

Local

Kuwait's Amir invited to 42nd GCC Summit

Crown Prince receives Speaker Al-Ghanem, PM Sabah Al-Khaled



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received an invitation, addressed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz to attend the 42nd session of the GCC Summit. The invitation, addressed to His Highness the Amir, was delivered to His Highness the Crown Prince by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud.

The meeting between the visiting Saudi foreign minister and His Highness the Crown Prince was attended by Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah,

Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Undersecretary and Director of His Highness the Amir Bureau, Ambassador Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad. Also present at the meeting were the Director of His Highness the Crown Prince Bureau Jamal Mohammad Al-Dhiab and Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs Ambassador Hamad Rashed Al-Meri.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

Zain platinum sponsor of POP UP BY COMFEST

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its platinum sponsorship of POP UP BY COMFEST 2021, Kuwait's biggest gaming and comics event. The event, which Zain supports for the second year running, welcomed huge crowds of gaming, comics, and pop culture fans.

The event's opening ceremony witnessed the presence of Zain Group Chief Investment and Digital Transformation Officer Malek Hammoud and Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, who were eager to take part in the event after it made a comeback after a year-long halt due to the pandemic.

Zain's support to the event came in line with its keenness to support and encourage the various efforts and initiatives that offer a unique entertainment and social experience for the youth, given that they represent society's most vibrant segment. The company is also committed to supporting and empowering young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs who own small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Zain took part in the event via its dedicated booth, through which the company showcased its recently launched Zain Esports brand. The company hosted many exciting competitions and mini championships for visitors who enjoyed competing against each other. Zain also presented valuable prizes to the winners.

Zain Esports is a regional gaming powerhouse launched in December 2020 by Zain, and to date, the brand has hosted numerous multi-national tournaments in the Middle East, such as the 'EA SPORTS FIFA 21 Tournament: Middle East Challenge'. Zain Esports has also organized the 'PUBGM Champions Squad Season 1 & 2', 'Zain Summer Series', and the CSGO 'Final Clash' and most recently partnered with the Kuwait Olympic committee to manage a first-of-its-kind four-week-end esports event.

These and other tournaments have attracted the participation of over 15,000 players from across the region and have been viewed by over 35 million on Zain Esports' YouTube, Twitch and other social media channels.

POP UP BY COMFEST 2021 is considered Kuwait's biggest gaming and comics event, having featured many of the entertainment and gaming industry's biggest brands. The event also hosted many popular international celebrities from the world of gaming and entertainment, where audiences had the chance to meet and greet them. The event witnessed the participation of many Kuwaiti entrepreneurs who own small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who are comic and pop culture fans and featured their unique products at the event.

Zain is aware of the important role private sector



Malek Hammoud and Waleed Al-Khashti at Zain's booth

companies play in encouraging such initiatives that support the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) segment, especially that it is one of the leading national companies in the private sector. Zain's participation at this event further reflected its keenness in developing the Kuwaiti entrepreneurial community, which bursts with young talents who have vibrant ideas that offer viable solutions for the

market needs.

Zain's support to this event came in line with its core objectives that aim at shouldering the advancement of the community as a whole on all levels, where the company reaffirms the principal of partnership through similar efforts with the aim of contributing to the further progress of national economy.

Campaign to plant trees in Ahmadi

KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah stressed yesterday the importance of launching official and civil initiatives that organize greening and afforestation campaigns in Kuwait. His remarks came in a press statement on sidelines of Ahmadi Governorate campaign 'We camp, we plant' which aims to enhance environmental awareness to preserve and develop the environment. He expressed his happiness with the campaign response which develops the people's awareness on preserving and caring for the environment, praising the efforts of all participants and volunteers and the support of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK). Sheikh Fawaz pointed out that the Ahmadi Governorate continued joint work during the campaign by distributing 3,000 agricultural seedlings to be planted in the camp areas. The Deputy Director



General of Corporate Communications Sector at the Commercial Bank, Amani Al-Werea, said in a similar statement that protecting the environment represents an important social dimension in social responsibility programs, as the bank always seeks to support public community activities that serve the community and the citizen. — KUNA

Agencies defend extra charges for...

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Agencies charge KD 890 in addition to a KD 150-KD 200 for air tickets to recruit a domestic helper from the Philippines. However, an employer in this case would have to wait for months before the helper arrives to the country (in addition to 14 days of institutional quarantine and an additional KD 500 cost for the hotel stay for unvaccinated maids). Hiring a domestic helper who has been returned by their original employer comes with the advantage of saving time, while the fact that they are already trained makes them even more sought after by employers.

In business terms, this creates a situation controlled by supply and demand, whereby agencies believe they are justified to charge higher for returned domestic helper who are already in Kuwait than workers who are still in their home countries.

However, Macapudi denied reports that there is a shortage of domestic helpers from the Philippines in Kuwait because Manila is allegedly prioritizing meeting demand of other countries such as Singapore, Japan, Canada and the US, where helpers are paid more than the \$400 they receive in Kuwait. "Yes, there is demand for housemaids in that part of the world, but we have enough supply," she said. "We have people who want to work in Kuwait."

The Philippines is a major source of housemaids for Kuwait, along with Sri Lanka and India.

Other labor exporting countries such as Nepal, Indonesia and Ethiopia have requested the signing of agreements to start sending workers to Kuwait. The Philippines and Kuwait earlier agreed and signed a tripartite agreement in which Kuwait agreed to provide Filipino housemaids with decent and appropriate housing equipped with all the necessities, suitable food and clothing, and medical treatment in case of sickness pursuant to the healthcare insurance system of Kuwait.

Their salary must be paid at the end of the month - not less than the designated amount signed by both parties, compensating the housemaid in case of injury during work, employers must issue a valid residency for the duration of contract, handle all the expenses to bring the housemaid, and in case of death, the employer must also bear the expenses of the deceased body.

The new tripartite contract also mentions that the employer is not allowed to assign the worker outside Kuwait without an agreement from the worker. The housemaid is also allowed to use the phone outside working hours, provided that she maintains the privacy of the household and in a manner consistent with public morals. Working hours must be 12 hours daily and employers must allow the housemaid to rest for eight continuous hours.

They must have a fully paid weekly day off, annual leave, end-of-service benefit of one full month's salary for every year of service, plus a bonus equivalent to one month's salary annually. The employer is not allowed to keep their passport in their possession. The employer needs to provide an economy ticket to the worker at the end of her contract, and in case of conflict, the case will be referred to the Public Authority for Manpower.

Health minister assures no...

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On the Funaitees center, Sheikh Basel said the 107th center in Kuwait will serve residents of the area. He added it includes several types of clinics, a laboratory, a workshop, nursing rooms and the administration. He added that several other projects will be launched, including another center in Funaitees. Director of Ahmadi medical area Dr Ahmad Al-Shatti said the Funaitees Medical Center

is the 30th in Ahmadi and eighth in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate.

Sheikh Basel said the center will only be open during the morning period, as this is only the preliminary launch and will include primary medical care, three clinics and dressing rooms for children, women and men. He also touched on pharmacy preparations, saying the upcoming phase will include expansion in specialized clinics including a diabetes clinic, chronic illness clinics, maternity and infant clinics, as well as labs.

Dr Shatti clarified that a dentistry unit will be available in the coming stages, adding the opening of medical centers reflects belief in importance of primary medical care, expressing pride in the number of medical centers in Kuwait. — KUNA

Incomplete mosque bares...

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near completion. Several cranes are frozen in time above the edifice, which towers over the upscale Mansur district of the capital.

"Unfortunately, we've neglected the country's heritage," architect and university professor Mohamed Qassem Abdel Ghaffour told AFP. "These projects belong to all Iraqis, we should make use of this heritage, and turn them into cultural and touristic sites," he added. "All of this is Iraq's money and the state must profit from it."

Although it was initially built as a Sunni mosque, it was taken over by Shiite clerics after the fall of Saddam. Today, it is a symbol of division between Shiites, now the dominant political force in Baghdad after decades of marginalization in the Shiite-majority Arab state. "After the fall of the old regime, the mosque fell under the control of the Islamic Virtue Party," a senior government official who asked to remain anonymous told AFP. "The party was never able to complete construction, because the costs are huge."

Saddam Hussein "wanted a mosque bigger than

the 'Taj Mahal', he recalled. The Islamic Virtue Party has blocked government plans to turn the mosque into a university or museum, the official said. Although the party's takeover of the mosque remains unofficial, its members hold the main weekly prayers each Friday at noon under one of the secondary domes. About 150 families have lived for years in makeshift homes that sprouted on vacant lots surrounding the mosque.

In January 2020, a court recognized the authority of the Shiite waqf - the institution that manages the community's religious properties - over the mosque. The verdict obliged the Islamic Virtue Party to pay \$200 million in compensation, according to a statement from the waqf. The waqf accuses the party of having occupied the site "for more than 16 years", "without any legal or religious legitimacy".

But the court ruling has not been enforced. Activist Subeih Al-Kachitani said that Iraqi security forces had tried several times to intervene. "But faced with the weapons of the state, there are the weapons of the parties," he said. Development of land adjacent to the mosque to build a shopping center or a housing complex could create up to 20,000 jobs, according to the waqf. But "construction cannot resume until the mosque is removed from partisan conflicts", Kachitani said, and the status quo remains.

For Caecilia Pieri, a researcher at the French Institute of the Near East, the mosque testifies to the "policy of architectural symbolism" of Saddam's Baathist regime. — AFP

CNN fires Chris Cuomo over help...

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"I owe them all and will miss that group of special people who did really important work."

Cuomo has spoken candidly of his strong bond with his older sibling. "He's my brother. And if I can help my brother, I do. If he wants me to hear something, I will. If he wants me to weigh in on something, I'll try," he told investigators in July when asked about the counsel he had offered. "He's my

brother, and I love him to death no matter what."

Democrat Andrew Cuomo was elected governor three times before resigning in August after New York's attorney general said an investigation concluded he had sexually harassed at least 11 women. In October, the former governor - whose father Mario Cuomo had also been governor of New York - was charged with a misdemeanor sex crime for forcible touching.

At the start of the pandemic, the Cuomo brothers soared to new heights of popularity: Andrew, 63, earned praise for his frank daily briefings as the coronavirus ravaged New York, and his live exchanges with Chris on CNN were peppered with banter. The investigation into Chris Cuomo's conduct remains ongoing, CNN said. — AFP