

# The Euro Gulf History Portal Timeline

(28 August 2022 Update)



**EGIC**  
Euro-Gulf  
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Centre

## ❖ Pre-Islamic Era

**326-324 BC:** After Alexander the Great's Indian campaign, his admiral Nearchus led an exploration fleet via the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf to the Tigris and Euphrates. Nearchus visited Bahrain (Tylos in Greek), a flourishing commercial island, which was then colonised by the Greeks and Hellenised much like Kuwait (Larissa) and the Failaka Island (Ikaros).

**323 BC, June 11:** Alexander III of Macedon ( Alexander the Great) died in Babylon before a series of planned campaigns into Arabia and his empire was partitioned by his generals in the Wars of the Diadochi. Seleucus conquered the eastern provinces and in 312 BC founded the Seleucid Empire, which at its height stretched from the East Mediterranean and the Levant to Central Asia, the Gulf and South Asia.

## ❖ 7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Century

**624, March 13:** Muhammad ibn Abdullah (Prophet Muhammad) and his Medina-based followers defeated Mecca's ruling Quraysh tribe in the Battle of Badr in today's Saudi Arabia. The subsequent war between the two sides resulted in Muhammad's victory, expansion of Islam and the establishment of the first Caliphate.

**628, April:** In the Battle of Khaybar, the Jewish tribes living in Khaybar near Medina were defeated by the Muslim forces, led by Prophet Muhammad. The Muslims then allowed the Jews to stay in exchange for half of their produce. The agreement served as a precedent for the status of non-Muslims under Muslim rule in Islamic Law.

**632, June 8:** Prophet Mohammed died in Medina and a struggle over the leadership of the umma ensued. The majority believed that Mohammed's followers should choose the successor and selected his close friend Abu Bakr as the first Caliph, while a smaller group believed that Mohammed's cousin Ali should become the leader.

**633, April:** The Rashidun Caliphate defeated the Sassanian Empire in the Battle of Chains near Kazima (today's Kuwait). It was the first direct encounter between the Muslim and Persian armies. The Caliphate further expanded its territory and began the conquest of Iraq and Syria.

**636, August 18:** Khawla bint Al Azwar, celebrated as one of the greatest female soldiers in history for her role in the Muslim conquest of the Levant, led a group of women that defeated the chief commander of the Byzantine army, during the Battle of Yarmouk fought between the Rashidun Caliphate and the Eastern Roman Empire near today's Jordanian-Syrian border.

**711, April 30:** Troops of the Umayyad Caliphate, led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, began the seven-year conquest of Hispania, which ended the Visigothic Kingdom, established Al-Andalus and brought much of the Iberian Peninsula under centuries-long Muslim rule. Tariq and his Berber troops landed at Gibraltar, which was named after him.

**756, May 15:** Abd al-Rahman I, a surviving member of the Umayyad dynasty overthrown by the Abbassids, defeated the last governor of Al-Andalus (now Spain and Portugal) and established the independent Emirate of Cordoba (later Caliphate), which ruled most of the Iberian Peninsula for some three centuries.

**893, mid-May:** The Abbassid Caliphate's army, led by the governor of Al-Bahrain province, Muhammad ibn Nur, conquered the first Ibadi Imamate of Oman with the capture of the Imamate's capital, Nizwa, and the killing of Imam Azzan ibn Tamim Al Kharusi. The Abbasids invaded Oman upon an invitation from the Nizaris who were in civil war with Al Azd and allies.

**1193, March 4:** Saladin, the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and the first Sultan of Egypt and Syria, who abolished the Fatimid Caliphate and fought against the Crusaders, died. His Sultanate encompassed the Hejaz with Mecca and Medina and he was the first ruler titled the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

**1258, January 29:** Mongols, led by Hulagu Khan, besieged and later plundered Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, and killed its last Caliph Al-Musta'sim, making it part of the Mongol Empire's Ilkhanate, also known as Iranzamin. As a result, the Egypt-based Mamluk Sultanate's influence over the Hejaz and the Holy Places grew.

## ❖ 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century

**1453, May 29:** After a two-month siege, the Ottomans under Sultan Mehmed II conquered Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire's capital for over 1,100 years, ending the era of the Eastern Roman Empire. After the fall of Constantinople, the traditional trade routes to the East were blocked for the Europeans and the search for new ways eventually brought the Portuguese to the Gulf.

**1497, July 8:** Vasco Da Gama set sail from Portugal in an effort to find an alternative sea route to Asia after the Ottoman capture of Constantinople cut off the traditional silk and spice links, which brought him to India. It led to the decline of the Venetian Republic and the ascendance of the Portuguese Empire, which began European incursions into the Gulf.

**1515, April 1:** The Portuguese, led by Alfonso de Albuquerque, recovered Hormuz from the Safavid Persia after seven years and established a century long domination over the Gulf's maritime trade routes. Portugal then formed an alliance with Persia against the Ottomans and Oman and assisted the Shah in invading Bahrain and Qatif.

**1515, April 15:** The Omani coast came under the Portuguese Empire's control following the reconquest of Hormuz. The Portuguese later based themselves in Muscat, developing trade in the Gulf and competing with the English and Dutch, until they were ejected from the Omani coast by the Yarubids in 1650.

**1517, January 22:** After the victory over the Safavids and annexation of northern Iraq, the Ottomans continued their expansion under Sultan Selim I and made their first gains in the Arabian Peninsula, defeating the Cairo-based Mamluk Sultanate in the Battle of Ridaniya and incorporating Egypt, the Levant and the Hejaz in western Arabia as Ottoman provinces.

**1552, July:** One of the first major conflicts between the Ottoman and the Portuguese Empires in the Gulf erupted with the Ottoman siege and sacking of Muscat occupied by Portugal since 1507, led by Ahmet Muhiddin Piri (Piri Reis). Piri then attempted to counter the Portuguese influence by seizing the Qishm and Hormuz islands and the Qatari peninsula.

**1555, May 30:** The Ottoman Empire gained access to the Gulf with the signing of the Peace of Amasya that defined its eastern boundary with its rival, Safavid Persia, after a 13-year war and brought large parts of Mesopotamia (Iraq) under its control. It was the first major Ottoman-Persian treaty amid a series of territorial wars in Iraq and the Caucasus, which lasted over four centuries.

**1559, July:** Ottoman forces, led by the governor of Al Hasa, launched their first attempt to capture Bahrain, which was at that time under the control of the Portuguese Empire and was important for its pearl trade and strategic location for reaching Basra and Ottoman trade routes. The unsuccessful Ottoman siege lasted until November and Bahrain remained under Portuguese control until 1602.

## ❖ 17<sup>th</sup> Century

**1602, August:** During the Long Habsburg-Ottoman War over Hungary, Romania and the Balkan Peninsula, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Rudolf II, sent the first legation in history to the Shah of Safavid Persia, Abbas I, who then agreed to form an alliance with the European powers against the Ottoman Empire.

**1622, January 9:** Persia and the English East India Company joined forces to capture Hormuz from the Portuguese that seized it in 1507 and controlled trade in the Gulf. The Persian Shah then allowed the Company to establish an office in Bandar Abbas, thus opening the Gulf trade to the British.

**1622, February 9:** A month after the Anglo-Persian pact, forces of the Safavid Persia supported by the English East India Company launched a three month siege of Hormuz to oust the Portuguese.

**1622, April 23:** Following the weeks-long Anglo-Persian siege of Hormuz, the Portuguese surrendered and retreated to Muscat. Persia restored control over Hormuz after more than 100 years. The Portuguese Empire's power declined and its domination of maritime trade routes between India and Europe was replaced by the English and Dutch.

**1625, February 12:** The battle of three islands, the largest naval battle in the Gulf was fought between the Portuguese forces that sought to reconquer the Hormuz, and allied forces of the Dutch East India Company and English East India Company. It ended with a Persian-Portuguese cease fire.

**1650, January:** The Portuguese were expelled from Muscat by the forces of Yarubid Ibadi Imam, Sultan bin Saif, after almost 150 years. Oman then defeated the Portuguese in East Africa, expanding the Omani Empire and becoming a major Indian Ocean power.

## ❖ 18<sup>th</sup> Century

**1722, May:** Ya'arub bin Bal'arab, who previously deposed elected Ibadi Imam of Oman, Muhanna bin Sultan, and became regent of Saif bin Sultan II, proclaimed himself Imam. Muhanna's supporters revolted and reinstated Saif as Imam with a new regent. The succession struggle and ensuing civil war led to a coast-interior split, Persian invasion, end of Yarubid rule and the ascendancy of the Al Said dynasty in the 1740s.

**1727, February 20:** Muhammad bin Saud Al Muqrin ascended to power in the town of Diriyah in central Arabia after his father, Saud bin Muhammad, died. He founded the First Saudi State that expanded across the Arabian Peninsula until the Ottoman conquest in 1818 and is considered the first ruler of the Al Saud dynasty.

**1749, June 9:** Ahmad bin Said Al Bu Saidi was elected by the Ibadi tribes as an Imam of Oman, becoming the founder and the first Ruler of the Al Said dynasty, which continues to lead Oman until today. Ascending to power during a civil war and Persian occupation, he replaced the Yarubid dynasty, and ruled for nearly four decades.

**1776, April 16:** After a one year siege, the Persians captured the southern Iraqi city of Basra from the Mamluks and the Ottoman Empire amid the Ottoman–Persian wars. Many merchants from Basra fled to Kuwait and Zubarah, contributing to their economic development.

**1783, May 17:** Persian troops, led by Nasr Al-Madhkur, governor of Bahrain and Bushire during the Zand dynasty, attacked Zubarah, prompting a retaliation from the resident Bani Utbah tribe.

**1783, July 28:** The Bani Utbah chiefs of Zubarah, supported by Kuwait and other allies, conquered Bahrain from Persia and expelled Nasr Al Madhkur, the governor of Bushehr and Bahrain under the Zand dynasty. Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Khalifa (Ahmed Al-Fateh), the progenitor of Bahrain's Al Khalifa ruling family, took over Bahrain, marking the beginning of the Al Khalifa ruling family's ascendancy in Bahrain.

**1795, July 18:** Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Khalifa, the progenitor of Bahrain's Al Khalifa ruling family and the first hakim of Bahrain, died. Known also as Ahmed al-Fateh (the Conqueror) for conquering Bahrain in 1783, Bahrain's Grand Mosque is named after him. He lived between Zubarah on the Qatari Peninsula, which was built by his father after he left Kuwait, and Bahrain.

**1798, July 2:** France, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, launched a campaign to conquer Egypt and Syria, which were part of the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon ended the Mamluk rule and established a short-lived French administration in Egypt until his forces' defeat and expulsion from the country by the British and the restoration of Ottoman control in 1801.

## ❖ 19<sup>th</sup> Century

**1802, June:** Forces of the Omani Empire, led by Sultan bin Ahmad Al Busaidi, helped by Persian forces from Bushehr, attacked Bahrain for the second time in less than two years. The second Omani invasion of Bahrain was short-lived as Oman had to withdraw its forces to defend their territory against Saudi incursion. Between 1800 and 1829, Oman tried to invade Bahrain at least four times.

**1806, February 6:** After the first British naval expedition against the Al Qasimi of Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah, the UK and Al Qasimi signed the first peace treaty to cease attacks on maritime shipping that intensified amid the latter's conflict with the British-allied Muscat.

**1807, June 16:** The Omani Empire under Sultan Said bin Sultan restored political and commercial relations with France, signing a Treaty of Amity and Commerce after the 1798 Treaty with the British to exclude the French from trade. It came a month after Napoleon I formalised an alliance with Persia amid the Napoleonic Wars in Europe against Britain, Prussia, Russia, Sweden and others.

**1811, April:** Bahrain's Al Khalifa, assisted by Al Sabah from Kuwait, repulsed the forces of the Emirate of Diriyah, which were commanded by Rahmah bin Jabir Al Jalhami, pirate ruler of Dammam and Khor Hassan, in the Khakeekera naval battle, preventing the invasion of Bahrain.

**1814, May 3:** The third ruler of Kuwait from the Al Sabah dynasty, Jaber bin Abdullah, ascended to power following the death of his father, Abdullah I bin Sabah, and ruled until 1859. He was opposed to the British and aligned with the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, resisting British attempts to turn Kuwait into a protectorate.

**1818, April:** Egyptian forces of Ibrahim Pasha began the siege of Diriyah, the capital of the Emirate of Diriyah (the First Saudi State). The siege, which lasted several months, was part of the Ottoman Empire's Najd campaign against the Al Saud and led to the end of the First Saudi State.

**1816, July 19:** The naval forces of the Sultan of Oman and Zanzibar, Said bin Sultan Bu Said, supported by Persia, sailed towards Bahrain to attack the Al Khalifa for renouncing Omani suzerainty over their territory. However, the Al Khalifa forces repulsed the attempted Omani invasion of Bahrain and killed the Sultan's brother in a battle in Muharraq.

**1819, May:** Abdullah bin Saud Al Saud, the fourth and the last ruler and Imam of the Emirate of Diriyah (the First Saudi State), was executed by the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople.

**1820, February 5:** Rulers of Khatt and Fahlain, Jazirah Al Hamra, Abu Dhabi, Rams and Al Dhayah, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, and later also Bahrain, signed the General Maritime Treaty (dated 5 February) with the British, which sought to end maritime hostilities and protect trade.

**1833, July 9:** The Al Bu Falasah faction, led by Maktoum bin Butti and Obeid bin Said, seceded from the Bani Yas tribe and left Abu Dhabi, settling in a place that would later become Dubai. The two leaders, Maktoum and Obeid, became the first joint rulers of Dubai.

**1839, May 31:** The Sultan of Muscat and its dependencies, Said bin Sultan, and the United Kingdom, represented by the East India Company, signed the Convention of Commerce and Navigation, formalising bilateral trade relations, allowing each other to trade in their respective territories and enjoy privileges of the most favoured nations, and expanding the 1822 anti-slavery treaty.

**1840, late April:** Ahmad bin Na'aman Al Kaabi, envoy of Sultan Said bin Sultan of Oman, Muscat, and Zanzibar, arrived at the port of New York aboard the Sultanah ship carrying goods from Muscat and Zanzibar. It was the first official visit by an Arab emissary to the United States. Lasting several months, it aimed to bolster commercial ties.

**1843, May:** Faisal bin Turki bin Abdullah Al Saud, the deposed second ruler of the Emirate of Nejd (Second Saudi State), was released from Cairo, where he was held for five years for opposing the Ottomans. Faisal, who was allied with the Al Rashid of Hail, then reestablished his rule over the Emirate of Nejd and sought to expand to the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula during his 22-year reign.

**1843, June 1:** The rulers of sheikhdoms on the Arabian southeastern coast and the United Kingdom signed a ten-year maritime truce, which succeeded a series of truces prohibiting any hostilities at sea during pearling seasons renewed annually since May 1835. The crucial maritime security system led the British to refer to the signatories as the 'Trucial States'.

**1844, March 15:** Persian Prime Minister Aghassi used the name "Persian Gulf" to claim sovereignty over the entire Gulf, including all islands under Arab jurisdiction, namely Bahrain. Persia laid over ten claims to Bahrain between 1822-1957 and later seized Emirati islands. Thus, the GCC countries use "Arabian Gulf" and Iran insists on "Persian Gulf".

**1853, May 4:** The British and the Rulers of Ajman, Dubai, Umm Al Quwain, and Chiefs of Joasme (Al Qasimi) and Bani Yas, later collectively known as the Trucial States, signed the Perpetual Maritime Truce. Building on the 1820 General Maritime Treaty and several pearling season truces, it prohibited acts of aggression at sea and all disputes had to be referred to the British for judgement.

**1861, April 6:** The Omani Empire was partitioned into two Sultanates – Zanzibar, and Oman – as the British mediated a succession struggle between the sons of Sultan Said bin Sultan Al Said. The end of the Omani maritime empire boosted British influence in the Indian Ocean and allowed them to eventually extend control over both Sultanates.

**1862, March 10:** Britain and France agreed to respect the independence of Sultan of Zanzibar, Majid bin Said, and Sultan of Muscat and Oman, Thuwaini bin Said, following a power struggle that led to the division of the Omani Empire. Thuwaini initially refused to recognise Majid and planned to retake Zanzibar.

**1865, January 19:** Telegraph Agreements with Sultan of Oman and Muscat allowed the UK to use its territories in Arabia and Mekran to connect the Iraq telegraph line with India via the Gulf. Stations were built at Musandam and Gwadar and a submarine cable ran through Al-Faw, Bushehr, Musandam and Jask.

**1869, May 12:** Forces of Salim and Ibrahim bin Sultan Al Qasimi of Sharjah sent to retake Ras Al Khaimah from Humaid bin Abdullah Al Qasimi, who proclaimed independence from Sharjah, were forced to withdraw by the British political resident, who demanded the restoration of maritime truce. RAK retained independence throughout Humaid's reign (1869-1900).

**1869, June:** The last occupation of the Buraimi Oasis by the Saudi forces in the 19th century ended after the Na'im tribe had expelled them with the help of Azzan bin Qais, Imam of Muscat and Oman. The Saudis continued to claim the area and the territorial dispute culminated in an armed conflict between forces loyal to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Trucial States in the 1950s.

**1871, January 30:** Turki bin Said Al-Busaidi, supported by interior tribes, Dubai, Ajman, Ras Al-Khaimah and the Na'im, led a successful revolt against Imam Azzan bin Qais, who deposed the previous Sultan and established religious rule. After the victory, Turki bin Said became Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

**1871, May 13:** Kuwait's naval forces, led by Abdullah II Al Sabah, landed at Ras Tanura to help the Ottomans conquer the Al Hasa province. Taking advantage of an internal Saudi power struggle in the Emirate of Nejd, the Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha, re-established Ottoman control over Al Hasa. Kuwait's ruler Abdullah II was then named kaymakam (Ottoman provincial governor).

**1872, January:** Qatar became part of the Ottoman Empire as a kaza of the Al-Hasa province after it submitted to the Ottomans in exchange for protection against external attacks and Ottoman forces settled on the peninsula. Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani was later named Qatar's kaymakam (district administrator).

**1882, July 13:** The British Navy bombarded Egypt's Alexandria in an effort to support the Khedive Tewfik Pasha against a nationalist uprising, led by Ahmed Urabi, that sought to depose Tewfik and end Anglo-French influence in the country. It culminated in the Anglo-Egyptian War and decades-long British occupation of Egypt.

**1888, June 4:** Faisal bin Turki Al Said, succeeded his deceased father, Turki bin Said, as Sultan of Muscat and Oman. During his 25-year reign, the European struggle for influence in the Sultanate, which became the



centre of the arms traffic between in the Gulf, continued and a tribal rebellion against the Sultan was brewing.

**1891, January 21:** In the Battle of Mulayda, the Al-Rasheed, allied with the Ottomans and commanded by Muhammad bin Abdullah (Emir of Hail), defeated the Al-Saud, led by Abdulrahman bin Faisal (the last Emir of Nejd and father of the first King of Saudi Arabia). The Second Saudi State ended and the Al-Saud was ousted to Kuwait.

**1892, March 7:** Between 6-8 March, the Trucial States' Rulers signed an Exclusive Agreement with the UK, which competed for influence notably with France and Russia. In exchange for protection, they agreed not to cede territory to and form relations with foreign governments without the British consent.

**1893, March 14:** In the Battle of Al Wajbah, Qatari forces, led by Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani, defeated the Ottomans, who came to punish Jassim for defying the Empire. After the battle, Qatari tribal leaders were freed, the Al Thani pardoned, Basra's governor replaced and the Ottomans retained control.

**1896, May 18:** Mubarak Al-Sabah became the seventh ruler of Kuwait after the killing of his half-brothers, Jarrah and Muhammad Al-Sabah, who held the title of Pasha from the Ottoman Sultan. Mubarak turned away from the Ottoman Empire towards the United Kingdom. Often called Mubarak the Great, he is seen as the founder of modern Kuwait.

**1899, January 23:** Kuwait's ruler Mubarak Al-Sabah signed an agreement with the United Kingdom, promising that Kuwait would not cede territory or receive foreign powers' representatives without the UK's consent in exchange for territorial protection. Kuwait remained a British protectorate until 1961.

## ❖ 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### ▸ Early 1900s

**1900, January:** German official, Herr Stemrich, arrived in Kuwait—with the Ottomans' approval—to select a terminus for the extension of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. Kuwait's ruler, bound by a secret protection treaty with the UK, refused. Tensions with the Ottomans, who viewed Kuwait as part of its Empire, increased.

**1901, March 17:** The Emirate of Hail, led by Abdulaziz bin Mutaib Al Rashid, defeated Kuwait, led by Mubarak Al Sabah, in the Battle of Sarif. It halted Kuwait's offensive in central Arabia and reversed the course of the Kuwaiti-Rashidi war. The Emirate of Hail then sought Ottoman help to invade Kuwait but was forced to retreat.

**1902, January 13:** During the Battle of Riyadh, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud, recaptured Riyadh from the rival Al-Rasheed rulers of the Emirate of Jabal Shammar, loyal to the Ottoman Empire. It marked the beginning of the Third Saudi State.

**1903, January 26:** The first hospital in Bahrain, the Mason Memorial Hospital (later the American Mission Hospital), was opened by the Reformed Church of America and led by doctors Sharon and Marion Thoms. It also served the neighbouring countries without medical facilities.

**1905, February 11:** Britain formalised policy to protect the Arab Gulf pearling industry from foreign rivals, entitling the tribes of the Arabian Coast to the exclusive use of pearl fisheries within the three mile limit. Since 1914, the granting pearling and sponge fishing concessions had to be consulted with the British.

**1908, August 27:** The Ottoman Empire inaugurated the 1,400 km Hejaz Railway linking Damascus and Medina through the Hejaz in today's Saudi Arabia, replacing old camel caravans and shortening the journey from 40 to 5 days. It had a branch line to Haifa on the Mediterranean Sea. During World War I, the railway was used by German forces.

**1909, April 27:** The Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II, the last Ottoman Caliph to hold power over the government, was dethroned by the Young Turks. His reign was marked by decline and fracturing of the Empire. He initiated the Hejaz railway and approved Germany's railway plans to the Gulf.

**1909, May 19:** Zayed bin Khalifa Al Nahyan (Zayed the First), who ruled Abu Dhabi from 1855, died. During his reign, Abu Dhabi expanded its influence and became more prosperous. He was the great-grandfather of the current ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the UAE.

## • 1910s

**1911, August 19:** Russia and Germany signed the Potsdam Agreement in which Germany recognised Russian control in northern Persia, in exchange for Russian acceptance of the Baghdad Railway, which would be connected to Tehran by a Russian-built railway, creating a direct Berlin-Tehran link for trade. This derailed Persia's plans to use Germany to counterbalance the growing British and Russian influence.

**1913, July 17:** Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani became the Ruler of Qatar. During his 36-year-long reign, Qatar became a British protectorate, signed the first oil concession with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, discovered oil, and adopted the maroon-coloured national flag with nine white points, signifying the number of the Trucial Coast emirates, similar to the current flag of Qatar.

**1913, July 29:** The Anglo-Ottoman Convention ("Blue Line") was signed to ensure British dominance in the Gulf amid heightened European competition. It limited Ottoman jurisdiction regarding Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, recognising Kuwait's borders and its autonomous status and allowing the British to police the Gulf waters. Signed shortly before the World War I, the Convention was never ratified.

**1916, May 16:** The United Kingdom and France, in coordination with Russian Empire and Italy, secretly signed the "Sykes-Picot Agreement" dividing the spheres of influence in anticipation of the Ottoman Empire's defeat and partition. Although the agreement partially influenced the post-war creation of borders, it was never fully implemented.

**1916, June 10:** The British-backed "Arab revolt" against the Ottoman Empire during the World War I began in Mecca. The revolt, led by Hussein bin Ali Al-Hashimi, Sharif of Mecca and self-proclaimed King of the Hejaz, spread from the Hejaz to Transjordan, Syria and South Arabia in a bid to expel the Ottomans and create a large independent Arab state.

**1918, January 4:** David Hogarth, Head of the UK Arab Bureau, brought a message to Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, explaining the Balfour Declaration, which contrasted the past British promise of supporting an independent Arab state in exchange for help against the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

**1919, July 4:** Following a key victory in the battle of Turaba against the Hashemite Kingdom of Hejaz, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud of the Emirate of Nejd and Hasa planned to conquer Hejaz but the British deterred him from the campaign. The delicate ceasefire would end five years later with the Saudi conquest of Hejaz and the Hashemites' expulsion.

## • 1920s

**1920, July 3:** The first bank in Bahrain, the British Eastern Bank Limited, was opened to facilitate trade between the British Empire and the Arab Gulf. The first Bahraini-owned bank was opened 37 years later. Since then, Bahrain has emerged as a financial centre, where the banking sector forms an important pillar of Bahrain's economy and its economic diversification plans.

**1921, March 29:** Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah became the 10th ruler of Kuwait, which he led until his death in 1950. During his reign Kuwait discovered and began exporting oil. He was the father of Kuwait's current Emir Nawaf and Crown Prince Mishal, as well as the late Emirs Sabah (2006-2020) and Jaber (1977-2006).

**1920, April 25:** At the post-World War I Conference in San Remo, the Allied Powers partitioned former territories of the Ottoman Empire as mandates. France was assigned Syria (with Lebanon), while Britain got

Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine (later also Transjordan). The redrawing of the borders led to many crises and is vital for understanding the region today.

**1921, June 7:** Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) was officially recognised by the British as a Trucial State independent of Sharjah, ending the Al Qasimi's joint rule over Sharjah and RAK. Sultan bin Salim Al Qasimi became RAK's Ruler (1921-1948).

**1922, February 17:** Ruler of Sharjah, Khaled bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, pledged not to grant oil concessions without consulting the UK if oil would be found in his territory. Similar pledges were later made by Ras Al-Khaimah (22 February), Dubai (2 May), Abu Dhabi (3 May), Ajman (4 May) and Umm Al-Quwain (8 May).

**1923, January 10:** Sultan Taimur bin Faisal (1913–1932) agreed that the Sultanate would not exploit oil or grant concessions for its exploitation without consulting the British Political Agent in Muscat and without the approval of the High Government of India.

**1923, July 24:** The Treaty of Lausanne was signed to replace the Treaty of Sèvres partitioning the Ottoman Empire after the World War I and the Turkish War of Independence. It recognised the Republic of Turkey, which formally ceded control of former Ottoman territories, which included Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen, Asir and parts of Hejaz in the Arabian Peninsula.

**1926, January 8:** Following the seizure of Mecca and the expulsion of Ali bin Hussein, the last Hashemite Sharif of Mecca, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud, the Sultan of Nejd, was crowned King of the Hejaz. A year later, Nejd also became kingdom.

**1926, May 7:** Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Turkey was among the first countries to provide diplomatic recognition to the Kingdom of Hejaz, ruled by Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, and deployed its first three diplomatic representatives to Hejaz, all of whom previously served in the region under the Ottoman Empire.

**1927, May 20:** The Treaty of Jeddah established diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies, and affirmed UK's recognition of the independence of Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud's territories, replacing the 1915 Treaty of Darin. Ibn Saud agreed to maintain peaceful relations with the neighbouring British protectorates.

**1928, January:** Rashid bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi III became the ninth ruler of Ajman, ruling the emirate until his death on 6 September 1981. As one of the founding fathers of the United Arab Emirates, he oversaw Ajman's incorporation into the federation.

**1928, January 18:** The UK refused Persian territorial claim to Bahrain. Persia (later Iran) continued to claim the island state and unilaterally proclaimed Bahrain its 14th province in 1957. The Shah backtracked after the UNSC passed Resolution 278 but post-1979 revolutionary Iran renewed the claim to Bahrain.

**1928, July 31:** After a large oil discovery in Kirkuk, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (predecessor of BP), Royal Dutch/Shell (Shell), Compagnie Française des Pétroles (Total), US Near East Development Corp (Exxon Mobil) and Calouste Gulbekian signed the Red Line Agreement in Ostend, Belgium, dividing shares in the Turkish (later Iraq) Petroleum Company and defining its area of operation between the Suez Canal and Persia (excluding Kuwait), where they would not engage in independent operations.

**1929, August 3:** The Republic of Turkey, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd, led by Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, signed a Treaty of Friendship, marking the beginning of the Saudi-Turkish bilateral diplomatic relations, which were further cemented after the unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**1929, August 24:** The governments of the Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd (future Saudi Arabia) and the Imperial State of Persia signed a Treaty of Friendship, which involved mutual recognition and the full establishment of Saudi-Persian diplomatic relations.

## ▶ 1930s



**1932, April 22:** The Treaty of Friendship establishing formal ties between Italy (then the Kingdom of Italy) and Saudi Arabia (then the Kingdom of Nejd and Hejaz and its Dependencies) was ratified in Rome in the presence of Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Viceroy of Hejaz and the future Saudi Foreign Minister and King, during his first visit to Italy.

**1932, June 2:** The Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) struck the first oil at the Well Number One in Jebel Al Dukhan in Bahrain, ushering in a new era of economic growth and development for the Arab Gulf countries. Two years later, Bahrain made its first oil export to Japan.

**1932, July 22:** Ruler of Sharjah, Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasimi, and the British government signed an agreement to establish an air station and a rest house for passengers and staff of the Imperial Airways (today's British Airways) operating flights between the UK, India and Australia, which would replace the facility on the Persian Hengam Island.

**1933, January 7:** The first air mail delivery arrived in Kuwait from Baghdad. The trip took three days. The next dispatch brought the first official air mail from New Zealand to Kuwait and took almost one month to reach its destination.

**1934, February 2:** The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) was incorporated by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now BP) and the Gulf Oil Corporation (Chevron). KOC discovered Kuwait's first oil almost four years after receiving the oil concession. KOC came under Kuwaiti ownership four decades later.

**1934, June 14:** The Treaty of Taif between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kingdom of Yemen, which ended a three month war and demarcated the Saudi-Yemeni border, became public. Yemen gained control of Hodeidah, while Saudi Arabia got Jizan, Asir and Najran. The Treaty was signed on 20 May, came into effect a month later, and was to apply for 20 years with the possibility of being renewed.

**1935, March 21:** On Nowruz (Persian New Year), Persian government changed the country's official name to Iran ("Land of Aryans"), arguing with geographical, historical and racial reasons. The decision was influenced by the Nazi Germany and the proposal came from Persia's Embassy in Berlin.

**1935, April 3:** Saudi Arabia presented the "Red Line," a claim to move the Saudi south-eastern border with the British protectorates well beyond the Anglo-Ottoman border set before World War I. Ibn Saud claimed Khawr al-Udayd, Jabal Nakhsh, most of Rub al-Khali and Dhofar. Long British-Saudi negotiations began.

**1935, May 5:** Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, the third ruler of Qatar (1913–1949), renewed the 1916 protection treaty with Britain, which in turn promised to protect Qatar from land attacks in addition to attacks from sea. Twelve days later, Qatar signed its first Oil Concession Agreement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

**1936, July 12:** The Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) refinery in Bahrain, the first oil refinery in the Arabian Gulf, started its operations two years after Bahrain began exporting oil.

**1938, February 22:** The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) discovered Kuwait's first oil in the Burgan Field.

**1938, March 3:** The first oil was struck at the Dammam Well Number 7 in Dhahran in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province by the California Arabian Standard Oil Co. (CASOC), later renamed Aramco. Commercial oil production was announced seven months later and the first oil tanker shipment left in May 1939.

**1938, May 10:** In a letter to the British Political Agent, Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani laid Qatar's first claim to the Hawar Islands, which have been under Bahrain's sovereignty. A year later, the British Government ruled in favour of Bahrain as Qatar lacked evidence for its claim.

**1939, May 1:** During a landmark event celebrating the loading of the first oil tanker DG Scofield with around 90,000 barrels at the Ras Tanura port, Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud opened the valve allowing the oil flow and inaugurated the first shipment of Saudi oil.

**1939, May:** During his first official visit to Bahrain as King of Saudi Arabia, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud visited Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) facilities, and watched a movie in the country's first cinema with his accompanying delegation and Bahrain's Ruler, Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa.

**1939, July 11:** Britain ruled in favour of Bahrain's sovereignty over the Hawar Islands, which were claimed by Qatar in 1938. Two years earlier, the Al Thani forces attacked Zubarah, which was under Bahraini authority, and expelled members of the local Naim tribe to Bahrain as they refused to recognise the Al Thani authority. The Bahrain-Qatar dispute was reignited with the 1935 Qatar oil concession.

## ▸ 1940s

**1940, January:** Oil was discovered in Dukhan, Qatar. However, oil production was postponed for nine years due to the Second World War. The first crude oil shipment was dispatched from Umm Said port to Europe on 31 December 1949.

**1941, March 31:** Lt Cdr George Grove was appointed as the first US Naval Observer to Bahrain, with a consent of the British and Bahrain's ruler. His task was to observe UK's anti-submarine operations in the Indian Ocean and gather intelligence on German U-boats. Three months later, he died in a plane crash, becoming the first US officer casualty in Iraq.

**1941, May 27:** The British advance on Baghdad and its subsequent capture marked the final phase of the Anglo-Iraqi War, which overthrew Iraq's Axis-allied government, led by Rashid Ali Al-Gaylani, and restored the pro-British monarchy. During the war, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy supported Iraq via Vichy French Syria, which led to the British Syria-Lebanon Campaign.

**1941, August 25:** The United Kingdom and the Soviet Union launched an invasion of the Imperial State of Iran following Tehran's refusal to expel German nationals, seeking to limit the influence of Nazi Germany and its allies in the region, and secure oil fields and supply lines to the Soviet Union. It later led to the abdication of Reza Shah Pahlavi and his replacement with his son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.

**1942, February 20:** Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa succeeded his father, the late Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, as the eighth Hakim of Bahrain since 1783. He ruled Bahrain until his death in 1961 when he was succeeded by his son, Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who led the country until 1999.

**1944, January 31:** The California Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC), established in 1933 following an oil concession agreement between Saudi Arabia and the Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL), was renamed the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco).

**1945, February 14:** Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud and US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met for the first time aboard USS Quincy, laying the ground for the US-Saudi partnership. They discussed the future of Palestine and Jewish refugees, Syria and Lebanon, as well as agriculture.

**1945, March 22:** Kingdom of Egypt, Kingdom of Iraq, Republic of Lebanon, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syrian Republic and Emirate of Transjordan, soon joined by Kingdom of Yemen, founded the Arab League, a regional organisation to enhance cooperation and coordination among Arab states, based in Cairo.

**1945, June 26:** Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, signed the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the International Court of Justice at a ceremony in San Francisco, making Saudi Arabia one of the founding members of the United Nations.

**1946, March 2:** The British forces left Iran, which was occupied by the Allied forces since 1941 due to the Shah's cooperation with Germany, but Moscow refused to honour the Tripartite Agreement withdrawal deadline. It was the first crisis brought to the UN Security Council.

**1946, June 30:** Emir Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurated Kuwait's first export of 10,000 tonnes of crude oil aboard the British Fusilier tanker from the Mina Al-Ahmadi Port, eight years after the country's first oil discovery.

**1948, January 6:** As the pearling industry continued to decline, local pearl merchants urged Bahrain's ruler to coordinate with other Gulf states to prohibit import of foreign pearls amid an influx of pearls from countries like Venezuela and a British embargo on exporting pearls to the newly-independent India.

**1948, May 14:** The end of the British Mandate for Palestine and the proclamation of the State of Israel, sparked the First Arab–Israeli War, involving Arab coalition forces from Iraq, Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The war resulted in Israeli victory and 1948 is often referred to as Nakba (disaster) by the Palestinians.

**1949, August 20:** Ali bin Abdullah Al Thani became the fourth ruler of Qatar following the abdication of his father, Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani. He ruled the country for 11 years during which he witnessed the first oil export and made numerous trips abroad. Following an assassination attempt by his cousin, he abdicated in favour of his son, Ahmad bin Ali Al Thani.

## ▶ 1950s

**1950, February 25:** Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah's ascension to power in Kuwait following the death of his cousin, Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has been marked as Kuwait's National Day to celebrate the independence from the United Kingdom under his reign in 1961.

**1950, June 18:** The Kingdom of Egypt, Kingdom of Iraq, Kingdom of Jordan, the Lebanese Republic, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Republic and Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen signed a collective security pact, the Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation of the League of Arab States.

**1951, May 11:** The Trucial Oman Levies (later Scouts) were established to ensure internal security in the Trucial States. Headquartered in Sharjah, they were raised as indigenous armed forces under British command. After the establishment of the United Arab Emirates, the Scouts formed the basis of the Union Defence Force.

**1952, January 28:** Dammam hosted a conference to resolve a long-standing territorial dispute over the Buraimi Oasis between Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Oman revived due to oil exploration. The initiative failed and Saudi forces invaded the Oasis, which was later reclaimed by the Trucial Oman Levies.

**1952, March 23:** The Trucial States Council, a consultative body founded to enhance cooperation among the rulers of the Trucial Shaikhdoms, held its first meeting, chaired by the British Political Agent. It was attended by seven rulers as the UK recognised Fujairah as a Trucial State two days earlier.

**1952, August 31:** The "Buraimi dispute" escalated when a group of Saudi guards, led by the Emir of Ras Tanura, Turki bin Abdullah Al Otaishan, crossed Abu Dhabi territory and occupied Hamasa, one of the Omani villages in the Buraimi Oasis, claiming it as part of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

**1956, February 26:** An agreement delineating the underwater border between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain came to force. Negotiated amid offshore oil explorations, it was the region's first delineated continental shelf boundary and the world's first to establish a joint maritime zone with a unique sharing arrangement.

**1956, April 21:** Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Saudi Arabia's King Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Imam Ahmad bin Yahya Hamidaddin of Yemen signed a mutual defence pact in Jeddah. The move sought to consolidate the bloc opposed to the Baghdad Pact.

**1956, July 26:** Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal Company, a British-French company that had operated the essential waterway since 1869, ostensibly to finance the Aswan Dam following an abrupt withdrawal of UK and US funding offers. Three months later, Israeli, French and British troops invaded Egypt to regain control of the Canal, marking the beginning of the Suez Crisis.

**1957, August 11:** Responding to a request by the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, British air and ground forces intervened militarily to help defeat the rebel forces of the Imam of Oman that managed to capture Nizwa, the capital of Oman, from the Sultanate. The Imamate was initially supported by Arab governments, notably Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The insurgency lasted until 1959.

**1957, August 13:** Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen requested the UN Security Council to discuss UK's "armed aggression...against the independence, sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Imamate of Oman," angering Sultan of Oman and Muscat, who

requested UK's help against the insurgency. A week later, the UNSC rejected the request as only Sweden, Iraq, USSR and Philippines voted in favour.

**1957, August 17:** The Sultan of Muscat and Oman, Said bin Taimur, protested the request of eleven Arab countries to include British 'aggression' against 'the Imamate of Oman' on the UN Security Council's agenda, denouncing it as an interference in the Sultanate's domestic affairs. The Sultan also stressed that Imamate of Oman was not recognised as an independent state and was part of the Sultanate.

**1958, February 1:** Egypt and Syria proclaimed the United Arab Republic, a pan-Arab, socialist state. Alarmed by the move, the Hashemite Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan formed the Arab Federation two weeks later and demanded Kuwait to join them. However, both entities were short-lived due to coups d'état in Iraq and Syria.

**1958, March 8:** The Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen and the United Arab Republic (a federation of Egypt and Syria) formed a confederation, the United Arab States, which lasted until December 1961. It came after a defence pact between the Kingdom of Yemen and Egypt and conflicts with Saudi Arabia.

**1958, March 24:** Saudi Arabia's King Saud bin Abdulaziz was forced to transfer executive powers in domestic and foreign affairs to his brother Crown Prince Faisal amid economic crisis and growing discontent with his mismanagement. Faisal initiated an austerity programme to balance the budget, among others.

**1958, July 14:** The 14 July revolution in Iraq deposed and killed King Faisal II, ending the era of the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq, dissolving the Hashemite Arab Federation between Iraq and Jordan, and establishing the Iraqi Republic. Ten years and three days later, another coup brought the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party to power in Iraq.

## ▶ 1960s

**1961, June 19:** Kuwait gained independence from the United Kingdom following a formal Exchange of Letters between the British Political Resident and Emir Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, terminating the 1899 Exclusive Anglo-Kuwaiti Treaty that established Kuwait's British protectorate status. Kuwait joined the Arab League a month later and the UN in 1963.

**1961, July 1:** Shortly after Kuwait's independence, the UK responded to a request from Emir Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah and launched a major military operation 'Vantage' to protect Kuwait against Iraq's territorial claims, significantly expanding British military presence in the Gulf. The UK forces were replaced by the Arab League three months later. Iraq recognised Kuwait's independence in 1963.

**1961, July 6:** The UK submitted a draft resolution to the UN Security Council calling for respecting Kuwait's independence and territorial integrity. The resolution was vetoed the next day by the Soviet Union due to its alliance with Iraq, which provoked the UK resolution with its refusal to recognise Kuwait's independence and claiming its territory.

**1963, February 3:** Kuwait's oldest functioning women association, the Women's Cultural and Social Society, was established to promote Kuwaiti women's rights and political participation.

**1963, March 11:** Kuwait became the first Arab Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union during the Cold War and helped the USSR to expand relations with the GCC countries in the 1980s.

**1963, April 17:** Following the Tripartite Unity Talks, Egypt, Syria and Iraq agreed to form a federation with Gamal Abdel Nasser as President. It came shortly after coups d'états in Syria and Iraq established Ba'athist governments. But the plan collapsed a few months later after a failed pro-Nasserist coup in Syria.

**1964, January 12:** The Zanzibar Revolution overthrew the last Sultan, Jamshid bin Abdullah Al-Busaid. Zanzibar became part of Oman's empire in 1698 after the Portuguese defeat in East Africa and it later also briefly served as a seat of the Omani ruler Said bin Sultan in the 1830s before its split from Oman.

**1964, August 12:** Saudi Arabia renounced the disengagement agreement with the United Arab Republic (UAR) from the previous year, effectively ending the UN Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM) tasked with

monitoring the Saudi and Egyptian disengagement from Yemen. UNYOM's mandate officially ended on 4 September.

**1964, August 14:** Members of the Council of Arab Economic Unity—the United Arab Republic, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan and Syria—signed a resolution approving the creation of the Arab Common Market. All signatories, except Kuwait, became members of the common market and were later joined by Libya, Mauritania and the Democratic Republic of Yemen.

**1965, July 7:** The Rulers of Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States agreed on a monetary union with common Arab Gulf currency to replace the devalued Gulf and Indian rupee. However, the plan failed and so Bahrain released its own currency, the Bahraini dinar, which was adopted by Abu Dhabi, while Qatar and Dubai introduced the Qatar-Dubai riyal, and the other Trucial States adopted the Saudi riyal.

**1966, August 6:** Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan became the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and launched a wide ranging reform and development programme. He replaced his brother, Shakhbut bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who ruled the emirate from 1928, following a bloodless coup by the Trucial Oman Scouts.

**1967, June 5:** The Third Arab–Israeli War, involving the United Arab Republic (Egypt), Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, erupted. Within six days, Israel took the Golan Heights, Sinai, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank from its Arab neighbours. The war ended with a UN-brokered ceasefire on 11 June.

**1967, June 6:** During the Six Day War, Arab oil producing countries, including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Saudi Arabia, decided to ban oil shipments to the UK, US and West Germany in a bid to discourage any allies from supporting Israel. The lack of success of the 1967 oil embargo led to the creation of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).

**1967, July 27:** The first batch of Omani crude oil (nearly 550,000 barrels) was exported aboard the Norwegian tanker Mosprince from Mina Al Fahal to Japan. The event took place five years after Oman finally struck oil in commercial quantities and 30 years after the establishment of the Petroleum Development Oman, the Sultanate's oil and gas major.

**1968, January 16:** The UK Labour government announced the withdrawal of British forces from the Gulf by the end of 1971, ending British regional dominance and precipitating the emergence of independent Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

**1968, February 18:** Rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, met in Al Sedaira and agreed to form a federation to unite the two emirates and invite other emirates to join, laying the foundations of the United Arab Emirates.

**1968, February 27:** The Rulers of the Trucial States, Bahrain and Qatar signed an agreement to form a federation of nine Arabian Gulf Emirates in Dubai. However, Bahrain and Qatar would later withdraw from the federation and proclaim independence.

**1969, July 25:** During the Vietnam War, US President Richard Nixon announced the "Nixon Doctrine", which led to the twin-pillar policy in the Gulf, relying on Iran and Saudi Arabia as US allies to help ensure regional security. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran it was replaced by the "Carter Doctrine" (1980) that committed the US to defending the Gulf countries by military force.

## ▶ 1970s

**1970, May 2:** The strategically important, US-owned Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tapline) delivering oil from Eastern Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean was shut down until early 1971 due to a damage in Daraa that caused a large oil spill and the subsequent refusal of the Syrian government to allow its repair until ARAMCO paid extra transit fees.

**1970, July 23:** Qaboos bin Said Al Said became the Sultan of Oman following the dethroning of his father, Said bin Taimur. The day became to be known in Oman as the Renaissance Day, marking the beginning of



the country's opening to the world and development and modernisation efforts. Sultan Qaboos ruled Oman until his death in 2020.

**1970, August 8:** After the accession of Qaboos bin Said Al Said, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was renamed to Sultanate of Oman.

**1971, March 30:** Amid an internal Baath party power struggle, Hardan al-Tikriti, former Vice President and Defence Minister of Iraq, was assassinated in Kuwait on the orders of Saddam Hussein. Al-Tikriti was a key member of the 17 July Revolution (1968), which brought the Baath party to power in Iraq.

**1971, August 15:** Bahrain proclaimed independence from the United Kingdom and terminated the exclusive treaties signed between the two in the late 19th century. Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa became the country's first Emir.

**1972, January 25:** Ruler of Sharjah, Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, one of the UAE's founding fathers, was killed in a failed coup led by his cousin and former deposed ruler, Saqr bin Sultan, who returned from exile in Egypt. Khalid's brother, Sultan bin Muhammad, succeeded him and continues to rule until today.

**1972, February 10:** Under the leadership of Ruler Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ras Al Khaimah joined the United Arab Emirates and became the seventh emirate of the federation two months after its establishment.

**1972, February 23:** Qatar's Prime Minister, Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani, deposed his cousin, Ahmad bin Ali Al Thani, and became Emir of Qatar. Generally considered as the first modern ruler of Qatar, he ruled until 1995, when he was deposed by Hamad bin Khalifa, his son and father of the current Emir.

**1973, March 20:** Iraq attacked Kuwait's border post at Sanita near Iraq's Umm Al-Qasr port, killing two officers, amid border talks. Iraq laid claim to Kuwaiti islands Bubiyan and Warbah, controlling access to the port, developed with Soviet help. Saddam Hussein flew to Moscow and both sides accepted mediation by PLO's Yasser Arafat.

**1974, January 1:** Governments of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman agreed to buy the British Overseas Airways Corporation's shares in the Gulf Aviation and founded the Gulf Air, a joint flagship airline. In 2007 Bahrain became the airline's sole owner after the other three governments withdrew.

**1974, February 7:** Palestinian militants took hostages at the Japanese Embassy in Kuwait City, demanding a safe passage for the "Bukom bombers," four members of the Japanese Red Army and PFLP, from Singapore to Kuwait. Japan dispatched a plane that flew them to Kuwait and then to Aden, Yemen.

**1974, March 18:** Arab oil producing countries (except Libya) lifted the oil embargo against the United States, which was imposed on Israel's supporters during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and caused a global energy crisis, amid prospects of disengagement talks between Israel and Egypt and Syria.

**1974, June 3:** Saudi Arabia announced that it will take majority ownership of the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) from the US, increasing its share from 25% to 60%, retroactive from 1 January. The 1973 Arab oil embargo and global energy crisis boosted nationalisation in several countries, including Kuwait, Libya and Saudi Arabia.

**1974, July 10:** The Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) lifted the embargo on oil exports to the Netherlands, which was levied against the Netherlands by the Arab oil producers during the 1973 October War citing the Dutch political and military support for Israel.

**1974, August 21:** The Treaty of Jeddah was signed by the King of Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and the President of the United Arab Emirates, Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, to settle the two countries' longstanding border dispute.

**1975, March 5:** Kuwait acquired the remaining 40% of the Kuwait Oil Company from the British Petroleum and the Gulf Oil and took full control of its oil industry. The agreement was signed in December 1975 and was backdated. It expedited the nationalisation process of oil industries in other Arab Gulf countries.

**1975, March 25:** King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who ruled Saudi Arabia since 1964, was assassinated by Faisal bin Musaid, his nephew and grandson of the last Al Rashid Emir of Hail. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud ascended to the throne after his brother's death.

**1975, April 12:** Delegations from Saudi Arabia and Iraq agreed on border delimitation from Wadi al-Aujah at the tripoint with Kuwait to Jabal Anazah at the tripoint with Jordan, straightening the line. The Neutral Zone was later divided as well. The formal Saudi-Iraqi border treaty was finalised in late 1981.

**1975, April 13:** The 15-year Lebanese civil war broke out as the fighting between the Maronite Christians and the Palestinian-Muslim forces intensified after an attempted assassination on the Phalangist leader and a deadly retaliatory attack on a bus with Palestinians.

**1975, July 15:** After Iranian Shah's calls for a Gulf collective security pact, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister proposed a less ambitious plan to advance regional security cooperation to his counterparts from Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE, visiting Jeddah for the Islamic Conference. The proposal failed due to differing views and mistrust, particularly from Iraq.

**1976, February:** The Sultanate of Oman and the Baathist Iraqi Republic established diplomatic relations for the first time after Baghdad ceased supporting the Dhofar insurgency. Oman later proposed a regional security framework that would include the six future GCC states, Iraq and Iran.

**1976, May 6:** The United Arab Emirates' federal military body, the UAE Armed Forces, was created by the unification of the Abu Dhabi and the Dubai Defence Forces, the Ras Al Khaimah Mobile Force, the Sharjah National Guard and the other emirates' smaller forces.

**1979, January 17:** The last Shah of the Imperial State of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, fled to the US amid looming revolution. Ruhollah Khomeini landed in Tehran two weeks later and established the region's first Islamic theocracy in modern times.

**1979, March 19:** The Second Yemenite War between the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), supported by the US, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and the USSR-allied People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), ended with a ceasefire and peace talks in Kuwait brokered by the Arab League.

**1979, March 26:** Egypt's President, Anwar Sadat, and Israel's Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, signed a formal peace treaty at the White House. Egypt was the first Arab state to recognise Israel, angering the Arab world. Egypt was suspended from the Arab League until 1989 and Sadat was assassinated by Islamists.

**1979, July 16:** Saddam Hussein, who has been Vice-President of Iraq since the 1968 Ba'athist coup, officially seized power in Iraq, becoming Iraq's President, Prime Minister and Chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, posts he held until 2003.

## ▶ 1980s

**1980, February 13:** Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the US Carter Doctrine, Kuwait and other Arab Gulf states, except Oman, supported Iraq's Arab National Charter, calling for non-alignment, peaceful resolution of intra-Arab conflicts, solidarity against foreign aggression and rejecting foreign military presence in the region.

**1980, April 7:** The US President, Jimmy Carter, severed diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran as Tehran refused to release 52 US citizens held hostage at the US Embassy since November 1979. The two countries have no formal diplomatic relations to this day.

**1980, April 28:** Iran's Foreign Minister, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, survived an assassination attempt in Kuwait during his first regional tour. Tehran blamed Iraq for the attack. Ghotbzadeh, who was one of the closest aides of Ayatollah Khomeini during the Islamic revolution, was executed in 1982 for allegedly plotting to overthrow Iran's theocratic regime.

**1981, February 4:** Foreign Ministers of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates convened in Riyadh to draft the founding Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which was then formally adopted by the rulers of the six countries in Abu Dhabi in May.

**1981, May 25:** The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, known as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), was formally established at the first GCC Summit in Abu Dhabi. Rulers of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE adopted the founding Charter of the GCC. Abdullah Bishara became the first Secretary General.

**1982, February 21:** Saudi Arabia signed bilateral security pacts with the UAE and Qatar and two days later also with Oman. An Iran-backed coup plot in Bahrain earlier prompted a similar security pact with Manama and the first GCC Foreign Ministers' extraordinary session in Bahrain, which affirmed the principle of collective security.

**1982, June 13:** Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud became the fifth King of Saudi Arabia, replacing his brother, the late King Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (1975–1982). Fahd ascended to the throne amid the rise of the revolutionary Iran and the Iran-Iraq War, and ruled Saudi Arabia for over two decades until his death in 2005.

**1984, March 27:** During the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi Air Force escalated the "tanker war" with the first combat use of a French-made Super Étendard fighter jet and an Exocet missile against the Greek commercial tanker Filikon L, carrying crude oil from Kuwait to Italy, assuming it carried Iranian oil.

**1985, May 26:** A suicide car bomber rammed into the cavalcade of Kuwait's Emir, Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, killing three people and wounding 12, including the Emir. The Iran-linked Islamic Jihad (precursor to Hezbollah) claimed responsibility for the assassination attempt, demanding the release of the "Kuwait 17" terrorists imprisoned in Kuwait for the December 1983 bombings.

**1985, June 17:** Sultan bin Salman Al Saud, son of the current King of Saudi Arabia, became the first Arab, Muslim and royal to fly to space. He was a payload specialist aboard the space shuttle Discovery, part of NASA's Space Shuttle programme's 18th flight, and the youngest person to fly on a space shuttle.

**1986, June 15:** Tensions ran high between Qatar and Bahrain over the disputed Fasht Al-Dibal after Qatari armed forces occupied the coral reef/island, declared it a restricted zone and seized 29 construction workers hired by a Dutch company to build a Bahraini coast guard station. Qatari troops left the island on 15 June following nearly two month, intense GCC mediation and formal protests by the Netherlands.

**1987, June 23:** Ending a week-long impasse amid a coup attempt in Sharjah, the UAE Supreme Council of the Rulers named Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, the Head of Sharjah National Guard, who led the coup, as Sharjah's Crown Prince, while his younger brother, Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, was reinstated as the Ruler.

**1988, April 5:** Shia militants hijacked the Kuwait Airways Flight 422 en route from Thailand, demanding Kuwait to release the "Kuwait 17" terrorists responsible for the 1983 bombings. Militants held hostages for 15 days, killing two, and forcing landings in Iran, Cyprus and Algeria. Kuwait said it was orchestrated by Hezbollah's Imad Mughniyeh.

**1988, April 14:** During the Iran–Iraq War, the US frigate USS Samuel B Roberts was damaged by an Iranian mine on its way to escort reflagged Kuwaiti tankers in the Gulf. The US forces retaliated against Iran four days later with the Operation Praying Mantis, the US Navy's largest surface engagement since World War II.

**1988, April 26:** A bomb exploded at the Saudia airline office in Kuwait, one day after Riyadh broke off diplomatic relations with Tehran over Iranian acts of terrorism and subversion, namely the 1987 riot in Mecca that killed over 400, the attack on Saudi Embassy in Tehran that killed one Saudi diplomat, and attacks on commercial shipping in the Gulf.

**1988, August 9:** The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 619 to set up the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) to supervise the implementation of a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq (effective from 20 August) and the withdrawal of their forces to internationally recognised borders to end their eight-year war.

**1989, February 16:** North Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt announced the establishment of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) to foster closer economic cooperation and integration. The new bloc unsettled neighbouring states, particularly in the GCC. However, the ACC did not survive the 1990-91 Gulf War.

## ▶ 1990s

**1990, March:** Oman and Saudi Arabia resolved a long standing territorial dispute, agreeing on delineation of their nearly 658 km border across Rub al-Khali (Empty Quarter), marking a fresh start in Omani-Saudi relations. They also agreed to share water resources and establish a road connection.

**1990, May 22:** The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) and the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) were unified into the Republic of Yemen after years of fighting. Ali Abdullah Saleh (North) became President and Ali Salim Al Beidh (South) became Vice President.

**1990, August 2:** Iraq invaded Kuwait and began its seven-month occupation. After the Iraqi forces captured the Dasman Palace, Kuwait's Emir, Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the government fled to Saudi Arabia. The UN Security Council unanimously adopted the Resolution 660 condemning the invasion. In a first, the USSR and US jointly called for a worldwide arms embargo against Iraq.

**1990, August 4:** The twelve-member European Community (EC) imposed an embargo on oil imports from Iraq and Kuwait, which accounted for about 11% of the Community's total external oil supply in 1989, and announced they would ban arms sales to Baghdad in reaction to its invasion of Kuwait. The EC also froze Iraqi assets and took steps to protect Kuwaiti financial assets in Europe.

**1990, August 5:** Kuwait's Emir Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah formed a government in exile in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, under the premiership of Saad Al-Salim Al-Sabah, in reaction to Iraq's installation of a puppet government in occupied Kuwait.

**1990, August 7:** After Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent amassing of Iraqi troops on Saudi borders, the US announced the launch of the Operation Desert Shield, a multinational military coalition to defend Saudi Arabia and liberate Kuwait. Riyadh began mobilising forces and allowed US troops to base themselves on its territory, in an unprecedented move.

**1990, August 10:** During the Arab League Emergency Summit, 12 countries, including all GCC members, approved the Resolution 195 condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and supporting Saudi Arabia's request for foreign troops' assistance. Algeria, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan and PLO voiced reservations, Iraq and Libya voted against, while Yemen and Algeria abstained. Egypt, Morocco and Syria sent forces to the Gulf to support the international coalition against Iraq.

**1990, August 16:** Iraq's President Saddam Hussein, offered to accept Iranian peace terms to end the state of war, including withdrawing troops from Iranian territory, recognising Iran's pre-war borders, and releasing all war prisoners. The move came as Iraq became increasingly isolated after invading Kuwait.

**1990, August 22:** The members of the Western European Union (WEU) military alliance decided to increase and coordinate naval presence in the Gulf to help protect European security interests amid Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It helped to monitor the naval embargo against Iraq and carry out minesweeping operations in the Gulf.

**1990, August 28:** Iraq's Saddam Hussein officially declared Kuwait as the 19th province of Iraq and ordered change of place-names, including renaming the capital, Kuwait City, to the provincial capital of Kadhima. He expanded Iraqi Basra province to Kuwait's territory to encompass the end of Rumaila oil field as well as the Bubiyan and Warbah islands that controlled the access to Iraq's main port, Umm Qasr.

**1991, January 15:** The UN Security Council deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait passed. The US-led Coalition launched military campaign to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Meanwhile, Iraq also fired missiles at Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Israel.

**1991, February 8:** Iraqi forces began systematically igniting Kuwaiti oil wells, reaching 700 by the end of the Gulf War. Two weeks earlier, Iraq dumped around seven million barrels of crude into the Gulf waters, causing the world's largest oil spill.

**1991, February 28:** One day following Saddam Hussein's order to the Iraqi forces to retreat from Kuwait, the liberation campaign of Kuwait by the US-led international coalition successfully ended Iraq's almost seven-month long occupation and the Gulf War.

**1991, March:** Following the Gulf War, Foreign Ministers of the six GCC countries, Egypt and Syria, which helped liberate Kuwait from Iraq, met in Damascus to discuss a new security system for the Gulf. They adopted the "Damascus Declaration," envisaging defence cooperation among the parties.

**1991, June:** Bahrain and Qatar clashed again over disputed territory when Qatar's navy entered waters adjacent to the Hawar Islands, prompting Bahrain to send fighter jets into Qatari airspace. The GCC temporarily managed to ease the tensions. A month later, Qatar unilaterally brought the case to the International Court of Justice.

**1992, March 1:** Iran further fuelled the conflict with the United Arab Emirates over the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, occupied since 1971, by demanding that all visitors must have Iranian visa.

**1992, June 22:** Qatar expanded military cooperation with the US following the Gulf War and signed a bilateral security agreement that gave the US access to Qatar's air and naval facilities.

**1994, January 20:** Qatar Airways began operations under the ownership of the Al-Thani royal family two months after its establishment, becoming the GCC's fifth national flag carrier (after Saudia, Kuwait Airways, the Emirates, Oman Air). 20 years later, it became fully government owned.

**1994, April 8:** Saudi Arabia's government officially revoked Saudi citizenship of Al-Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden. Since his expulsion from Saudi Arabia in 1992, he relocated his base to Sudan and later to Afghanistan.

**1994, May 21:** Four years after the unification of North and South Yemen, a short civil war culminated in Southern secession and the proclamation of the short-lived Democratic Republic of Yemen, which was supported by all GCC countries, except Qatar. However, secessionists were soon defeated and Yemen was unified under a northern government.

**1995, June 27:** Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, father and predecessor of the current Emir of Qatar, became Qatar's seventh ruler after deposing his father, Khalifa bin Hamad, who led the State of Qatar since 1972. Hamad bin Khalifa continued to rule Qatar for 18 years, until 25 June 2013.

**1995, July:** The US Fifth Fleet was established in Bahrain to command US naval forces in the Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and the West Indian Ocean, replacing the Middle East Force based in Bahrain since 1971. It was the first US Fleet to be established in 50 years and the first one dedicated to the Indian Ocean.

**1996, April 2:** Israel's Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, visited Qatar for the first time. Following a meeting with Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Qatar and Israel agreed to exchange trade representations. Qatar was the second GCC country after Oman to publicly host a head of an Israeli government.

**1996, June:** Bahrain's government said it uncovered a plot by Hezbollah-Bahrain, a group founded in 1993 with the help of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, to undermine Bahrain's security and overthrow the government by force in order to replace it with a pro-Iranian regime. Bahrain recalled its Ambassador to Tehran and downgraded the diplomatic representation.

**1996, 25 June:** A large car bomb explosion at the Khobar Towers housing complex in Khobar in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, near the causeway linking Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, killed 19 US Air Force personnel and wounded nearly 500 people. According to the investigation, members of Hezbollah Al-Hejaz and Iran were behind the attack.



**1996, August 23:** Al Qaeda's Osama bin Laden declared holy war against the US. It was published in the London-based newspaper Al Quds Al Arabi entitled: 'Message from Osama bin Laden to his Muslim Brothers in the Whole World and Especially in the Arabian Peninsula: Declaration of Jihad Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Mosques: Expel the Heretics from the Arabian Peninsula.'

**1997, February 24:** Qatar inaugurated the Qatargas 1 LNG plant, the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporting facility. The plant uses natural gas from the North Field. The first LNG exports were bound for Japan and Spain.

**1997, April 10:** In a first, a German court ruled that Iran's government, including Supreme Leader Khamenei, President Rafsanjani and Minister Fallahian, ordered the killing of four Kurdish dissidents in Berlin in 1992. Germany was Tehran's biggest trading partner and Europe's "critical dialogue" policy with Iran was called into question.

**1999, March 6:** Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa succeeded his father, Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, as the second Emir of Bahrain since gaining independence from the UK. He assumed the title of King following a 2002 national referendum to turn Bahrain into a constitutional monarchy.

## ▶ Early 2000s

**2000, June 12:** Saudi Arabia and Yemen signed the Treaty of Jeddah demarcating their common border in a bid to resolve nearly a century long bilateral border dispute. The agreement was reached during a visit of Yemen's then President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to Saudi Arabia.

**2001, February 15:** In a referendum held on 14 and 15 February, some 98.4% of Bahraini voters approved the National Action Charter, a constitution transforming Bahrain to a Kingdom and Emir Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to a King, establishing an elected parliament and introducing social reforms.

**2001, March 12:** Iran's President, Mohammed Khatami, and Russia's Vladimir Putin signed the first cooperation and security agreement between Moscow and Tehran since the 1979 Islamic revolution, aiming to expand ties notably in military technology, arms trade, Iran's nuclear programme and regional affairs.

**2001, March 16:** The International Court of Justice settled a long-standing territorial dispute between Bahrain and Qatar and delineated their maritime boundary. According to the Court's final ruling, Zubarah and Janan Islands belong to Qatar, while the Hawar Islands and Qit'at Jaradah belong to Bahrain.

**2001, April 18:** Saudi Arabia's Minister of Interior, Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and his Iranian counterpart, Abdolvahed Mousavi Lari, signed a bilateral agreement on internal security cooperation as ties between Iran and its Arab Gulf neighbours began to improve.

**2003, January 2:** Rashid bin Ahmad Al-Mualla II, who ruled Umm Al Quwain since 1981, died aged 77. He was succeeded by his son, Saud bin Rashid Al-Mualla, the tenth ruler of Umm Al Quwain who leads the emirate until today.

**2003, April 9:** Three weeks since the beginning of the US-led invasion of Iraq, the Coalition forces formally began occupying Iraq's capital, Baghdad, deposing Saddam Hussein and ending the Baath Party rule. It led to a protracted armed conflict and regional instability.

**2004, June:** An armed conflict erupted between the Yemeni government and the supporters of Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, leader of the Believing Youth movement, who was wanted by the government for forming an armed group, organising violent protests and stirring unrest in a bid to revive the Zaidi Imamate. It marked the beginning of the Houthi insurgency in Yemen.

**2005, January 5:** Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, became the Ruler of Dubai, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, following the death of his brother, Maktoum bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who held the positions since 1990.

**2005, August 1:** Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who served as Crown Prince since 1982, became the sixth King of Saudi Arabia after the death of his half-brother, King Fahd. During his 10-year reign, he appointed

women to the Shura Council and the Council of Ministers and allowed them to participate in local elections for the first time.