



Soccer
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Amir offers condolences as Kuwait mourns martyred Army personnel

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has extended his deepest condolences to the families of Major Sergeant Ahmad Farhan Harat and Sergeant Musaad Dhahi Saleh, Kuwait Army personnel who lost their lives during a live-fire training exercise on Wednesday. He also wished a swift recovery for the two injured personnel.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Ahmad Al-Sabah sent similar messages, expressing their sympathies to the bereaved families and support for the wounded soldiers.

Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah, along with senior Ministry of Defense officials, mourned the fallen soldiers, emphasizing their sacrifice in the line of duty. The Army's Chief of the General Staff also extended condolences and confirmed that an official investigation into the incident is underway.

Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi joined in offering condolences to the leadership and people of Kuwait, affirming solidarity with the nation and wishing

the injured a speedy recovery.

In response to the tragic accident, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense announced on Thursday the formation of a Kuwaiti-US technical team to investigate the circumstances surrounding the 'Desert Observer' military exercise incident. The decision follows directives from Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah, reflecting ongoing military cooperation and a shared commitment to safety standards in joint training exercises.

The minister visited the accident site in Al-Adarea and later checked on the injured soldiers at Al-Jahra Hospital, where he received updates on their conditions and wished them a full recovery.

Meanwhile, Kuwait laid to rest Major Sergeant Ahmad Farhan Harat and Sergeant Musaad Dhahi Saleh at the Sulaibikhat Martyrs' Cemetery in a solemn military funeral on Thursday.

Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah, senior military officials, grieving families, and citizens gathered to honor the sacrifices of the fallen soldiers. Attendees expressed their prayers for the martyrs and support for their injured colleagues, highlighting the nation's deep respect for those who serve in uniform.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah joins senior military officials, grieving families, and citizens in honoring the fallen soldiers at a solemn military funeral on Thursday.

Wallets feel pinch as Kuwait inflation climbs 2.5% in Jan

Food, fashion, and education get costlier

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's consumer price index (CPI) rose by 2.5% at the end of January on an annual basis, according to data from the Central Statistical Bureau released Thursday.

The data, reported by the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), also showed a 0.15% monthly increase compared to December 2024. The year-on-year rise was attributed to higher prices in key sectors, particularly food, clothing, and education, while transportation costs declined.

The food and beverages category saw the highest increase, up 5.19% from January 2024. Clothing prices followed with a 4.81% rise, while education costs increased by 0.71%. Meanwhile, housing services rose by 0.9%, and household furnishings saw a 2.98% uptick.

Healthcare costs climbed by 3.99%, while the transport sector was the only category to register a decline, dropping by 1.26% year-on-year. Other categories showing annual increases included communications (0.88%), entertainment and culture (2.64%), and restaurants and hotels (2.03%). Prices for miscellaneous goods and services rose by 5.17%.

Excluding food and beverages, Kuwait's inflation rate stood at 1.86% year-on-year.

Kuwait drug bust nabs 8 traffickers

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Ministry of Interior announced that the Drug Control General Department, during intensive security campaigns in various areas of Kuwait, arrested eight individuals - four Kuwaitis and four Bedoun residents - in possession of large quantities of narcotic substances, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The confiscated items included:
■ 50 kilograms of hashish
■ 25,000 capsules of Lyrica
■ 5 kilograms of Shabu (methamphetamine)
■ 1 kilogram of Chemical
■ 2,000 Captagon tablets
■ Two sensitive weighing scales
■ A big quantity of empty sachets

The ministry stated that the street value of the seized items is estimated at around KD 220,000.

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2 Peace festival pulls huge number of participating bodies and public

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9 NBK hosts its annual Graish event to celebrate employees



11 Dive into Kuwait's rich underwater heritage

E-visas praised

Iraq mulls citizenship restoration requests

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Ambassador of Iraq to Kuwait Al-Munhal Al-Safi praised the decision that came into effect on Tuesday to allow Iraqi citizens to obtain electronic tourist entry visas to Kuwait.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of the Japanese embassy's National Day celebration, Ambassador Al-Safi explained that this step is the result of efforts exerted by the Iraqi embassy in Kuwait, in collaboration with Kuwaiti authorities, primarily the Ministry of Interior, led by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

The decision followed the success of the 26th Gulf Cup Football Championship and aims to further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two sisterly countries.

Regarding the visa acquisition process, Ambassador Al-Safi explained that the same mechanism used by Kuwaiti authorities during the Gulf 26 Championship is being followed. Visas can be obtained through the Ministry of Interior's website by completing the visa application form and meeting the necessary requirements. The conditions include a hotel reservation or a residential address in Kuwait. The tourist visa is valid for one month.

In another development, the Iraqi ambassador praised the outcomes of the eighth meeting of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi Technical Legal Committee, which took place on Sunday in Kuwait.

He said the meeting was held in a positive atmosphere and followed the regular bi-monthly meeting schedule in the capitals of the two countries.

Ambassador Al-Safi stressed that the meetings are ongoing and each one opens new opportunities, indicating that advancing these negotiations reflects the strong desire of both nations to continue developing a clear roadmap for future cooperation.

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US-Kuwait ties shine in liberation photo exhibit

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The American Embassy, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), organized the 'Allied Efforts and Documentation of Liberation' exhibition on Thursday at the National Museum.

The exhibition focused on the role of the United States of America in supporting Kuwait during the invasion. It was a reflection of the strength of relations between the two countries and a commemoration of the heroic moments during the liberation period.

In his speech at the event, Secretary General of the NCCAL Dr. Mohammed Al-Jassar pointed out that the National Museum is not just a building; as it is rather a living testimony to Kuwait's steadfastness and strong will.

He pointed out that the establishment of the museum is aimed at telling the story of Kuwait throughout the ages -- from its ancient history extending to more than 7,000 years up to the modern era, including the Al-Sabah Collection, which is one of the most prominent Islamic collections in the world. "Today, a new chapter is added to this narrative -- the events of the liberation and the subsequent reconstruction and renaissance," he stated.

Meanwhile, American Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara said the photographs displayed at the exhibition shed light on the pivotal role of the United States in liberating Kuwait during the Gulf War.

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Photo by Mohammad Morsi

US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara reflects on a powerful image from the exhibit commemorating Kuwait's liberation during the Gulf War.

Salwa detectives seize 350 illegal exhausts, arrest four

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Just four days after the Ministry of Interior threatened to take strict action against vehicles producing disturbing noises and to immediately shut down companies supplying vehicles with disruptive exhaust systems, informed security sources revealed Salwa detectives, based on the

directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, arrested four expatriates in possession of approximately 350 noisy exhaust devices stored in garages in Shuwaikh Industrial.

They affirmed the garages were closed in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

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Photo by Samer Shiger

Performers captivate the audience with a vibrant cultural presentation at the Diplomatic Day event, held at the Heritage Village of the Seas under the patronage of Information and Culture Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi. — See Page 2

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The General Traffic Department announced the commencement of the fourth phase of maintenance work at the intersection of the Fourth Ring Road and Maghreb Road on Thursday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the department explained that the sub-exit from the Fourth Ring Road towards Hawally will be closed for road users coming from Salmiya heading to Shuwaikh, and traveling towards Kuwait City via the Maghreb Expressway.

It advised drivers to use alternative routes, such as Fahaheel Expressway, King Faisal Expressway, Damascus Street, and Baghdad Street.

KUWAIT CITY: Central bank governors from within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) bloc assembled for talks in Kuwait on Thursday, presided over by Kuwaiti central bank chief Basel Al-Haroon.

The gathering aims to ratchet up financial and monetary cooperation across the six-member bloc, Kuwait's central bank said in a statement, citing a slew of pressing matters on the agenda for the talks, chief among them cybersecurity and the latest financial technology practices.

Regional efforts to clamp down on money laundering and terrorism financing were also discussed, according to the statement, underlining that the talks are part of routine gathering that seek to bolster cooperation between GCC central banks. (KUNA)

Scattered showers give way to mild weekend in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): The acting Director of the Kuwait Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, stated that the country experienced varying levels of rainfall on Wednesday evening due to the extension of an air depression, coupled with a deep depression in the upper atmospheric layers. The highest amount of rainfall recorded was 3.85 mm at Kuwait International Airport, while the lowest was 0.26 mm in the Abdali area.

Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Thursday that monitoring stations recorded varying levels of rainfall, from light to moderate, in different

parts of Kuwait, revealing that rainfall amounts included 3.65 mm in Wafra, 3.03 mm in Jal Al-Layah, 2.6 mm in Rabiya, and 1.17 mm in Salmiya.

Regarding the weather over the weekend, Al-Ali explained that Friday will be warm, with winds shifting from northwesterly to variable directions, light to moderate, at speeds ranging from 8 to 30 kilometers per hour. The expected maximum temperatures will range between 23 to 25 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, with heights ranging from one to five feet.

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KUNA photo

Motorists navigate rain-soaked roads in Kuwait on Thursday.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Back to square one as gov't output queried one year on

"A year has passed since the dissolution of the National Assembly and the absence of its oversight. The government administrative leadership previously justified its weak performance by attributing it to the presence of the legislative body, accusing the latter of disrupting governmental work." Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Today, there is no longer room or justification for poor performance. All of us are looking forward to solutions to existing problems, such as the administrative complexity, poor services, delayed transactions, poor human development performance, and the weakness that affected infrastructure.



Adel Al-Kharafi

"This is just a little of a lot, so what has happened in terms of addressing all these issues? Can the administrative leadership tell us what they have been doing so far?"

"The financial analysts pointed out the low percentage of capital spending from the budget -- approximately KDI.9 billion. I am not a financial analyst, but I believe that this amount is considered huge compared to the low ability of the government administration to implement projects, as experience has shown so. Will the executive leadership be able to implement projects during the fiscal year with this large amount, which is difficult to predict?"

"In addition, according to the Ministry of Finance, the Public Debt Law will be issued soon, and that loans will cover infrastructure and service projects. This puts new burdens on our administrative leadership, considering there are two aspects in the implementation of this law -- first is conducting studies for the projects, as it is not right to start borrowing without looking into the feasibility of projects that are ready for implementation. Second is laying down realistic repayment plans. If such plans are not ready and the debt will cover current spending, there will be a risk of gradually entering the 'debt trap'.

"Today, the government administrative leadership is at stake, as the challenges are many and the required tasks are daunting. These tasks should not be ignored and blaming one another for the lack of achievement must stop.

"In all of this, lack of achievement must be subject to questioning and accountability, because it is not right to hear statements about important projects, and then not see them on the ground. This has happened many times in the past and we hope it will not be repeated.

"Allah is the Giver of success."

Also:

"After Kuwait was liberated from the brutal Iraqi invasion, a small number of Kuwaitis with properties decided to sell their assets in Kuwait and move them abroad. They believed that Kuwait would not survive the aftermath of the invasion and occupation. They sold their homeland at the first opportunity, and purchased properties in America, thinking it was a safer choice. However, over the years, America faced the mortgage crisis, causing the value of their properties to decline, while the properties they had sold in Kuwait skyrocketed in value. This is Kuwait, ladies and gentlemen - enduring and blessed", columnist Dr. Khaled Ahmad Al-Saleh wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"The government is selling its shares in private companies and making bold decisions that have caused some unease. It has resulted in the circulation of frustrated expressions, as though Kuwait were an unstable foundation. Worries rise in the hearts of the youth, and false narratives are being spread by those who seek to sow doubt, as they assess the material value of a nation that its people love and cherish. It is a losing equation and a misguided measure.

"Some continue to repeat the flawed claim that Kuwait is a land of migration and that there are no true Kuwaitis. But Kuwait's history spans over three hundred years, longer than many nations. Every person on Earth has roots elsewhere, for migration has always been a part of human history. Despite the detractors, they will fail, just as they have failed before.

"Kuwait will remain strong as long as the sun rises in the East. It is our beloved homeland, the place where we are content with little. It carries the weight of exile for us, protects us from the sorrow of loss, helplessness, and the loss of dignity. Our homeland, Kuwait, remains steadfast in its glory.

"Dear youth, have faith in your homeland. No matter how much the corrupt may spread their influence, or how loud the voices of the malicious may grow, or how many the unjust may become, they are nothing more than scum floating on the sea of Kuwait, destined to be removed by Kuwait's enduring strength.

"Kuwait will endure and rise. Just as those who sold their properties after the invasion lost, so will those who doubt it. But those who believe in it, work for it, and contribute sincerely

will succeed. My country will forever be the pearl of nations, the most beautiful of lands. My heart will always tremble with love for it, and my eyes will tear up whenever it welcomes me back after a journey or time apart. It is Kuwait, my eternal homeland, above all disagreements, higher than any concern, and nobler than any struggle. My homeland, Kuwait, remains secure in glory."

"There is no doubt about Saudi Arabia's efforts to bridge divides and resolve conflicts in various regions in the past. It has consistently worked on healing rifts between nations, with its most recent initiative focused on Sudan. In this case, Saudi Arabia tirelessly worked to address the crisis between opposing factions by organizing numerous conferences and meetings. These efforts had a significant and positive impact, and led to meaningful progress toward a solution," columnist Dr. Essa Mohammad Al-Amiri wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Saudi Arabia's dedication to these causes stems from its deep belief that such efforts not only serve the Arab world but also enhance its global standing.

"We highlight this to draw attention to another major global event - the upcoming summit bringing together the leaders of the world's two largest nations, Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, in an effort to resolve the grave global crisis -- the Ukraine conflict. This conflict is expected to find its resolution on Saudi soil, and help avert the far-reaching global consequences of the war.

"Moreover, hosting such a summit in Riyadh affirms the pivotal international role Saudi Arabia plays. This is due to several factors, including the esteemed political stature of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who enjoys a prominent standing with the leaders of both nations. This summit further exemplifies Saudi Arabia's ongoing commitment to resolving the Russia-Ukraine crisis and working toward a fair and enduring peace in the region.

"In addition, Saudi Arabia has consistently championed many peace initiatives to bridge divides and bring opposing parties together in conflict zones around the world. Its policies are widely trusted and respected by the world's largest powers, and its strategic position in international diplomacy allows it to effectively support and lead global peace efforts.

"Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's internal stability and growth enhance its influential leadership role on the world stage. May Allah grant success."

"The government of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah remained silent for a long time, but when it spoke, it spoke with action. The announcement of the signing of the contract to begin the execution of the Mubarak Port project is a historic moment and an event that should be celebrated and praised," columnist Abdul Latif Al-Duajj wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"The project, as envisioned by its primary architect, the late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, aims to restore Kuwait's pioneering role as an investment and commercial hub in the region. It is part of a grand vision known as "New Kuwait 2035". We hope that the current governmental efforts to execute the project are sincere and that this marks a true beginning for the implementation of the "New Kuwait 2035" vision.

"If we are serious about executing this vision, economic and legal changes are necessary. More importantly, it demands social and cultural transformations, essentially a complete revolution in the mindset, mentality, and institutions of the state and society.

"For Kuwait, or any other country, to become an attractive financial and commercial hub, it must adopt an open spirit, strong capabilities, and a mentality that is able to accept others without complications or conflicts with new ideas.

"It is impossible to plan to become a hub for others and their capital while doubting everything they represent or even their outward appearance. No one will want to invest in an isolated place, and no one there will want them. It would be better for such a place to remain closed off, isolated, and drowning in its own problems, as we are today.

"The Kuwaiti merchant who once made Kuwait a commercial center in the region was a sailor who traveled the world, interacted with all types of people, and accepted diverse and understandable customs and traditions, while coexisting with foreign, and even unconventional, practices and innovations.

"The government of Sheikh Ahmad can look at the experience of Saudi Arabia, which set a 2030 plan, like us, perhaps after us, but they have outpaced us in its implementation, preparing the psychological, social, and economic atmosphere to accept it. Their achievements are unfolding steadily and successfully, with results that inspire admiration.

"Restoring our status as a commercial and investment hub means reclaiming what we lost, whether due to the reliance on oil or the regressive policies followed by previous governments. Simply put, we need to regain our openness and acceptance of the new, and return to the ambition and capabilities of the Kuwaiti people, which were undermined by the comforts of oil wealth."

Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/
Simi K. Kutty



Group photo of the forum participants with Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUNA photos

Women play vital role in security sector: Sheikh Jawaher

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs held on Wednesday an educational forum entitled (Women in the Security Sector. Inspiring Achievements and Renewed Aspirations) under the patronage and attendance of Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. This forum enhances Kuwait's role and



Ghada Al-Taher

efforts in human rights, which emerged from the Committee for Monitoring the Development Plan and the Government's Action Program, in cooperation with the National Committee for Implementing Security Council Resolution No. 1325 entitled Women, Peace and Security.

In a press statement on the sidelines of the forum, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher Ibrahim Duajj Al-Sabah said that women have a vital and essential role in all fields, especially the security sector.

In turn, the Representative of the UN Secre-

tary-General and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher, praised the valuable efforts made by the Government of Kuwait and women leaders in the security sector and the GCC countries, and their commitment and wonderful efforts in promoting peace and security.

She also noted that Kuwait, along with other GCC countries, has shown remarkable progress in enhancing the role of women in the security sector, as the launch of the National Action Plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kuwait in 2021 is a fundamental step towards institutionalizing security policies that respond to women's empowerment.

Murders, money-laundering dip

Public Prosecution issues statistics

Al-Seyassah Report

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Attorney General Justice Saad Al-Safran on Thursday confirmed the release of the annual report about the work of the Public Prosecution in 2024.

The report included statistics on case indicators, in a way that enhances the principle of transparency and helps the concerned authorities take decisions related to combating crimes, ensuring community security and serving public interest.

According to the report, the prosecution re-

corded 46,250 cases last year -- more than double of the total number recorded in the last five years. It added that the number of prosecution members totaled 480 and 18.4 percent of whom are women -- an increase of 1.6 percent compared to 2023.

The number of premeditated and attempted murder cases reached 10 -- 35 percent lower than the number recorded in 2023, cases of officials who failed to implement judicial rulings reached 426 -- an increase of 10.3 percent compared to 2023, money laundering cases reached 188 -- 11.3 percent lower than the previous year, embezzlement of public funds reached 221 -- an increase of 4.7 percent, juvenile crimes reached 5,870 -- an increase of 17.7 percent, forgery of bank documents reached 2,651 -- an increase of

4.7 percent, dud-cheque cases reached 2,906 -- an increase of 1.3 percent, and domestic violence cases reached 2,405 -- an increase of 3.7 percent.

The total number of defendants presented to the prosecution reached 51,428 and 56 percent of whom are Kuwaitis, while most of those who committed crimes belong to the age group 30-39 years or 29 percent of the total.

The completion rate of cases reached 95.8 percent -- 59 percent were referred for criminal trial, 33.9 percent were closed and 7.1 percent were transferred to the concerned courts as the courts where they were initially referred to were found to have no jurisdiction over them; while the conviction rate of judicial rulings issued last year reached 79 percent.

Stores selling fake gifts, luxury items, shoes, watches shut

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has issued 22 closure decisions for commercial establishments in Hawally that violated regulations, and referred them to the Commercial Prosecution.

Director of the Commercial Control Department at the ministry Faisal Al-Ansari explained

that these decisions were made based on recommendations from the inspection committee.

Among the establishments closed were two advertising companies. One of the companies had been promoting health insurance policies for specified amounts tied to each health insurance card. However, consumers were surprised to find that when they visited medical clinics, the cards were either suspended or did not carry the agreed-upon amounts. Many consumers also complained

about not receiving their cards on the specified date, despite having paid in advance.

The decisions included the closure of 13 stores selling counterfeit goods, including gifts, luxury items, shoes, watches, bags, and accessories. In addition, seven domestic labor recruitment offices were shut down for violating ministerial regulations prohibiting cash transactions. These offices were found to have accepted cash payments instead of using electronic payment devices such as Knet.



KUNA photo
Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah, meets the Japanese Ambassador to the country, Mukai Kenichiro, and Japanese military attaché, Colonel Ryo Tatsukawa.

Military ties part of talks

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Defense Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah met recently with Japanese Ambassador Mukai Kenichiro and Japanese Military Attache Colonel Ryo Tatsukawa to discuss important issues of mutual interest.

A statement by the ministry said the meeting involved friendly exchanges and discussions about military-related issues.

10 years jail awarded to real estate firm's top tier

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Ahmed Al-Sadi, sentenced the chairman and two board members of a major real estate company to ten-year imprisonment each, along with a fine totaling KD 14 million. The Public Authority for Minor Affairs holds shares in the company. The court also ordered the convicted individuals to repay KD 7 million.

The Public Prosecution had charged the three defendants of causing damage to the company's funds by facilitating an illegal share transaction worth KD 7 million in favor of a board member.



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PAHW's housing grants near 100K as major infrastructure progresses

Completion rates exceed expectations

By Mohammad Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Recent statistics from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) revealed that the number of housing grant applications is close to touching 100,000 barrier, as it reached 99,402 in January.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics, showing that the completion rates in the infrastructure project contracts affiliated with the housing until January were ahead of the timetable.

It indicated that remarkable progress was achieved in the infrastructure of South Sabah Al-Ahmad and South Saad Al-Abdullah housing projects; since the actual completion rates

exceeded the specified contractual rates. It stated that South Sabah Al-Ahmad housing project witnessed a remarkable development in the implemented works.

The actual completion rate reached 43.21 percent compared to the assumed contractual rate of 32.4 percent, which means the actual progress rate exceeded the contractual rate by 11 percent -- a manifestation of intensive efforts to complete the works at a faster pace.

In the South Saad Al-Abdullah housing project, the actual completion rate reached 20 percent, while the assumed contractual rate was 6.9 percent, so actual progress rate exceeded the contractual rate by 13 percent or three times the contractual rate.

The authority indicated that the affordable housing project is still in the trial period for the first and second contracts for the construction of housing units; pointing out that 151 public

buildings are still under construction, including 80 buildings in Mutla'a and 31 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

On the other hand, the authority, in cooperation with the Commercial Arbitration Center at Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, concluded a training program for its employees with the theme, "Alternative Means of Dispute Resolution and Legal Skills" under the slogan "Empowerment."

Present at the event were Deputy Director General for Public Relations and Development Omar Al-Ruwaih and Secretary General of the Commercial Arbitration Center Dr. Anas Al-Tawra.

The authority revealed in a press statement that the training program extended for nine weeks, with a total of 180 training hours and the participation of more than 45 employees and 13 lecturers in many fields.



Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Chairman of the UAE National Media Office and Chairman of the Emirates Media Council Sheikh Abdullah Al-Hamed view the contents of the center.

Al-Mutairi and UAE Media Office Head tour Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and the UAE National Media Office Head and Chairman of the Emirates Media Council Sheikh Abdullah Al-Hamed visited Wednesday Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center.

The visit included a comprehensive tour of the center's halls, including the various exhibitions it offers, covering the fields of science, history, arts, and Islamic culture. The center is considered one of the most prominent cultural landmarks in Kuwait and aims to spread knowledge and enhance cultural awareness among members of society.

Digital transformation

Kuwait backs Awqaf modernization push

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 20, (KUNA): A seminar in Malaysia on Wednesday pushed forward with plans to form a central Islamic endowments body, also known as Awqaf, given its increasing significance towards sustainable development.

The seminar, sponsored by Kuwait's Awqaf General Secretariat, in the Malaysian capital is tantamount to a launchpad for the formation of a digital Awqaf body, its chief organizer Reham Bukhawa told KUNA, citing such a measure as aiming to regulate and organize the process.

Such a move should also ensure financial transparency and outline with clarity the notion of digital Islamic endowments, the participants collectively agreed, citing the launch of campaigns to generate awareness about the measure before it comes to fruition.



KUNA photo

Group photo of researchers, participants and attendees at the conclusion of the 'Digital Endowments' symposium in Kuala Lumpur, organized and sponsored by the General Secretariat of Endowments in the State of Kuwait.



Rana Al Zahhar - Art teacher & Nesrine Charrad - Student.



Khalid Ali - Art Coordinator.



Students engaged in the Exhibition.

Celebration of creativity and confidence

Dasman Bilingual School empowers students in Premier Arts Competition

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Kuwait's Dasman Bilingual School recently organized its highly anticipated Premier Arts Competition, bringing together young, talented artists from various divisions to showcase their creativity and passion for the arts.

The event, designed to encourage artistic expression and innovation, featured a diverse range of works, including paintings, digital art, crafts, and multimedia projects.

The competition aimed to empower students by providing them with a platform to express themselves freely and build confidence in their artistic abilities. The school ensured that students from all learning backgrounds -- including those with special needs -- were given the opportunity to participate, making the event an inclusive celebration of talent.

Arts teacher Ms. Rana Al-Zahhar emphasized the importance of nurturing students' creativity, stating, "Through this competition, we are preparing our students for a future where they can apply their artistic skills in various professions, whether as artists, architects, engineers, or designers. It's about fostering self-confidence and expression without fear or hesitation."

One of the standout participants, Nesrine Charrad, shared her experience of working with different artistic mediums.

"I love experimenting with colors and textures" she said, "whether it's alcohol markers, pastels, or acrylics. I always look for new ways to bring my ideas to life."

Nesrine, working with a black canvas presents both a challenge and an opportunity. "It can be tricky for the eye, but the key is to make the colors stand out clearly and harmoniously," she explains.

"You have to ensure that the colors don't overwhelm or strain the viewer's eyes. Sometimes, that means reversing the colors to achieve the right balance."

Her passion for art extends to exploring various materials and techniques. "I get excited every time I try something new. I love working with alcohol markers, pastels, poster markers, acrylics and watercolors -- I like to experiment with everything. I hate remaining idle," she said.

When it comes to inspiration, Nesrine describes her creative process as instinctive. "Once an idea is born in my mind, I immediately start working on it. I don't rely heavily on visuals, but if certain de-

tails are tricky, I might use a reference for accuracy."

With her fearless approach to color and technique, Nesrine embodies the spirit of artistic exploration, constantly pushing boundaries and refining her craft.

"Today marks the opening of the highly anticipated Premier Art Exhibition, an inspiring showcase of creativity and talent from students across all divisions, including special needs, middle and high school," Khalid Ali -- Art Coordinator.

Speaking at the event, the art coordinator highlighted the growing number of emerging artists among the students this year. "We discovered a remarkable number of new artists, many of whom are picking up a brush for the first time."

"Some have been with us for a couple of years, gradually developing their passion for art through various mediums," he said.

He went on to say, "The exhibition is designed to mirror the excitement of a movie premiere, providing young artists with a platform to present their work without fear or hesitation."

"Our goal is to empower students, allowing them to proudly display their art to parents, friends, staff, siblings and teachers, fostering confidence and self-expression," Ali added.

Beyond artistic expression, the event also encourages students to explore entrepreneurship, helping them recognize the potential of their work as a profession or a source of inspiration for others.

This year's exhibition, he said, focuses primarily on multimedia art, featuring a diverse range of works, including paintings, drawings, digital art, crafts and heritage-inspired pieces.

With its largest participation yet, the Premier Art Exhibition celebrates the students' creative journeys, marking a significant milestone in their artistic growth.

The Premier Arts Competition not only highlighted the incredible artistic potential within the school but also encouraged students to consider art as a viable career path or a lifelong passion. Parents, teachers, and fellow students attended the exhibition, celebrating the young artists' hard work and dedication.

With the overwhelming success of this year's event, Dasman Bilingual School plans to expand the competition in the coming years, further fostering a culture of creativity and artistic excellence among its students.



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LOCAL



KUNA photo
Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti Writers Association, Hmaid Al-Mutairi with Sheikhha Afrah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the award's sponsor, during a press conference held to announce the award.

Elevating literary excellence

Kuwait Writers Association launches poetry, novels, short stories contest

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): The Kuwait Writers Association on Wednesday launched its contest in the fields of poetry, novels, and short stories in order to raise the level of literary works to an international scale.

The contest sponsor Sheikhha Afrah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said during a press briefing that what is distinctive of this contest is that it coincides with the national days and Kuwait's celebration of the "Kuwait Capital of Arab Culture and Media 2025".

She added these awards are meant to help encourage the progressions in the quality and value of Kuwaiti literary works and seek to strengthen Kuwait writers association on the Arab and international cultural scene.

Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti Writers Association, Hmaid Al-Mutairi said "the ceremony aims to raise

the literary and artistic heights of our literary works and standards in Kuwait in order to reach world-class levels".

In order to apply for the contest one must have a valid membership at Kuwait Writers Association and that no more than three years have passed since the publication of his works, written in classical Arabic.

The contest categories are Best Kuwaiti novel, Best Kuwaiti collection of poetry, best theatrical text, Best children's story, Best short story, and the Best critical article dealing with a Kuwaiti literary work. Established in 1964, Kuwait Writers Association consisted of poets, story writers, and novelists, and aims to foster the intellectual movement and literary renaissance in Kuwait and the trend in literature to serve the Arab community and to develop national and patriotic awareness.



KUNA photo
The White Hands Volunteer Project is one of the association's projects.

Kuwait's Tamayuz Charity expands humanitarian aid in Nigeria, Benin

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Tamayuz Charity announced several projects aimed at bettering individual's lives and promoting sustainable development in Nigeria and Benin.

Deputy Chair of Board of Directors, Khalil Al-Hamadi, told KUNA of the charity's core belief in creating a comprehensive educational, healthy, and social environment.

He pointed to recent achievement of inaugurating Abdullah Al-Musallam village in Nigeria, home to mosque with a capacity for 300 persons, a school for 600 student, an orphanage for 40 orphans and a farm to ensure sustainability of resources.

Al-Hamadi also spoke of a sharia and Arabic Language College, orphanages, farm and mosque, as well as performance of 300 eye surgeries.

KFAED renews support for engineers, architects

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has renewed its support for national employees by continuing the "Training and Qualifying Kuwaiti Engineers and Architects" program, which was first launched in 2004, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued during its participation in the 24th Engineering Admissions Exhibition, organized by the Office of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University,

KFAED explained that the program aims to equip Kuwaiti engineers and architects with the skills needed to achieve a high professional level in the shortest time possible. The training course will be held for approximately 13 months and is divided into three phases.

Its participation in this exhibition aims to familiarize high school students with the outcomes of the training and qualification program for newly graduated Kuwaiti engineers and architects.

Continued from Page 1

Iraq mulls

In response to a question regarding the restoration of Iraqi citizenship for those affected by the decision to revoke Kuwaiti citizenship under Article 8, Ambassador Al-Safi revealed that the Iraqi embassy had been informed via a memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the withdrawal of nationality from a number of wives of Kuwaiti men.

He affirmed that these cases are being examined to determine the legal procedures necessary to restore Iraqi citizenship.

Ambassador indicated that it is possible for those who previously renounced their Iraqi citizenship to regain it by submitting a request to the Iraqi Minister of Interior through the consular section at the Iraqi Embassy in Kuwait, in order to initiate the required legal procedures.

Kuwait drug

It revealed that the suspects and the seized items were referred to the Drugs and Alcohol Prosecution for legal action.

The ministry affirmed that DCGD will continue its intensive campaigns to apprehend drug smugglers and dealers to ensure the security and safety of society.

Salwa detectives

The ministry disclosed last Saturday that as part of ongoing efforts to combat negative phenomena which disturb public comfort and affect road safety; the General Traffic Department (GTD), in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, affirmed the continuation of intensive traffic campaigns through the establishment of fixed and mobile checkpoints in order to impound vehicles whose exhausts were modified illegally and emit annoying sounds, in addition to the immediate closure of garages that supply vehicles with illegal exhausts.

US-Kuwait

She added it is a unique documentation of the moments of courage, resilience and solidarity that formed the deep bonds between the two countries.

She continued: As we look forward to the future, let us recall moments from the past when there was a man named Saddam Hussein who wanted to erase the identity of Kuwait. Tanks came and tried to do so, but after 34 years, all we see here is the true, unique and independent identity of Kuwait. There is a famous saying,

"The best revenge is to live a prosperous life." I believe that Kuwait lives a very prosperous life. So, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to participate in this important event.

Diplomacy officer at the American Embassy Stuart Turner said the reason behind displaying such photos now is that they were kept inside the embassy and were not available to the public.

On military cooperation, he disclosed there is a foreign military sales (FMS) program between the United States and Kuwait, and the details of which are being discussed through the Office of Military Cooperation.

He stressed that Kuwait is always keen on obtaining the latest military technologies, while affirming the continuation of joint training between the Kuwaiti and American armies using advanced American equipment.

He revealed "when I contacted Eng. Bashar Al-Salem -- the organizer of the event at 'Gardenia', to discuss ways for us to participate in a special event, it immediately came to my mind to display these photos because of the strong indications they carry about the extended partnership between our two countries. The timing of the exhibition is also ideal, coinciding with Kuwait's national and liberation celebrations."

Ambassador praises bilateral bonds and vision for peace

Kuwait Embassy in Doha marks National Days

DOHA, Feb 20, (KUNA): The Embassy of Kuwait in Doha celebrated on Thursday the 64th Independence and 34th Liberation Days in the presence of a number of ministers, ambassadors, and foreign and local dignitaries.

Ambassador of Kuwait to Qatar Khaled Al-Mutairi praised at the ceremony His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. He pointed out that the celebrations are an opportunity to display Kuwait's vision of peace, cooperation, and friendship among all countries and peoples of the world.

Al-Mutairi stressed Kuwait's keenness to strengthen cooperation with the GCC and all Arab countries, in addition to supporting the efforts of the international community towards establishing international peace and security.

He praised the distinguished Qatari-Kuwaiti relations on all levels linked by a strong relationship throughout history, thanks to the care and wise directives of the leaders in both coun-



KUNA photos
Part of the ceremony of the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Qatar. Inset: Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Qatar Khaled Al-Mutairi delivers speech at the event.

tries.

Al-Mutairi pointed out the Sixth Qatari-Kuwaiti Joint Supreme Committee that sought to

strengthen bilateral cooperation, relations, and development in various sectors, by signing a number of beneficial agreements.

Kuwait leads regional push for 'clean energy' solutions

Bushehri calls for strengthened cooperation

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri said the 24th meeting of the Regional Renewable Energy Council reflects everyone's commitment to support regional cooperation and the transition towards more sustainable energy systems to achieve sustainable development goals and fulfill commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions towards carbon neutrality.

In his speech during the opening of the meeting, Bushehri explained that energy production focuses on two main axes: supply, meaning the production and generation of energy from renewable sources, and demand that is related to energy consumption. He pointed out that improving energy efficiency



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri, during his participation in the conference.

leads to reducing consumption, which limits the production of electricity using traditional methods that is positively reflected on the environment.

He added the meeting tackled renewable energies and their localization and the optimal use of electricity, while stressing the need to develop policies and mechanisms that enhance investment in renewable energies and their efficient use in various economic sectors like private housing, invest-

ment, commercial, industrial and agricultural sectors.

He pointed out that the meeting is being held at a time there is a struggle to adopt clean energy technologies and enhance energy efficiency as basic pillars of sustainable development. He highlighted the vital role of the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in supporting countries in the region by exchanging experience, developing capabilities and presenting plausible recommendations to formulate applicable national and regional policies.

He stressed the importance of direct investment in renewable energy, localizing modern technology, qualifying and training national and Arab workforce, and raising community awareness on the importance of energy efficiency to rationalize consumption and ensure its sustainability.

He also announced that Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, will host the Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week from May 11 to 13, which includes a conference and exhibition organized by the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency with the participation of global and regional entities from the public and private sectors.

ABK announces Abdulstar Abdulsamad Al Safar as Alfouz weekly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Abdulstar Abdulsamad Al Safar as the winner of the Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday, 17 February, 2025. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the account has attracted significant attention in the Kuwaiti market. Based on the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

With a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000



Alfouz 2025 Weekly Winner.

monthly draw, the Alfouz account continues to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.

To top it off, ABK has simplified the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10

deposited.

The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 24 February, 2025.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for!

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow ABK's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

Awqaf takes part in Expo 965 exhibition

By Mohammed Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The acting Deputy Secretary-General for Administration and Support Services at the General Secretariat of Awqaf Amal Al-Dallal announced the participation of the Department of Media and Awqaf Development in the 6th annual Expo 965 heritage and craft exhibition for Kuwaiti creators.

In a press statement, Al-Dallal explained that the department's pavilion includes various publications from the General Secretariat of Awqaf that highlight the endowment as a noble prophetic Sunnah promoted by Islam. The pavilion showcases the secretariat's achievements at both local and international levels, including most prominent media and marketing publications, children's stories about endowment and charitable work, and social and educational materials, among others.

Al-Dallal clarified that the secretariat's participation in the exhibition aims to spread the culture of endowment to the audience and introduce its distinguished, specialized accomplishments in order to enhance the public's understanding and perception of endowment among exhibition visitors.

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Kuwait crude oil price jumps to \$79.78 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil leaped USD 1.43 during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 79.78 per barrel compared with USD 78.35 pb the day before, Kuwait Pe-

roleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Brent futures edged 20 cents higher to USD 76.04 pb and West Texas Intermediate rose 40 cents to USD 72.25 pb.

Business



Invest GB team during the hospital visit.



Group photo of Invest GB team.

'InvestGB' reinforces its community commitment with a visit to hospitalized children

As part of its corporate social responsibility efforts to support activities that benefit the community and promote a spirit of engagement and compassion, a team from Gulf Capital Investment Company, "InvestGB", the investment arm of Gulf Bank, visited the pediatric wards at Al Amiri Hospital and Ibn Sina Hospital. The visit was coordinated in collaboration with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH). During the visit, the InvestGB team met with the children and their families, spreading joy by distributing gifts in

a heartwarming and uplifting atmosphere filled with optimism and kindness. Commenting on the initiative, Mr. Nazem AlGhabra, Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications at InvestGB, emphasized the company's commitment to community service. He stated: "We were delighted to bring smiles to the children's faces. This initiative aligns with our broader vision of corporate social responsibility, and we will explore further collaborations with nonprofit organizations to expand our community impact."

AlGhabra further highlighted that InvestGB remains dedicated to support-

ing and developing the community through various initiatives, including youth empowerment, workplace enhancement, and environmental awareness. Through training and development programs, the company provides students and graduates with practical opportunities to acquire the skills needed for the job market, reinforcing its commitment to investing in human capital as a cornerstone of sustainable growth. Additionally, InvestGB seeks to foster an innovative and supportive work environment that promotes responsible practices, further strengthening its role in driving sustainable development.

Boursa Kuwait closes higher with 0.49% gain

Major 50 Index gains 0.68%

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Thursday's trading session on a positive note, with the general index rising 39.71 points, or 0.49%, to close at 8,142.94 points.

Market activity saw 480.5 million shares traded through 21,303 transactions, with a total value of 157.2 million dinars (approximately \$484.17 million).

The Main Market Index edged up 11.82 points, or 0.16%, to 7,477.56

points, with 346 million shares changing hands across 12,425 transactions worth 103.2 million dinars (around \$317.8 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index advanced 48.71 points, or 0.56%, to reach 8,711.36 points, supported by the trading of 134.5 million shares in 8,878 transactions worth 53.9 million dinars (\$166 million).

The Major 50 Index also gained 51.87 points, or 0.68%, closing at 7,625.82 points, with 284.5 million shares traded through 8,718 transactions, totaling 95.8 million dinars (\$295 million).

Duqm Refinery boosts capacity by 10% to 255K barrels per day

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Duqm Refinery's maximum refining production capacity recently increased by 10 percent -- from 230,000 to 255,000 barrels per day, reliable sources told the newspaper.

Sources said this growth is expected to continue, with another 10 percent increase projected for 2026. The refinery's rapid development, despite its recent establishment, is attributed to increased global demand and its strategic location, they added.

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) marketing efforts and the refinery's proximity to the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea have also contributed to its success, sources pointed out.

The Sultanate of Oman has placed special emphasis on Duqm Refinery due to disruptions at the Omani Sohar Refinery and the Duqm Refinery's consistent production. With an investment value of approximately \$9 billion, it has become a major player in

the Middle East and North Africa region, sources affirmed.

The refinery has also captured a significant share of the African market, exporting roughly 50 percent of its diesel production to the continent. It exports high-quality materials to European and Asian markets, with over 110 shipments sent globally last year. Its products, including diesel, naphtha, liquefied petroleum gas, jet fuel, petroleum coke, and sulfur, are all free of environmental pollutants and meet international standards. It has helped increase Oman's total refining capacity to over 500,000 barrels per day, leading to record-high petroleum derivative export shipments last year, sources explained.

While feasibility studies for a petrochemical complex near the Duqm Refinery, in partnership with Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia, have been completed; the project's start date remains uncertain as Kuwait and Oman await a final response from Saudi Arabia, sources added.

Under the patronage of H.H. the Crown Prince

Zain strategic partner of 15th International Invention Fair

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Zain has announced its strategic partnership with the 15th edition of the International Invention Fair in the Middle East, organized by the Kuwait Science Club with support from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The event, which brought together 180 inventors from 42 Arab and international countries, was held under the esteemed patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Zain participated in the exhibition's opening ceremony, attended by H.H. the Crown Prince's representative, H.E. the Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, alongside Chairman of the Scientific Club and President of the Exhibition's Organizing Committee Talal Al-Kharafi, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, as well as numerous diplomats, academics, and members of the scientific community.

Zain continues its annual support for this pioneering scientific event, taking pride in being part of its success story since its inception. The company considers fostering innovation and supporting creative minds as integral to its vision, and this partnership reaffirms its commitment to empowering scientists, inventors, and innovators in their pursuit of excellence.

The patronage of H.H. the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah reflects Kuwait's deep commitment to advancing science and its scholars, reinforcing the country's standing in the global scientific



Minister Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei with Talal Al-Kharafi, Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain's team, and organizers at the company's booth.

community and its contributions to international scientific progress.

Zain firmly believes that investing in creative minds is an investment in the future and that supporting scientific research and innovation is the key to achieving sustainable development and positioning Kuwait as a hub for knowledge and creativity.

For Zain, this partnership is more than just a corporate commitment—it is a national responsibility. The company is dedicated to inspiring young minds and enabling visionary thinkers to realize

their ambitions.

Over the years, the exhibition has earned significant recognition, showcasing Kuwait's rich intellectual and cultural contributions on regional and global scientific platforms. It has established itself as the largest of its kind in the Middle East and the second largest worldwide.

The International Invention Fair in the Middle East attracts substantial interest from the Arab, regional, and global scientific communities. It serves as a platform to highlight the ingenuity of young Arab and, particularly,

Kuwaiti inventors, reinforcing Kuwait's leadership in fostering innovation for the benefit of humanity.

Through its continued support of this initiative, Zain seeks to contribute to creating an environment that nurtures Arab and Kuwaiti youth—especially Kuwaiti inventors—enabling them to showcase their talents and scientific potential alongside global participants who travel from various countries to present groundbreaking ideas and inventions that serve diverse aspects of life.

New tools to support economic trends & SDG tracking

Arab Fund and UN-ESCWA join forces to upgrade data portal for sustainable development in the Arab region

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance the Arab Development Portal, a key online data resource for Arab countries. This collaboration aims to speed up Arab countries' progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The portal is a regional knowledge and data platform providing access to reliable development data from various credible sources. The upgraded version will include tools powered by artificial intelligence tools, user-friendly dashboards and predictive analytics, offering valuable insights into economic trends, global benchmarks, and SDG indicators.

"This collaboration with the Arab Fund, representing ACG institutions, marks a pivotal step in strengthening data-driven, evidence-based decision-making across the Arab region. By enhancing data dissemination and accessibility, we empower policymakers and researchers with the insights needed to address critical challenges in economic development, public health, unemployment, climate resilience, and other key areas aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals," said Rola Dashti, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UN-ESCWA.

The Arab Development Portal was established by the Arab Coordination Group (ACG), an alliance of 10 Arab development institutions including the Arab Fund.

"Partnership is at the core of our new strategy to maximize our impact on social and economic development across member countries," said Bader Alsaad, Arab Fund's Director General and Chair-



MoU signed to advance data-driven decision-making in Arab region.

man of the Board of Directors. "Together with UN-ESCWA we will use our expertise and resources to create a data-driven approach that helps policymakers make informed decisions."

The three-year partnership will include hands-on workshops, the creation of knowledge shar-

ing resources, and the development of innovative strategies to improve development indicators. It will also strengthen connection between the portal and its sources and will offer specialized training on AI tools to boost skills in data management and analysis.

Airline to surge flights, targets 40K+ by '25

Kuwait Airways aims for 25% revenue increase in 2024/'25

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways, headed by Abdul Mohsen Al-Faqan, aims to achieve better revenues and operational efficiency while providing the best services to customers around the world.

Sources revealed it is expected that the revenues of the airline in the 2024/2025 fiscal will increase by about 25 percent compared to last year's profits, which amounted to around KD 335 million (2023/2024).

Asked if the airline's seventh spot among the best revenues for Gulf airlines in fiscal 2023/2024 according to statistics from the Arab Union for Tourism Media meets the expectations of the Board of Directors, sources responded "our achievement of this position, although good, is not the ambition of the board. The current board aims to achieve very high profits for the company, especially since it is keen on achieving unprecedented revenues in the 2025/2026 fiscal, which will begin in early April."

They explained that such an ambition will be realized by increasing the number of destinations, which will reach 58 in summer. "Kuwait Airways

aspires to reach 65 destinations in the summer of 2026. It aims to increase the number of its annual passengers from 5.5 to 6 million in the current year," sources added.

Sources revealed the airlines is also keen on increasing its flights to reach more than 40,000, especially in 2025, so that the highest percentage will be reached next year. They indicated that the completion of Terminal 2 at Kuwait International Airport in 2027, "the airline's profits will reach limits that reflect the efforts exerted by the incumbent board of directors, which assumed responsibility under difficult circumstances."

Sources also pointed out that the efforts exerted by the State in expanding its economic structure and implementing many development and service projects, which have been active under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Al-Jaber Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, are among the main factors for increasing revenues. They said that allowing family visits and the 60-year-old expatriates to renew their residency permits without paying the previous health insurance fees for those who do not hold university qualifications also contributed to increasing the revenues.



Part of the executive management's participation in one of the competitions during the ceremony.



Executive management at the forefront.

Honoring their vital contribution to the bank's ongoing success

NBK hosts its annual Graish event to celebrate employees

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, symbolizing unity and gratitude, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) reaffirmed its appreciation for its employees' dedication by celebrating them at the annual Graish ceremony. This year's event took place at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, in the presence of the bank's executive management.

Through this event, NBK seeks to uphold the rich traditions and family values deeply rooted in Kuwaiti society, foster stronger connections among employees across all departments, and recognize their vital contributions to the bank's ongoing success.

The event commenced with a brief address by Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer of National Bank of Kuwait, who extended his congratulations to all employees in anticipation of the holy month of Ramadan.

In his speech, Al-Sager emphasized NBK's long-standing tradition of organizing Graish ahead of Ramadan each year as a tribute to employees' dedication and contributions. He highlighted that their unwavering commitment and collective spirit have been instrumental in maintaining the bank's leadership in the banking sector.

Attended by over 1,700 employees, the ceremony provided a vibrant setting for colleagues to exchange Ramadan greetings and celebrate the cherished Kuwaiti tradition of Graish. This annual gathering not only honors cultural heritage but also reinforces NBK's commitment to fostering a strong family spirit across the organization.

The two-and-a-half-hour ceremony featured a variety of activities, including entertainment segments, musical performances, and engaging competitions, along with exciting prize draws. The event was met with great enthusiasm from attendees, creating a lively and memorable experience.

The Graish celebration organized by NBK for its employees this year was elevated by the enchanting presence of high-end music. A musical ensemble, led by maestro Dr. Khaled Nouri, captivated the audience with a selection of renowned songs and distinctive melodies, creating a magical ambiance. The evening became even more memorable as a group of NBK employees joined the band in playing and singing, adding a personal and heartfelt touch to the



Mr. Isam Al-Sager giving his speech.



Executive management participates in competitions during the ceremony.

- NBK Remains Committed to Strengthening Family Traditions and Values in the Kuwaiti Society
- The Bank is Committed to Inspiring Employees and Fostering a Work Environment that Encourages Creativity and Innovation

celebration.

On this special occasion, NBK sought to cultivate a spirit of camaraderie and excitement among its employees by hosting a series of engaging competitions throughout the event. The celebration was further elevated with the distribution of prestigious prizes, creating an atmosphere brimming with energy, anticipation, and joy.

Acknowledging employees' dedication and cultivating strong interpersonal connections form the foundation of NBK's strategic vision. This commitment underscores the importance of seamless communication, values individual contributions, and fosters a culture of teamwork, productivity, and synergy across the bank's diverse departments.

NBK firmly believes that its employees are its greatest asset and the driving force behind its continued success. No institution can achieve its strategic objectives without the dedication, active participation, and commitment of its people. With this in mind, the bank continuously strives to inspire its employees, foster their professional growth, and unlock their full potential. The strong team spirit that unites NBK's workforce across all departments serves as the foundation of its achievements, enabling the bank to deliver world-class banking services that rival those of leading global institutions.

NBK places great emphasis on social and cultural initiatives that strengthen employees' sense of belonging and job satisfaction while fostering a spirit of collaboration and teamwork. By cultivating an inspiring work environment that encourages creativity and innovation, the bank ensures that these values translate into exceptional service quality, reinforcing its commitment to delivering an unparalleled banking experience to its customers.



Part of the audience.



One of the party's segments.



Draws and prizes.



The ceremony witnessed distinctive musical and singing segments.



Part of the party activities.



National talents added a fun atmosphere to the party.



National Bank of Kuwait employees in a group photo.



Abu Alhous and Duaij Alsaleh



Group photo after signing the agreement.

For the first time in Kuwait and through KFHonline app

KFH signs agreement to launch transfer service to KCC via KFHonline

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: As part of its leadership in digital transformation and offering the latest innovative banking solutions, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has signed agreement to launch of a new service in collaboration with Kuwait Clearing Company (KCC). The new service, which is rolled out for the first time in Kuwait, allows customers to securely and easily transfer funds online to their trading account at KCC through KFHonline app.

Following the signing of the agreement with the CEO of the Kuwait Clearing Company (KCC), Duaij Alsaleh, KFH Group's Chief Operations Officer, Abdulla Abu Alhous, said that the new money transfer service to trading account through KFHonline offers numerous advantages. Customers are able to access the service 24/7 without any fees, reflecting KFH's success in offering maximum convenience to its customers, through a seamless, secure, and high-quality banking experience.

Abu Alhous emphasized that KFH is strengthening its efforts to enhance customers' experience and facilitate a comprehensive range of banking operations that meet their evolving needs and expectations amid rapid technological advancements. This is achieved by leveraging the KFH's outstanding technological and digital infrastructure.

Kuwait Clearing Company CEO, Duaij Alsaleh, appraised the efforts made to ensure the success of the service. He further added that the agreement with Kuwait Finance House will help improve the quality of services provided by KCC and is an important addition to its service ecosystem, which aims to provide users with comfort, flexibility, and security. Alsaleh acknowledged all efforts aimed at improving the company's approach and service delivery. The company is committed to digitizing its services by implementing cutting-edge automated systems, ultimately



Abu Alhous signs the agreement with a KCC representative.

- Abu Alhous:**
 - The service confirms our continued leadership in offering innovative digital solutions
- Alobaid:**
 - The new service is accessible online 24/7
- Alsaleh:**
 - A significant addition to clearing services

enhancing customer and user satisfaction.

Meanwhile, KFH Executive Manager Digital and Alternative Channels, Meshal Alobaid, said that the service reinforces KFH's leadership in delivering innovative digital solutions that meet customer expectations and enhance their banking experience. He noted that the new service is available on iPhone, Android, and Huawei devices. "Through KFHonline app, customers can transfer amounts to KCC within one working day in a quick and secure manner," he further explained.

Alobaid added: "KFH continues to take the lead in launching a range of digital services that provide an unparalleled banking experience. These include the digital e-signature for personal financing transactions, AFAQ payment service enabling customers to instantly transfer money from their accounts to GCC banks participating in the AFAQ service, and Wamd service allowing customers to send and request money from other customers instantly and free of charge using their phone numbers linked to their bank accounts 24/7.

It is worth noting that KFH has also introduced other digital services such as launching the instant card printing service for the first time worldwide, cardless cash withdrawal and deposit, buying and selling gold, instant gold biscuits delivery, facilitating online payments using smart watches, and online cheque deposit. Additionally, KFHonline offers over 150 banking services, in addition to other 50 services offered through XTM and KFH Go smart branches. In total, KFH offers about 200 online banking services through different apps and e-channels, making it the preferred destination for digital banking services and solutions.

Dean celebrates students' success in H.I. Innovation Program

AU team secures second runner-up in prestigious KIB competition

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The team representing the College of Business at the Australian University (AU) secured second runner up place in the highly regarded H.I. Innovation Program hosted by the Kuwait International Bank (KIB). Competing against top talent from other universities in Kuwait, the AU team developed a cutting-edge banking solution designed to enhance customer engagement and reduce churn rates.

The AU student's innovative product demonstrated immediate applicability and showcased a clear strategic vision, strong functionality, and a compelling return on investment. Their professional presentation and ability to articulate objectives with precision set them apart from competition. The students representing AU during the competition were: Alizaa Hassan, Khaled Al Otaibi, Mishari Al Ameeri, and Abdulaziz Al Jaian.

Ms. Nourah Al Humaidi, a representative from KIB's Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence department, praised the team for their dedication and ingenuity, stating: "Their dedication, creativity, and problem-solving skills were truly inspiring. We were amazed by their ability to tackle challenges with such



Australian University students at the H.I. Innovation Program.

enthusiasm and innovation, and we have no doubt that they have bright futures ahead."

Commenting on the success of the students, Dr. Farid Abdullah, Dean of the College of Business at AU, said: "We are immensely proud of our students for this remarkable achieve-

ment. Their success in the KIB H.I. Innovation Program is a testament to their talent, dedication, and ability to develop real-world solutions. This accomplishment reflects the excellence we strive for and reaffirms our commitment to nurturing future business leaders."

'Global corp. to set up research centers'

Kuwait Oil Company signs MoUs for Al-Ahmadi Innovation Valley

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Oil Company signed memoranda of understanding with Baker Hughes, SLP Oilfield Services, Weatherford International, Halliburton Co., and the National Energy Services Reunited Corp. (NESR) to develop Al-Ahmadi innovation valley - a leading initiative in the field of digital transformation.

KOC CEO Ahmad Jaber Al-Eidan inked the deals with representatives of the five corporations on Wednesday, according to a statement from KOC.

Under the deals, each of the five corporations will set up a world-class research center at Al-Ahmadi innovation valley to offer solutions to KOC in the areas of exploration for, and

production of, oil and gas.

Al-Ahmadi innovation valley, to be provided with efficient energy experts and the latest technologies, is designed to be one of the national assets aiming to push the energy sector forward, the statement quoted Al-Eidan as saying.

It will be a big stride towards strengthening Kuwait's status as a regional power in the fields of energy and digital transformation, he noted.

Working with global partners, KOC is building an integrated system that could help achieve the company's targets for technological excellence and sustainable energy, Al-Eidan added.

'Eng. Suha Isaac highlights successful partnership'

KIBS celebrates 3-year partnership with FranklinCovey for leadership excellence

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) celebrated the ongoing success of its partnership with FranklinCovey Middle East which has spanned three years, with the goal of empowering leaders and enhancing their leadership skills. This was highlighted during the closing meeting of the Leadership Excellence Program where leaders from three groups held in the 2024-2025 training year gathered to share their experiences and benefit from outstanding training content.

Eng. Suha Isaac, Head of Training at KIBS, welcomed the

attendees and expressed her pride in the fruitful collaboration with FranklinCovey. She also extended her gratitude to Mr. Stéphane Gervais Senior Consultant at Franklin Covey, for his inspiring presentation, which provided valuable leadership insight.

The event featured an interactive Q&A session where participants exchanged ideas and experiences. This event served as an inspiring milestone in leadership development and a message of appreciation to successful leaders who contribute to building a promising future.

'\$32 bln in insurance operations over 50 years'

Saudi Arabia hosts Dhaman's 50th anniversary celebration in Riyadh

RIYADH, Feb 20: Under the patronage of His Excellency Minister of Finance Mr. Mohammed bin Abdullah Aljadaan, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) celebrated its Golden Jubilee as the first multilateral investment guarantee body in the world.

Held in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, on Wednesday (February 19, 2025) evening, the celebration was attended by a large number of Their Highnesses and Their Excellencies princes, ministers, diplomatic missions' representatives and chairmen of organizations, chambers, unions, Arab and international government and private bodies and public figures.

Addressing the event, the Minister Aljadaan congratulated in his speech delivered on his behalf by His Excellency Mr. Khaled Bawazier, Saudi Deputy Minister of Finance for International Relations, the Corporation and Member Countries, and commended Dhaman's contribution, since it was established, to strengthening economic integration and achieving sustainable development in Member Countries.

He said during the celebration, where the Corporation's former board chairmen and directors-general were honored, that the Kingdom's hosting of this exceptional event affirmed its unwavering commitment to supporting pan-Arab action institutions in general, and promoting Dhaman's role in developing investment, trade, finance and insurance sectors in a manner that backs the Arab region's economic development process.

His Excellency the Minister underlined the Kingdom's continued support for the Corporation's strategies, plans and programs in the coming period, along with its directions to broaden the scope of its sectoral and geographical activities through its headquarters in the State of Kuwait and its regional office in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, in a bid to strengthen its presence to serve Member Countries and ensure that it keeps providing its services and helping achieve growth and prosperity.

Minister Aljadaan noted in his speech that this backing offered by the Kingdom is an extension of being one of the Corporation's largest shareholders, as it spearheaded efforts



Dhaman celebrates 50th anniversary under Minister Aljadaan's patronage.

to enhance its financial capabilities in the context of the initiative of the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud - May Allah have mercy on him - during the Riyadh Economic Summit in 2013, to boost the capital of Arab financial institutions.

Considering the rapid regional and global economic and political developments, the Minister underlined the significance of consolidating cooperation and integration in the coming period in order to achieve common goals and promote sustainable development in various domains, pointing out the importance of the concerted efforts of the region's countries to cope with these developments through deliberate, objective and implementable plans at various levels.

He, further, stressed the significance of cementing and beefing up our local and regional institutions to enable them to face challenges and strengthen their roles in serving Arab economies and peoples, adding, "We are confident that continued cooperation between all parties will contribute to achieving further successes and progress in the future."

For his part, the Corporation's Board Chairman, H.E. Dr. Naif bin AbdulRahman Al-Shammari, thanked H.E. the

Saudi Minister of Finance, Mr. Mohammed bin Abdullah Aljadaan for patronizing the celebration, and welcomed the representatives of Member Countries, regional and international bodies and governmental and private agencies, who were keen on partaking in the celebration of this exceptional occasion.

Dr. Al-Shammari commended what has been achieved by Dhaman to serve the regional economies, its customers and partners in various areas of investment, trade, finance and insurance throughout its long history, noting that it has doubled the volume of its insurance operations in the region against political and commercial risks with a cumulative value exceeding \$32 billion since its establishment until the end of 2024. He added that what really gives rise to optimism is the fact that more than 90% of these operations were carried out during the past couple of decades, which culminated in the conclusion of commercial and financing deals and investment projects whose value is much higher than that of those guarantees.

He added that the Corporation has backed many national exportcredit insurance agencies in Arab countries, and pro-

vided them with extra insurance capabilities through various reinsurance mechanisms. The Corporation has also developed its activity in the field of improving the investment and business climate in the region by means of offering consultations, technical and training support, publishing more than 600 specialized publications and periodicals, and organizing and attending hundreds of relevant events.

The Corporation's Board Chairman elaborated that despite its operational success and commitment to its developmental role towards Member Countries, the Corporation could maintain a strong financial performance to hike up its reserves to more than \$230 million thanks to its sustainable reliance on its own resources.

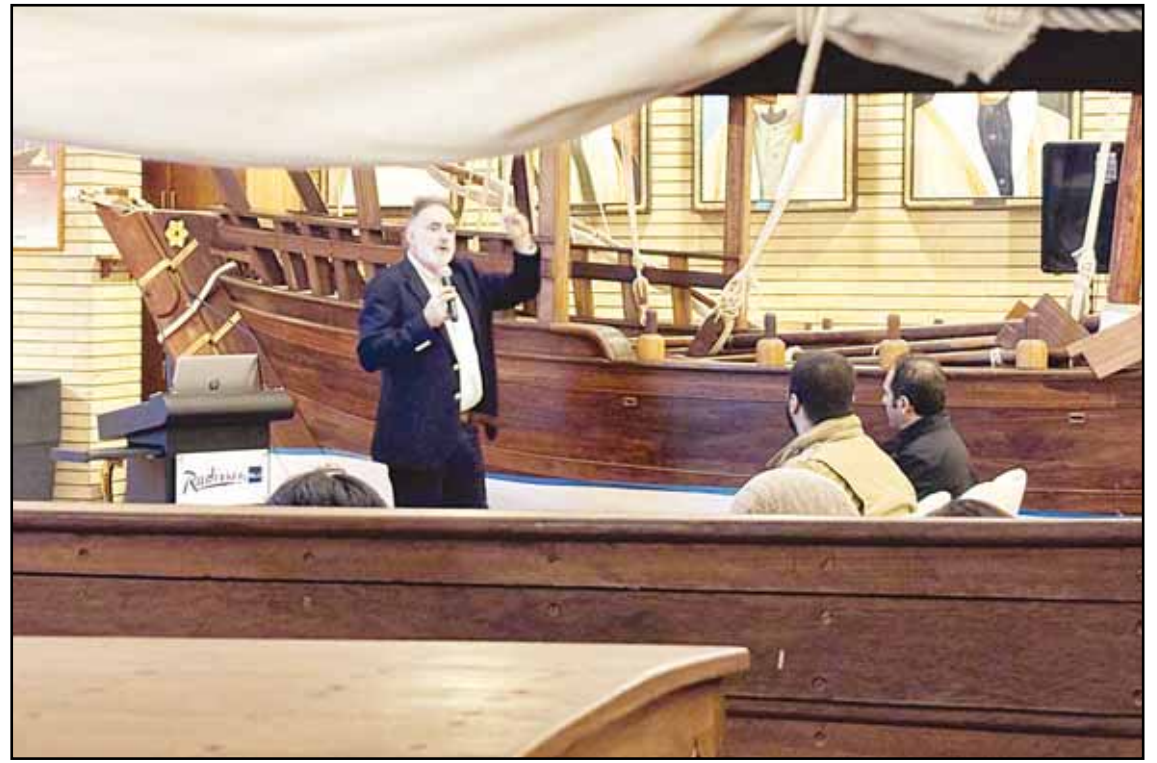
Dr. Al-Shammari ascribed this achievement to the continued backing of Member Countries for plans to develop and diversify their services and broaden the scope of its operations to cover hundreds of investors, exporters and financial institutions from over 120 countries in the region and the world, in addition to the conclusion of hundreds of contracts and cooperation agreements. He also pointed out the commitment of the Corporation's successive boards of directors and executive managements to applying effective regulatory policies and governance standards, while maintaining its high credit rating of A+ grade since 2008.

Al-Shammari underscored Dhaman's absolute commitment to attaining its objectives by means of developing carefully considered strategies, flexible annual plans and effective mechanisms implemented by qualified staff so as to maintain its leading status in the region as a reliable partner for regional, governmental and private entities in developing the region's economies and backing the development of trade, investment, finance and insurance sectors.

The Corporation's Director-General, H.E. Mr. Rashed Ahmed Al-Harour, thanked H.E. the Minister of Finance, Mr. Mohammed bin Abdullah Aljadaan, for patronizing the Corporation's most significant occasion since Arab governments decided to establish it fifty years ago, with the State of Kuwait having hosted its headquarters and sponsored its first launch.



From left to right: Dr. Ali Al-Mousawi, Dr. Fahad Al-Senafi, Dr. Arafat Al Shuabi, Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, Dr. Timmy Gambin and Talal Al-Muhanna at Marine Science Center, Al-Fintas, Kuwait.



Dr. Timmy Gambin delivering a talk on an ancient Phoenician shipwreck at the Marine Museum in Al-Bida'a, Kuwait. In the audience, scuba diver Abdullah Alkhashty (left) and Khalid Salim of Kuwait's National Museum (right).

3D-Q8 brings global experts to Kuwait for maritime research

Dive into Kuwait's rich underwater heritage

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: From February 15 to 17, archaeologists, heritage professionals, marine scientists, scuba divers, and university students convened in Kuwait to discuss maritime archaeology, underwater excavation techniques, and 3D technologies in underwater research. Under the rubric "3D-Q8," the project served as a platform for education, training, and exchange that included a lecture series, a half-day workshop, and an interactive virtual reality seminar led by underwater archaeology specialists from Malta.

The multi-day initiative emerged from a partnership between the University of Malta, Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL), and the Department of Marine Science at Kuwait University. Professor Timmy Gambin, an associate professor of maritime archaeology in the Department of Classics and Archaeology at the University of Malta, led the Maltese team, accompanied by John Wood, a 3D photogrammetry expert and technical rebreather diver. Talal Al-Muhanna, a Kuwaiti filmmaker and postgraduate student of maritime archaeology at the University of Malta, coordinated the collaboration effort.

UNESCO

UNESCO defines Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) as "all traces of human existence having a cultural, historical, or archaeological character that have been partially or totally underwater, periodically or continuously, for at least 100 years." This definition encompasses a wide range of potential artifacts — from prehistoric Stone Age tools to ancient harbors and commodities transported by ships over thousands of years. As Gambin et al. noted in a 2021 article for Remote Sensing: "The seabed can be considered as the world's largest museum, and underwater sites explored and studied so far provide priceless information on human interaction with the sea."

Talal Al-Muhanna — whose MA dissertation is being supervised by Dr. Gambin — stated: "Ever since Kuwait ratified the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, a robust framework for maritime archaeology has become available to prospective maritime archaeologists in Kuwait." Indeed, with its comprehensive guidelines for researching, recovering, preserving, protecting, and managing underwater cultural heritage, UNESCO's 2001 Convention is gradually establishing a global standard in underwater archaeology. Al-Muhanna added: "As a State Party to the 2001 Convention, Kuwait can reap positive benefits. At the same time, like all States Parties, ratification implies fulfilling various obligations too."

Marine archaeology in Kuwait

To date, marine archaeology in Kuwait has focused on identifying and examining archaeological features along the shoreline, primarily on Failaka Island. From 2013 to 2019, under the auspices of Kuwait's National Council, the Kuwaiti-Polish Archaeological Mission (KPAM) conducted coastal surveys around Failaka Island, identifying numerous archaeological features such as stone tidal weirs (fish traps). The KPAM archaeological team, which included Polish marine archaeologist Magdalena Nowakowska, determined that some of the studied features were built during the Early Islamic Period, while specific fishing practices related to these features continued to be used by island inhabitants into the early 20th century.

Building bridges to the past

In a time when environmental factors such as ocean acidification, marine pollution, and rising sea levels threaten the integrity and sustainability of Kuwait's maritime landscapes, aquatic resources, and underwater cultural heritage, Project 3D-Q8



Dr. Timmy Gambin delivering a talk on underwater archaeology and marine ecology at the Marine Science Center in Al-Fintas, Kuwait.



Dr. Fahad Al-Senafi (right) and Dr. Timmy Gambin (left) at Marine Science Center in Al-Fintas, Kuwait.



Professionals representing various institutions attending Dr. Timmy Gambin's talk on Underwater Cultural Heritage at the Marine Science Center, Al-Fintas, Kuwait.



Marine science students and recent graduate Fares Al-Fayez from Kuwait University try out Virtual Reality headsets from Underwater Malta's Virtual Museum.



Marine Science Center, Al-Fintas, Kuwait



Photo courtesy of Dr. Timmy Gambin
Phoenician shipwreck

aims to rejuvenate discussions about underwater archaeology in Kuwait and foster interdisciplinary connections between local and international

institutions with shared sustainability goals and scientific interests. Dr. Fahad Al-Senafi, Acting Head of the Marine Science Department at



Dr. Fahad Al-Senafi (left) and Dr. Timmy Gambin (right) at Marine Science Center in Al-Fintas, Kuwait.

Kuwait University, commented: "It is time to initiate a deeper exploration of the region's rich history, right here in our own backyard in Kuwait.

In the face of a changing climate, it is valuable to examine how ancient civilizations adapted to past environmental shifts, as this knowledge

can help inform our strategies for the future".

With top-notch facilities at its coastal campus in Al-Fintas, the Marine Science Centre boasts numerous classrooms, research laboratories, a library, a lecture hall, and direct access to the ocean. Al-Senafi, whose expertise and interests span physical oceanography, ocean modeling, and climate dynamics, added: "This region, once closely connected to Mesopotamian civilization, has long been shaped by the rivers that once flowed into Kuwaiti waters. Over time, these waters have accumulated historical remnants in our seabed, preserving a record of the past beneath layers of sediment, waiting to be explored."

3D-Q8 programme

Project 3D-Q8 launched on February 15 with an invitation-only workshop for scuba divers, underwater photographers, remote sensing technicians, heritage workers, and university students interested in underwater surveying techniques. The workshop was followed by a public lecture at the Marine Museum at the Radisson Blu Hotel, where topics related to underwater archaeology in Maltese waters were discussed. On February 17, the Marine Science Centre in Al-Fintas hosted public talks. A set of morning lectures by Dr. Gambin focused on the protection and management of underwater cultural heritage and the environmental factors impacting underwater archaeology. Later that day, John Wood led a highly popular interactive seminar featuring Virtual Reality (VR) headsets. Visitors, staff, and students were offered VR experiences. Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts & Letters (NCCAL), expressed enthusiasm for the initiative and emphasized the importance of promoting Failaka Island in line with sustainable tourism, as evidenced by NCCAL's ongoing project in collaboration with the World Monuments Fund.

Failaka

Between the two days of public talks offered by Project 3D-Q8, the University of Malta team took an excursion to Failaka Island, guided by local heritage worker Hasan Al-Failakawi. As one of the Gulf's key archaeological sites, 3D photogrammetry expert John Wood and Kuwaiti drone operator Ahmad Albebehani conducted preliminary aerial surveys of select sites. The results will include 3D models and orthographic photographs.

Future prospects, new horizons

"My visit to Kuwait has been an enriching experience", Gambin declared. "The state-of-the-art facilities are truly impressive, but what stands out most is the dedication and expertise of the heritage and marine sciences specialists. Their commitment suggests that Kuwait has the potential to become a leading force in underwater research and a catalyst for innovation in the field, not only in its territorial waters but also across the broader region." Gambin's positive interactions led him to conclude, "The future bodes well for collaborative efforts between the University of Malta, Kuwait University, and the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters." Indeed, strengthening research ties and fostering new opportunities in maritime heritage and marine scientific exploration could create common ground.

Funding

Project 3D-Q8 was funded by a Research Networking Scheme (RNS) grant from Xjenza Malta (Science Malta). The project sought to enhance understanding and appreciation for underwater archaeology by fostering knowledge development, improving capacity building, and facilitating professional networking. The Ambassador of Malta to Kuwait, Prof. Dr. George Said-Zammit, provided additional support.



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappé celebrates with Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham, right (unseen), after scoring his side's third goal during the Champions League playoff second leg soccer match between Real Madrid and Manchester City at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Sports

Championship set to begin on Saturday

Kuwait's veterans ready for Gulf Cup opener against Oman

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Gulf Cup for Veterans Football Championship is set to begin on Saturday, at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium, running until next Wednesday. The tournament will feature four matches on the opening day.

The Kuwait will launch its campaign against Oman at 7:45 pm, while Qatar and the UAE will face off at 9:15 pm in Group One. Earlier in the day, Iraq will take on Yemen at 4:45 pm, followed by a Group Two clash between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain at 6:15 pm.

The tournament features eight teams, divided into two groups based on the Gulf 26 Cup draw, which Kuwait hosted from December 20 to January 4. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals.

Today, a press conference will be held for the coaches of the participating teams. The Group One coaches will speak at 3:00 pm, followed by the Group Two coaches at 3:45 pm.

Meanwhile, officials from the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Federation have arrived in Kuwait and conducted inspections of Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Stadium, team accommodations, and other logistical arrangements to ensure the success of the event, which has drawn significant me-



Muhammad Binyan

dia and public interest.

Muhammad Binyan, Director of the Kuwait team for Veterans, affirmed that "The Blues" are fully prepared for the championship following a successful preparation phase. The team played three friendly matches, showing gradual improvement, culminating in an impressive performance in their final warm-up game.

Binyan expressed gratitude to the tournament organizers, highlighting the event's significance in bringing together former Gulf football stars during Kuwait's national holiday celebrations in February.

He emphasized that the Gulf Veterans Cup presents a great opportunity for fans to witness legendary players in action. With all four matches played on the same day – each lasting 40 minutes with two halves – spectators at Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Stadium can enjoy a full day of football featuring the region's former stars.

Binyan also noted that despite some injuries during training, the medical team provided excellent care to ensure the players' readiness. He concluded by wishing success to the Kuwait team and all participating nations in making the tournament a memorable event.



Kuwait veterans hold their final training session for the championship.

Mbappé runs riot as Real eliminates City



Real Madrid's Raul Asencio, right, controls the ball as Manchester City's Omar Marmoush tries to stop him during the Champions League playoff second leg soccer match between Real Madrid and Manchester City at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

PSG and Dortmund advance in CL

MADRID, Feb 20, (AP): Kylian Mbappé scored a hat trick, Erling Haaland stayed on the bench injured and Real Madrid dumped Manchester City out of the Champions League.

Mbappé's stellar trio of goals in the fourth, 33rd and 61st minutes in a 3-1 win gave Madrid a 6-3 victory on aggregate over the 2023 champion in their two-leg knockout playoff.

"This has been the complete performance - attack, defense, with the ball and without the ball, we showed such high levels of quality," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "Almost the perfect night."

One superstar striker was watched by another from the sidelines. Haaland was not fit to start for an ultimately overmatched Man City because of a knee injury sustained late in a Premier League game Saturday.

Paris Saint-Germain beat French rival Brest 7-0, to run up a 10-0 aggregate score, and will play either Liverpool or Barcelona in the round of 16.

PSV Eindhoven ousted Juventus in the only one of the eight playoffs this week that went to extra time. Defender Ryan Flamingo scored in the 98th minute for a 3-1 win on the night and 4-3 on aggregate. United States international Timothy Weah scored for Juventus.

"Honestly, we slipped up," Weah said. "I felt like they were more aggressive on the night and we lacked a bit of aggression and hunger."

In the early game, Borussia Dortmund started with a 3-0 lead at home to Sporting Lisbon and was barely stretched in a 0-0 draw. Sporting's Champions League campaign imploded after coach Ruben Amorim left for Manchester United in November.

Mbappé's first goal of the two-leg playoff in Manchester was a lucky miscue, a looping effort off his shin to level at 1-1 in what ended a 3-2 win.

His three goals in Madrid were classy and decisive. A first-time lob over City goalkeeper Ederson - who perhaps advanced too far, too soon - was followed by a low shot after leaving defender Joško Gvardiol on the turf.

The third was a powerful left-footer from the edge of the penalty area when he had lured six Man City players toward encircling him.

"I have always said I didn't come here simply to complete a dream," said Mbappé, a boyhood Madrid fan who never won a Champions League at Monaco and PSG. "I want to play well, I want to mark an era."

Coach Pep Guardiola's injury-hit side - with Ballon d'Or winner Rodri out since September and Kevin De Bruyne now rarely starting - has looked like a shadow of the heavyweight rival that met Madrid in each of the past three seasons, when each time the winner went on to lift the trophy.

PSG has not lost anywhere since a Champions League defeat at Bayern Munich three months ago, and the playoff against Brest proved a total mismatch.

Brest had impressed in its first European season but went out with a whimper at Parc des Princes, after a 3-0 loss in the home leg.

Wingers Bradley Barcola and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scored in the first half. Midfielder Vitinha, Desiré Doué, left back Nuno Mendes, striker Ramos and Senny Mayulu netted after the break. PSG also beat Brest 5-2 in a French league game this month.

Al-Rayyan stands in Kuwait Club's path to the Gulf Handball Championship final

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MUSCAT, Feb 20: Kuwait Club will compete in the semi-finals of the 41st Gulf Handball Championship for Cup Champions Clubs, facing Qatar's Al-Rayyan at 3:30 pm. The tournament, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, runs until February 24 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat.

Following this clash, the second semi-final match will take place at 5:30 pm, featuring Qatar's Al-Arabi against the winner of the Group One decider between Saudi Arabia's Al-Noor and Oman's Al-Seeb, which was played yesterday.

Kuwait Club secured its spot in the semi-finals by finishing second in Group Two, behind Al-Arabi of Qatar. Despite a loss to Al-Arabi, "Al-Abyad" earned victories over the UAE's Dibba Al-Hisn and Oman's representative, ensuring its progression. Meanwhile, Al-Rayyan of Qatar topped Group One, with the second qualification spot contested between Al-Seeb and Al-Noor, with the latter having the edge.

Additionally, matches to determine the fifth to seventh place rankings will also take place tomorrow.



Kuwait Club player tackles an opponent during the Zain Premier League match.

Sameh Al-Hajri, leader of the Kuwait Club delegation, expressed his hope that the team would deliver strong performances that reflect Kuwaiti sports' reputation. He emphasized the significance of this championship in uniting GCC nations through sports and providing players with valuable experience on the regional stage.

Kuwait Club faces tough challenge against Al-Salmiya

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: League leader Kuwait Club will face a tough test in its championship pursuit as it takes on Al-Salmiya at 7:05 pm at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium in the 16th round of the Zain Premier League. Earlier in the day, Al-Arabi will meet Yarmouk at 4:50 pm at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium.

Kuwait Club, sitting atop the standings with 40 points, aims for its 14th league victory as it pushes towards another league title. The team is well-equipped with a strong squad capable of maintaining its lead. However, "Al-Abyad" is aware that any dropped points could jeopardize its position, especially with Al-Arabi trailing just two points behind. Adding to the challenge, Al-Salmiya proved to be a formidable opponent in its first-leg encounter, where Kuwait Club narrowly won 4-3.

On the other hand, fourth-placed Al-Salmiya (27 points) enters the match with high ambitions. The team seeks redemption against Kuwait Club and aims to climb to

third place, hoping for a slip from Al-Qadisiya (29 points), who will face Al-Nasr on Sunday. However, Al-Salmiya has struggled with consistency in recent matches, drawing 2-2 with Al-Fahaheel, losing 2-1 to Al-Qadisiya, and securing a narrow 1-0 win over Khaitan.

In the second match of the day, Al-Arabi (38 points) looks to return to winning ways after a goalless draw against Kuwait Club in the previous round. The team hopes to secure another victory over Yarmouk, having defeated it 2-0 in its first-leg encounter. With only eight rounds left in the season - three in the second phase and five in the championship round - Al-Arabi cannot afford any setbacks in its title chase.

Despite a significant 33-point gap between the two teams, Al-Yarmouk is expected to put up a fight. The bottom-placed side (5 points) has already secured its place in the relegation playoffs but will aim to end a 15-match winless streak (10 losses, 5 draws) and begin its survival bid on a strong note against Al-Arabi.

Al-Tadamon sweeps Al-Sahel for first volleyball league win

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Al-Tadamon Club secured its first victory in the Kuwait Volleyball League, defeating Al-Sahel 3-0 (25-22, 25-21, 25-19) in the 13th round at the Games Union Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. In another match from the same round, Kuwait Club dominated Al-Yarmouk with a straight-set win (25-15, 25-20, 25-16).

Following the conclusion of the 13th round, Kazma remains at the top of the standings with 18 points from six matches, followed by Al-Shabab with 12 points from five matches.

Kuwait Club holds nine points from three matches, while Burgan and Al-Nasr are tied with six points each from four and six matches, respectively.

Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi both have six points from three and four matches, respectively,



Players battling for the ball during the volleyball league.

while Al-Sulaibikhat sits at six points from seven matches. Al-Tadamon climbs to three points from five matches, while Al-Yarmouk has two points from five matches, and Al-Sahel remains at the bottom with one point from six matches.