

MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE KICKS OFF NEXT APRIL

KUWAIT: A number of global delegations, exhibitors and speakers have pledged their support for the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Exhibition (RE3), taking place 4-6th April 2016 at The Regency Hotel Kuwait, as the focus on applying renewable energy solutions continues to play a major focus in the country's plans.

The exhibition will run alongside the hugely successful MENEREC 6 conference, hosted by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), both under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of the State of

IRENA, RCREEE, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy Germany (BMW), MASDAR Institute, UNDP, Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety Germany.

Platinum sponsor; EQUATE Petrochemical Company will be showcasing its sustainable operations throughout its processes, alongside International and local confirmed exhibitors; Worley Parsons, SMA, Al Dhow and Wylton from Hong Kong, and many more.

Following the decline in crude oil prices over the last year, Kuwait's commitment to renewable energy has continued to grow with much investment including the creation of Kuwait's 1st solar-thermal energy generation station, which will both help achieve the country's goal of boosting the renewable energy sector, while enhancing private investment.

Speaking last month at the World Future Energy conference in the United Arab Emirates, Dr Saad Al-Jandal, research scientist at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and head of the RE3 steering committee told the Guardian; "We are spending so much, something like \$8bn (£5.6bn) to \$10bn on fuel and power stations, so we want to replace part of it with renewables, and we can also do better with energy conservation and energy efficiency. Instead of using oil in power generation we might sell it and get hard currency."



Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research

Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. RE3 will allow companies to showcase their expertise; latest technology and services in the renewable energy field aimed at all the major countries from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Several ministerial delegations have already confirmed their attendance to the event from across Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Germany, UAE and Kuwait. They will join an impressive international steering committee and speaker panel from top names including UNESCWA, REN21, Arab League,

AL-ANJARI: AFTER SUCCESS IN THE GULF, COULD RESTAURANTS BECOME GLOBAL TOURISTIC PRODUCT? LEADERS GROUP ISSUES MONTHLY REPORT

KUWAIT: Leaders Group for Consulting and Development, the representative of the World Tourism Organization in Kuwait, issued its monthly report on the food services industry, an important branch of the tourism sector in the region.



Nabila Al-Anjari

Nabila Al-Anjari, Leaders Group General Manager said: "The food services industry has seen a significant growth over the past few years, and this is reflected by the number and expansion of restaurants and food companies that are today servicing the industry. Investor spending has also increased tremendously in the region, whether to attract franchisees or to establish local concepts, in addition to marketing brands. In Kuwait alone, there are over 5,000 restaurants today."

The report showed that the GCC has an encouraging and attractive environment for this industry, thanks to a flow of capital, the high income of individuals, and the growth of a population under the age of 25 years old, which represents today 45 percent of the Gulf population. This segment of the population has grown in a culture of fast food and new tastes. The industry is also supported by a diversified culture in the region, the ability to invest in franchises, as well as the high revenues brought by the industry.

In a recent report issued by

Almasah Capital Company, the food services industry in the GCC was valued at \$18.8 billion in 2014. The Company expected the industry to grow annually at 6.8 percent to reach \$24.5 billion in 2018. KSA comes in first among the GCC with total sales of the food services industry reaching \$8.9 billion, equivalent to have the GCC market.

A growing industry

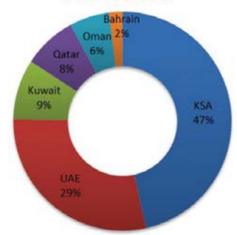
Leaders Group report also showed that the food tourism industry has gained attention over the past years, where the "Gastronomy" concept became an important part of the touristic experience for millions of tourists who are for the look for renowned names to taste their food, and who also travel to new destinations for a new and exquisite culinary experience.

The report also highlighted that countries are increasingly focusing on developing and marketing the food industry. Food tourism is generating revenue and creates many job opportunities, reviving the servicing and industrial sectors in countries, such as the transportation and logistics sectors, agriculture, manufacturing and refrigeration, printing, advertising, and many more sectors.

The World Tourism Organization considers the culinary tourism as a new trend which countries are seeking to develop as a touristic product, specially that more than a third of touristic spending is targeted to the food world.

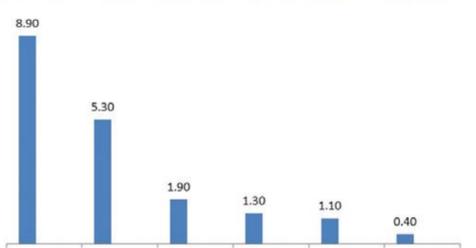
From here, the concept of restaurants has changed from being a simple food place to an entertainment and enjoyment destination. Exhibitions and fairs specific to the food industry are held periodically, such as the Horeca Exhibition. Food markets, kitchens and kitchenware offers, festivals, rating associations, chef unions, all have taken the food industry to a new level. One of the main examples that these activities are successful is the Gulf Food Exhibition held in Dubai in February. Over 5,000 companies from five continents representing 120 countries

Chart 1: Food services industry expected growth in the GCC in 2018 (US\$25 billion) Average annual growth rate between 2012 and 2018 in the GCC: 6.8%



Source: PWC

Chart 2: Sales of the food services industry in the GCC (2014, in US\$ billion)



Source: Almasah Capital Company

participated in the exhibition. It is the largest annual food and catering exhibition in the region, and opens the door to kitchens from around the world. The exhibition was established 20 years ago, and see annually over 84,000 guests from 120 countries roaming its aisles.

Challenges

Despite the fast growing food industry in the region, challenges remain. As per Almasah Capital Company, challenges include the high competition, a poor infrastructure for the supply chain, expensive rents in prime locations, the scarcity of qualified human capital.

Another issue that is highlighted in the industry is the oversupply of food, which is generated from cooking leftovers, or food at restaurants and homes. The leftovers can usually be reused as fer-

tilizers, or reduce it so that it does not pile up as waste, or even donate it to the poor like what is being done in some countries.

In conclusion, the Leaders Group's report said that the food industry is an attractive industry for investments. Consumer spending on food in the Gulf has reached \$83 billion in 2012, while it stood at \$59 billion in 2007. Statistics by A.T. Kearny Global Management Consulting Firm show that the industry is expected to reach \$106 billion in consumer spending in 2017, growing at 25 percent in the next years.

The question to ask here is can the growth of the industry drive Gulf countries to establish themselves as a culinary tourism hub, especially with Iran and Iraq opening up, and the growing population in particular growth of the younger generations segment, which attract famous restaurants and franchises.

KUWAITIS SHOULD CONSIDER TURKEY AS SECOND HOME: SPEAKER KAHRAMAN

ANKARA: The relations between our two great countries should enable Kuwaitis to consider Turkey as their second home, Speaker of the Turkish National Assembly Ismail Kahraman said yesterday. In an exclusive interview with KUNA, Speaker Kahraman said that he was glad to have met with his Kuwaiti counterpart Marzouq Al-Ghanem on the sideline of the 11th conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC (PUIC) recently held in Baghdad, stressing that the upcoming visit by Ghanem to Turkey will further boost bilateral relations.

The commercial exchange between Turkey and Kuwait had reached \$624 million last year which is an improvement from 2014's \$569 million, said

Kahraman who added that both nations have established a committee in 2013 to look into more fields of cooperation. He indicated that the Turkish Foreign Ministry was coordinating with its counterpart in Kuwait to hold several meetings in the future aimed at boosting ties.

Regarding the situation in Syria, the Turkish Speaker affirmed that the international community should increase its efforts in helping the Syrian refugees and stressed that it was important to find a just solution to the crisis in Syria which began in 2011. He took the chance to thank Kuwait for its firm support of the Turkish efforts to help the Syrian refugees, affirmed that the Gulf State was on the vanguard of helping the needy worldwide. —KUNA

GOVT TO REASSESS FEES ON STATE PROPERTIES: MINISTER



KUWAIT: Oil and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh (right) talks with MP Talal Al-Sehali during a parliament session at Kuwait's National Assembly yesterday.

—Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: The cabinet will reassess the fees imposed on state-owned properties, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh said during yesterday's National Assembly session.

Minister Saleh said that all industrial lands owned by the state had recently increased their fees in accordance with the status quo of the market. He noted that an international company was assigned to look into the economic situation in Kuwait as part of the government's efforts to provide feasible services and prices for the public. Cooperation with the National Assembly will enable the cabinet to carry out steps to increase the state income by 10 to 14 percent, said the minister.

Meanwhile, the session agreed

on a draft proposal to amend some items within article 37/1993 of the housing welfare law. The amendments included a proposal to speed up the process for allocating government housing for citizens with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) carrying projects for a period of five years without previous surveillance from the State Audit Bureau (SAB).

Minister of State for Housing Affairs Yasser Abul said that the draft law came up with nothing new, revealing similar discussions were made on the issue previously. The law, if passed, will be a huge responsibility for the ministry and PAHW; however, it may speed up the process of providing housing for citizens, said the minister. —KUNA

MINISTRY SIGNS KD108 MLN ROAD RENOVATION CONTRACT

NEW STRATEGY AT HOSPITAL TO ADDRESS HIGH DEMAND

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works signed yesterday a contract worth KD 108 million (\$360.90 million) to renovate the 5th Ring Road. The project aims to facilitate traffic and develop the road network in the country, Assistant Undersecretary for Road Engineering Affairs at the Ministry of Public Works Ahmad Al-Hassan told KUNA. He stressed the ministry's keenness to check and develop all roads in the country and overcome all the obstacles in this regard.

Separately, Hassan announced that a total of 49 percent of Jaber Al-Ahmad city highways and roads project was completed. The project, valued at KD 28.900 million, aims at improving the flow of traffic by building three bridges on Al-Jahra road, he added. He emphasized the keenness of the ministry to cooperate with all governmental bodies in order to finish the project at the stipulated time.

Mubarak Hospital

In other news, Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital Dr Ahmad Saud Al-Hussaini said yesterday that the hospital's new strategy will focus on meeting demands for better healthcare in Hawalli governorate which is witnessing an increase in population. The Hospital Management is seeking all kinds of assistance in preparation for the five-year plan aimed at reducing overcrowding and pressure on specialized hospitals, Hussaini said.

The strategy will provide the latest in healthcare services and reduce the cost of treatment, he said. Projects such as the expansion and establishment of a new emergency ward, a separate building for pediatrics, and other facilities such a multi-storey parking lot in addition to a renovated ambulance land zone will be within the strategy, he said. —KUNA

KUWAIT WINS AWARD FOR ELECTRONIC SERVICES

DUBAI: The State of Kuwait was proclaimed yesterday winner of the World Government Summit Award for the Kuwait Government Online portal 'e.gov.kw', set up by the Central Apparatus for Information Technology.

The award was handed over, during a ceremony held as part of the Fourth World Government Summit, to Kuwait's Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah by UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Dubai Ruler Sheikh

Mohammad Bin Rashed Al-Maktoum.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) and Kuwait Television, Minister Mohammad Al-Abdullah said this achievement has affirmed Kuwait's status as among the leading countries in the Gulf in government electronic services.

He revealed that the online service will be updated in the coming days to encompass tasks provided by all government departments. Minister Mohammad Al-Abdullah is head of a Kuwaiti delegation that has taken part in the three-day summit.

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