Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates & Emir of Dubai

Personal Background
Sheikh Mohammed became the crown prince of Dubai in 1995. In 2006, when his older brother passed away due to the long-term effects from a stroke, Sheikh Mohammed was proclaimed Emir of Dubai and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates. Sheikh Mohammed has a net worth of over $4 billion but he is praised not just for his ruling, but also his charitable work over the years. He has two wives, one being his senior wife, Sheikha Hind bint Maktoum bin Juma Al Maktoum, who he married in 1979, and his junior wife, Princess Haya bin Al-Hussein. He has 16 children total.

“I want Dubai to be a place where everybody from all over the world meets each other, does not fight or hate, just loves it, enjoys their sport, and that’s it.”

Palm Islands
Though halted by the global financial crisis of 2008-09, Nakheel Properties, part of Dubai World owned by Sheikh Mohammed, planned the development of three Palm Islands off the coast of Dubai. These islands, formed in the shape of palm trees, are artificially created through the process of dredging and reclamation, a method of gathering sand and using it to form land in bodies of water. The Palm Jumeirah has developed, while the second, the Palm Jebel Ali, is undergoing development, and the third, the Palm Deira, is still being planned.

Political Reform
Sheikh Mohammed has made great strides in political reform both at federal and local levels. The most notable example is seen in the creation of the UAE Federal Government Strategy established in 2007. The purpose of this act is to improve the lack of coordination and planning within the government. In addition, it is meant to address deficiencies in policy making, regulatory framework, and improve economic, and infrastructure development. Building off of this policy, he has also announced ambitious initiatives for the World Fair in 2020 hosted in Dubai.

“Open Doors. Open Minds.”
In order to educate the expatriates streaming into the country, Sheikh Mohammed established The Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding in 1998. The centre is located in the historical Al Fahidi district in a traditional Wind Tower House and provides an ideal spot to teach guests about local customs, culture, and religion. Through activities such as historical tours, cultural meals, mosque visits, and Arabic classes, the Sheikh hoped to foster understanding between the Emirati people and foreigners, helping them to live in harmony with each other.

Emirates Airline
From an early point in his career, Sheikh Mohammed was in charge of the Dubai Defence Force and more specifically, Dubai Civil Aviation. After a dispute with Gulf Air, Sheikh Mohammed was challenged to create a new airline called Emirates, entirely owned by the Government of Dubai. The airline now has over 200 aircraft, flies to 142 destinations worldwide, and was voted Airline of the Year in 2013 by consulting agency Skytrax.

DP World
During his rule, Sheikh Mohammed founded the Dubai Ports Authority by merging the Jebel Ali Port and Port Rashid. This entity was then merged with Dubai Ports International to created DP World. DP World owns a portfolio of over 65 ports world wide. However, this entity has been at the head of many controversies over security, most notably in 2006. Despite this, DP World continues to grow at a rapid pace as it sits currently as the fourth-largest container terminal operator. It posted a 11.8 profit increase in 2014, reporting revenue as $3.4 billion.

Burj Khalifa
In order to attract tourism and garner more international recognition to Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed conceived the idea of building the Burj Khalifa. Housing the world’s largest shopping mall, the Dubai Mall, it stands at 2,722 ft. tall, making it the world’s tallest man-made structure in the world. Sheikh Mohammed considers the Burj Khalifa to be a symbol of pride to all Arabs, calling it a national accomplishment, a historic milestone, and a key economic turning point.

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