

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCIS, Kolkata.

India-Kuwait Bilateral Relations

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Embassy Profile Report for 21.01.2026 depicting the Embassy of Kuwait.
2. India and Kuwait traditionally enjoy friendly relations, which are rooted in history and have stood the test of time. India has been a natural trading partner of Kuwait and until 1961, Indian Rupee was a legal tender in Kuwait. Till the discovery and development of oil, Kuwait's economy revolved around its fine harbour and 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. The year 2021-22 marked 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between two countries. The relationship was upgraded to a '**Strategic Partnership**' during the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Kuwait on 21-22 December 2024.

Political Relations:

3. The Ministerial visits from India to Kuwait in the last few years include that of the visit of Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar on 18th August 2024; Minister of State of External Affairs Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh on 13 June 2024 in the wake of tragic Mangaf fire incident; Minister of Oil and Natural Gas of India (MoPNG) Shri Hardeep Singh Puri on 17 December 2023 to convey condolences on the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; Minister of State of External Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan in August 2023; EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar's visit in June 2021; 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 Baijayant Jay Panda visited Kuwait on 26-27 May 2025 to emphasize India's strong stance against terrorism in wake of Operation Sindoor.
4. The Ministerial visits from Kuwait to India in the last few years include that of Abdullah Al-Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 3-4 December 2024, Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs in March 2021; Hend Barak Al Sabeeh, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare in October 2018 and Chief of Staff of Armed Forces Lt. General Mohd. Al Khoder in September 2017.

High-level Meetings on side lines of Multilateral Forums:

5. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al- Khaled Al-Sabah Al-

Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on the sidelines of UNGA in New York on 22 September 2024. EAM Dr S. Jaishanakar met Foreign Minister of Kuwait in Riyadh on 9 September 2024 on the sidelines of India-GCC Strategic Dialogue. Minister of Oil and Natural Gas of India (MoPNG) Shri Hardeep Singh Puri met Minister of Oil, Kuwait Mr. Tareq Sulaiman Al-Roumi on the sidelines of the 9th OPEC International Seminar in Vienna on 09 July 2025.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

6. Bilateral Trade: India has consistently been among the top trading partners of Kuwait. Total bilateral trade with Kuwait during FY 2024-25 amounted to USD 10.22 billion, of which Indian Exports was USD 1.93 billion, with top Five export items being Aircrafts & parts, Cereals, Organic Chemicals, Electrical equipment & machinery, and Jewellery & precious stones. During FY 2024-25, Kuwait accounted for about 3.5% of India's total energy needs in FY 2024-25, ranking as India's 6th largest Crude supplier and 5th largest LPG source. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2021-22 to 2025-26 are as under:

The Export-Import statistics from 2021-22 to 2025-26

(USD Billion)			
Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2021-22	12.24	11.00	1.24
2022-23	13.81	12.25	1.56
2023-24	10.46	8.36	2.10
2024-25	10.22	8.29	1.93
2025-26 (up to Nov'25)	11.16	10.07	1.09

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

7. A number of Indian public and private sector companies are present in Kuwait. Indian PSUs viz. TCIL, New India Assurance, LIC, Oriental Insurance have offices in Kuwait in association with local sponsors. Some of the reputed Indian private sector companies such as Tata group of companies like Air India, Tata Motors, TCS; L&T, Shapoorji Pallonji, Kalpataru, KEC, WIPRO, Ashok Leyland etc. are also present in Kuwait with local tie-ups.

8. **Investments:** Investments in India are being made by Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), and other Finance and Business Houses in capital markets. Some of the FDI investments from Kuwait in India are in Kirby Industries by Al Ghanim group, logistics and warehousing by Agility group, hospitality industry by Asiya Group etc.

9. **Bilateral Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement (BIPPA)** was signed with Kuwait with the initial tenure of 15 years, came into force on 28 June 2003 and expired on 27 June 2018. Two rounds of negotiations for the new BIT have taken place, with the 2nd round having been held on 1-3 July 2025 virtually.

C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation :

Bilateral Agreements /MoUs:

➤ Around 30 bilateral agreements / MoUs have been signed between both sides in various domains. During the visit of Prime Minister to Kuwait, 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 also signed the Treaty of International Solar Alliance (ISA) in Dec 2024 and ratified the agreement in May 2025. Recently, 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

➤ **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. It has subsumed the previous **Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC)**. Under the newly formed JCC, 7 new Joint Working Groups (JWGs) are being set-up 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. 1st meeting of JWG on Investment Cooperation held on 23rd September 2025 through online mode. 1st meeting of JWG on Trade & Commerce held on 23rd October 2025 through online mode.

➤ **Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs):** Seven rounds of FoCs have been held so far in 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2023 and 2024. The latest 7th round of FoC was held in New Delhi on 26 August 2025.

➤ **Hydrocarbon sector:** Kuwait remains a reliable supplier of crude oil & LPG to India. The Joint Working Group (JWG) on Hydrocarbons has been meeting regularly. The 7th India-Kuwait Joint Working Group (JWG) on Hydrocarbons was held on 10 December 2024 in New Delhi.

➤ **Medical cooperation:** India and Kuwait signed an MOU on Medical Cooperation on 23 April 2012 at New Delhi. A Joint Working Group on Medical Cooperation (JWG) was set up and its first meeting was held in Kuwait in November 2013. The 2nd Meeting of JWG on Medical Cooperation was held virtually on 31 August 2021. A preparatory meeting of the JWG was held virtually on 21 July 2025.

➤ **Manpower cooperation:** Indians are the largest expatriate community in Kuwait (approximately 1 million), including in private and domestic sectors of Kuwait. There is an existing mechanism of a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Labour, Employment and Manpower Development to discuss these issues, which has been meeting regularly. The 7th JWG meeting was held virtually in 2021. An MoU for 'Cooperation in the Recruitment of Domestic Workers' was

signed in 2021.

➤ **Science & Technology:** A number of agreements and MoUs have been signed between India and Kuwait, including an S&T Agreement in April 2009, programme of cooperation between Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and DST, MoU between KISR and CSIR etc. Director General of KISR led a two-member delegation to India in October 2019 and held fruitful discussions with various research institutions, including ISRO, CSIR, and IISC.

➤ **Civil Aviation:** Both Indian and Kuwaiti carriers fly on multiple sectors between India and Kuwait. From Indian side, Indigo, Air India Express and Akasa operates flight between India and Kuwait. From the Kuwaiti side, Kuwait airlines and Jazeera operates flights whereas. There are multiple ports of call in India (Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Goa, Kochi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai). The bilateral civil aviation consultations between both sides were held on 15 July 2025 in New Delhi.

Cultural Relations:

➤ Historically, India-Kuwait relationship has been anchored in and nurtured by close cultural contacts and people to people linkages. The Embassy has been promoting Indian culture and heritage through various programs and initiatives. During the year 2021-22, Embassy celebrated the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kuwait by organizing over 200 cultural programmes, including events like ‘Splendors of India’ and ‘Namaste Kuwait’. A ‘Festival of India’ under the aegis of Ministry of Culture was held in Kuwait in March 2023. The Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2025-29 was signed in December 2024. An exhibition on ‘250 years of India- Kuwait Partnership’ showcasing rare manuscripts, photos of leaders, books printed in India, Indian rupees and coins used in Kuwait etc was organized by the Embassy in association with National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) in May 2025 at the National Library. The 11th International Day of Yoga (IDY) was held on a large scale in a public place for the first time in 2025 in Salmiya Boulevard grounds with participation of over 1500 people of different nationalities.

➤ Government of India conferred the prestigious Padma Shri award to Sheikha Shaikha AJ Sabah, a royal family member, for the first time to a Kuwaiti national, for her efforts in promoting yoga in Kuwait. A weekly Hindi radio program ‘Namaste Kuwait’ has been started by Kuwait National Radio since April 2024. This also 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. Some Indian movies are released in theaters in Kuwait as well.

➤ **Education:** There are 26 Schools in Kuwait following CBSE curriculum with over 60,000 students, mainly Indians and some Arab and South Asian expats as well. There are not many Indian students pursuing higher education in Kuwait. Similarly, there are few Kuwaiti students in Indian Universities. ‘India Corners’ have been setup in Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST), Kuwait Technical College and Kuwait College of Science and Technology in 2024 and in American University of Kuwait (AUK) in 2025. An MoU on establishment of ‘Hindi Chair’ was signed between ICCR and GUST on 12 September 2024, following which, an Indian Professor has

been selected to teach Hindi in GUST University from 2025 academic year.

Consular Relations:

➤ The Indian community with a strength of over 1 million is the largest expatriate community in Kuwait and is regarded as the community of first preference among the expatriate communities. Professionals like engineers, doctors, chartered accountants, scientists, software experts, management consultants, architects; technicians and nurses; retail traders and businessmen are present in Kuwait, though a large proportion consists of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The Indian Business Community in Kuwait has carved a niche in the Kuwaiti market in retail as well as distributorship. There are over 200 Indian associations registered with the Embassy. These associations organize regularly socio-cultural programmes and humanitarian activities.

Source: www.mea.gov.in