

Kuwait National Day

Plan seeks multifaceted growth

Abdul-Rahman Humood
Al-Otaibi
AMBASSADOR OF KUWAIT

On behalf of the government, leaders, people of the State of Kuwait and myself I am honored to extend my sincere wishes of longevity and bliss to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and to every member of the honorable Imperial family. I am also pleased to express my heartfelt appreciation to the government and people of Japan for the efforts and initiatives made throughout our mutual history that have resulted in today's deep relations of friendship that bind our countries.

It is my honor to offer my sincere and heartfelt congratulations and best wishes of good health, bliss, and longevity to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the people of Ku-

wait further progress and prosperity.

These two occasions were a turning point in Kuwait's journey from a small trading outpost when it was first established well over 300 years ago in 1613, to today's progressive dynamic modern state that nevertheless remains faithful to the roots and traditions it was built on.

Benefiting from its strategic location at the head of the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait played a pivotal role on the major trade routes of the old world, and archeological evidence found the oldest seafaring boats in the world to be originating from this country, placing Kuwaitis among the first seafarers and maritime traders.

These geographical and anthropological characteristics shaped Kuwait's society from the very beginning. A society built on freedom of expression, openness, fairness, mutual respect and — most importantly — a society that upholds its time-honored tradition of consensus politics and open discussions, which became the pillars of Kuwait's constitutional and thriving democracy.

Building on these strengths,



Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Kuwait has committed itself to pursuing a foreign policy based on calm diplomacy to build relations of friendship and mutual respect with all nations around the globe, while emphasizing the importance of conflict resolution through dialogue, the end of wars, the eradication of poverty and the contribution to international peace. Kuwait, therefore, acceded to all major international organizations, including the U.N., Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as their respective specialized agencies, while exerting every effort to support and sustain humanitarian work around the globe.

As recognition of Kuwait's international stance and contributions, several countries stood for Kuwait's right and fought for its liberation following the brutal Iraqi invasion in 1990. Japan stood by Kuwait through its supportive and unwavering stance from the beginning of the invasion to liberation. This will always be engraved in the hearts and minds of every Kuwaiti.

In terms of the economy, being home to 6 percent of the world's known oil reserves, and even though the hydrocarbon industry has been naturally the driving force behind Kuwait's economy, many in-

dustries are thriving, from daily necessities to cutting-edge construction and engineering. However, the ultimate challenge facing this nation today is the diversification of the economy to build a more sustainable and environmentally friendly economic system that would protect future generations against market shocks and geopolitical changes.

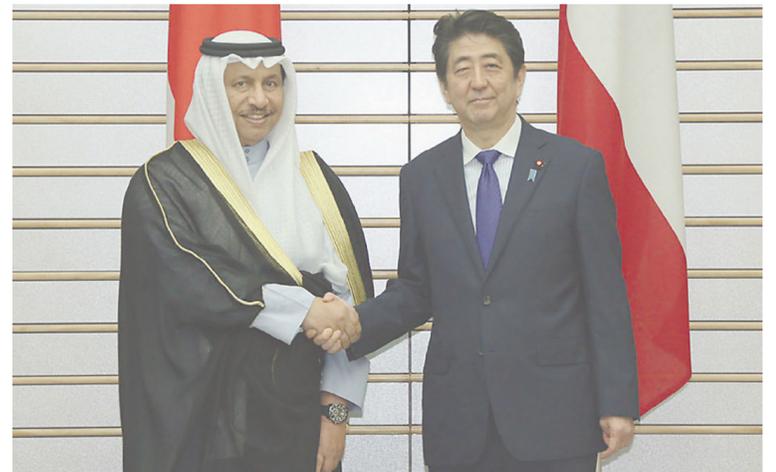
Therefore, in keeping with Kuwait's history of open trade and commerce, and to cater to the demands of a new economic environment, the government formulated "Kuwait vision 2035" that articulates His Highness' aspirations to "transform Kuwait into a world-class financial and commercial center, with the private sector leading economic activities, fostering competitiveness and increasing productivity supported by viable public institutions."

To this end, the government launched a comprehensive National Development Plan that mobilizes unified efforts across seven pillars. These pillars include developing and modernizing infrastructure with an 11 percent increase in investment; reforming the education system by creating 13 new universities and increasing student capacity by 40,000; and reforming administrative and bureaucratic practices to

reinforce transparency, accountability and efficiency in government. Additionally, the plan calls for improving service quality in public healthcare and developing national capabilities; developing a diversified economy to reduce the country's dependence on oil revenues, while facilitating the creation of 3,500 new small and medium-sized enterprises. The plan also aims to ensure the availability of living accommodation through environmentally sound resources and tactics by raising the share of renewable energy to 15 percent of Kuwait's overall energy production. Finally, the plan calls for the enhancement of Kuwait's regional and global presence in areas such as diplomacy, trade, culture and, in particular, philanthropy by raising its global humanitarian assistance to 1.5 percent of its gross national product.

In practical terms, Kuwait launched the first mid-range phase of the plan (2010-2014) with a total investment of around \$107 billion over four years. The second mid-range phase (2015-2020) allocates around \$103 billion worth of investments over the five-year period, with a focus on 30 strategic projects in 9 crucial sectors. These sectors are the North Zone Development; electricity and water; oil and gas; urban development; education; health; transport and communications; tourism and media; and the environment. Its main goals include increasing the share of the private sector from 26.4 percent to 41.9 percent of the gross domestic product, the share of the non-oil sector from 45.1 percent to 64 percent of GDP, the share of Kuwaitis in the private workforce from 6.8 percent to 8.2 percent and the share of research and development from 0.1 percent to 1 percent of GDP.

Through the implementation of government stimulus measures, Kuwait's infrastructure expansion is expected to be carried out strongly in the coming years. The private sector and foreign investors are set to play an important role in this



Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah shakes hands with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on May 12. CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

expansion, making the ultimate use of Kuwait's entrepreneurship and cutting-edge innovation.

At the heart of the country's development plans, and as part of its progressive approach to economic diversification, there are many programs targeted at Kuwait's greatest assets — youth and women — who are the key to the country's future. The youth of Kuwait make up around 40 percent of the population and are the driving force behind the economy, while women have been at the forefront of Kuwait's business and social landscape. In addition to being ranked first among Arab countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report, Kuwait has been witnessing an extraordinary surge in the number of women assuming leadership roles. In the five years to 2012, of the 125 development projects funded by the government, over 50 percent were owned and run by women.

Besides these ambitious strategies, numerous features make Kuwait today an attractive investment destination. Its sound macroeconomic conditions are reflected in a moderate, but sustainable economic growth, financial stability and curtailed inflationary pressures. Kuwait's per capita GDP classifies it within the group of very high-income countries. Furthermore, according to the

U.N. Development Programme classification, Kuwait belongs to the very high human development group with a human development index of 48. The banking and financial system in Kuwait follows a rigorous monetary policy and prudent oversight. In terms of sovereign rating, Kuwait has an investor-grade credit rating by major credit rating agencies such as AA (S&P), Aa2 (Moody's) and AA (Fitch). In addition to being a member of the World Trade Organization, the GCC and the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, Kuwait has entered into bilateral treaties for protecting and encouraging investments and avoiding double taxation with over 80 countries.

Kuwait also adopted a host of economic laws conducive to the investment climate, including those pertaining to new corporate taxes, encouraging competition, protecting consumers, intellectual property, copyrights, public tendering, the promotion of direct investments, privatization programs and public-private partnerships. Moreover, to promote inbound foreign direct investment, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority was established as one of the economic implementing arms of the country. It is mandated with attracting value-added direct investment into Kuwait, receiving applications for investment licensing and granting incentives, servicing investors, streamlining the business environment and enhancing Kuwait's competitiveness.

Furthermore, blessed with an abundant wealth, the State of Kuwait committed itself to the humanitarian obligation of helping other nations and established the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Development, a few months after it gained independence, to extend soft loans to finance development projects in emerging nations. The fund also provides for technical assistance and training. Since its inception, the fund provided 928 soft loans worth \$19.7 billion to 106 countries. Through the fund, Kuwait maintains a high foreign assistance ratio as a percentage of GNP and easily surpasses the U.N. target for development assistance set at 0.7 percent of GNP.

The anniversary of independence also marked the historical outset of Kuwait's long-standing and comprehensive relationship with Japan, which was among the first countries to recognize Kuwait as an independent state, even though trade between our

countries started well before the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1961 and has been growing continuously year on year. Today, our comprehensive partnership operates at many levels and in many areas, including in trade, infrastructure development, technical training, scientific research and people-to-people exchanges. Bilateral trade has been continually increasing and reached ¥645.3 billion in 2016. Japan has been one of Kuwait's main trading partners, and while Kuwait has been Japan's fourth-largest source of crude oil, Japan has been our country's second-largest source of total foreign direct investment during the past decade.

The convergence of perspectives between both countries on numerous international and humanitarian matters of great concern constitutes the pillar of our sustainable relationship of cooperation on various matters and issues of common interest. High-level mutual visits by political leaders, parliamentarians and officials from many sectors, in parallel with the close exchanges between businesspeople have been also furthering this relationship.

Additionally, our countries have endeavored to strengthen their cooperation through bilateral agreements and memoranda that would pave the way for further development of the economic relations between both sides and facilitate the exchange of investments, thus benefiting our peoples on a multitude of levels. Among those agreements are the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion; Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments; Memorandum of Cooperation on the National Development of Kuwait; as well as memoranda on cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, transportation, electricity and water among others.

There is nothing to doubt that the coming years will, in much the same way, bring further rapprochement between Kuwait and Japan. And while our countries share similar ideals and objectives based on peace, democracy, and rule of law, further development of this partnership on the basis of those ideals and values will be instrumental in terms of promoting and sustaining international peace and prosperity and in meeting the paramount challenges that today's world is facing.



Kuwait City at twilight EMBASSY OF KUWAIT

Heartiest Greetings and Congratulations to the State of Kuwait on the Occasion of the 56th Anniversary of National Day and the 26th Anniversary of Liberation Day



CEO PAK JAPAN GROUP OF COMPANIES
CHAUDHRY ASIF MAHMOOD WITH
GEN. RAHEEL SHARIF,
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Kuwait
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Kuwait Fund for helping the world.

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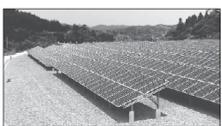
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WE EXTEND OUR CORDIAL FELICITATIONS
TO THE AMIR AND THE PEOPLE OF
THE STATE OF KUWAIT
ON THIS AUSPICIOUS OCCASION
WISHING FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF
FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN KUWAIT AND JAPAN



JAPAN-KUWAIT SOCIETY

Chairman: Yasushi Kimura

Kuwait National Day

Strong, mutual support in difficult times

Yasushi Kimura
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-KUWAIT SOCIETY

On the auspicious occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the National Day of the State of Kuwait, I am pleased to offer on behalf of the members of the Japan-Kuwait Society, our sincerest greetings and congratulations to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah; and His Excellency the Ambassador of Kuwait to Japan Abdul-Rahman Al-Otaibi, as well as to the friendly people of Kuwait.



Japan and Kuwait have built a friendly relationship since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1961. Today, Japan is Kuwait's primary export partner for oil, as well as an important import partner for automobiles, machinery, manufactured goods and other products. In addition to these economic ties, the two countries have increased cooperation in many fields such as culture, scientific technology, energy saving, medical care and environmental protection.

Japan's contribution to Kuwait in the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1990 and the post-war reconstruction, and Kuwait's support to Japan by donating 5 million barrels of crude oil after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 show the truly friendly relations of two countries that are willing to support each other in difficult times.

The ties between the two countries were reinforced by His Highness the Amir's visit in 2012 as a state guest of Japan, the visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Kuwait in 2013 and the visit of Kuwait's prime minister to Japan in May.

The prime minister's official visit last year marks the third following those in 2004 and 2009 when he was deputy prime minister, as well as defense minister. During his visit, he had an audience with His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito and a discussion with Abe, affirming the promotion and extension of cooperation

under a comprehensive partnership. A Kuwait-Japan business seminar and round-table meeting was also held during his visit. At the conference, Kuwait announced the complete annulment of the offset program that had long been a major hindrance to foreign investors. With this key improvement in the investment environment, Kuwait expressed great expectations for Japanese companies participation in the new five-year development plan that envisages huge infrastructure projects in electricity, water, public transportation system and more. As a result, economic and industrial cooperation between the two countries is expected to expand.

Looking at cultural exchange, interest in Japanese culture and tradition has been growing among people in Kuwait, thanks to the active efforts of the Japanese embassy. Young Kuwaitis wanting to learn Japanese have apparently been increasing due to the popularity of Japanese comics and anime. The University of Kuwait is making every effort at teaching Japanese, as can be seen by the free Japanese courses sponsored by a Japanese company. In Japan, the Kuwait embassy is actively promoting exchanges with elementary and secondary school students, introducing them to life in Kuwait; the culture, history and the Arabic language. The fact that the numbers of young people in our two nations with interest in each other's culture and language are increasing is encouraging in the efforts for further understanding between Japan and Kuwait.

Since its establishment in 1965, the Japan-Kuwait Society has been working on various cultural exchange programs, including Arabic language courses, to enhance the understanding among people in Japan about Islam and Arabic culture and foster friendship between the two countries. We at the society will continue these activities that help build stronger mutual understanding and friendship.

Last, but not least, I would like to offer my sincerest appreciation to Kuwait's ambassador for his amazingly powerful efforts for enhancing friendly relations between our two countries. Hoping that our excellent relations further develop, I pray for the prosperity and progress of Kuwait and its peace-loving people.

Unshakable bonds of friendship

Yuriko Koike
GOVERNOR OF TOKYO AND FORMER
CHAIRPERSON OF THE JAPAN-KUWAIT
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



As governor of Tokyo and former chairperson of the Japan-Kuwait Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the National Day of the State of Kuwait.

Japan and Kuwait have maintained friendly relations built around the economic sphere since Japan's endorsement of the Middle Eastern country's independence and establishment of diplomatic ties in 1961. I can say that our bilateral ties have developed further in recent years through enhanced exchanges in various areas, including the economy, culture, health care and energy.

It is especially worth mentioning that Kuwait promptly offered a great deal of reconstruction aid following the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. Soon after the disaster, the Kuwait government decided to provide 5 million barrels of crude oil, worth ¥40 billion at the time, free of charge, followed by additional



Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike poses with Ambassador of Kuwait Abdul-Rahman Al-Otaibi and Kamaishi Elementary School children in front of a Sanriku Railway train, which was introduced thanks to Kuwait's funding, on Feb. 17 in Kamaishi, Iwate Prefecture. TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

donations of \$3 million to the tsunami-hit Aquamarine Fukushima in Iwaki and \$2 million to the Japanese Red Cross Society. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced the two monetary donations during his state visit to Japan in 2012.

The Sanriku Railway's South Rias Line, which runs along the Pacific coast in Iwate Prefecture, was severely damaged by tsunami following the March 11, 2011, earthquake. However, the line was able to resume operations with the introduction of new trains thanks to funding from Kuwait. The newly built trains were emblazoned with the national emblem of Kuwait on their fronts and backs and the cars featured words of ap-

preciation to Kuwait on their sides in Arabic, English and Japanese. During my visit to Iwate Prefecture to encourage disaster-hit areas on Feb. 17, I went to Kamaishi with Ambassador Abdul-Rahman Al-Otaibi to see the trains.

Japan has received warm assistance from many countries, including Kuwait, in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake. I'd like to express our gratitude to the whole world at the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, which are celebrations of peace.

In closing, I wish for further development of our friendly bilateral ties, as well as the continued prosperity of the State of Kuwait and happiness for its people.



Kuwait Towers EMBASSY OF KUWAIT

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Mitsubishi Corporation



Heartiest Greetings and Congratulations
to
H.H. The Amir,
H.H. The Crown Prince,
H.E. The Prime Minister
and The People of The State of Kuwait

On the Occasion of the
56th National Day of Kuwait, and
26th Anniversary of Liberation



**Kuwait Petroleum Corporation
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