

## Local

# Kuwait to host 15th anniversary of NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

**BRUSSELS:** Kuwait is poised to achieve a new milestone in its relations and cooperation with NATO by hosting the 15th anniversary celebrations of NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will lead the North Atlantic Council (NAC), which includes the permanent representatives of the 29-member Alliance, to Kuwait in December to celebrate the anniversary, according to Kuwait's ambassador to NATO, EU, Belgium and Luxembourg Jassem Al-Budaiwi. This emerged following a meeting of the ambassadors of the four Arab Gulf members of ICI, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and UAE and the 29 NATO ambassadors at NATO headquarters Wednesday evening. "It was an annual meeting where the four ICI countries sit with the 29 NATO ambassadors led by the Secretary General to discuss issues that have been achieved till now and the goals and future plans and how to enhance our cooperation," Budaiwi said in an interview yesterday. "This meeting was special because we discussed about the celebrations that Kuwait will host in December to mark the 15th anniversary of the launch of the ICI. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will lead the 29 members of NAC to Kuwait for this historic event," he said. "We look forward for a fruitful meeting in December," he stated.

Kuwait had scored another history with NATO when on 24 January 2017 the NATO-ICI Regional Centre was opened in Kuwait city. NAC led by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg had travelled to Kuwait for the inaugural ceremony of the Centre. "It is an honor for us that Kuwait is hosting this centre the only one of its kind outside the Euro-Atlantic area," noted Budaiwi. "Kuwait values its relations with NATO and looks forward to strengthen it further through its bilateral relationship, and through its ICI partnership with its brotherly countries Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE," he said. "We have excellent programs and the NATO-ICI Regional Center has been hosting personnel from the ICI member states, plus Oman and Saudi Arabia, in training courses, workshops, seminars etc.," said the Kuwaiti ambassador. "We are very proud of this and looking forward for the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the ICI in Kuwait," Budaiwi added. NAC has visited Kuwait twice, in 2006 and then in 2017, and this will be its third visit to Kuwait in December 2019. Kuwait's new Defiance Attache in Brussels, Major General Abdullah Dashti, also participated in the NAC-ICI meeting.

NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) was launched at the Alliance's Summit in the Turkish city in June 2004 with the

aim to contribute to long-term global and regional security by offering countries of the Arab Gulf region practical bilateral security cooperation with NATO. Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE are the current four members of the ICI. Kuwait and NATO had taken another significant step to strengthen bilateral relations when Kuwait inaugurated in November 2018 its first ever diplomatic mission to NATO in Brussels. The ribbon-cutting inauguration ceremony was attended by Kuwait Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah and NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Alejandro Alvargonzalez.

Jarallah had said at the inaugural ceremony that Kuwait was the first member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to join NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). He also recalled the vital role played by NATO when Kuwait was invaded and occupied by Iraq and in the process of liberating Kuwait. Meanwhile, Alvargonzalez had said at the inaugural ceremony that "this is one more step that we have taken lately that coincides with all the efforts and all the splendid behavior of Kuwait with NATO for which we are very happy." The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the principal political decision-making body within NATO. — KUNA

## Kuwait optimistic about resuming oil production in divided zone

**KUWAIT:** Talks between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are ongoing regarding the energy resources in the divided border zone, a Kuwaiti government official said, expressing optimism about an early resumption of oil production in that area. Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel made that statement to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony hosted by the South Korean embassy to celebrate the country's national day.

On the oil prices, he said Kuwait is keen on stable prices that are fair for both consumers and producers. "The prices are determined by the supply and demand mechanism as well as geopolitical conditions," he said, noting that Kuwait is committed to its output quota specified by the OPEC. Regarding the border area between Kuwait and Iraq, he said both countries signed an agreement on the manipulation of the oil resources in this area and the selection of a global consultant to study this matter. "The study is underway and we are



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Oil Minister Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel takes part in the South Korean embassy's ceremony. — KUNA

in wait of its outcome and then we will hold technical meetings on how to share the production of the joint oilfields," the minister added.

Meanwhile, Fadhel expressed satisfaction with "the distinguished level" of the relations with South Korea. Congratulating South Korea on its national day, Fadhel told reporters at the embassy of the country, "this occasion coincides with the 40th anniversary of the special ties between both countries." "South Korean companies play an active role in the development of mega projects in Kuwait such as Saad Al-Abdullah City and the electricity and water projects," the minister pointed out. — KUNA

Roudhan, who doubles as minister of state for service affairs. He voiced hope for charting a clear-cut roadmap for industrial cooperation between Kuwait and Turkey in the near future.

Meanwhile, Varank said he held "very fruitful" talks with Roudhan and agreed to speed up the implementation of the signed agreements. The Turkish minister noted that Roudhan and his party aim to get acquainted with the extent of the advancement of the industrial infrastructure in his country. He added that Turkey has a lot to offer in cooperation with Kuwait in such areas as petrochemical, mining and investment sectors. Turkey's strategy for 2023, the centennial of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, focuses primarily on industrialization and production, he added. During their tour of the industrial zone in Ankara, Roudhan and his party inspected the heavy industry sites, including plants producing buses, trains, military vehicles and plastics. — KUNA

## Kuwait eyes Turkish industrial expertise

**ANKARA:** Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said on Wednesday his latest visit to Turkey aims to explore ways to transfer Turkey's industrial expertise to Kuwait. Both countries work for effective implementation of the previously signed agreements, he said at a joint press conference with Turkey's Minister of Industry and Technology Mustafa Varank after touring the industrial zone in Ankara. "There are huge potentials for cooperation in various fields but we focus now on the industrial one which is mutually beneficial," said

## UN official lauds educational development in Kuwait



**KUWAIT:** A photo showing participating speakers in the UN-organized seminar. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has taken strides on the path of overhauling its educational system however the United Nations wishes to see further steps forward, a UN official says. The UN Secretary General resident representative and coordinator, Tarek El-Sheikh, said yesterday during a UN-organized seminar on the international organization fourth goal for sustainable development (good teaching) that the UN 2030 scheme at this level is designed to develop education and qualify cadres to meet requirements of development and the labor market.

The United Nations aspires to see greater development of education in Kuwait, particularly with respect of teaching sciences and mathematics so that the country would have qualified cadres to accomplish development, he said. The seminar is part of a series of monthly gatherings, organized by the UN office in Kuwait to coordinate with local partners for exploring the UN potential role in boosting development. Salah Al-Majdi, the Education Ministry assistant for edu-

cational research, has indicated that the department strategy that focuses on "the human capital according to Kuwait Vision 2035" is largely inspired by the UN sustainable development plans. Dr Hiba Ahmad, supervisor of education at the World Bank in Kuwait, indicated that some of reforms in the sector had been done in coordination with the WB.

Future cooperation between Kuwait and the WB will be centered on "developing the human capital," not only in education but also in other sectors, such as health, as envisaged by the Kuwait Vision 2035, Dr Ahmad said. Dr Fatima Al-Hashem, from the Gulf University of Sciences and Technology, presented recommendations of a study prepared by Qatar Research Foundation regarding the first three levels of teaching in Kuwait. Among the recommendations is a proposal to enhance teachers' skills, she said, lauding the significant progress that has been made in the sector in Kuwait but recommending more efforts for further improvement. — KUNA