

## Local

# Austrian chancellor set to make important visit to Kuwait today

## Austria hails Amir's humanitarian role

VIENNA: Chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz is set to make an official visit to Kuwait today, the second one for an Austrian chancellor since the late Bruno Kreisky visited the country back in the 1980s. Kurz's visit coincides with the 54th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relationship between the two countries, which has been based on mutual respect and trust. It aims to expand their bilateral ties to higher horizons.

The Austrian chancellor's visit takes place less than a month since his meeting with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at an Arab-EP summit in Egypt's resort city of Sharm El-Sheikh last February. The visit holds a great importance on the Kuwaiti-Austrian relationship in terms of backing and boosting bilateral ties in various fields, particularly commercial as Kurz tends to expand the current "modest" volume of commercial exchange between the two countries.

During his visit, he is to hold talks with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and several other senior Kuwaiti officials. Talks will focus on significant common issues and affairs as well as bilateral economic cooperation in the areas of infrastructure, hospitals, power plants and oil refineries.

### Distinctive cooperation

Ex-Chancellor Kreisky's first official visit to Kuwait in 1981 contributed greatly in laying the cornerstone for the distinctive Kuwaiti-Austrian cooperation march. The two countries' relationship had seen significant developments over the past years, notably the official opening of the first Austrian embassy in Kuwait only

four years after Kreisky's maiden visit to the country. Furthermore, Kuwait is the first Arab state to establish political, diplomatic, and economic relationship with Austria, opening its embassy in Vienna officially in 1984 and had had six ambassadors who contributed in bolstering ties with the EU-member state.

The first-ever head of Kuwaiti diplomatic mission to Vienna was Ambassador Abdulhameed Al-Awadhi, who personally took up the task of establishing the Kuwaiti embassy in Austria and forming its staff. He was succeeded later on by Ambassador Faisal Al-Ghais, who carried out his diplomatic duties for seven years. In 1999, Nabeela Al-Mulla became Kuwait's ambassador to Austria. She also became ambassador extraordinary, plenipotentiary, and permanent representative of Kuwait at the UN and other international organizations in Vienna. Mulla was also the first woman from the Middle East and South Asia region to chair the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2003. In 2004, Fawzi Al-Jasem became Kuwait's ambassador to Austria and contributed in completing all construction works for the embassy's new building in Vienna. He was succeeded later on by Ambassador Mohammad Al-Sallal. In 2013, Sadeq Maarafi became and still is Kuwait's ambassador to Austria. He continues to carry on the same diplomatic approach as did his predecessors and exerts great efforts to boost bilateral ties with the European country, UN bodies, and Arab diplomatic corps in Vienna.

Throughout the past 54 years, Kuwait and Austria signed several cooperation agreements, including

MoUs, in political, economic, scientific, air transport, promotion and protection of investments, and double tax avoidance fields, in addition to signing of various cooperation protocols between Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and its Austrian counterpart. Moreover, Kuwait News Agency has played an effective role in boosting the two countries' relationship as the first Arab news agency to open and operate a bureau in Vienna since the early 1980s. KUNA's reporters have also contributed greatly in strengthening Kuwait's relationship with Austria and UN bodies in Vienna over the past decades through their extensive coverages of various events. Such great journalistic efforts have prompted the Austrian government to award KUNA a certificate of merit in 2006 in appreciation for its role in boosting the EU-member state's relationship with Kuwait and Arab countries.

### Amir's humanitarian role

Kurz said his country strongly appreciates the role of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a Humanitarian Leader and mediator for resolving regional issues. His Highness the Amir is a wise leader and an expert in foreign politics, since he had previously served as Foreign Minister for about 40 years, Kurz said yesterday prior to his official visit to Kuwait. He hailed His Highness Sheikh Sabah's efforts in mediating to resolve the ongoing crisis among the GCC countries. Kurz also underlined the strong Kuwaiti-Austrian ties that go back to 1965, adding that there are thousands of Kuwaitis visiting Austria each year to enjoy its beauty.

Speaking on Kuwait's humanitarian work, the chancellor applauded the country's hosting of several donors' conferences for Iraq and Syria. The Kuwaiti aid saved lives and eased the suffering of people in so many countries including Syria, Iraq, Chad, Somalia,



Chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz

and Ethiopia, Kurz added. The Austrian diplomat also underlined Kuwait's contribution to the Ban Ki-moon Center for Global Citizens (BKMC). Meanwhile, Kurz noted that his country is willing to take part in Kuwait Vision 2035 through executing projects for infrastructure, medical care or energy.

### Chance to boost ties

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Envoy to the UN Sadiq Marafi underlined the importance of the Austrian Chancellor's upcoming visit to Kuwait for boosting bilateral ties. Marafi noted the strong Kuwaiti-Austrian ties on different levels. He added that the Austrian Government strongly appreciates Kuwait's successful neutral foreign policy. The ambassador also said that the two countries' relations are growing stronger, mentioning in this respect the visit of Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl to Kuwait last December. — KUNA



## Visit chance to boost ties

construction works for the embassy's new building in Vienna. He was succeeded later on by Ambassador Mohammad Al-Sallal. In 2013, Sadeq Maarafi became and still is Kuwait's ambassador to Austria. He continues to carry on the same diplomatic approach as did his predecessors and exerts great efforts to boost bilateral ties with the European country, UN bodies, and Arab diplomatic corps in Vienna.

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## Rare valve replacement done at Chest Hospital



KUWAIT: The medical team that performed the surgery at the Chest Hospital. — KUNA

KUWAIT: A medical team headed by Chairman of the Cardiology Department at the Chest Hospital Dr Abdullah Al-Enezi carried out a valve replacement surgical procedure, considered as the first in the Middle East. Enezi said the procedure was done for a patient in his twenties. The old valve was damaged inside the heart and a new valve was installed by catheterization without the need for open-heart surgery, as done currently. He said the patient is in very good condition and will leave hospital in two days if the flow of blood is normal.

Enezi said a balloon was used to break the old damaged valve and a new one was installed in 45 minutes. The operation was done in cooperation

with the dean of the congenital defects units Dr Muath Al-Anbue, who expressed pride in the continued successes made by Kuwaiti doctors at the chest hospital. He said the outstanding achievements made by doctors is the result of efforts and perseverance for the sake of Kuwait.

Enezi said the chest hospital follows developments around the world and is considered among the best hospitals in the Middle East. It uses the most modern medical and technological developments in the field of heart diseases. The chest diseases hospital is distinguished with a heritage and experience that spans over 50 years in the field of diagnosing and treating all heart diseases, and is still in the lead. — KUNA



Chest Hospital Director Dr Reem Al-Asousi

## Amir's envoy condoles with New Zealand shooting victims

CHRISTCHURCH: Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Advisor Abdullah Al-Maatouq conveyed condolences to families of the victims of the terrorist shooting in New Zealand's Christchurch city mosques and visited the injured yesterday. Maatouq had attended on Friday the funeral of victims of the recent terrorist gunfire attack on two mosques in New Zealand's city of Christchurch.

On Thursday, Maatouq met in the city of Christchurch with New Zealand's

Defense Minister Ron Mark. During the meeting, Maatouq conveyed the condolences of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Kuwaiti government and people to the victims of the terrorist shooting attack. Maatouq also met with Mayor of the city of Christchurch in New Zealand Lianne Dalziel. — KUNA



CHRISTCHURCH: Amiri Diwan Advisor Abdullah Al-Maatouq visits a man who was injured in New Zealand's Christchurch city mosques' terrorist shooting.



Amiri Diwan Advisor Abdullah Al-Maatouq visits an injured man in hospital.



Amiri Diwan Advisor Abdullah Al-Maatouq conveys condolences to families of the victims of the terrorist shooting.



ISTANBUL: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is seen among participants posing for a group photograph during an emergency meeting of the OIC in Istanbul on Friday. — AFP

## Kuwaiti FM urges measures to counter Islamophobia

ISTANBUL: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Friday urged Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states to appropriately counter Islamophobia and promote Islamic tolerance and values. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled made the call while addressing an emergency OIC ministerial meeting held in Istanbul to weigh the aftershocks of the recent attack on two Mosques in New Zealand. He said the meeting aims to deliver a message of solidarity and condolence from the Muslim world to the families of the 'martyrs' and the wounded as well as the entire people of New Zealand following this dreadful act. However, the Kuwaiti minister appreciated the efforts and measures taken by New Zealand to tackle the ramifications of the incident, which reflected unprecedented tolerance and civilized response to the disaster, thus easing out the anguish of Muslims around the world. He decried

the phenomenon of Islamophobia and discourse of hatred, discrimination and violence as key serious scourges that target secure communities. He quoted the OIC member states as having repeatedly sounded the alarm about this growing scourge and called for countering it in order to maintain security, peace and harmony among world peoples, citing relevant OIC and UN recommendations and resolutions.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled emphasized that in the light of this horrible terrorist act and other similar terrorist acts worldwide, which broke the hearts of all Muslims, mechanisms should be put in place in order to fight extremism and bigotry, just as was the case with the international counterterrorism alliance. He went on to say that the recent terrorist attack shows that terrorism has neither religion nor homeland, and that the Muslim world has suffered enough from misconceptions about Islam and its principles and values,

along with relevant negative effects, which have sparked a state of hatred, religious intolerance and discrimination against Islam and Muslims. Therefore, Kuwait, through its non-permanent UN Security Council membership, and Indonesia managed to produce a UNSC press statement condemning this terrorist act and calling for fighting such terrorist acts, he noted. He urged OIC member states to work together to counter this abhorrent phenomenon through dialogue with other societies and to promote the principle of moderation.

The Kuwaiti minister concluded by appreciating the efforts of New Zealand's government in curtailing the negative impacts of this painful terrorist incident and ensuring the recurrence of similar incidents. At least 50 people were killed in the twin attack on March 15th by an Australian gunman who showered worshippers with a hail of gunfire at the two mosques. — KUNA