

## Local

# US official thanks Amir over Afghanistan evacuations

## Benaim hails enduring US-Kuwait relationship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** A visiting US official yesterday expressed gratitude to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his "excellent decision to work closely with the United States to partner in the evacuations from Afghanistan". "US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Kuwait showed how important we believe this US-Kuwait relationship is. Throughout history, US and Kuwait have proven that they are the strongest of allies and friends," said Daniel Benaim, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs in the Near East Bureau at the US Department of State.

"I wanted to meet government, civil society and business leaders to discuss many issues of importance that play into our strategic dialogue, and get a first-hand sense of key bilateral and regional issues that we have a chance to advance together," Benaim said during a roundtable discussion at the US Embassy yesterday. He praised Kuwait's diplomatic role in restoring the spirit of Gulf unity, "which was on display when the countries came together in New York and met the US as full partners, having put to rest the rift that had divided the US allies".

Benaim said discussions with Kuwaiti officials included policies related to Iran, Iraq and Syria. Benaim earlier yesterday met Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri, who previously served as Kuwait's ambassador to Iran. "President Biden has been committed to ensure Iran does not acquire a

nuclear weapon. We will consult closely with our partners and work with the international community to return to the nuclear deal (known formally as the JCPOA), to bring Iran's nuclear program back from the dangerous levels of enrichment it is currently engaged in," he said.

"Secretary Blinken has made it clear that the window of diplomacy is open, but it won't be open forever. We hope the new Iranian government will take the earliest opportunity to return to the table and engage in very serious diplomacy to address this threat to international security," Benaim added, refusing to be drawn when asked if the Biden administration would be prepared to pursue "other avenues" to ensure Tehran does not acquire a nuclear weapon.

Benaim vehemently denied that the US has lost interest in the Middle East. "The US has enduring interests, enduring values and enduring commitments in this region. I think the last two months have very vividly demonstrated that this region is fundamental to how America operates around the world, as we saw with the evacuation from Afghanistan. We will be here in the Middle East because it is the best way to advance our national interests, when countries are not able to proliferate nuclear weapons and terrorism is held in check. This can happen when partnerships are vibrant and healthy," he said.

Benaim was asked if the US will hand over the names of Kuwaiti members of Hezbollah to the Kuwaiti government. "Kuwait is a very good partner of the US on counterterrorism, and these kinds of sanctions help



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs in the Near East Bureau at the US Department of State Daniel Benaim holds a roundtable discussion at the US Embassy yesterday.

us ensure that Iran and its proxies and organizations cannot undermine the norms of international security and engage in terrorist behavior," Benaim replied, referring to US Treasury Department sanctions imposed on two Kuwaitis last month for supporting and financing Hezbollah.

## Kuwait's daily COVID-19 infection to test ratio stands at 0.19 percent

**KUWAIT:** Ministers were briefed during the Cabinet's weekly meeting on the latest developments of the coronavirus pandemic situation, including the signs of improvement shown in declining infection cases and hospitalizations. The daily rate of infections stands at 0.19 percent of the number of swap tests, he said, attributing the improvement to the accelerating rate of immunization. The Cabinet members express satisfaction about the trends of improvement, underscoring the need to continue commitment to the health precautions to help contain the outbreak of the virus and protect the community, thus preparing for return to normal life.

Kuwait's Cabinet convened its regular weekly meeting at Al-Seif Palace on Monday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Prime Minister briefed the ministers on the progress made in the implementation of the call of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the country's executive and legislative authorities to start a national dialogue. The ministers reaffirmed backing for the call and agreed that a quiet dialogue could prod economic development, prepare the ground for balanced relations with the legislative authority and realize the aspirations of the people, said Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. The ministers reviewed the constitutional and political aspects of His Highness the Amir's plea as well as its positive impacts on the legislative-executive cooperation and the domestic and regional situations.

Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser said he apprised the meeting of the outcome of his participation in the 149th session of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). He noted that the GCC ministerial meeting, recently held in Riyadh, strongly denounced the

Yemeni Houthi militias for persisting in launching missile and drone attacks on civilian targets in sisterly Saudi Arabia. The Cabinet meeting reviewed the outcomes of the participation of Kuwait delegation, led by His Highness the Prime Minister, in the 76th session of the UN General Assembly as well as the outcomes of the talks held on the sidelines with missions of friendly countries to the session.

His Highness the Prime Minister also briefed the meeting on his visit to friendly United Kingdom and the talks with Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Elizabeth Truss, and Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa James Cleverly. He apprised the meeting of his visit to sisterly Algeria where he handed a message from His Highness the Amir to President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on the bilateral relations. He put the ministers in the picture of his talks with Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Dr Najla Mangoush during her recent tour of the countries of the region. He noted that talks with Dr Al-Mangoush dealt with the latest developments on the regional and international scales as well as Kuwait's efforts to stabilize sisterly Libya.

Representative of His Highness the Prime Minister, the Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi briefed the Cabinet meeting on his mission to Expo 2020 Dubai and the opening on Friday of Kuwait Pavilion at the global gala under the theme of "New Kuwait - New Opportunities for Sustainability." The Cabinet members congratulated sisterly UAE on the successful inauguration of the Expo, which is considered the world's biggest gala ever held in the Middle East. They debated the proposals of the legal



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting. —KUNA

affairs committee regarding a number of international pacts, and agreed blueprints of some MoUs with other countries. On regional affairs, the Cabinet denounced the persistence of the Houthi militias in launching missile and drone attacks on civilians targets in sisterly Saudi Arabia, deeming such acts as blatant violation of the international humanitarian law.

They restated firm support to sisterly Saudi Arabia in whatever measures it might take to protect its safety, stability and sovereignty. The Cabinet members expressed sympathy with sisterly Oman and the UAE in the face of the tropical cyclone Shaheen that left scores of victims. They expressed condolences for the families of those who perished in the hurricane and wished the wounded a quick recovery. They also expressed condolences for UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and the brotherly people of the UAE over the tragic crash of an air ambulance. They congratulated Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the brotherly people of Qatar on the successful legislative elections, expressing best wishes of prosperity and welfare for Qatar. —KUNA

## Whistleblower calls to...

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"The company intentionally hides vital information from the public, from the US government and from governments around the world," Haugen's statement said.

She spoke less than a day after Facebook, its photo-sharing app Instagram and messaging service WhatsApp went offline for roughly seven hours, hitting potentially billions of users and highlighting global dependence on its services. "Here's my message for (Facebook CEO) Mark Zuckerberg. Your time of invading our privacy, promoting toxic content and preying on children and teens is over," said Senator Ed Markey. "Congress will be taking action... we will not allow your company to harm our children, our families and our democracy anymore," he added.

Senator Amy Klobuchar said she sees the whistleblower disclosures as the long-needed push to get Congress moving. "I think the time has come for action, and I think you are the catalyst for that action," she told Haugen. US lawmakers for years have threatened to regulate Facebook and other social media platforms to address criticisms that the tech giants trample on privacy, provide a megaphone for dangerous misinformation and damage young people's well-being.

Facebook has pushed back hard against the whistleblower revelations and attacked Haugen's knowledge yes-

terday. Haugen "did not work on child safety or Instagram or research these issues and has no direct knowledge of the topic from her work at Facebook," tweeted Andy Stone, a spokesman for the company. Haugen, a 37-year-old data scientist from Iowa, has worked for companies including Google and Pinterest - but said in an interview Sunday with CBS news show "60 Minutes" that Facebook was "substantially worse" than anything she had seen before. Facebook's vice president of policy and global affairs Nick Clegg vehemently pushed back at the assertion its platforms are "toxic" for teens, days after a tense, hours-long congressional hearing in which US lawmakers grilled the company over its impact on the mental health of young users.

Facebook late Monday blamed the outage on configuration changes it made to routers that coordinate network traffic between its data centers. "This disruption to network traffic had a cascading effect on the way our data centers communicate, bringing our services to a halt," Facebook vice president of infrastructure Santosh Janardhan said in a post.

In addition to the disruption to people, businesses and others that rely on the company's tools, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg took a financial hit. Fortune's billionaire tracking website late Monday said Zuckerberg's personal fortune plunged by nearly \$6 billion from the prior day to land at just under \$117 billion. Some people rejoiced at Facebook's tools being offline, but some complained to AFP that the outage had caused trouble for them both professionally and personally. —AFP

## Nobel Physics Prize honors...

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Parisi, 73, won the other half for his work on the interplay of disorder and fluctuations in physical systems.

"Syukuro Manabe and Klaus Hasselmann laid the foundation of our knowledge of the Earth's climate and how humanity influences it," the Nobel Committee said. "Giorgio Parisi is rewarded for his revolutionary contributions to the theory of disordered materials and random processes," it added. "The discoveries being recognized this year demonstrate that our knowledge about the climate rests on a solid scientific foundation, based on a rigorous analysis of observations," Hansson said.

Manabe is affiliated with Princeton University in the US, while Hasselmann is a professor at the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology in Hamburg. Parisi, who also won the prestigious Wolf Prize in February, is a professor at Rome's Sapienza University. Working in the 1960s, Manabe showed how levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere correspond to increased Earth surface temperatures. He was influential in developing the physical models of Earth's climate and explored how the heat received by Earth from the Sun radiates back into the atmosphere.

Hasselmann was credited for working out how climate models can remain reliable despite sometimes chaotic variation in weather trends. The Committee praised his identification of climate "fingerprints" caused by both natural and human activities and how much climate change can be attributed solely to manmade emissions. Already three decades ago, Hasselmann issued an eerily accurate warning about where the climate was headed.

"In 30 to 100 years, depending on how much fossil fuel we consume, we will face a very significant climate change," Hasselmann said in a 1988 interview, according to a statement from the Max Planck Society in Germany. Speaking to the Nobel Foundation after the award was announced, Hasselmann stressed the need for urgent action. "There are many things we can do to prevent climate change," he said, adding that he thought the issue depended on "whether people will realise that something which will happen in 20 or 30 years is something you have to respond to now." —AFP

## Nazaha invites public to report suspected corruption complaints

By Dana Al-Matar

**K**uwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) is an entity that is responsible for combatting corruption crimes in the State of Kuwait. This is a complex mandate that requires sophisticated action. In order to perform this task, Nazaha has developed its operational sectors accordingly. Two of the main sectors at Nazaha are the Financial Disclosure Sector and the Detection of Corruption and Investigation Sector.

The Financial Disclosure Sector receives and analyzes what is known as the "financial disclosure statements." In these statements, state officials disclose their wealth, including bank accounts, properties, valuable items, and others. The purpose of the statements is twofold: to preserve the integrity of state officials and detect corruption crimes. Statements must be submitted and updated by the state officials according to specific dates. They are also regularly examined by financial auditors for illicit enrichment, and in this case, they are referred to the Detection of Corruption and Investigation Sector.

Financial disclosure statements need to be submitted by specific state officials, those who are deemed to be more prone to corruption. These officials are identified in Article 2 of Law No 2 for the year 2016 on the establishment of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority and the Special Provisions of Financial Disclosure. These state officials include the Prime Minister, ministers, speaker and members of the parliament, head of the judiciary council, judges, among others.

On the other hand, the Detection of Corruption and Investigation Sector receives and investigates complaints by whistleblowers and takes the required course of action in that regard. The complaints must be against the state officials mentioned above, and the crime should be among the corruption crimes stipulated in Article 22 of the said law which includes: bribery, abuse of power, money laundering, fraud and other crimes against public funds.

All complaints by whistleblowers are considered strictly confidential, and personal information is never disclosed. In fact, Nazaha provides whistleblowers with the maximum level of protection. It represents them in courts and challenges any administrative or legal action taken against them for submitting a complaint.

Since its establishment in 2016, Nazaha has received 367 complaints about corruption crimes. Yet, Nazaha does not solely rely on complaints. It monitors news about corruption crimes in newspapers, social media, and other sources. In this manner, Nazaha has detected 97 cases of suspected corruption crimes since 2016.

Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis are welcome to submit their complaints to Nazaha through booking an appointment online. They can then provide the information on the suspected incident of corruption to an assigned investigator along with the supporting documents.

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