

COUNCILOR SUPPORTS MORE EXPAT-FRIENDLY KUWAIT

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Municipal Council member and rapporteur of the Capital committee Ali Al-Moussa spoke in an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times on various topics, including expatriates' ownership of properties, the beach barbecue ban and the cleaning companies' contracts. The following is the transcript of the interview:

Kuwait Times: Do you have any plans to utilize foreign expertise in municipal work or with the Kuwait Municipality?

Ali Al-Moussa: Actually, we are looking forward to mandating and getting embassies that have economic and commercial attaches in Kuwait to exchange expertise with us.

KT: What kind of expertise do you need to discuss most with these diplomatic bodies?

Moussa: Some friendly countries have special bylaws and regulations in effect and we need to discuss them in terms of municipal activities and make use of their experiences in putting those regulations into practice.

KT: Should Kuwait adopt the regulations used in the countries you mentioned?

Moussa: We need to adopt the regulations needed to develop municipal work in general, especially those related to projects that were successful in those countries.

KT: Is there an actual model to use in attracting such expertise or do you intend to visit the concerned embassies or countries to gain such experience?

Moussa: We had an ideal experience during a visit to Britain, which was coordinated by the British ambassador to Kuwait, to whom I wish to express my appreciation for giving us the opportunity to review British municipal regulations and bylaws.

KT: Some expatriates living in Kuwait have been suffering because they are not allowed to own residential properties in Kuwait. What do you think about that?

Moussa: I am absolutely for the idea of allowing Arab and foreign expats to own their own apartments in various investment areas, especially since many of them have been living in Kuwait for several years now and have every right to own residential apartments the way expats in other countries can. If such a proposal is passed, it will help provide Kuwait with a new source of income and reduce the outflow of expat remittances.

KT: Do you believe that Kuwait would benefit from this proposal?

Moussa: Arab and foreign expats in Kuwait will definitely reduce the sums they transfer back to their home countries, boost Kuwait's status on Arab country as well as at international levels and revive the economy. It will also help many expats who actually deem themselves citizens by affinity and by the long years they have spent in Kuwait.

KT: Tell us something about your trips abroad and their benefit to municipal activities?

Moussa: We have gone on various successful trips, visiting Arab and foreign waste recycling factories and plants

Many expats have been living in Kuwait for several years now and have every right to own residential apartments the way expats in other countries can



KUWAIT: Municipal Council member Ali Al-Moussa speaks during his interview with Kuwait Times. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



during which we benefited very much from others' experiences in this field and intend to adopt them in Kuwait, especially since they help increase public revenues.

KT: Some foreign and Arab expats have many complaints about cleanliness in their neighborhoods. What do you have to say about this?

Moussa: As a matter of fact, the municipality missed out including some important conditions in the new cleaning contracts for using modern cleaning machinery, which led to increasing the costs of such contracts. Some cleaning companies do not respect this clause and Asian garbage collectors working for them still use conventional and outdated primitive equipment that do not help achieve the desired cleanliness levels. However, the municipality supervisory bodies ought to take very strict measures against all violating cleaning companies.

KT: Many sea-lovers have noticed increasing amounts of refuse in Kuwaiti national waters. Why doesn't the municipality act to remove this rubbish?

Moussa: On a visit to a European country, the use of specialized marine municipal units to collect waste from various beaches caught my attention. Such units and machinery are not yet used in Kuwait and are not even included in newly-signed cleaning contracts. I do hope they would be brought to Kuwait soon to remove waste and garbage from Kuwaiti beaches.

KT: Many expatriates have expressed dissatisfaction with the municipality's decision banning barbecuing at various beaches without offering an alternative. What is the best solution to this problem?

Moussa: Beach barbecuing is a recreational activity and banning it is not an ideal solution, unless alternative sites are allocated and barbecue equipment is provided at reasonable fees affordable by everyone on the condition that all users fully observe cleanliness and the municipality has those sites under close supervision.

KT: Do you believe it is important to name some Kuwaiti streets after foreigners who have served it in vari-

ous fields?

Moussa: Yes, I am totally for such a proposal in order to memorialize some outstanding Europeans for their services to Kuwait.

KT: A large segment of the Kuwaiti population is youths, who have every right to enjoy their leisure time and have access to special facilities where they can practice their hobbies. What do you think of these youth demands?

Moussa: I believe entire integrated areas should be

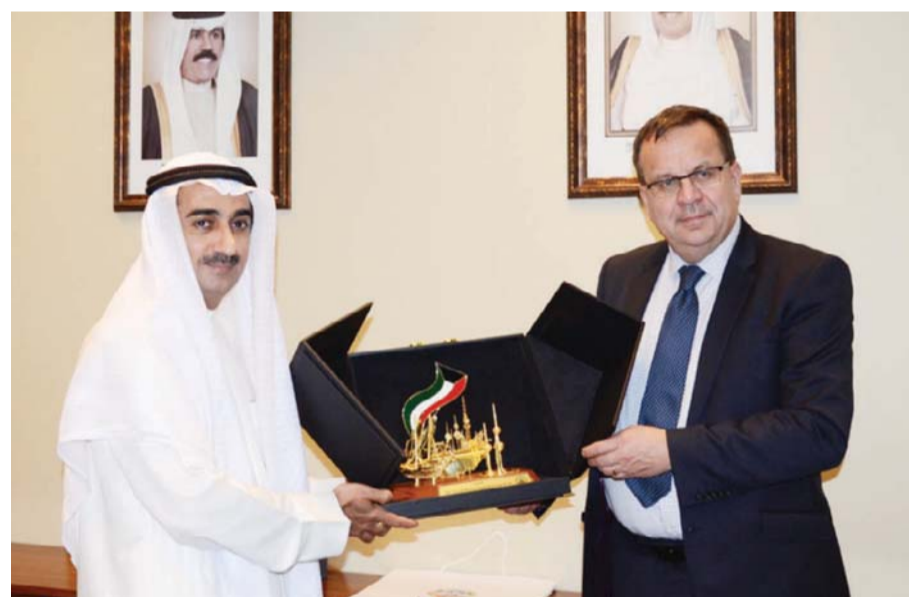
allocated for youths to practice their favorite hobbies, including hazardous ones like racing, shooting and scooter games. Those sites should be suitable to Kuwait's climate and good enough to encourage the youth to use them.

KT: The municipal council was recently allocated a land plot to build the Diplomatic Club along Balajet Street in Salmiya. What is holding up the execution of the project so far?

Moussa: The municipal council did allocate the land to build the club for the benefit of a large segment of Arab and foreign diplomats. I hope the club will be built soon.

KT: Speaking of sidewalks and jogging areas, what is the municipal council's role in this regard?

Moussa: Such exercises must be encouraged and special places must be allocated for both citizens and expatriates to practice it, which is widely encouraged and practiced in several Arab and European countries we visited. These routes must be shaded and paved, and we must also provide special lanes for cyclists.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Yousef Al-Ali presents a memento to Czech Minister of Trade and Industry Jan Mladek following their meeting yesterday. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

CZECH DELEGATION, COMMERCE MINISTER DISCUSS BOOSTING TIES

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: A Czech business delegation of 35 members headed by the Czech Minister of Trade and Industry Jan Mladek is visiting Kuwait to discuss the bilateral trade relation and plans of increasing trade between the two countries. The delegation members met with Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Yousef Al-Ali and other officials yesterday at the Ministries Complex.

Dr Ali stated after the meeting that the two sides discussed the opportunities available for Czech companies to be part of the development plan projects in Kuwait. "During this visit, we have discussed improving the bilateral trade relation in different fields, especially that the trade exchange is below expectation. The trade value between Kuwait and the Czech Republic is \$50 million, and we aim to increase it more, especially that it once reached \$200 million," he noted. "We discussed new horizons for our cooperation that will increase the bilateral trade activities. We also discussed the benefits of increasing the number of visiting delegations from both countries and attending the exhibitions from both sides to gain more information about both products.

In this matter, I invited the Czech Republic through its minister to participate in the Kuwait International Business Exhibition that will be held on February 21 and 22, 2016," added Ali.

Attracting investors

Ali discussed the ways of attracting investors and businessmen to closely see the investment and trade opportunities available in both countries. Both sides also discussed the obstacles in the way of increasing the trade value and the ways of overcoming it. "Medical tourism and services has the main portion of the trade exchange in addition to some other fields," he concluded.

According to the Minister Jan Mladek, it is necessary to improve the bilateral trade relations and commercial exchange. "There are many opportunities that are not yet exploited between the two countries. We already have bilateral agreements on both investment protection and tax duplication, and we aim to sign an agreement on economic cooperation, which should solve the problems occurring during the business cooperation between the Kuwait and Czech companies," he pointed out.

Over 6,000 Kuwaiti citizens visit the Czech Republic every year for medical treatment, especially physiotherapy which is done in the spas. "We would like to increase the number of Kuwaiti visitors to the Czech Republic. If visa procedures are simplified, this would definitely lead to have more Kuwaiti tourist visiting our country. So we definitely support the possibility of canceling the visa system for Kuwaiti citizens to the Schengen countries which we are part of," Mladek stressed.

MINISTER LAUNCHES KUWAIT'S AWARD FOR YOUTH EXCELLENCE, CREATIVITY

SHEIKH SALMAN LEAVES FOR ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah yesterday announced the launch of Kuwait's award for youth excellence and creativity.

The award, the first of its kind for youth in the Arab World, reiterates the state's keenness on youth and their projects, giving priority to their ambition as well as promoting their capabilities as the "country's future and real wealth," Sheikh Salman told a press conference.

He added that the award is also part of the state extensive strategy to prepare a young generation that sticks to national values and be a partner in sustainable development through boosting the culture of creativity and the artistic aesthetic sense.

Sheikh Salman noted that the award, launched by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, will constitute an incentive to youth, and reaffirm that Kuwait is doing its best to unleash their creativity. He said that the ministry is highly interested in encouraging creativity and innovation among Kuwaiti youth in all fields, patronizing the gifted.

The newly-launched annual award covers 10 fields, providing an incentive for creativity and developing a favorable cultural environment. It offers youth financial and spiritual support to help them play a leading role in the society, the minister noted.

Ten categories

Meanwhile, the ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Youth Development Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said that the financial value of the award hits KD 100, 000 for 10 categories. These include entrepreneurship; education; media; culture and arts; voluntary work; sciences and technology; sports; boosting health; architecture, urban planning and, housing, and sharia sciences, Mutairi noted.

Only Kuwaitis aged 14-34 are eligible to apply for the award, the first of its kind in the Arab countries. They can apply as of yesterday till 14 January, through the ministry website. Results



KUWAIT: Information and Youth Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah (right) speaks during yesterday's press conference. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

are to be announced at the beginning of March.

Islamic conference

Separately, Sheikh Salman stressed the significance of the 9th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers in view of time and goals. Speaking to KUNA before leaving for Oman to attend the conference due between November 2-4 in Nizwa, the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2015, the minister, who doubles as Chairman of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), said efforts need to be exerted in order to build an all-out strategy to promote the role of Islam in serving humanity and fighting extremism.

He called for capitalizing on Islamic cultural tradition in the correction of negative stereotypes about the religion of Islam inside and outside the Muslim world in different activities and sciences. He said the Muslim countries' ministers of culture are well aware of schemes being plot-

ted against Islamic culture.

On the meeting, he said the agenda is full of issues and subjects, primarily a conference bureau, election of a consultative council tasked with carrying out the cultural strategy in the Muslim world and mechanisms for promoting tolerance, moderation, inter-cultural dialogue, amity and peace.

The State of Kuwait, through the Ministry of Information and the NCCAL, has adopted a cultural strategy of action that copes with the requirements of the current and future stages, the minister noted.

The strategy establishes the concepts, values, principles and tolerance of the Islamic sharia, Sheikh Salman said, adding that Kuwait was currently making preparations for a festival marking Kuwait City as the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2016 through various cultural activities that reflect the country's tradition and opening up to different cultures and civilizations. — KUNA

KUWAIT PINS HOPES ON UNESCO CONFERENCE

PARIS: Kuwait pins substantial hopes on the UNESCO 38th General Conference, the country's permanent envoy to the organization Dr Meshaal Hayat has said. The country expects the conference will take significant resolutions to serve "national purposes." Hayat made the statement to KUNA ahead of the conference, 3-18 November. Kuwait's Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Hamad Al-Essa is taking part in the UNESCO conference.

The Kuwaiti delegation is expecting the conference to endorse two resolutions made by the

UNESCO Executive Board on establishing a global center for excellence for the empowerment of persons with disabilities through information and communication technologies (ICT), and setting up a water research center at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Hayat said. The Executive Board approved Kuwait's two projects in October and referred them to the UNESCO director general for endorsement.

In the meantime, Hayat said Kuwait is looking forward to winning the posts of Deputy President of the General Conference and Deputy Chair of the

Educational Committee. The Kuwaiti delegation will also seek to win membership of the UNESCO Legal Committee. In addition, Kuwait is targeting membership of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education, seeking the only seat for the Arab group, despite a fierce competition, he said.

This general conference offers a good opportunity to highlight the role of Kuwait and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a 'Humanitarian Leader' in supporting the UNESCO educational initiatives for the Syrian refugee students, as well as around the globe. — KUNA