

## Local

# Kuwait expects community immunity by Sept-end: PM

## Mega projects like Silk City to provide job opportunities to graduates

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said yesterday that the government expects to achieve what is called “herd immunity” against the coronavirus pandemic by the end of September, when 70 percent of the population will be vaccinated. Speaking to university graduates at Sabah Al-Salem University City, the prime minister said so far some 2.6 million people have been vaccinated, which represents around 66 percent of the country’s population.

By the end of next month, the vaccination rate is expected to hit 70 percent, “which is sufficient to achieve community immunity” against the pandemic. Over the past few weeks, Kuwait has seen a sharp decrease in the number of new coronavirus cases, the number of patients and those in intensive care units.

HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also affirmed that the New Kuwait 2035 vision (the national development strategy) can only be attained with employment of Kuwaiti youth capacities. In the dialogue he held yesterday with the outstanding university graduates, coinciding with International Youth Day on Aug 12, the prime minister declared that 10 of the top students will be enrolled at the government-affiliated entrepreneurs’ center to be involved in new development enterprises. Advanced nations search for distinguished students to employ them in key projects, as they consider young citizens as a significant investment, he added.

Sheikh Sabah urged the graduates “not to worry” over “stiffness” in the relationship between the government and the National Assembly. Addressing the current political atmosphere in the country, the premier told the crowd that “all matters can be handled according to political discourse practices”.

“We had a major challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic, with our children missing out on (in-person) education,” he noted. “Now is the time for you to know what you will face behind university walls. There are mega government projects like Silk City, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and Entertainment City, as well as investment opportunities on the man-made islands of Sheikh Jaber Causeway, in addition to the biofuel and new airport projects. All

these will provide job opportunities to our graduates,” Sheikh Sabah added, conveying greetings, congratulations, and wishes of further success and progress from HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the graduates.

### Fund posts unprecedented profits

Sheikh Sabah also announced that the future generations fund has achieved unprecedented profits. “Your country is rich, as we enjoy excellent financial solvency. However, we have some shortfalls in the economy. It is insensible to have a single source of income for the Kuwaiti economy,” he said. Much has been achieved to transform Kuwait into a commercial-financial hub, however strains between the executive and legislative authorities “have placed a host of issues backwards”, the prime minister revealed.

In response to a question on how to employ the public debt law for executing mega projects and pave way for diversifying the income, the prime minister re-affirmed that “the state’s financial solvency is excellent and flaws exist in the undiversified economy”. He indicated that Kuwait is following the example of other nations to resort to borrowing for coping with financial or economic burdens.

HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled confirmed the importance of involving companies contracting with government projects to employ Kuwaiti youth in their projects. In his speech, he stressed that Kuwaiti youth are the foundation of all developments plans, expressing his optimism in their abilities to build the future of their country. He stated that 42 Kuwaiti male and female engineers are currently working on the new Kuwait airport project with the international company investing in the airport to gain experience and undertake project management and maintenance in the future.

The PM referred to the health crisis during the last period that caused delays in many projects, saying, “it’s time to give these projects more attention and focus; youths can be a major part of these projects”. Regarding Kuwait’s development plan for 2035, the prime minister expressed hope that the National Assembly will speed up the approval of amendments to the law



**KUWAIT:** HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah addresses graduates at Sabah Al-Salem University City yesterday. —KUNA

on the Silk City project.

The project, which extends over 1,800 sq km, can provide more than 100,000 job opportunities for citizens, in addition to diversifying income sources. Sheikh Sabah also stressed the importance of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project that is expected to reach an estimated capacity of 1,800,000 containers a year, and would provide great job opportunities for citizens, in addition to its financial benefits to the state. The Entertainment City, Jaber Causeway, Clean Fuels Project and Failaka Island are all mega projects that would provide great job opportunities for Kuwaiti youths and citizens.

He pointed out that the Cabinet holds continuous meetings to follow up on projects divided into short, medium and long-term. “Despite the health crisis due to COVID-19, we will continue our lives according to health requirements until the pandemic ends gradually,” he concluded.

## UN official hails Kuwaiti youth

**KUWAIT:** Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator to Kuwait Tariq Al-Sheikh praised the role of Kuwaiti youth, their initiatives and effective participation in their society, and their vital role in facing challenges and crises in various fields. On the occasion of the United Nations celebrating International Youth Day, Sheikh explained in a press statement yesterday that Kuwaiti youth are always looking forward to change, learn and contribute to improving life.

He said that there are youth groups that have provided environmental friendly products such as recycled food waste to be used as fertilizer and greening neighborhoods. These small businesses have a great impact on the world. He pointed out that many young people in Kuwait expressed their desire for greening empty spaces as one of the most effective ways to reduce car-

bon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Sheikh praised the efforts of Kuwait through the national dialogues held by the UN in cooperation with the public and private sectors and youth groups that invested in improving the food supply chain. He pointed out that the youth group, which constitutes the vast majority of the population density in Kuwait, exceeded all expectations during the COVID crisis by providing support to their government and society in several areas such as health, environment, food systems and others.

He praised the statement of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on this occasion, in which he stressed that young people are on the frontlines of the struggle to build a better future for all, noting that the pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for them. He also praised the statement of UN Development Program Resident Representative Heidko Hadzialek, in which he said “young people make up the majority of Kuwaiti volunteers who worked day and night during the pandemic to provide support and food to migrant workers and families in need”. —KUNA

## 150 kg of hashish found in air coolers



**KUWAIT:** Shuwaikh Port customs officers discovered 150 kg of hashish hidden in air coolers that arrived from a neighboring country. The discovery was made when an officer had doubts and decided to search the container thoroughly.