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1. Country Brief: About Bahrain

Bahrain is a kingdom that consists of 33 islands with an area of 707 sq. kilometers. It is situated in the middle of the Arabian Gulf close to the east coast of Saudi Arabia. Bahrain's local time is three hours ahead of Greenwich meantime. The Kingdom derives its name from Bahrain which is the biggest island with an area of 586.5 sq. kilometers.

It is linked by a causeway to the island of Muharraq where Bahrain International Airport is situated. Another causeway links Bahrain to Sitra which has a vast industrial area where the crude oil tank farm is situated. The Kingdom of Bahrain gives the impression that it is a magnificent cosmopolitan community where eastern and western cultures flourish with high rise buildings rub shoulders with traditional houses and archaeological sites thriving side by side with modern lifestyles.

Bahrain's 600,000 population comprises a high proportion of expatriates from various corners of the globe. Bahraini citizens and foreigners co-exist in peace and interact in a rare atmosphere of friendship. These qualities have given rise to the growth of a vast network of luxury hotels, apartment block accommodation and restaurants that serve the increasing number of tourists who visit the country from neighbouring Gulf states and other parts of the world.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has a rich history since ancient times. Ancient civilizations have only been unearthed recently by archaeologists and history scholars who came to Bahrain from various parts of the world. Tens of thousands of years ago, Bedouins used to cross the Bahrain desert, a fact proved by the basalt stone that used to be used for payment of taxes. Modern excavations have shown that the Kingdom of Bahrain was in fact the home of the lost Dilmun civilization that dates back to the third millennium before the birth of Christ. This land was described as the legendary gardens of Eden and was labeled as the "Paradise" in the epic of Gilgamesh. In addition, the land of Dilmun was frequently mentioned in the Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian manuscripts as a vital seaport between Mesopotamia and the Sind Valley due to the availability of sweet water. In the year 600 B.C. Bahrain was annexed to the new Babylonian empire when it prospered once again. In 323 B.C. two of the ships of Alexander the Great arrived in the ports of Bahrain to herald the launch of new trade routes to herald the growth of Greek influence resulting in changing the name from Dilmun to Tylos. In addition, Bahrain is the home of the biggest pre-historic graveyard. At a certain historical era Bahrain had some 170,000 burial mounds that covered the central and western areas of the country. The archaeological excavations provided evidence that there were two important civilizations namely the Dilmun and Tylos civilizations that were separated by 2000 years between the third and first millenniums before the birth of Christ.

Dilmun

Dilmun was often mentioned in the ancient mesmeric tablets that date back to the third millennium before the birth of Christ and were available in Mesopotamia and in the Ibla site in northern Syria. Scholars have sought to locate the land of Dilmun that was described as the land of eternity. It is situated where the sun rises and is located at a distance of 3 hours from Mesopotamia.

Archaeological excavations have proved that Bahrain is Dilmun that is mentioned in the ancient mesmeric plates with its successive historical eras and even a thriving trading centre. It was the land of settlements, towns and villages that thrived with the lives of palaces, mansions, markets, fresh water springs, water canals, sacred temples and thousands of graveyards of different shapes and sizes. The uncovered pottery, stone relics, round seals and other archaeological finds serve to provide evidence of the developed ways of life, advances of industry and commerce and expansion of such activities. Dilmun played the role of a trade centre between the cultures of Mesopotamia, Sind Valley and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula. .

Tylos

Tylos and Aradous are the two names given by the Greeks to the islands of Manama and Muharraq in the third century before the birth of Christ. The Greeks knew this region long before the arrival of Niachos, commander of the campaign sent by Alexander the Great to discover this area. He described as a good island that enjoys natural sea ports and is full of palm groves, pearl fishing and fish stocks. Significant archaeological sites belonging to this era have been discovered to add many new facts through the historical finds in the settlements and graveyards. .

Awal

That was the name given to Bahrain during the pre-Islamic times. The name is linked to a pagan god worshipped by the Wael tribe in Bahrain in the Islamic eras.

The Kingdom of Bahrain embraced Islam when the Prophet's envoy arrived in the island in the year 629 or the seventh Islamic century. The people of Bahrain played a significant role in the Islamic conquests by giving support and assistance to the new armies of the Islamic state with their seafaring skills. Al Khamis Mosque is considered as one of the earliest mosques built in Bahrain. Local narrators say that it was built during the reign of the 8th Omayyad Caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz (99-101 Hijra) (717-720 A.D.). Bahrain continued to play its cultural and economic role throughout the different Islamic eras until it became the target of foreign ambitions.

Map



Fig 1. Map of Bahrain

Society & Culture

Head of the State:	His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
Capital City:	Manama
Religion:	Islam is the official religion of the country.
Official Language:	Arabic is the official language.
Weekend:	Friday and Saturday for government institutions.

2. Oil & Gas Industry Brief

Bahrain reserves are considerably small in comparison its neighbours. Bahrain has oil reserves of 0.125 billion barrels (as of 2009). Gas reserves amount 3.25 billion cubic feet. Oil and gas production respectively are 48520 barrels per day and 4001.1 billion cubic feet (As of 2007). Unlike other GCC countries, Bahrain exports refined petroleum products rather than crude oil.

All of Bahrain's onshore proven oil reserves are located in Awali field, the first oil field to be developed in the Persian Gulf, discovered in 1932. Since 1970's, Awali crude oil production has drastically declined from 75.000 bbd to 35.000 bbd of crude oil.

Besides Awali there have been speculations that Bahrain might have undiscovered oil reserves offshore in the Gulf of Bahrain, including Hawar the islands.

Since 2001 Bahrain has been making these areas available for exploration and potential exploitation offering concessions to foreign investors.

Bahrain's natural gas reserves, 3.25 Tcf, much of it is associated gas from Awali field. Natural gas production and processing are the responsibility of Bapco Upstream. In September 2003, government signed an agreement with Alcoa, allowing the American company to take up to 26% equity stake in the company. Bapco Upstream awarded a contract in June 2004 to US engineering firm Foster Wheeler for upgrading their natural gas processing facility at Awali.

In January 2002, Qatar and Bahrain signed a Memorandum of Agreement indicating Bahrain's intention to purchase natural gas from Qatar's North Field Enhanced Gas Utilisation Project.

Bahrain shares the Abu Saafa field with Saudi Arabia.

Main oil field

Awali

Sector Organisation

National Oil and Gas Authority (NOGA) is the organization responsible for all petroleum and gas related issues in Bahrain.

Source: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bahrain, EIA Country Brief (as of 2009).