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becoming
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Migration, migrants and the marooned



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Kuwait is among a handful of countries around the world where the migrant population far outnumber citizens. As such, migration, and migrant problems have been issues of concern to policymakers, parliamentarians and the public in Kuwait, as well as to local, regional and international human rights organizations.

Policymakers tend to slot migrants and their problems into neat cubby holes such



as, labor issues faced by legal migrant workers; abuses and human rights violations against migrant domestic helpers; potential implications of having to harbor asylum seekers, and the ongoing predicament of finding a lasting and widely acceptable solution to the tens of thousands of so-called 'stateless' people in Kuwait. And lastly, the large number of illegal migrants who are considered an economic and security vulnerability to the country.

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Spain's relations with Kuwait on an upswing

By Reaven D'Souza
Managing Editor

Ambassador of Spain H.E. Miguel Moro Aguilar held an Iftar reception on 17 April at his residence for local media as part of traditional Ramadan celebrations.

He praised the Ramadan traditions in Kuwait that point to the warmth and camaraderie that exists among all communities living in the country, and the wonderful spirit of meeting and greeting people in their diwanis and receptions.

Speaking about Spain's bilateral relations with Kuwait, Ambassador Aguilar said fruitful political consultations were held in Madrid last June 2022 at the level of Vice minister of Foreign affairs where many issues were discussed, including ways to increase the volume of their bilateral exchange, cooperation in the realms of defense, culture and in the promotion of the Spanish language, science and sports.

Elaborating on the discussions, the ambassador said many issues of international and regional dimension were also discussed, and pointed out that there was indeed a large space of understanding and for collaboration between both countries. He pointed out that the first bilateral Joint Economic and Trade Committee took place in Madrid on 14 and 15



largest EU countries, was fully committed to the strengthening of these relations and from next July, they will hold the six-month Presidency of the Council, when they will try to give an impulse to the EU-GCC and EU-Kuwait relations.

million euros in 2022). The Spanish imports from Kuwait have also increased 145 percent to €133 million in 2022, mainly oil products.

There is a trade balance in favor of Spain, with a diversity of Spanish exports compared to imports concentrated in oil, plastics and chemical products and the high relative weight of clothing items. The main products exported from Spain were mechanical machinery, non-knitwear (14%), knitwear (9%), fuels (7%) and ceramics (5%).

He also mentioned that the Spanish Business Council was created last year, which he hoped would definitely help to give their economic relations more vitality and visibility.

"We already enjoy a strategic partnership, which is bound to grow exponentially in the next few years, if we all make the right decisions and take the adequate steps," Ambassador Aguilar noted.

Regarding cultural exchanges, the ambassador expressed his sincere hope that these exchanges would improve and enhance the links as Spanish culture was well-known all over the world and Kuwaitis, due to their special bond with Spain, really like every aspect of Spanish culture.

He pointed at flamenco being very popular in Kuwait, as well as Spanish cuisine and

Spanish sports like football and tennis. "Both Real Madrid and Barcelona have academies in Kuwait and even Rafa Nadal inaugurated his fabulous academy here," he noted.

"In this spirit, we are working hard to bring Spanish artists to Kuwait. As a result of these endeavors, a Spanish duo playing guitar and violin will perform a concert here in Kuwait on 14 May, with the much appreciated collaboration of the National Council for Culture Arts and Letters."

Expanding on tourism to Spain, he revealed that Kuwait Airways flew officially to Madrid last September the first direct flight between both capitals in almost 40 years, as well as signed an agreement with the Spanish Air Europa for a code sharing agreement, a real hallmark in our relations and a wonderful bridge for both countries to improve our links in all fields.

Ambassador Aguilar concluded by saying that there were around 600 Spaniards living in Kuwait and he was proud to say that they were a well-integrated community present in almost every sector, education, business, sports, engineering. "They are a very valuable part of these people to people relationship between Spain and Kuwait, and I want to thank them for their contributions," he pointed out



“

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”

of November 2022, which was a hallmark in their bilateral relations.

Additionally, he emphasized the value of the EU-Kuwait relations. Spain, as one of the

On economic and trade relations between Kuwait and Spain, he pointed out that they have intensified with a sustained increase in Spanish exports (from €149 million in 2009 to €394



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British ambassador praises diwaniyah as platform for free opinion

British Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Belinda Lewis, expressed her happiness at experiencing the holy month of Ramadan in Kuwait for the second time in a row, pointing out that Ramadan this year comes as people are more confident and more open to practicing religious rituals, customs and traditions such as iftar parties, ghabgas and Ramadan evenings, after the end of the Corona pandemic, which now is a distant memory.

Ambassador Lewis said in a statement that the Ramadan ghabga she held at her residence recently on the occasion of the holy month, and in the presence of senior diplomats, was characterized by a charming atmosphere, several Ramadan tents and decorations reflecting the holy month.

She explained that the month of Ramadan was a favorable opportunity for her to visit many diwaniyahs, praising these gatherings as a unique

Kuwaiti custom that provided a platform for free opinion in Kuwait, which was very similar to a mini parliament.

Regarding the embassy's preparations to receive the summer season, tourism and travel, and the growing demand for visas, the British envoy said that the new electronic travel permit (ETA) will start working as of February 2024, noting that it will add ease and flexibility to the process of traveling to the United Kingdom,

as it allows the holder of unlimited multiple entry valid for Britain for two years from the date of its approval.

Regarding her advice to students who want to study in the UK, she said they should apply for a visa as soon as possible and not wait for the last moment.

She pointed out that bilateral relations with Kuwait are developing significantly at various levels, both in the defense field, especially in terms of training the Kuwaiti forces, the economic and trade levels, investment, health, and cultural and academic cooperation.

Kalyan Jewellers celebrate festival of Akshaya Tritiya

Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewelry brands, has announced the commencement of its Akshaya Tritiya celebrations with exciting offers for customers across the country. To mark the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Kalyan Jewellers is providing customers with appealing discounts and valuable giveaways on their jewelry purchases.

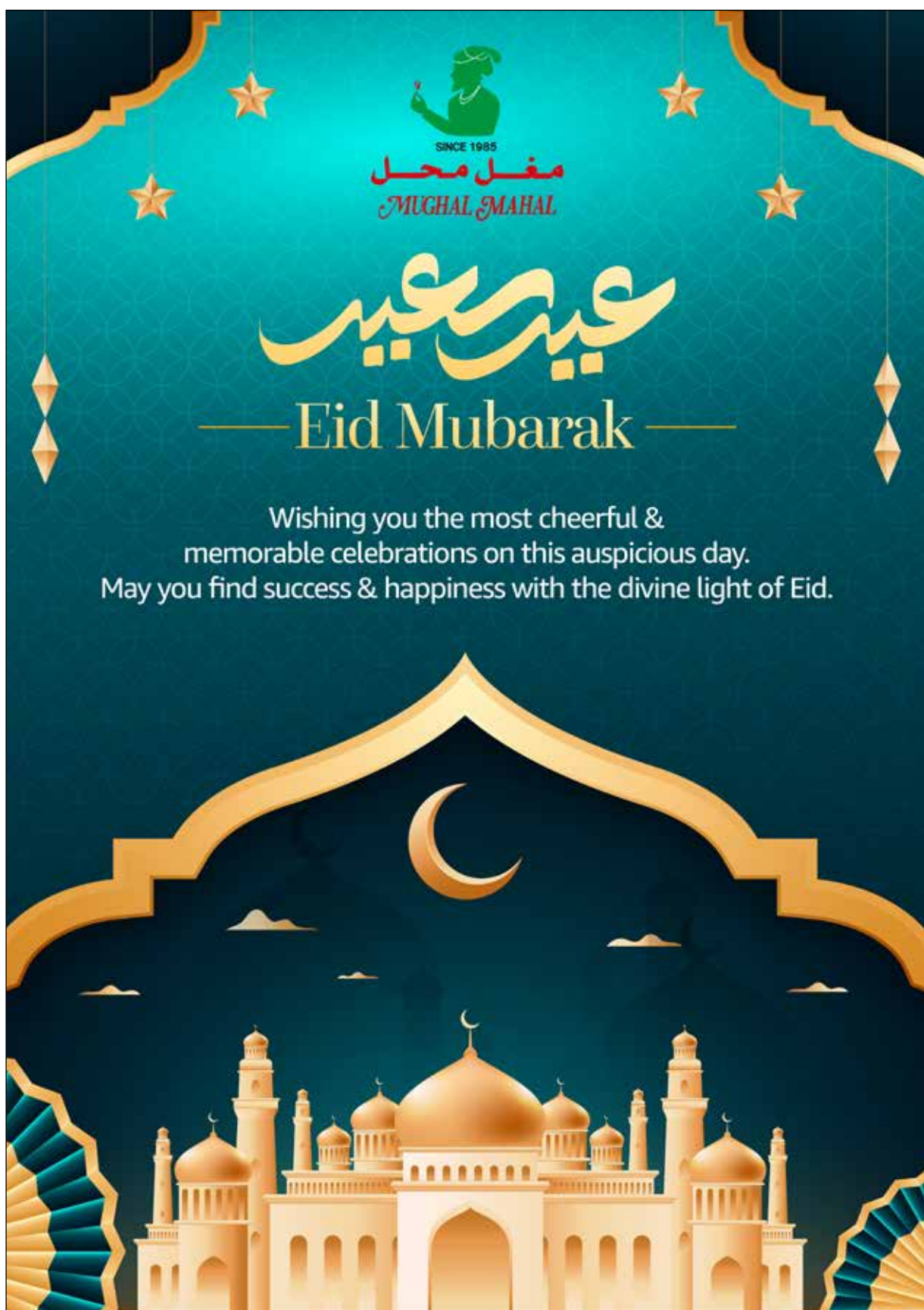
With these one-of-its-kind offers, Kalyan Jewellers aims to ensure that customers get maximum value on their jewelry purchases, across categories — from gold and diamonds to uncut and precious-stones jewelry. Customers purchasing gold jewelry worth KD500 will receive a ½ gram gold coin, whereas those who purchase precious/uncut jewelry worth KD500 will get a 1-gram gold coin. On purchase of diamond jewelry worth KD500, customers will be rewarded with a 2-gram gold coin. These bumper offers are valid until 30 May across showrooms in Kuwait.

Talking about the Akshaya Tritiya Offer announcement, Executive Director of Kalyan Jewellers, Ramesh Kalyanaraman, said, "Over the years, we have taken significant strides and accomplished major achievements towards creating a comprehensive ecosystem that elevates the overall customer shopping experience. As we kick start our 2023 Akshaya Tritiya campaign, our aim is to ensure that patrons receive the highest possible benefit from their jewelry purchases. Our commitment to delivering the finest shopping experience to our valued customers remains steadfast, and we will always uphold the company's fundamental principles of trust and transparency in the future."

The jewelry retailed at Kalyan Jewellers goes through multiple purity tests and patrons also receive the Kalyan Jewellers 4-Level Assurance Certificate which guarantees purity, free lifetime maintenance of ornaments, detailed product information and transparent exchange and buy-back policies. The certification is part of the brand's commitment to offering the very best to its loyalists.

Kalyan Jewellers popular house brands include Lila, diamonds and semi-precious stone jewelry; Tejasvi, Polki jewelry; Mudhra, handcrafted antique jewelry; Nimah, temple Jewelry; Glo, dancing diamonds; Ziah, Solitaire-like diamond jewelry; Anokhi, uncut diamonds; Muhurat, wedding jewelry; and Rang, precious stones jewelry.

For more information on the brand, its collections and offers, visit <https://www.kalyanjewellers.net/>





Azerbaijan Ambassador hosts Iftar for media

Speaking during an iftar reception held last week for media personnel at the embassy, Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Emil Karimov said that more than 22,000 Kuwaiti tourists visited Azerbaijan last year, and the numbers are expected to further increase this year.

Elaborating on the history of Azerbaijani - Kuwaiti relations, the envoy noted that since

the establishment of diplomatic relations more than 30 years ago, the two countries had strengthened their relations in all fields, with bilateral ties reaching a peak in 2009 following the visit to Kuwait by the Azerbaijan president Ilham Aliyev that year.

He went on to point out that Kuwait provided humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan and supported his country in all international

forums. He also revealed that both Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways operate six direct flights per week to Azerbaijan, and Azeri Airlines resumed direct flights from Baku to Kuwait in April 2022.

Ambassador Karimov renewed his country's readiness to cooperate with Kuwait in the field of food security and the provision of meat and agricultural products.

He also invited Kuwaiti investors to invest in his country, not only in the field of real estate, but also in the fields of agriculture, tourism and various other industries.

He pointed out that there were several facilities provided by the state to foreign investors, including exemption from taxes and ensuring the ease of entry and exit of capital.

Kyrgyzstan facilitates visas for several countries

Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan H.E. Azamat Karagulov announced last week that his country recently simplified the granting of visas to citizens of eleven countries — Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal Pakistan, Tunisia, and Sri Lanka.

The government of Kyrgyzstan has decided to extend the simplified system for granting visas to citizens of the above mentioned countries, said the ambassador. He explained that the main condition for granting a visa to citizens of the aforementioned countries is that the person be a legal resident of the following countries — Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Brunei.

The ambassador indicated that this decision was taken within the framework of facilitating the visa regime in order to create favorable conditions for residents of these eleven countries in the GCC states, as well as by citizens of Gulf states, for investments and development of the tourism sector in Kyrgyzstan.

Banks to set ceiling on daily, monthly digital transactions

Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has reportedly asked all local commercial banks to set a ceiling on the value of transactions that individual customers can make on a daily and monthly basis using electronic payment links.

The stipulations are in line with the CBK's keenness to regulate the digital payment ecosystem in the country, given the increasing number of fraudulent transactions that take place through these payment services, and to comply with international anti-money laundering and terrorist financing requirements.

The banking regulator has asked all commercial banks to adhere to the following conditions when providing links to digital transaction services for their customers:

Include the bank statement data, whether for the sender or the receiver, and clarify the name of the other party in full, and the name of their bank based on data from their payment card, as well as the purpose of the payment.

The validity of the payment link shall not exceed 24 hours. Setting a ceiling on the value of daily and monthly transactions that a single customer can carry out using the payment link, commensurate with the degree of risks associated with the particular customer, and obtaining prior approval from CBK before setting the value limits.

Undertake continuous follow-up on the operations carried out through payment links, setting up the mechanisms, procedures and controls necessary to detect fraud, activating continuous monitoring through anti-fraud systems, and intensifying awareness campaigns on various communication channels.



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Deanship of the Diplomatic Corps holds annual Ghabga



Kuwait plays a pivotal and essential role in leading diplomacy in the region, said the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Tajikistan, H.E. Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda, during a Ramadan ghabga he organized for heads of diplomatic missions and special guests at the At. Reis Hotel on 12 April.

He pointed to the facilities provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah and his deputy, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, to the heads of diplomatic

missions accredited to the country, in overcoming all difficulties to perform their diplomatic duties. In Kuwait.

Noting that there are more than 100 missions and international organizations that operate from Kuwait, making it the hub of diplomatic activity in the region, Ambassador Zubaydzoda remarked that Kuwait has a very vibrant and active diplomatic circle, which reinforces the importance the country pays to its relations with all nations around the world,

In a press statement issued on the occasion,

Ambassador Zubaydzoda congratulated the Kuwaiti government for obtaining high confidence among countries in the region and internationally.

He noted that Kuwaiti relations with his country were very good, in addition to Kuwait's distinguished relations with brotherly and friendly countries around the world.

He extended his warmest congratulations to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, and the Kuwaiti people during the

last ten days of the holy month, and the advent of the blessed Eid Al-Fitr.

He added that holding such Ramadan gatherings has become a Sunnah that he is keen to hold in the month of Ramadan every year, and is considered a diplomatic gathering without regard to the beliefs of the participants. This, he said, is evidence of religious tolerance in Kuwait, indicating that such social events are an opportunity for diplomats, especially the new ones, to get to know each other, and acquaint themselves with Ramadan customs in Kuwait.



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City Centre hosts Loyac initiative for Eid Clothing and Toys

As is customary for every Eid, Kuwaiti-owned City Centre carried out the Eid Clothing & Toys Initiative in Collaboration with Loyac in their Shuwaikh branch, located in Manara Mall. The initiative comprises of an evening at City Centre, with 40 families hosted by way of doing their kid's Eid clothing shopping, enjoying an iftar meal together, and celebrating with a fun-packed evening at Cozmo Kids entertainment area.

The initiative, started in 2021, has been a regular one as part of City Centre's social responsibility

commitment, especially at a time where families should be enjoying these joyous occasions together without having to worry about how to provide for Eid with their children and loved ones. It also goes hand-in-hand with Loyac's commitment of supporting the community.

Speaking on this, City Centre Deputy CEO Nasser Alghanim said, "Our mission of supporting youth in Kuwait is made possible through the efforts from the esteemed Loyac organization, and we are committed to always being an active player in the community. We believe it is our responsibility and every Kuwaiti company's responsibility to ensure that the younger generations get all the support possible to get the right foundation for their future."

To note, this is just one of the ways in which City Centre has collaborated with Loyac in support of the community and continues to do so. Another noteworthy initiative is City Centre's participation with Loyac's Summer internship, where young adults starting out their careers had



an opportunity to work at City Centre's various branches and head office to gain practical and professional experience as a foundation for their future careers.

Germany to contribute to Kuwait's development plans

German Ambassador Hans-Christian von Reibnitz said his first Ramadan in Kuwait has been an overwhelming experience of compassion, solidarity and social openness, and that the many different Diwanias and Ghabkas he attended since the beginning of Ramadan opened his heart and mind to the deeply rooted hospitality so characteristic for the people of Kuwait.

Speaking to media persons at an Iftar he hosted in their honour he pointed out that Kuwait had a very special character and flavour that differs from other Arab and Islamic countries where he served which included Turkey, Afghanistan, Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Ambassador Reibnitz pointed out that he learned new things from Kuwait's customs in this Holy Month, perhaps the most prominent of which was Gergeian, which he had not seen in any country he served before. Elaborating on what he saw in one of the suburbs of Kuwait aroused joy and pleasure, indicating that this custom was very similar to some celebrations in Germany, where children roam around the houses, knock on doors, sing some songs, and families present them with sweets, in a wonderful indication of family and community cohesion.

Ambassador Reibnitz praised Kuwait's



diwanias which he described as unique as platforms for opinion, explaining that he had visited more than 25 diwanias so far, pointing out that foreign missions in Kuwait are racing to visit the largest number of diwanias during the holy month, expressing his happiness at the state of beautiful coexistence between religions in Kuwait.

He pointed out that he experienced Kuwait in an atmosphere of openness and friendship, which are the most important elements of coexistence between people. In response to a question about the embassy's preparations for the tourism and travel season and the potential

demand for visas, he said our country is open to you, and we welcome Kuwaiti tourists and travelers but cautioned not to leave it for the last moment.

Regarding economic and social relations, he said, "I think we can build on what we have done in the past sixty years, but we can improve them. Our economic relations are fairly stable, but they have not developed, and Germany is ready to participate in the Kuwaiti government's plans to diversify the country's economy to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century."

Among them, energy transformation, water management, environmental awareness and

climate change are possible areas of cooperation. "We look forward to closer cooperation with the Kuwaiti government in the run-up to the World Climate Change Conference, which the region will host in December 2023," he said, noting that the economic relations between Kuwait and Germany are looking forward to future prospects in many sectors such as automobiles, industrial technology, health, information technology and artificial intelligence and others.

Ambassador Reibnitz pointed out that education was as good as free with a cost of as little as 200 euros annually and encouraged people to apply to German universities.



Workshop on cooking with millets

Healthy and nutritious foods not only impacts our physical health but also our mental well being. Switching to a healthy diet is not a difficult proposition if you know how to make a few modifications to the ingredients in the dishes we cook daily.

One interesting and easily incorporated option to achieve a nutritious diet is to include millet to your daily food. Millets are a great source of proteins, micronutrients and phytochemicals. For quite some time now, I have been cooking millets in different ways and coming up with simple and tasty dishes.

Everyone wanting to enjoy the nutritious benefits of millet can now join my hands-on workshop that teaches the basics of cooking

millet and creating multiple nutritious millet dishes. The highly successful workshops, titled 'Chhaya's Divine Delights Cooking', help people prepare dishes from different types of millets, and enlighten them on the variety of fusion dishes that can be prepared with millet as the base ingredient.

More such workshops designed to allow people to cook delicious nutritious dishes are planned in the future. These workshops will integrate various culinary arts. Workshops in the past including, Healthy, Easy, Instant Breakfast, Chaat Special (Street Food), Child Friendly Non Fire Cooking and others.



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Reconnaissance Research hosts Ramadan Diwaniya



From left: Reconnaissance Research directors Ali Zalzalah - Qais Aljoan - Yousef Alghusain



From left: Abdulrahman Al-Olayan - Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri - Greek Ambassador - Tunisian Ambassador



From left: Reaven D'Souza - Lebanon's charge d'affaires - Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri - Tarek Sultan

Reconnaissance Research, the leading independent think-tank in the country held its annual Ramadan Diwaniya coinciding with its fourth anniversary, last week. The reception was attended by several members of the diplomatic corps and prominent Kuwaiti social figures.

Speaking on the occasion, Founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, said: "This year's diwaniya coincides with the fourth anniversary of our establishment. This is an occasion that means a lot to us and to me personally." He continued that, "despite the obstacles, challenges and few mistakes along the way, the fact that we were able to cement ourselves as a leading and independent research institute, is quite an achievement on its own".

Reconnaissance Research continues to



work with a team of experts from different fields to provide comprehensive insights and analysis on many complex issues that have a bearing on Kuwait and the society. "We aim to inform policymakers, businesses, and other

stakeholders about the political, social, and economic dynamics of Kuwait and the GCC," said Al-Anjeri.

"After four years of extensive research, we identified a need for customized and in-depth advisory services among potential clients in the Middle East region and beyond. Over the past few years we have been working diligently and exerting all our efforts to meet this need by providing clients with bespoke insights, reports and analysis on a set of issues such as, energy, economics, security, politics and social issues, among others."

In their statements made on the occasion, the Ambassador of Oman remarked:

"Reconnaissance Research has become a prominent research institution not just within Kuwait but also across the Gulf and Arab regions. One of the main reasons for its significance is the platform it offers for transparent dialogue that encourages diverse perspectives without bias. The center's founder, Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, has a clear vision and long-term strategy to establish the institution as a center of excellence and high quality. Despite only being four years old and operating during the COVID-19 pandemic, the center has successfully hosted numerous conferences, seminars, and dialogues in person and virtually, covering a variety of issues and featuring high-level decision makers from multiple countries. We are expecting a close collaboration with the Sultanate of Oman on various fields. This initiative is part of the ongoing efforts to bolster the excellent existing bilateral relations between Oman and Kuwait."

For her part, the French Ambassador stated:

"It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Reconnaissance Research on the fourth anniversary of the launch of this esteemed think-tank. It was my honor to participate in many of Reconnaissance Research's programs, and I appreciate the quality of their work. Independent think tanks like Reconnaissance are needed in Kuwait and in all countries to provide honest, clear, objective, and expert analysis of the most important issues facing a society. They help locals and onlookers understand more than one side of an issue and can guide decision makers as they plot a better future. I wish Reconnaissance the best of success as they continue to work as hard as they've always been, bringing more international spotlight and awareness to Kuwait in a very unique way."

Statement from the Chinese Ambassador:

"I was very pleased to attend Reconnaissance Research's Ramadan dewaniya on the occasion

of its fourth anniversary. The center plays an active role in promoting exchanges between Kuwait and other countries. With the world experiencing rapid changes not seen in a century, it is imperative that countries promote universal values and work towards building a future that is shared by all. Intellectual institutions, like Reconnaissance Research, have a vital role to play in promoting people-to-people exchanges and international cooperation to achieve a world of peace, stability, development, and equity. We have great confidence in Reconnaissance Research's ability to continue serving as a robust connection between China and Kuwait, fostering deeper bonds between the people of both countries. As an essential hub for intellectual and cultural exchange in the Gulf region, the center will undoubtedly elevate the State of Kuwait's prominence and prestige. We extend our best wishes to the center and its leaders for continued progress, achievement, and success."



Indian Ambassador with Sheikh Abdullah M. Alsabah, Undersecretary at Ministry of Defence




Ambassador of Oman and his delegation



From left: French Ambassador with Nada Almutawa - Egyptian Ambassador




From left: Greek Ambassador - Chinese Ambassador - Ukrainian Ambassador




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Indian Embassy hosts Ghabga evening

Embassy of India in Kuwait hosted a Ramadan Gabgha event on 11 April at the Embassy premises, which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti friends of India, and Indian community representatives.

The event showcased the diversity of religions and faiths that coexist peacefully in India, and underlined that India is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. The holy month of Ramadan is observed with reverence as a time of fasting, charity and family get-togethers, by worshippers throughout India, and the Eid Al Fitr at the end of Ramadan, is celebrated with great zeal and fervor.

Attendees at the embassy's Ramadan Ghabga enjoyed traditional Indian instrumental music and a sumptuous dinner prepared for the occasion. Speaking at the event, Ambassador of India H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika said: "We are delighted to host this Ramadan Ghabga, which is also an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the Indian and Kuwaiti communities." Expressing his happiness that his first posting in the region was to Kuwait, Ambassador Swaika noted that he feels fortunate to get to know the Kuwaiti people and their customs closely. He pointed out that he has so far visited about 20 Kuwaiti diwanis and attended several Ghabgas, both of which highlight the country's traditional values and heritage .

Regarding his recent meeting with Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, he said they discussed ways to develop bilateral relations between the two countries in all fields, and to prepare for the



exchange of high-level official visits between the two countries.

He revealed that the political consultations between the two countries is scheduled to

be held in the Indian capital New Delhi next month, which will focus on diversifying the fields of cooperation from the oil and food sectors to other areas as well, including the

pharmaceutical industries, the health sector, medical tourism, cooperation in the space field, information technology and various other sectors.

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EU Delegation holds ghabga for media representatives



Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union Delegation in Kuwait, Gediminas Varanavicius, held a Ramadan Ghabga for media representatives on 10 April that was attended by a large gathering of media personnel.

In his address to the gathering, Mr. Varanavicius thanked media members for their support and cooperation with the EU Delegation in Kuwait, and informed them about the Delegation's plans for the coming period, including Europe Day celebrations next month. He praised the excellent EU-Kuwait bilateral ties and added that both the EU and Kuwait are determined to build on these strong relations, as evidenced during recent positive meetings between EU and Kuwait high-level representatives.

He pointed out that the High Representative of the EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Vice President of the

European Commission, Josep Borrell, met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, H.E. Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, in the margins of the Munich Security Conference on 17 February.

Mr. Varanavicius said: "the EU is eager to continue its political dialogue with Kuwait, to compare notes on global and regional files. He added that the EU has worked constructively with Kuwait on regional issues, such as Syria and the Middle East Peace Process. He stressed that he was confident Kuwait would remain an important humanitarian donor in the Middle East. In this regard, he welcomed Kuwait's participation and generous pledge in the International Donors' Conference for the people of Turkey and Syria affected by the earthquake, which was held in Brussels on 20 March, and said that the EU also counted on Kuwait's participation in the Seventh

Brussels Conference on "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" scheduled for 15 June.

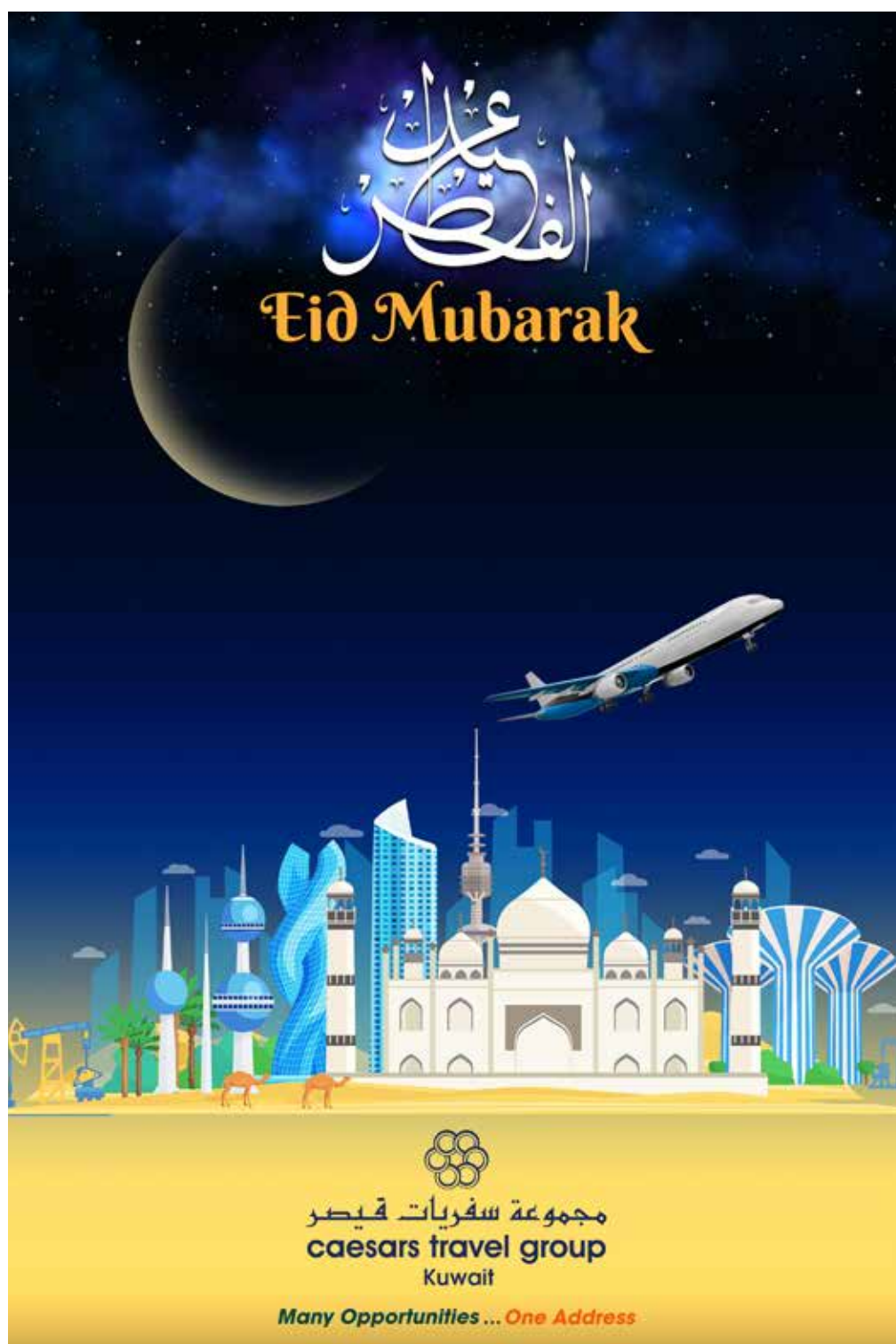
He pointed out that the European Union's new strategy aimed at enhancing its relations with the GCC states, including Kuwait, on a wide range of issues, covering political dialogue, security, counter-terrorism, trade and investment, energy, climate change, education, health, cybersecurity, and strengthening coordination in multilateral fora. The above strategy was translated into joint activities throughout the year between the EU and Kuwait. For instance, on security, the EU organized earlier this year, in cooperation with Kuwait's Ministry of Information, a specialized Strategic Communication Workshop on tactics and strategies to counter radical, extreme, and terrorist narratives. Mr. Varanavicius added that "this Workshop was the first of its kind in the Gulf region and that it has shown that both Kuwait and the EU are facing common global challenges including on security. The enhanced relationship with the Gulf region and Kuwait in particular are important to overcome those challenges together."

Another important area of the EU

Strategy towards the Gulf including Kuwait is to facilitate people-to-people contacts. In this context, the EU Delegation and 16 EU Member States represented in Kuwait will hold a celebration on 9 May to mark Europe Day, highlighting the joint aspirations of EU Member States under the roof of the EU.

Mr. Varanavicius explained that facilitating travel is an important element of enhancing people to people contacts. In this context, the Schengen visa waiver for Kuwaiti nationals is currently in the European Parliament. The draft legislation will have to be endorsed by the European Parliament before the next steps of the EU legislative process can commence.

Mr. Varanavicius concluded by saying that during the visit of Mr. Borrell to Kuwait last year, he stressed during his meeting with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the strength of the EU-Kuwait partnership. He had also noted that "for the European Union, Kuwait stands as a close and reliable partner". The EU Delegation in Kuwait is determined to translate these words into action by seeking to do more together with Kuwait.



Huawei hosts annual media gathering during Ramadan

Huawei Consumer BG, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, held its annual Ramadan Media Gathering on 5 April at the Kubar Tents in Waldorf Astoria.

The Ramadan Ghabqa's objective was to strengthen ties between Huawei and the media and its partners, and to express appreciation for the support provided by the media. The gathering was held in the presence of Huawei's Director of Kuwait Device Office Paul Fanshibao, the Marketing Director, Li Yiqi, and the Public Relations Manager, Humood Al-Shaheen.

During the initiative, Huawei also listened to reviews and feedback from their customers regarding their products and services. This was also the first Ghabqa in which the company presented its sustainable and high-efficiency innovations to the public. The main highlight of this year's Ghabqa was the promotion of the much-awaited and sold-out Huawei Watch Buds



in Kuwait, which was released only on 30 March.

Multiple unreleased products were also showcased including other exciting upcoming devices like buds and smartphones! In terms of wearable tech, Huawei continued to garner the interest of the market with its health and fitness products, like the revolutionary Huawei Watch Buds, which set the high technological standard for design.



Ukraine Embassy marks 30 years of diplomatic ties with Kuwait

By Dr. Oleksandr Balanutsa
Ambassador of Ukraine to the State of Kuwait

Ukrainian Embassy last week marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Kuwait. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Ukraine, H.E. Dr. Oleksandr Balanutsa, praised the significant strides made by the two countries in mutually beneficial

cooperation across various fields, such as politics, trade, education, and culture.

Despite the ongoing war against Ukraine, we remain committed to strengthening our ties with Kuwait. When President Zelenskyy's peace formula brings comprehensive and lasting peace, it will create new opportunities for cooperation, and we will spare no efforts to expand and deepen our interactions with Kuwaiti friends and partners, said the

ambassador.

"I cannot but thank Kuwait, known as the Humanitarian Leader, for standing by our side in the most critical moments of our existential struggle. Ukraine is grateful to Kuwait for its firm stance at the UN and regional levels, as well as tangible support provided to Ukrainians. The good will definitely prevail and open up new prospects for cooperation between Ukraine and Kuwait, said the envoy in conclusion.

Cambodian Embassy celebrates regional New Year



Ambassador of Cambodia H.E. Saman Manan, said that the New Year's celebrations in his country, as well as in Laos, Thailand and Myanmar are a common social and cultural heritage, so the four embassies decided to celebrate it jointly and that this country's embassy hosted this year's celebration.

The solar new year, which this year began on 14 April, is a socio-cultural event that is celebrated with great enthusiasm and traditional ceremonies throughout many countries in the region. In a media statement issued on the occasion, Ambassador Manan said that such celebrations contribute to the consolidation of popular relations between countries and the transfer of this cultural heritage to new generations.

Turning to bilateral relations with Kuwait, the Cambodian ambassador described the strong Cambodian-Kuwaiti relations as being excellent. Explaining that he assumed his duties

in Kuwait only two months ago, Ambassador Manan emphasized that he would exert all efforts to further support and strengthen the existing ties with Kuwait in all fields, including in political, economic, commercial, tourism and cultural exchange aspects.

Pointing out that there was immense potential for enhancing bilateral trade between the two countries, he said that the current volume of trade exchanges were not up to expectations. On the tourism front, the ambassador noted that obtaining a visa for Cambodia was very easy and is done through simplified and easy procedures, whether by submitting an application through the embassy, which takes three days, or online through the website, which takes about a week, or by obtaining a visa upon arrival at the airport. He called on Kuwaitis to rediscover his country as a distinguished tourist destination and a country that offers many wonderful investment opportunities.

Al Rashed International Travel Co. W.L.L tie up with ATG Travel Worldwide



Al Rashed International Travel Co. W.L.L. has partnered with ATG Travel which puts Al Rashed International Travel Co. W.L.L. in a unique position of being able to handle travel needs of customers not only in Kuwait but anywhere in ATG network spanning 140 countries.

Al Rashed International Travel Co. W.L.L., headquartered in Kuwait City, will serve ATG's clients locally as ATG KUWAIT. The agency was established in 1975 and evolved to become Al Rashed International Travel Co. W.L.L., to cater to the demands of the growing Kuwaiti markets.

ATG has operated in Kuwait via its ATG Middle East regional office in Dubai since 2014, however, the addition of ATG KUWAIT strengthens ATG's presence in the region significantly, enabling ATG to provide more localized support to clients.

For more details visit our website www.alrashed.travel

Mexican Ambassador conveys greetings on Eid Al Fitr

Ambassador of Mexico H.E. Miguel Ángel Isidro extended his sincere congratulations and best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the advent of 'Eid-al-Fitr', wishing the friendly people of Kuwait further prosperity and stability.

Amb. Isidro added, "I would like to express our continued commitment to strengthening the ties between Mexico and Kuwait and assure the State of Kuwait that we will strive to further consolidate the bilateral relations already existing between the two countries.

On this festive day, I wish His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



the best of health and happiness and the friendly people of Kuwait peace and prosperity, said the ambassador adding, "Eid Mubarak! Wa Kullu Aam Wa Antum Bikhair".

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Kuwait expresses solidarity with people in Turkey, Syria

Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development and Minister of State for Women and Childhood Affairs, Mai Al-Baghli, said Kuwait stands by brothers and friends at all times and never delays in providing the necessary assistance in times of distress.

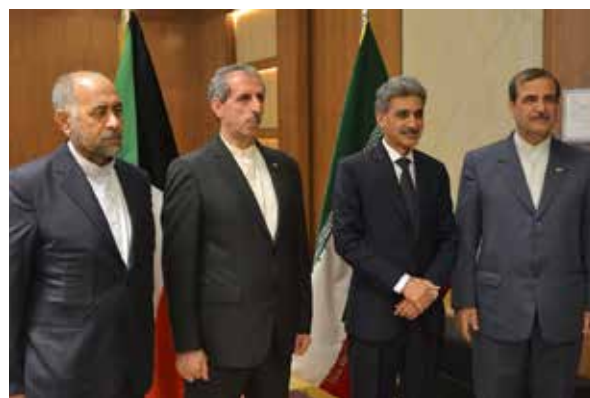
The minister was speaking while attending a Ramadan Ghabga organized at the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait last week. She expressed Kuwait's full and continuous solidarity and empathy for the Turkish and Syrian people, following the recent



devastating earthquake that claimed thousands of lives, and caused horrendous damage to homes and infrastructure in those two countries.

Minister Al-Baghli disclosed that in response to the natural calamity, the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people mobilized all efforts to render assistance to the two countries, upon directives from the ruling family and in implementation of the instructions of the Council of Ministers to provide people in Turkey and Syria with urgent help.

Iranian Ambassador praises relations with Kuwait



Iranian Ambassador H.E. Mohammad Irani praised the customs and traditions of Kuwait during the blessed month of Ramadan, pointing out that although four and a half years have passed since he assumed his duties in Kuwait, he never felt a stranger in this country.

The Iranian ambassador was speaking on the sidelines of a Ramadan Ghabga he held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on the occasion of International Quds Day 2023, which is marked each year on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan. In his address at the event, which



was attended by a large number of heads of diplomatic missions, the ambassador expressed his wishes of success and prosperity for the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people.

Regarding the Iranian-Saudi rapprochement, he said that Iran, Saudi Arabia and the rest of

the countries in the region are facing great challenges that "we must face together. He added that Iran and all Islamic countries fully agreed on supporting the Palestinian cause, the sanctities of the land and the rights of the Palestinian people.

Al-Muzaini Exchange Company opens 127th branch in Kuwait



Al-Muzaini Exchange Company, one of the leading money exchange companies in Kuwait, recently opened its newest branch in Sulaibikhat and Al Doha Co-operative Society, bringing the total number of its outlets in Kuwait to 127, in addition to its many self-service machines located across Kuwait, as well as its Al Muzaini online and the Al-Muzaini application for smartphones.

The opening of yet another branch reflects the company's endeavor and commitment to expanding its network so as to provide the highest quality of financial services such as money transfers, foreign currency exchange and bill payments with ease, comfort and safety and at the best prices, seven days a week to people all over Kuwait.

The new branch was inaugurated in the presence of General Manager of Al Muzaini Exchange Company, Hugh Fernandes along with the company's department managers, and several valued customers on 6 April. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Fernandes said: "We are keen to strengthen our leading position in the local market and to ensure that we provide the best financial services experience to our customers and meet all their money transfer needs."

The company always strives to make its financial services accessible to all. In addition to its strong network of branches, Al Muzaini application provides safe and simplified financial solutions with many features such as its availability on all digital platforms, new customer registration, the ability to add a new beneficiary, the Foreign Currency delivery service wherein customers can order their desired currencies and have it delivered to their doorsteps within hours and various benefits from the Western Union service and Visa Direct service with simple steps to assist customers with their money transfers anywhere, anytime.

Al Muzaini also has an ongoing Mega Promotion Campaign 2023, wherein anyone transferring money through Al Muzaini stands a chance to win a 2023 model BMW X3 and various other incredible prizes worth over \$130,000. Customers can send money through Al Muzaini's branches, self-service kiosks, online or the mobile app and use any of their services for a chance to win every day. Transferring through the app multiplies the chances of winning a prize in the campaign that runs from 23 March to 11 June.



Air India holds Iftar reception

Tata Air India held an Iftar reception for travel agents and well-wishers at the Mughal Mahal Hawally branch on 12 April to mark the holy month of Ramadan.

The Iftar reception was attended by Indian Ambassador H.E. Adarsh Swaika who spoke about India's tourism potential as well as the country's diverse culture, and the dramatic

development India has gone through over the years.

Tata Air India manager Sanjeev Suri in his address to the guests thanked them for their continued support and cooperation to the airline over the years and also spoke about the latest initiatives by Tata Air India in their transformative journey and their commitment to strengthening their Agency and Corporate partnerships.

The event was also graced by the General Sales Agent management team who have been instrumental in ensuring the success of Tata Air India in Kuwait.



Kuwait becoming a 'singles' nation

Makeshift and ad hoc decisions taken in recent years, usually to placate political exigencies, have led to unforeseen consequences that negatively impact the economic and social spheres in Kuwait.

Latest statistics from the Ministry of Interior and the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) reveals that the number of single expatriates in the country have risen sharply over the last couple of years to total over 1.2 million at the end of last year.

This number gains added significance when considering that the country's total population was only around 4.7 million in 2022 constituted over 3.2 million expatriates and 1.5 million citizens. The singles population constituted over a quarter of the total population of Kuwait, and accounted for 38 percent of total expatriates in the country.

The increasing transformation of Kuwait into a 'singles' society has been exacerbated by laws and policies designed to make it difficult for expatriates to apply and receive family visas. Increasing the minimum salary requirements and raising several government service fees for foreigners have led to fewer expats opting or being able to bring their families to Kuwait.

Meanwhile, increases in the cost-of-living from higher rents, food and educational costs, as well as recent hikes in medical services have combined to cause many expatriates to send their families back home, and shifting from

family flats to shared accommodation with other singles.

Responsible sources confirmed that some problems, crimes and wrong behaviors are spreading significantly in communities dominated by singles, which not only have negative repercussions on the quality of life of expatriates but also on Kuwaiti society in general.

Data available with the Ministry of Interior and the PACI show that the number of families who left Kuwait permanently during the past months has increased, with the total number of cancellations of dependent residencies in the past four years reaching 100,000. The data showed that the annual cancellation of dependent visas ranges between 11,000 to 15,000 yearly. While 64,000 left Kuwait permanently during the Corona crisis.

The figures also reveal that more than one million expatriates, mainly from South Asian countries along with Egyptians and Syrians, live collectively in crowded housing in a number of areas. Records show that 53 percent of the Bangladeshi community lives collectively, followed by Pakistanis and Nepalese at 52 percent, and Egyptians at 50 percent, compared to 33 percent of the Indian community, 17 percent of Filipinos, 10 percent of Sri Lankans, and 7 percent of Syrians.

According to a population breakup report on governorates by PACI, Farwaniya Governorate had the highest number of bachelors, with over 356,000 bachelors residing in this area,

followed by the governorates of Hawally, Ahmadi, Jahra, the capital, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer. Statistics from PACI also disclose that 984,145 singles came from outside Kuwait and are not born of Kuwaiti parents, while non-Kuwaiti singles born in Kuwait numbered up to 145,000 people. Moreover, 32 percent of singles, or around

410,250 individuals were without any educational certificates and were classified under the category of 'basic read and write', followed by 249,000 bachelors who held intermediate certificates.

Segregation of the singles figures by labor sector showed that there were a total of 611,302 singles in the private sector, followed by 302,000 among domestic workers and 22,000 working in the government sector.

Most of the singles, whether male or female, were found to be residing in residences that failed to meet minimum security, safety and



hygiene standards. In some areas there were often more than six or seven people living together in a room of less than 12 square meters, especially in the areas of Al-Jleeb, Mahbouda, Khaitan, and Farwaniya among others.

Jazeera Airways adds Larnaca in new summer schedule

Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low cost carrier, recently added Larnaca in Cyprus to its network of new European destinations for the 2023 summer season. Larnaca is Cyprus's oldest city, balancing a mix of the old and the new. Centrally positioned in Cyprus, the city provides easy access to other parts of the island for both leisure and business travel. With a Mediterranean climate, Cyprus is the perfect place to enjoy the sun, sea and fresh air.

Chief Executive Officer, Jazeera Airways, Rohit Ramchandran, said: "We are pleased to add Larnaca to our growing list of European destinations for the upcoming summer season. This provides travelers from Kuwait another holiday destination that is a short, affordable flight away. With the addition of Larnaca, we now proudly serve 63 destinations across Europe, the Middle East, Central and South Asia and Africa."

Jazeera Airways is currently running a special offer on fares for 50,000 seats starting from



KD21 only. This offer is open until midnight (Kuwait time) on 20 April and valid for travel between 1 May and 15 June 2023.

You can book your flights to Larnaca, Belgrade, Tirana, Sarajevo and Prague on the airlines website (www.jazeeraairways.com), or on the Jazeera App. The airline also connects from these European cities to other destinations across its network, providing convenient transits through Kuwait.

Flights to Larnaca will operate twice weekly from 29 April - 27 May 2023, and three times a week from 29 May - 28 October 2023.

Ramadan in Kuwait through the lenses of an expat

Mercedes Vazquez
GM ESK Holding

Iwould like to begin by extending my warmest wishes to all Muslims observing the holy month of Ramadan. May God accept your fasting and prayers.

This year marks my 7th Ramadan in Kuwait. As a citizen from Spain and therefore European I have to say that I really appreciate how Kuwait allows for respectful interfaith dialogue. I think Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries set an exemplary role in this aspect and for that I am personally grateful. In reality, there is so much that brings us closer rather than what sets us apart and it is through dialogue, building a bridge of curiosity and shared respect that we reach mutual understanding.

What is there not to love during this holy month? Along with the splendid iftars and 'ghabgas', Kuwait's hospitality is like no other place in the world that I have experienced. I was recently chatting with a Kuwaiti friend and I asked how do you prepare for Ramadan? The response really stood out for me: "Well it's easy I just prepare my soul" that made me reflect on the meaning of Ramadan: giving back and nourishing the soul through fasting, which are common values and practices to my faith and foundational root system as a Catholic.

For the second year in a row, Ramadan and Easter Sunday occurred on the same weekend, which only happens three times a century or once every 33 years. This rare conjunction of holidays is possible because unlike the Christian calendar, which is determined by the course of the sun and is widely used in the Western world, the Islamic calendar is aligned with the moon and the lunar year. Twelve



months in the solar year last 365 days, in the lunar year, on the other hand, only 354 days. Thus the Islamic cycle of holidays moves across the Western calendar over the course of a good three decades.

On Easter's Eve I was delighted to be invited to a Ramadan Ghabga, hosted by the British Ambassador H.E. Belinda Lewis, at the British Embassy, in a symbolic meaning of peaceful coexistence, meaningful understanding and inter-faith dialogue. A ghabga, a tradition that is unique in the GCC countries specifically to Kuwait, is a tradition of generosity and unity.

Over the last couple of days I also had the pleasure of attending Marriott's annual ghabga that in my perspective was a melting-pot of diverse cultures, industries and backgrounds coming together in harmony for a friendly reunion.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Korean embassy holds Iftar reception for local media

Korean Ambassador H.E. Chung Byung-ha, held an Iftar reception on 13 April for the local press to mark the holy Month of Ramadan. Ambassador Byung-ha praised the local tradition of Iftar and Ghabga that are being held during the month of Ramadan.

Speaking to the media gathered at the Iftar, the ambassador revealed that an agreement had been signed to establish an institute for teaching the Korean language at Kuwait University. He disclosed that "the Korean language teacher has already been selected and will come anytime soon, perhaps at the end of this month or next month. which means we can actually open the Korean language class in May or June this year."

Ambassador Byung-ha also pointed out that the embassy was planning to hold several cultural events. Elaborating on the planned activities, he said the most important event would be a sporting one, and that the embassy had already invited a well-known taekwondo



team to perform in Kuwait, sometime in May, following which a food festival would also be arranged. Regarding economic relations with Kuwait, Ambassador Byung-ha noted that bilateral trade amounted to US\$13 billion dollars and they have 14 Korean companies operating in Kuwait, who were awaiting the announcement on several large tenders.

Speaking about Korean tourism and the country's attractive touristic venues, the ambassador said: "Kuwaitis do not have to obtain a visa to visit Korea; all they have to do is simply apply for an e-Visa, and they will obtain it within two minutes." However, he pointed out that nationals of other countries would require a visa but it would

take less than a week. He also added that all restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic had been lifted.

Elaborating on the popularity of Korean products in Kuwait, the ambassador said that "besides exporting cars, mobile phones and many electronic items, nowadays we can see Korean cosmetics being sold everywhere in Kuwait". On medical tourism, the Korean ambassador said: "We have several famous private hospitals that Kuwait usually sends some of its patients who need plastic surgery as a result of fire accidents to receive treatment there."

He concluded by adding that he had a very fruitful discussion with Minister of Public Works Amani Bouqmaz to discuss road repairs pointing out that the minister invited them to listen to her plans to improve road conditions explaining that foreign companies with road maintenance experience would participate in the tenders that would be released by the ministry soon.

Migration, migrants and the marooned

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

While there are stringent labor laws to tackle labor problems related to legal migrant workers, domestic workers do not come under the purview of these laws. And, despite the access to new domestic worker laws and various plans and policies by the government to provide protection to such workers, abuse of household workers continues unabated. While the government has tended to ignore or pass on the onus of tackling the issue of asylum seekers to others, the issue of stateless bedouns remains a thorn in the sides of authorities that cannot be ignored or forgotten.

Similarly, though the authorities have repeatedly conducted raids, and checkpoints and introduced periods of amnesty for illegal migrants to leave the country without paying any punitive fines, the number of illegal migrants in the country still runs into tens of thousands and continues to increase as years go by. Here we look at each of these migrant related issues in more depth.

Kuwait's uneasy relations with its large expatriate population is nothing new. The country has been a magnet for migrants even before the country's independence, as merchants and entrepreneurs sought Kuwait's strategic location and its bustling port to do business with the Arabian hinterland. However, it was the finding and export of oil beginning in the late 1940s, and the modernization spree that followed the country's independence in 1961 that led to mass immigration of people to Kuwait from the surrounding Arab region and South Asia, as well as from Africa, Europe and further afield.

People seeking work opportunities in mega infrastructure and construction projects taking place around the country, as well as businesses lured by the desire to participate and share in the new-found wealth generated from the flow of oil, flooded to Kuwait. The country's population, which was less than half a million at the time of independence, climbed to nearly a million by the end of the first decade of independence and crossed two million by 1988.

Except for a short sharp drop in the population to 1.6 million in the mid-1990s — in the aftermath of the 1990-91 invasion and occupation of the country by Iraqi forces — Kuwait's population has witnessed a steady increase over the years. It crossed the two million mark again at the turn of the century and then went on to add another million by the end of 2010. Another million people were added to the population in the space of a further six years. Much of this population increase was from an increase in the number of migrants arriving each year.

Latest statistics on population and employment published by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) reveals that as of the end of 2022 the total population of Kuwait

grew by 8 percent from a year earlier to reach 4.74 million people. Although the increase of Kuwaiti population by 1.9 percent to reach 1.51 million contributed to the country's population growth, the hike in population witnessed in 2022 came about largely from the 11 percent growth in non-Kuwaiti population, with the total expatriate numbers climbing to 3.22 million.

The demographic disparity arising from two-thirds of the population of Kuwait being foreigners has been blamed for many of the economic setbacks and social ills witnessed in the country. Lawmakers, for their part, have never missed an opportunity to criticize government policies for the population imbalance in the country, and to pressure the authorities to amend the skewed demographics.

Kuwait's legal framework for migration dates back to the 1959 Aliens Residence Law, which continues to govern the residence and employment of migrants. This law forms the basis for the Temporary Contractual Workers (TCWs) system, which is based on a policy of having every migrant worker in the country



under the 'kafala' or sponsorship of a citizen. Kuwait's visa regulations are also organized on the TCWs system, with the country issuing eight types of residence permits or visas to TCWs through Residency Articles 17 to 24 that clarify the resident status of migrants.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the main UN agency helping address migration-related issues in Kuwait. Since its establishment the IOM office in Kuwait has worked in close partnership with Kuwait to strengthen the capacity of relevant ministries and others responsible for protection of victims and the prosecution of human traffickers. The IOM has also organized several awareness raising campaigns on the topic of human trafficking and the rights of domestic workers.

On the issue of domestic workers in Kuwait a report published in the third quarter of 2022 by the Central Statistical Bureau, showed that by the end of the first-half of last year nearly a quarter of the total migrant workers in Kuwait

were domestic workers. Around 655,000 expatriates, mainly from South Asia, were employed as domestic workers in Kuwait, of whom 339,000 were women workers and nearly half of them (161,000) were Filipina domestic workers.

Despite the Philippines being one of the main countries that sends domestic workers to Kuwait, and the Gulf nation remaining among the top source for migrant remittances to the Philippines, the working conditions of Filipina household workers, as well as women from other countries, have been an irritant in relations between Kuwait and other labor-source countries, in particular the Philippines.

The latest flare up in diplomatic ties with the Philippines followed the gruesome murder of yet another Filipina domestic worker in Kuwait early this year. In late January, the charred remains of Jullebee Ranara, 35, were discovered out in the desert. Investigations by security personnel led to the arrest of her employer's 17-year-old son who was then charged of murder.

For his part, Kuwait's ambassador in the Philippines Musaed Saleh Al-Thwaikh

the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and the subsequent 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 'stateless' people remains a socially embroiling issue in Kuwait. The country is home to the seventh largest stateless population in the world, but ranks fourth in the world in terms of the proportion of stateless people in the total population.

Except for several thousand bedouns or 'stateless persons' as they are often referred to, who were naturalized over the years, Kuwaiti citizenship is reserved mainly for those born to a Kuwaiti father. Naturalization of 'stateless bedouns' who claim the right to Kuwaiti citizenship is a sensitive social issue and has been a major source of discord in parliament between opposition lawmakers and government's over the years.

Social scientists and population experts point out that irregular migration policies over the years have contributed to the current skewed demographic profile in Kuwait, and the region in general. According to available data from the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2020, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, had a total population of 58 million of whom around 30 million (or 52%) were non-nationals, or migrants.

Assuming that between 20-40 percent of the migrants residing in the various Gulf states were irregular, this would amount to between 6 to 12 million migrants being illegal residents in the GCC. The true magnitude of this population cohort remains unknown, as available data on their numbers are often at best estimations, since their illegal status means most of them are not recorded on the databases of states in the region.

Studies by the ILO and others have shown that four major social and economic structural features of GCC states lead to generating and sustaining illegal migrants.

These include the need for a sponsor (or kafeel) in order for a migrant to reside and work legally; the sale of visas, or visa trading by citizens and middle-men and their purchase by potential migrants; the difficulty of transferring from one employer to another; and finally, the role that intermediaries play in enabling and sustaining irregular migration.

In mid-February, Kuwait's Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations, Tareq Al-Bannai, told a UN economic and social committee session that the country's social development is based on transparent constitutional rules and guidelines which offer adequate support to its youth, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. He added that the state provides free social insurance, social welfare and healthcare to its nationals in the event of old age, sickness, or the inability to work. Sadly this caring and benevolence is limited to citizens and does not extend to the majority migrant community in the country.

expressed profound regret and said that the Kuwaiti society was also shocked and saddened by the incident. He assured that justice would be done to Mrs. Ranara, and that such an incident was an isolated case. However, repeated occurrences of such horrendous acts in the past prove that the incident was anything but isolated.

On the asylum seekers front, since Kuwait is not a party to the 1951 UN Refugees Convention, the country does not have an asylum system. With the state lacking the legal frameworks and institutions to deal with asylum seekers, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN's refugee agency, is the only institution that deals with asylum-seeking migrants and refugees. According to the UNHCR, in 2019, there were between 692 and 1,700 refugees in Kuwait, and 1,073 asylum seekers, mainly from Iraq, Somalia, and Iran.

Also, as the country has not signed on to



Why learning Self Defense Could Save Your Life

jewelry in public, and be cautious when out at night since criminals use the darkness to attack and get away easier.

"Learning self-defense techniques can help women become physically and mentally stronger to protect themselves from harm at any age. I use a combination of training drills and techniques to enhance their performance so they become a Force Multiplier. I also teach laws of leverage to combat an attacker's muscular strength so women can execute defensive tactics against any sized attacker regardless of their strength. I've helped hundreds of women become empowered, vigilant, and prepared to defend their safety. These skills have to be practiced to master and become a daily habit. If you must rely on conscious thinking to remember a technique against an attack, it's too late, and you're a victim. It must be subconscious thinking to move and execute defensive tactics immediately," explains Duza.

By Hermoine Macura-Noble



The first Australian English speaking News Anchor in the Middle East. She is also the Author of Faces of the Middle East and Founder of US-based 501c3 charity - The House of Rest which helps to ease the suffering of victims of war. For more from our Contributing Editor, you can follow her on Instagram, here.

muggings, assaults, and murder instead of living in peace," explains Duza.

A master instructor in mixed martial arts and tactical defense training, Duza teaches life-saving skills to defend against criminal attackers or bullies and to escape without injury. "Learning self-defense skills also



Founder of US-based company Conflict Defense, John Duza

empowers individuals to be good Samaritans to help others in distress. Internally, it builds discipline, ambition, confidence, good morals, and empowerment while harnessing a deeper strength to unleash the warrior within," adds Duza.

The common mistake most people make is that they must be aware of their surroundings, explains Duza. "They are distracted by their phones or on social media, texting, playing phone games, or watching videos in public. They would never react in time to a criminal



attack or any other safety hazards." Another mistake is being too engaged with friends and not being observant of your surroundings and potential threats. "When people are distracted or too engaged with whatever they are doing, they don't see the signs of an attack coming until it's too late, and they become victims. Remember, awareness buys you time, time buys you options, options buy you survivability and escape," says Duza.

Situational awareness is vital for personal safety, and using your eyes and ears to look for potential dangers that may cross your path is one of the first things to do to stay safe. Also, looking down at your phone with headphones on in public is another habit that could leave you open to risk.

"Some tips for situational awareness include constantly looking all around you every few steps to make sure no one is stalking you for an attack, listening for alarming sounds like footsteps running towards you or a car speeding towards you with criminal intent, and being cautious when alone in transitional spaces such as an elevator, stairwell, hallway, street alley, where someone can trap you for an attack, advises Duza.

Other great tips he also recommends are to lock your doors as soon as you're in your car or home, stay in a group when going out to parties or vacationing in foreign countries, avoid flashy

As for children, Duza says that children as young as six can start learning self-defense. "It's important for children to learn self-defense to defend against child predators. It also helps them defend against bullies so they don't go through any torment and abuse. Martial arts also help children develop enhanced cognitive thinking, coordination, balance, agility, strength, mental focus, discipline, confidence, and ambition. It can guide children to stay on the right path for success and keep them from straying to bad behavior and criminal intentions," Says Duza.

The first 30 seconds of an attack determine your odds of being a survivor or a victim. The odds diminish against you the longer you stay engaged, as the attacker may now pull out a weapon, or you may get injured or exhausted in defending, or another attacker may appear and join the attack against you. "The priority is to inflict an initial quick devastating attack to buy enough time to run away and seek help while impeding the attacker's ability to chase you. I recommend jamming the thumb or fingers into the attacker's eyeballs or smashing the kneecaps. The pain is intense and now takes away the ability of the attacker to chase you. The pain affects the physiological and psychological threshold of the attacker, so they are focused on their injuries rather than their ulterior motives against you," concludes Duza.



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