield vaccines was supplied to Kuwait in

February 2021. From the Kuwait side, during the Second wave of COVID-19 in India, an Air/Sea bridge was established to carry medical supplies from Kuwait to India. Kuwait sent a special aircraft with 282 oxygen cylinders, 60 oxygen concentrators, ventilators and other medical supplies onboard on 04 May 2021, followed by Indian Naval Ships, INS Kolkata, INS Kochi, INS Tarkash, INS Tabar & INS Shardul carrying liquid medical oxygen in ISO tanks, Oxygen cylinders, concentrators & other medical supplies to India. The Indian community in Kuwait contributed to the efforts. Over 425 metric tons of liquid medical oxygen, over 12,500 oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators, ventilators and other medical equipment was sent from Kuwait to India during the month and half long operation. Under the Vande Bharat Mission (VBM), travel of around 2,20,000 Indians was facilitated from Kuwait.

Trade and Commerce :

9. **Bilateral Trade:** India has consistently been among the top trading partners of Kuwait. Total bilateral trade with Kuwait during FY 2025 -26 amounted to USD 9.57 billion, of which Indian exports was USD 1.65 billion, with top five export items being cereals, jewellery, vehicles, electrical equipment and machinery. During FY 2025-26, Kuwait accounted for about 3.5 % of India's total energy needs, ranking as India's 6th largest Crude supplier and 4th largest LPG source.

10. A number of Indian public and private sector companies are present in Kuwait. Indian PSUs, TCIL, New India Assurance, LIC, Oriental Insurance, have offices in Kuwait, while EIL (Engineers India Ltd.) is executing contracts in Kuwait. Leading Indian private sector companies including L&T, Kalpataru Power Transmission Limited, Megha Engineering (MEIL), Afcons, KEC International, TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Eicher Motors, Tata Motors, as well as Air India Express, IndiGo, and Akasa Air are present in Kuwait.

11. **Investments:** Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), and other Finance and Business Houses of Kuwait have invested in capital markets in India. Kuwaiti investments in India include Kirby Industries of the Alghanim Group, logistics and warehousing by Agility group, hospitality industry by Asiya Group.

12. **Cultural cooperation :** India-Kuwait relationship has been anchored in and nurtured by close cultural contacts and people to people linkages. 'Bharat Mela', a cultural fest was organized by the Embassy in 2025 and 2026, featuring cultural performances and a diverse range of food and handicraft stalls. The 2026 edition featured performances by over 700 artists and witnessed enthusiastic public participation, attracting more than 50,000 visitors. A weekly Hindi radio program 'Namaste Kuwait' was started by Kuwait National Radio in April 2024. This was featured in PM's Mann Ki Baat episode on 30 June 2024. The translation of abridged versions of Ramayana and Mahabharata into Arabic by Kuwaiti nationals Abdullah

Al-Baroun and Abdullateef Al-Nisf was highlighted in PM's Mann Ki Baat episode on 27 October 2024. Padma Shri award was conferred for the first time to a Kuwaiti National, Sheikha Shaikha A J Sabah, a royal family member, for her efforts in promoting yoga in Kuwait in 2025.

13. **Education:** There are 25 Schools in Kuwait following CBSE curriculum with over 50,000 students, mainly Indian nationals. 'India Corners' have been setup in Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST), Kuwait Technical College and Kuwait College of Science and Technology, American University of Kuwait (AUK) and in Canadian College of Kuwait.

14. **Indian community:** Indian nationals comprise the largest expatriate community in Kuwait (1.05 million of 5.4 million). The Indian community has made significant contributions to Kuwait across sectors such as healthcare, engineering, architecture, education, business and other professional sectors. Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award recipients from Kuwait are Dr. Mariam Chisti in 2004, for her contribution to public health and healthcare; the Indian Doctors Forum, Kuwait in 2013 for its contribution to community service, healthcare awareness and humanitarian initiatives; and Shri Rajpal Tyagi in 2019 for his contributions to architecture and community engagement.

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