

Local

EU appreciates Kuwait's 'constructive and positive role' in the region

Deputy Foreign Minister concludes visit to Brussels

BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri concluded his one-day visit to Brussels Tuesday evening after holding constructive and successful talks with European Union and Belgian officials. "I heard today from the EU highest appreciation of Kuwait's role in the region and its foreign policy which was led by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and is being completed by determination and strength by His Majesty Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah."



Kuwait set example in 'diplomatic heritage'

he told the press after the talks. He said Kuwait is leading the "active diplomacy" by having contacts and communication with the countries of the region to create a climate of regional stability and security.

"The Kuwaiti diplomatic heritage has become an example for the countries of the world and the EU speaks about this Kuwaiti example," stressed Dhafiri. He said that dialogue with the EU is essential and a strategy for the state of Kuwait and added that "we are continuing this dialogue with all our determination to deepen the bilateral ties. "It was very heartwarming to hear that the EU intends to respond to the Kuwaiti request to lift the Schengen visa for Kuwaitis because of the high trust for Kuwait in Brussels he said and hoped that this would happen



BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri meets with Secretary-General of the EEAS Stefano Sannino. — KUNA

in the near future." The EU-Kuwaiti relations are strong and distinguished by their untiring efforts for peace and stability and resolving problems based on international law and the UN charter," he added.

Dhafiri had met earlier the Secretary-General of the EU External Action Service (EEAS) Stefano Sannino who said "the relationship between the EU and Kuwait are very important, very relevant for us." "It is a key country in the Gulf region but also beyond playing a very positive and constructive role in the region," Sannino said welcoming the Kuwaiti delegation. "We appreciate this. We are trying to enhance

the relationship with the region. We are going to create a communication relation with the EU and countries of the Gulf which is shaping a framework in enhancing our common work," he added.

Dhafiri also met Theodora Gentsis Director General of the Belgian foreign ministry Tuesday afternoon and discussed Belgian-Kuwaiti relations and ways to strengthen and deepen the relations in all sectors, trade, economic, investments or security. "We are happy to have a strong relationship with the Kingdom of Belgium and Belgium and we seek to develop this relation to the strategic level," he

said. "Belgium's role is pivotal and Kuwait's role is also pivotal in the region," he stressed.

Dhafiri's visit began with a luncheon meeting in Brussels today with Enrique Mora, Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs, Political Director of the EEAS. Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar assistant foreign minister for the office of deputy foreign minister and Ambassador Naser Al-Hain assistant foreign minister for European affairs, Kuwait's ambassador to the EU, Belgium and NATO Jassem Al-Budaiwi also attended the meetings. — KUNA

Putting gender equality first

By Josep Borrell and Jutta Urpilainen

Rarely in the world have women's and girls' rights been challenged in such a concerning way as they have been in Afghanistan. The EU has made it clear that future EU development assistance will depend on the respect for norms on human rights, including women's and girls' rights. The EU will continue to support women and girls worldwide, sticking to our values and beliefs.

Human rights, freedom and democracy, and equality represent core values that make the European Union what it is. It enriches our societies and strengthens resilience. Gender equality is key for peace, security, economic prosperity and sustainable development.

That is why working on all levels to promote and safeguard progress on gender equality is a political priority and objective for the EU. The EU Gender Action Plan III and the new EU external action budget provide a roadmap for global action towards a gender-equal world. We work closely together with multilateral, regional and bilateral partners, including civil society organizations, to achieve those objectives. We still have a long way to go; there is no room for complacency.

In many countries, the pandemic has exacerbated existing gender inequalities across different areas: education, vocational training, health, security and safety, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and economic opportunities. In addition, the COVID-19 lockdowns have often led to an increase in gender-based violence, in particular domestic violence. At the same time, a significant part of the care burden has fallen on women and girls. Workers in the informal economy and in low-skilled jobs (most of whom are women), migrants, and those belonging to minorities, have been more at risk and face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Moreover, school closures have exposed girls to an increased risk of sexual exploitation, early pregnancy, child labor, and forced marriage. The Malala Fund estimates that 20 million more girls risk dropping out of school, adding up to a total of 150 million girls - equivalent to a third of the EU population - without educational prospects.

According to a recent UN report, military spending in 2020 still outpaced the worldwide expenses on health, even in a year that was dominated by the corona pandemic. For a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to redouble our efforts to promote gender equality.

Time to do more

This challenge now requires a global response, when we are building the future we wish for our children and grandchildren to grow up in a post-pandemic world that is more equal, more diverse, and where equal opportunities are a reality. We need to address the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination in order to achieve sustainable change.

The European Union and its Member States, as well as the European financial institutions have stood with the women and girls of the world throughout the pandemic. As Team Europe, we have already mobilized €46 billion in support of over 130 partner countries, with a particular focus on women and youth.

Three examples as an illustration: In Nepal, we



Josep Borrell



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helped one million girls and boys continue their education through radio-based learning. In Togo, we supported the creation of a universal income scheme and the appointment of women to head new municipalities. Worldwide, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative has helped 650,000 women and girls prevent or address violence against them, and educated 880,000 men and boys on positive masculinity, non-violent conflict resolution and parenting.

Still, to meet the growing challenges, we need to do more. That is the purpose of the Gender Action Plan III. It promotes leadership and meaningful participation of women, girls and young people in political, economic, social and cultural life, as well as in all matters related to peace and security.

Human development back on track

We are now making this plan a reality with the help of the new €79.5 billion NDICI-Global Europe instrument that will support the EU's external action for the next seven years.

Support for education and particularly girls' education will have a central role. Just as we support education in emergencies, the EU has worked with partner countries throughout the pandemic to minimize its impact on children, and to facilitate a safe return to school.

We already provide more than half of all global aid to education as Team Europe. We will increase funding further, to promote gender equality through quality education at all levels. Our joint €1.7 billion pledge to the Global Partnership for Education in July - to transform education for girls and boys in up to 90 countries and territories - is part of this new beginning.

We are multiplying our efforts, from supporting women and girls' education and economic opportunities to improving their access to sexual and reproductive health services. By 2025, 85% of all the EU's new external actions - across all sectors - will contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment.

This is now being finalized with our partner countries based on close consultation with civil society organizations, women's rights activists, and youth. We need to put human development back on track and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, leaving no one behind. It is crucial we get it right.

- Josep Borrell is the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

- Jutta Urpilainen is the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships

I 'fully trust you, Amir tells...

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"The Amir and Crown Prince tasked us with an important duty relating to the future of Kuwait and its

Australia lists Hezbollah as...

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terrorist attacks and provide support to terrorist organizations" and poses a "real" and "credible" threat to Australia.

Hezbollah is part political party and part militia - the only group in Lebanon to have refused to disarm since the civil war ended in 1990. The movement, which plays a pivotal role in Lebanese politics, has been accused of fuelling Syria's civil war by sending thousands of fighters across the border to prop up President Bashar Al-Assad's regime. In 2006, it fought a short yet devastating war against Zionist. Critics have accused the movement of killing former prime minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005, and more recently of blocking investigations into the cataclysmic 2020 Beirut port explosion. Some countries have sought to distinguish between Hezbollah's political and militant factions, fearing a blanket ban could further destabilize Lebanon and hamper contacts with authorities. Australia had such a policy since 2003, when it banned Hezbollah's so-called External Security Organization - a part of the movement's military wing that is chiefly focused

UAE Crown Prince makes first Turkey...

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The move was "to support the Turkish economy and boost bilateral cooperation between the two countries," the agency added. Erdogan has this year sought to improve ties with regional rivals including Egypt in the face of increasing diplomatic isolation that has caused foreign investment to dry up - particularly from the West. The groundwork was laid for the rapprochement with a visit in August by a UAE delegation, as well as a phone call between Erdogan and Sheikh Mohammed, the UAE's de facto ruler.

Investors have become skittish over what they see as Erdogan's unorthodox thinking on interest rates. The lira has lost 39 percent of its value against the dollar since the start of the year and inflation was nearly 20 percent in October. The currency rallied by 5 percent after the news about Emirati mon-

India seeks to ban ...

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CoinSwitchKuber, CoinDCX and other home-grown crypto exchanges across television channels,

people and the two authorities are willing to tackle issues such as corruption, economic development, and other topics of great significance," he said.

Ghanem added that during a separate meeting with the Crown Prince, "he asked me to inform the lawmakers to focus on priorities that concern citizens especially fighting corruption and economic challenges" which include "external and internal investments and finding sources of income other than oil".

on shadowy overseas operations.

From now, membership of the entire organization or providing funding for it will now be proscribed in Australia, which has a large Lebanese community. Zionist Prime Minister Naftali Bennett thanked his "friend" and Australian counterpart Scott Morrison for the move. "Hezbollah is an Iranian-backed terror organization in Lebanon responsible for countless attacks in Zionist & around the world," he tweeted.

'Long overdue'

No reason was given for the timing of Canberra's decision, which comes as Lebanon reels from spiraling political and economic crises. Nearly 80 percent of the population is estimated to be living below the poverty line. Elections are expected in March 2022 and there is growing public anger about nepotism and corruption among Lebanon's ruling class.

The move may play well domestically for Australia's conservative government, ahead of its own elections expected next year. Before 2018 polls, Morrison made the surprise move of recognizing west Jerusalem as Zionist capital, helping secure votes in a battleground Sydney seat with a sizable Jewish community.

Matthew Levitt, a former US counter-terrorism financing official now with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, told AFP the move was "long overdue." — AFP

ey flowing into Turkey to reach 12.2 against the US greenback. Sultan Al-Jaber, the UAE's minister of industry and advanced technology, told Turkish state broadcaster TRT Haber that Turkey was a "natural partner" for Abu Dhabi.

Jaber said the two countries would develop economic, social and trade relations in areas including energy, agriculture, infrastructure, finance and tourism. "The main purpose of this visit is increasing our trade and business partnership through sustainable and successful investments," he was quoted as saying by TRT Haber. The main focus of the \$10 billion fund will be on "strategic investments", especially in sectors including energy, health and food, WAM reported.

Observers say Turkey does not only seek the UAE's financial support, but also to repair ties "between two major players who seek to assert themselves in the region," said Hasni Abidi, international relations professor at the University of Geneva. The two countries also know they are not favored by the White House under US President Joe Biden as they were under his predecessor, Donald Trump, he added, leading to a rethink of their relationship. — AFP

online streaming services and social media.

These platforms spent more than 500 million rupees (\$6.7 million) on advertising spots during the recently concluded T20 cricket World Cup, research by TAM Sports showed, with viewers subjected to an average of 51 cryptocurrency advertisements per match. Analysts say regulation would be central to addressing security risks, with crypto exchanges increasingly targeted by cyber criminals as virtual currency prices soar. — AFP