

Local

Kuwait's Deputy Amir receives Saudi Ambassador



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud. The Ambassador handed in a letter from the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The letter focused on bilateral relations, issues of common interest, and the latest updates on the regional and international fronts. The letter also included an invitation to His Highness the Amir to the fifth Future of Investment Initiative. — KUNA

Kuwait against torture, inhumane treatment: Ambassador to UN

GENEVA: Kuwait's participation in the 18th meeting of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) reflects its keenness in human rights issues with all its forms and aspects, a senior Kuwaiti diplomat said yesterday. This came in the speech Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international Organizations Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim gave during the meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Kuwait's contribution to the CAT committee elections, that will take place during the meeting, comes in support of efforts in this domain, he added. Kuwait is among few countries keen on implementing all of its obligations, including handing the periodical reports on its scheduled timings, due to its partnership in international agreements related to the human rights, including CAT. This commitment came from the high responsibility and transparency Kuwaiti policy follows on human rights issues, which highly served a good reputation, and mutual trust with



Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim

human rights institutions, and all other international conventions committees related to this matter, he added.

Kuwait joined CAT in 1998, which reflected the state's deep belief in CAT values, a convention that Kuwait was a pioneer among other Arab countries to join it. Kuwait, since joining CAT, took many measures that boost the implementation of this convention, the diplomat said. Enhancing and protecting the human rights is a "strategic choice", and anti-torture value is a deep-rooted value in the traditions of the Kuwaiti people, he affirmed. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society launched a donation drive in the Avenues Mall yesterday to help cover school expenses of children of families in need in Kuwait. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Roads authority assigned to execute railway project

KUWAIT: The Cabinet asked the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to implement the railway project, a local Arabic daily reported yesterday quoting sources. A time schedule must be prepared for the implementation in agreement with the dates approved by the GCC secretariat

general, reported Al-Qabas. This means the responsibility of the project's implementation has moved from the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) to PART.

The railway project is part of GCC countries' plans to build a joint railway network to boost the economy, increase trade volumes and create more job opportunities in the region. The decision to move the project to PART was according to the law that allows it to establish companies, as it allows it to establish a shareholding company to carry out the task. The cost of the first stage of the project is around KD 300 million. The line will be 111-km long with four stations, including for maintenance, storage, loading, passengers and goods.



Visa curbs, worker exodus lead to...

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Even some private hospitals and clinics are complaining of a shortage of staff. "We are exhausted, but we cannot complain, since patients are our number one priority rather than ourselves. We don't get days off, we are overworked, and are prevented by the management to take annual leave too," a nurse at a private hospital told Kuwait Times.

Rico Cinco, who owns two restaurants in Salmiya, said he has been waiting for the reopening of visas for restaurant workers for nearly two years now. "I needed people to work at my restaurants even before the

pandemic. While waiting for the reopening of visas, I work from the kitchen to the dining area to help my staff. I hope the government meets our need for manpower," he said.

Hypermarkets in some areas of Kuwait are even accepting workers on domestic visas. "We have no choice. We need people, so we hire domestic helpers although it's illegal," a manager of a hypermarket told Kuwait Times. Shops and garages are also short of workers. "I hope everything will be okay by next year; if not, I will have to close my business. I need people, but they demand high salaries," a garage owner in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh said.

But not all sectors are in demand, as many companies affected by the coronavirus pandemic are laying off workers. "We are still in bad shape. If we want to keep our jobs, we should be ready to accept salary cuts or be terminated. There are no new projects yet," an engineer told Kuwait Times.

Moderna and AstraZeneca jabs, but not Janssen which was authorized much later and is far less widely used in France. The results also suggest that over the period of study - up to five months - vaccination protection against severe COVID did not diminish.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization's vaccine advisers yesterday recommended people with weakened immune systems should be offered an additional dose of all WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccines. The UN health agency's experts also said over-60s fully immunized with China's Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines should be offered an additional third COVID-19 vaccine dose.

The Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) stressed it was not recommending an additional booster dose for the population at large, which is already being rolled out in some countries. The WHO wants a moratorium on booster doses for the general population until the end of the year to prioritize first doses in the dozens of nations starved of vaccines. SAGE said it would review the issue of general booster doses on Nov 11. — AFP

Tens of thousands of residents to...

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This prompted the traffic department to put a block on them so they cannot be renewed.

There are also 40,000 residents who got driving licenses as per existing conditions, but as they changed their professions, they lost one of the conditions for obtaining a license. But many of them still

drive using those licenses, and if caught, they only pay a KD 5 fine. This made the traffic department to link up with the manpower authority, so any resident who has a license cannot renew their residency permit until after making sure there is no block on them at the traffic department. If there is a block, the resident must hand over the expired driving license to be able to renew their residency permit.

The sources said a circular will be issued soon to ban driving using old licenses even if they are still valid, and holders must exchange it with the new one, in order to restrict those who received the licenses in an illegal manner or lost one of the conditions that allows them to get a license. — Al-Rai

Saudi, Iran signal warming ties but...

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the two sides "were on the verge of agreeing... to ease tensions between them and the (diplomatic) proxy war in the region" during the last round of talks.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan has confirmed a fourth round took place in September, and expressed hope they would "lay the foundation" to address issues between the countries. His Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, has said the discussions are "on the right track". "We have achieved results and agreements, but we still need more dialogue," he said earlier this month.

The foreign diplomat said the two sides would "most likely put the final touches to an agreement" in a new round of talks that could come within days. "They, in principle, have reached an agreement to reopen consulates... and I think an announcement of normalization of ties may come in the next few weeks," the diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Saudi media have toned down their rhetoric towards Tehran, with the state-run Al-Ekhabariya television last week reporting "direct and honest" discus-

sions that would "achieve stability in the region". It also cited Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's statement this year that Riyadh wants "a good and special relationship" with Tehran.

Last month, Saudi King Salman expressed hope that talks with Iran would "lead to tangible outcomes to build trust" and revive bilateral cooperation. But he also called on Tehran to cease "all types of support" for armed groups in the region, referring especially to Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have escalated missile and drone attacks on the kingdom.

Since 2015, Riyadh has led a military coalition to support the government against the Houthi insurgents after they seized the capital Sanaa. Riyadh accuses Iran of supporting the Houthis with weapons and drones, but Tehran says it only provides the rebels with political support. "Saudi Arabia is interested in ending the conflict in Yemen... which has cost it billions of riyals," the foreign diplomat said.

But Tehran also seeks economic opportunities with Riyadh as it looks to revive its sanctions-battered economy, according to the diplomat. Saudi government adviser Ali Shihabi said that while the atmosphere was positive, Tehran would have to take "substantive" action, particularly on Yemen, before Riyadh would agree to measures like the reopening of embassies. "Iran needs to take real steps, not just (engage) in nice talk," Shihabi told AFP. — AFP

Vaccines prevent severe COVID...

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Starting 14 days after a second dose, a vaccinated subjects' risk of severe COVID was reduced by 90 percent, according to the research conducted by Epi-Phare, an independent medicines safety research group that works closely with the French government. Vaccination appears to be nearly as effective against for the Delta variant, with 84 percent protection for people 75 and older and 92 percent for people 50-75.

That estimate, however, is only based on a month of data, since the variant became dominant in France only in June. "The study should be followed up to include results from August and September," epidemiologist Mahmoud Zureik, the head of Epi-Phare, told AFP. The study covers vaccination with the Pfizer/BioNTech,