



A Look Back at Dubai's Humble Beginnings in Light of the Future-Focused Expo 2020

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If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships – the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.

Franklin D. Roosevelt





Introduction

“If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships - the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.” Franklin D. Roosevelt’s take on civilisation is perhaps the most apt one you’ve ever read.

Civilisations have existed for a million years before us and will continue to exist for millions after. But what does it take for a civilisation to reach from fishing shores and sandy beaches to the world’s biggest tower, largest mall, and the pinnacle of the latest known innovations? If this question has ever made you curious, you need to know the story of Dubai.

From its earliest known mentions in travel books of the 10th century to a city of superlatives shining on the world map in the 21st, Dubai’s journey has been fascinating to say the least. This article seeks to help you dive deep into the past to familiarise with the humble beginnings of this amazing city.

Today, as the Emirate skilfully hosts the world’s greatest show, the Dubai Expo 2020, it is rather fulfilling and inspiring to know the background of this city and its journey from pearl diving to becoming a world jewel itself.



Dubai History and Timeline

1045

Dubai began to appear in geography and travel books.

1793

The Bani Yas tribe established political power in the UAE's current capital city, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai became a major part of it.

1833

Dubai emerged as a tiny town of 800 residents, who belonged to the same Bani Yas clan. They made the natural harbour of the city provided by the creek that ran through Dubai and converted the region into a minor fishing and pearling hub. This population was eventually joined by Bedouins, a tribe of Arabian nomads from the Arab world, who also started living in the same area.

1958s

The Emirate had developed its own survival system, and it was a civilisation that was now reliant on the proceeds of commerce and oil exploration. Then came a major development that changed the face of Dubai's economy.

1959

The then-ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, ordered the construction of Dubai Airport in 1959 to be opened in 1960.

Dubai History and Timeline

1960s

Who would have thought that the Dubai Airport would become the world's busiest airport by international passenger traffic within 50 years?

Since then, there has been no looking back. As the trade world opened the opportunities for the Emirate to collaborate and flourish, the leaders took the responsibility to shape a brighter future for Dubai.

1966

Dubai's story reached a major developmental milestone—the discovery of oil. Coupled with the forward-thinking attitude of the leaders, this was a time that triggered a series of prosperity-driven developments across the city.

1971

Dubai became a part of the UAE after the British officially withdrew their rule.

1970s–2000s

Over the years, one of the most interesting developments of the city remains the fact that the leaders have always pushed towards reducing the reliance of the Emirate on oil and hydrocarbons.

For years now, the city has focused on adopting sustainable and greener practices and working towards diversifying its economy beyond oil. The efforts are now bearing fruit.

Dubai in 2021

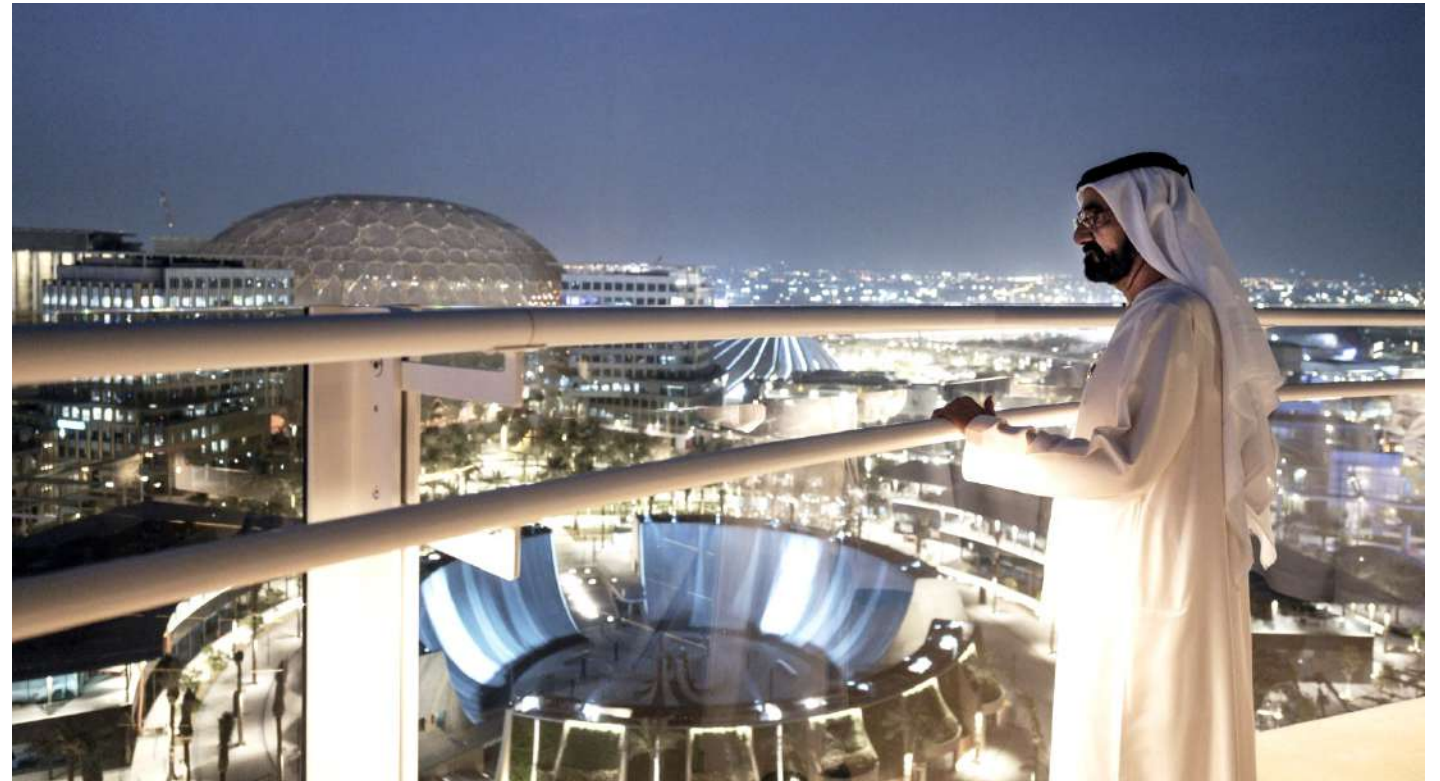
A recent report shared by Dubai Media Office has stated that the Emirate's non-oil external trade rose up by 31 per cent in the first half of 2021. It said that the total foreign trade during the period was recorded at US\$197 billion, making it one of the fastest growing economies of the world.

2021

+ 31%

2021

\$197B



In Numbers: The UAE Economy

The UAE is steadfast in doubling its \$421 billion economy by 2031.

With the UAE's commitment to developing industry-friendly laws and tax regimes to encourage increased commercial activity, the conditions are favourable for all types of businesses, including start-ups, to establish themselves and grow exponentially in the Gulf nation.

Quote

“The accelerated pace of external trade growth reflects Dubai’s growing global role in facilitating and streamlining worldwide trade and supply chains. Dubai’s existing sea and air network will be expanded to cover 200 new cities around the world. We are confident that we will continue to build on our growth momentum to achieve our ambitious sustainable development projects and plans.”

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council



Conclusion

The currently ongoing Dubai Expo 2020 is just another milestone in the fascinating journey of Dubai. Overall, the journey of Dubai towards excellence has never stopped. And the results have been visible in a short span of time as the city went from being a small fishing village to the shining, glowing, and ever growing city that it is today. Dubai is today one of the most revered metropolitan cities in the world and continues to be a guiding light for many economies.

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