



AMIR, CROWN PRINCE CONGRATULATE OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST AL-DEIHANI

DEIHANI TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY SALARY OF KD 5,000

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable, congratulating the 49-year-old Kuwaiti shooter Fehaid Al-Deihani who won a Gold Medal in the men's Double Trap competition at the Rio Olympics. Al-Deihani was a member of the Independent Olympic Athletes (IOA) team, winning them the first ever gold medal since the establishment of the team in 1992. His Highness the Amir stated that this was a huge accomplishment for Al-Deihani, proving the abilities of Kuwaiti athletes to compete and to win medals in the Olympics.

High Highness the Amir wished Al-Deihani all the best in future competitions where he will proudly represent the Kuwaiti flag. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and High Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent cables congratulating Al-Deihani for his outstanding achievement.

Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said that the gold medal demonstrates competent capabilities of the Kuwaiti youth to challenge hardships facing Kuwaiti sports. Al-Deihani won the gold medal in the men's Double Trap competition in Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday - defeating Italy's Marco Innocenti in the final match. "This is an unprecedented historical achievement" for Kuwait, as the first gold medal for Arabs in Rio '16, Minister Sheikh Salman said.

This prompts exerting all efforts to support, and promote Kuwaiti sports on all levels, looking ahead to the future, while standing on a solid national ground with full confidence to conquer the impossibility, the minister added. In spite of the challenges imposed on the Kuwaiti sports, including suspension from international competitions, Kuwait's youth would not surrender and insisted to take part (in Rio'16) under the Olympic flag to prove to the entire world that they are able to represent their

country and promote its status, Sheikh Salman said.

The minister stressed pride by Kuwait's leadership, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, of the Kuwaiti youth and their capabilities of holding the "flag of national responsibility" for the country's progress in all fields. Sheikh Salman congratulated His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister, and the Kuwaiti people on the victory, highly appreciating Al-Deihani's efforts and triumph.

Al-Deihani praised

Meanwhile, the Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Sport Dr Hamoud Al-Shemmari said in a statement published in a local newspaper that Kuwait Olympic champion Fahid Deihani will get a monthly salary of KD 5,000 for a period of 4 years. Also the Director General of the Public Authority for Sport (PAS) Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Sabah has lauded the Kuwaiti shooter Fehaid Al-Deihani for winning the gold medal in Rio de Janeiro.

PAS Director General, in a statement yesterday congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the political leadership and the people of Kuwait on the unprecedented victory. He expressed hope Al-Deihani's accomplishment would pave the way for further sports achievements, in addition to reforming and revamping the sector. Sheikh Ahmad Mansour wished identical success for the other Kuwaiti champions taking part in the international tournament, however, he expressed distress that the Kuwait flag is not being raised during the games. — Agencies



Fehaid Al-Deihani, an independent athlete from Kuwait competing on the Refugee Olympic Team, celebrates his victory at the end of the men's Double Trap gold medal match at Olympic Shooting Center at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Wednesday, Aug 10, 2016. — AP Photos

in my view

THE GOLD STANDARD

By Ahmad Jabr

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Fehaid Al-Deihani's historic achievement goes beyond being the greatest accomplishment in the history of Kuwait's sports; both in individual and team competitions.

Despite Kuwait being suspended from participating in the 2016 Olympics, a number of Kuwaiti athletes still participated as independent athletes. Some of them received sponsorship from private companies in Kuwait, but not Deehani, who opted to pay for his own trip to Rio and pursue his goal of winning the gold medal. He is the first Kuwaiti athlete to ever bring home a gold. Previously, the veteran Olympian won bronze medals in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and 2012 London Olympics respectively.

That was just one of many adversities that Deehani and other Kuwaiti athletes went through in their journey. Yet, he was able to overcome all obstacles, compete at the highest level of competition and climb his way to the top of the mountain at the grandest stage.

This achievement comes at a very crucial time for Kuwait, in which much hope is pinned on its people and their potential as the country's most valuable asset. Not only does Deehani's feat provide a motivation for young athletes and young people in Kuwait in general, but it also serves as proof that with enough determination and hard work, success can be achieved - whether you have government support or not. Furthermore, it shows that when the opportunity presents itself, Kuwaitis are also willing to take all challenges head-on and not only succeed in what they do, but also excel at it.

Deehani's gold medal is a source of pride and inspiration not only for people in Kuwait and the Gulf region, but also the entire Arab World. Defeatism, hopelessness, frustration and despair overwhelm a large segment of young men and women in the Arab World today. Many of them have lost hope and believe that no matter how hard they try, the 'system' is just not designed to give them any chance to succeed. But with this gold medal, Deehani has shown that once you set your eyes on a certain goal and be willing to make the extra effort, nothing can stand in your way to success - not even failure or backstage politics.

Deehani had all the reasons not to be successful. No one could probably blame him had he not participated in the Olympics to begin with. Yet, here he is today, not only competing against the best athletes the world has to offer, but also emerging victorious and bringing home the gold.

Kuwait can be very proud though it is more than unfortunate that the first ever Olympic gold medal a Kuwaiti has won will never be listed under Kuwait's name in the official records. However, there is no time for Kuwait to feel sad. Instead, Kuwait is filled with pride knowing that the whole world now knows the true potential of its people, and what they are really capable of. And that cannot change, regardless of what flag is raised at the end of the day.