

In Brief

AMIR THANKS HOLLANDE

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable to the French President Francois Hollande. His Highness the Amir expressed deep pleasure for the President's participation in the concluding session of the "Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage" conference in Abu Dhabi, sponsored by the UNESCO. — KUNA



RECEPTION RESCHEDULED

KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah apologized for not receiving guests at his diwaniya on Tuesday, December 6, 2016. The reception will be rescheduled and a new date will be announced later, said a statement released by the governor's office yesterday.



ASIAN ART

KUWAIT: Kuwait is taking part in Bangladesh's 17th Biennial for Asian Art, which features 127 artists from 54 countries, with the host country winning awards for eight paintings. Kuwait is joining other countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, the US and Canada, said Dr Bader Al-Duweesh, Assistant Secretary General for Arts in the National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL). —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A general view shows lightning striking in the sky over Kuwait City before a rainstorm early yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT RECEIVES WIDESPREAD PRAISE FOR AMIR JABER PRIZE AT UNESCO

PARIS: Kuwait is given widespread praise and commendation Friday for its commitment to helping the disabled on occasion of the awarding of late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah prize for 'Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.'

In a ceremony at UNESCO headquarters, Kuwait's long-term contribution to this event and its persistence in helping to facilitate and improve life for the disabled was highlighted by UNESCO officials and other participants.

The award ceremony was attended by Amir Jaber's own son, Sheikh Mubarak Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who conveyed the greetings and support of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti government, which was represented by Education Undersecretary Haiitham Al-Athari. Also in attendance were Kuwaiti Ambassador Sami Al-Sulaiman and UNESCO Ambassador and Permanent Delegate Dr Mishal Hayat.

Encouragement

Sheikh Mubarak underlined that disabled people needed encouragement and support, hailing efforts to help them transcend obstacles to their development. He noted that "one billion people are handicapped in the world, and 15 percent of kids are handicapped." "They have a right to training," he remarked, noting that "all information can now be transmitted through digital technology."

Speaking on behalf of UNESCO, Director for Communication and Information Sectors Indrahit Banerjee stressed the importance of Kuwait's contribution to helping promote "significant improvements in technology" destined to help those with disabilities. "This prize highlights the value of Kuwait's role and the mobilization for people with disabilities," Banerjee told participants. Kuwaiti Ambassador to UNESCO, Dr Mishal Hayat, pointed out that Kuwait has "sponsored this prize since 2002 and it is awarded every two years." He further stated that it was now decided to extend the prize "for another six years" and that "it has been extended to cover all disabilities," and not just mental health issues.

\$40,000

The Amir Jaber award is valued at \$40,000 and is split equally between an individual and an NGO, or Association. This year, the award was given to Dr Alireza Darvishy, a visually-impaired Swiss



PARIS: Kuwait is recognized by the UNESCO for the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah prize for 'Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.' —KUNA

researcher, who has developed a digital application to permit blind people "knowledge access" through an inclusive digital system that has proven its usefulness and looks certain to have a broad dissemination. In accepting the \$20,000 award, Darvishy said he is "willing to work with all countries" to help others and implement his application.

The second recipient was the 'Tiflonexos Association', an Argentine association that has constructed a massive library that is accessible to the blind. The Argentine NGO has compiled 7,000 books for its library and has linked up 300 other organizations on its network. All prize recipients thanked Kuwait for its generosity and encouragement and said that the award was a boost to their work to help the disabled.

UNESCO's Deputy Director-General Edouard Matoko expressed to Kuwait the gratitude of his organization and the appreciation of Director-General Irina Bokova, who was unfortunately not able to attend because of a commitment abroad.

Recalling that the Amir Jaber prize has been awarded since 2002 and was an important event on the calendar, he also said that Kuwait was a nation that has "championed many causes" to help the disadvantaged.

Only prize

Dr Hayat underlined the uniqueness of the Amir Jaber prize, noting "it is the only prize of its kind in the UNESCO, and even the United Nations system,

coming after the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and which seeks to help the integration of handicapped in society."

The Kuwaiti award coincided with the 10th anniversary of the UNCRPD and also comes at the same time as the International Day for Persons With Disabilities, which fell yesterday. Dr Hayat said the objective now was "to use digital, electronic means to facilitate equality between disabled and normal people."

Using these modern means is a tool to help in "knowledge acquisition," the Kuwaiti official added. "Knowledge is very important and that is why we try to use the most modern means via the structure of communications here at UNESCO," he added.

He pointed out that Kuwait also wanted more broadly to sensitize people to the question of disabilities and how to best help handicapped people. "The question of disabilities in Kuwait is something we have been working on for many decades and we have many rules and laws to protect handicapped people and we have passed new laws in the past couple of years to give incentives and even oblige both the public and private sector to hire handicapped persons," he indicated. "It is very important when we consider male-female equality, we have to also integrate the handicapped into society and treat them like normal people because they have abilities better than many others," the Kuwaiti official stated. — KUNA

MOH CARES FOR OVER 41,000 WITH DISABILITIES



Khaled Al-Sahlawi

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health offers due services to all persons with disabilities in Kuwait, who hit 41,330 till the first quarter of 2016, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Khaled Al-Sahlawi, citing statistics of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA). Disabilities are various, mental, physical, visual and auditory, Al-Sahlawi added in a press statement yesterday as the ministry marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The theme adopted by the ministry this year is 'Achieving 17 goals for the future we aspire to,' he said, apparently referring to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the UN 2030 Agenda. Choosing the motto aims to encourage removing obstacles hindering merging the persons with disabilities into the society, the senior official said, noting that the ministry offers due health care to the disabled through specialists of medical and

rehabilitations assistance. Sahlawi stressed the vital necessity of pre-marriage medical tests to discover cases with genetic predisposition to produce potentially children with disabilities. The ministry has designed a program to examine newly born babies for 22 diseases that include hereditary and genetic ones, together with some cases of hormonal imbalances that may lead to mental disabilities on the long-term, he noted. — KUNA



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