

SWITZERLAND, KUWAIT OPEN NEW CHAPTER IN TIES: AMBASSADOR

BERN: The First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's visit to Switzerland has resulted in opening a new chapter in the bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the European nation, Kuwait's ambassador said.

Ambassador Bader Al-Tunaib said the warm hospitality accorded to Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and his delegation reflected the Swiss Government's sentiments of admiration toward the Kuwaiti Government and people. The Swiss leaders admire Kuwait's development policies and generous aid to needy nations, eye the Gulf State as a key regional "political and development player" and a prospected vital partner at the development level, Ambassador Tunaib added.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's meetings with the senior leaders, namely the president, the foreign minister and the parliament speaker, dealt with boosting the bilateral ties, stability in the Middle East, the refugees and human rights, he said, adding that the two sides concurred that dialogue and negotiations



Kuwaiti Ambassador to Switzerland Bader Al-Tunaib

are the best avenues for restoring stability to the region. The two sides have also tackled economic cooperation namely in the business sector. Bern witnessed on Monday a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of establishing the Swiss-Kuwaiti diplomatic ties. The event was attended by Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and the Swiss leaders. — KUNA

HOLLANDE STRESSES 'CONFIDENT RELATIONS' WITH GCC COUNTRIES

TERRORISM GLOBAL, LASTING THREAT: FRENCH PRESIDENT

PARIS: French President Francois Hollande yesterday stressed the close ties built up between France and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as well as the ongoing cooperation in fighting terrorism and seeking regional stability. Speaking in a keynote address to France's foreign ambassadors convened at the Elysee Palace, Hollande said France was willing to work with the countries in of the Gulf region and further friendly ties, and also work on bridging the divide with Iran as it seeks to re-integrate the international community.

Hollande said that France favored this re-integration after decades of isolation of Iran because of its controversial and opaque nuclear programs. "If Iran wants to achieve (reintegration), it must contribute to calming the situation in the region," Hollande said.

"France is ready to facilitate this process with the countries of the Gulf," he added. "Everyone knows the confident relations that we have been able to build up with these countries." The president said there were several areas where France saw a potential role as a 'useful' broker or mediator.

Global threat

Meanwhile, Hollande warned that terrorism is "the greatest threat" being faced by the international community and this threat is set to last. Speaking to France's 181 ambassadors on post abroad, the French leader said his country was intensifying its efforts to fight terrorism which is emerging in many areas throughout the globe.

Much of the terrorist threat emanates from so-called Islamic State operations in Syria and Iraq, where France has recently increased its military activity against this extremist group. But Hollande cautioned that threats from this group and others had emerged in other areas.

"In Libya, in Yemen, in Egypt, in Somalia, Nigeria, with Boko Haram, and even in Asia recently in Bangladesh (and) I could continue the list," he said. "The whole world is therefore concerned, and it will be for the duration," he added. He said France and the international community must not only act against terrorism but "prepare for this war that will be long." He urged "all partners" to work together to

fight the scourge of terrorism.

Hollande stressed that France and the United States and the NATO alliance were working together to improve cooperation and coordination in Syria, where IS has taken control of large areas but is under increasing pressure to retreat and is losing ground.

He also indicated "regular exchanges" with Russia on the Syrian question and he urged that Russia become "an actor" in finding a settlement to the conflict, rather than "a protagonist" involved in the military campaign to support the Damascus regime.

The Syrian crisis

A diplomatic source told KUNA that Hollande discussed Syria with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the side-lines of the latest G20 meeting and that Putin is coming to Paris for talks on October 19, when the subject will be broached again. But Hollande also warned that terrorism cannot be defeated if the sources of conflict are not addressed.

"If we want to take a lucid look at this, there will be no victorious fight against terrorism if the crises that give it a fertile ground do not find (solutions)," the President remarked. Among these crises, he cited the "horrible tragedy" in Syria, with more than 300,000 dead, five million refugees outside the country and nine million internally displaced.

Hollande condemned the terrible humanitarian catastrophe in Syria, the use of chemical weapons by the regime and probably by the Islamic State forces and the huge number of abuses of human rights and myriad violations of humanitarian law.

"There must be a halt to this carnage and France calls for this immediately," the French leader stated, adding that "these crimes cannot go unpunished." He further warned about the risk of the Syrian war spreading and he said it had "grave consequences for the region, for Europe and (France's) own security."

Foreign forces

"Today the massive presence of foreign forces in Syria demonstrates the internationalization of the conflict," he warned. The recent entry of Turkish troops into Syria to combat Islamic State "can be



PARIS: French President Francois Hollande gestures as he addresses French ambassadors yesterday in Paris. — AFP

perfectly understood" in view of the terror attacks carried out by IS in Turkey, Hollande continued. But he spoke out to caution against the Turkish action against Kurdish forces, which are supported by the Coalition, saying this kind of action was "contradictory and brings the risk of a general blow-up" in the conflict.

Hollande reiterated a frequent call for a halt to the fighting and a resumption of the peace process which he said exists and should be used. "The (Syrian) regime and its supporters think the solution is military while the way out is political," he affirmed, noting that the peace negotiations track has never really been exploited to the full.

Hollande also addressed the moribund Middle East peace process that France has been seeking to revive, notably by hosting a ministerial conference in June to establish a framework for fresh talks between Israelis and Palestinians. Even if the move has been rejected by Israel, Hollande said that he hoped for 'concrete measures' as decided at the June meeting and which are planned before the end of the year. — KUNA



KUWAIT TACKLES DWINDLING FISH WEALTH

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) launched yesterday the second phase of a national campaign titled 'enriching the fish wealth,' effective September. Dr Khaled Abdullelah, in charge of KISR's fish breeding, said that the institute will release into the sea waters up to 135,000 fish during the coming days; in coordination with government authorities and public welfare societies.

The institute, in the first stage of the

campaign, released more than 126, 000 fish into the territorial waters, he said, indicating that the project is vital to make up for dwindling amounts of the fish in Kuwait's sea waters. He called for abstention from excessive fishing or acts that damage the marine environment. The first phase of the project, patronized by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was launched last August. — KUNA

KUWAITI TEACHERS INVITED TO ARABIC TEACHING PROGRAM IN US

YOUTH TO INVEST IN 1,000 SCHOOL CANTEENS

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti teachers are invited to be involved in a special US program to teach Arabic to American students in a US college, the US Embassy's Cultural Attaché Dr Zennia Paganini announced yesterday. Explaining some features of the program, called the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program, Dr Paganini said it is a nine-month activity for early career English teachers or professionals in related fields who will teach Arabic to US students in a US college. The program is fully funded by the Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and it is an integral part of the Fulbright Foreign Student exchange program.

Dr Paganini shed some light on prospected impact of the program on the Kuwait-US relations, saying the FLTA participants will have an excellent opportunity to extend their knowledge of the society and culture of the United States while serving as cultural ambassadors of Kuwait.

In addition to being teaching assistants of Arabic to US students, participants will engage in community service activities, learn about US values, and share their Kuwaiti culture with American citizens. "This year, we are delighted to be working closely with the (Kuwait) Ministry of Education to publicize the program to English language teachers," Dr Paganini said.

Elaborating on the program benefits, she said Kuwaiti teachers will have an excellent opportunity to connect with other language teaching professionals and academics. This year, the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs is expected to fund approximately 100 Arabic Fulbright FLTA participants from the Middle East and North African region.

Direct communication

Those participants will meet in an Arabic FLTA orientation to prepare for their teaching experience. During the program, the FLTAs will be in direct communication with American students and faculty members on US campuses, which will help strengthen their foreign language instruction skills, and refine their English language proficiency.

They will also interact with host communities in conversation groups, extracurricular activities, and



Dr Zennia Paganini, the US Cultural Attaché in Kuwait

community outreach projects. As a result, FLTAs also typically gain experience in public speaking and presenting. FLTAs attend a mid-year enrichment conference, and also enroll in two college courses dealing with US Studies per semester, at their host institutions, which affords them a wonderful chance to gain further insight into US culture and society. After the program, Fulbright FLTAs return to their home countries and can immediately apply their newly acquired professional skills and experience to directly benefit their own educational institutions.

On application requirement, the cultural attach said applicants must be Kuwaiti citizens who are English teachers, or recent graduates of American studies, journalism/media studies, or American/English literature.

English language proficiency is mandatory and should be demonstrated with a TOEFL IBT score (79-80 minimum) or IELTS score (6.0 in total). Complete applications should be submitted through the links available on the US Embassy's social media platforms on twitter and Instagram. The Embassy will only con-



Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa

tact short-listed applicants for interviews. Last date to submit applications will be on September third.

School canteens

In other news, the Ministry of Education announced yesterday that it will offer Kuwaiti youth the opportunity to invest in 1,000 school canteens. This step seeks to support youth in small and medium enterprises, Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa said after heading a meeting at the Ministry of Education for supporting the youth projects. The meeting was attended by the ministry's officials, representatives of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development and in addition of 30 young men.

Essa stated that a team is formed with members from Ministry of Education, State Ministry of Youth Affairs, SME and a number of young people, where they will put the outline and framework for this idea. Up to 30 days' grace period was given to work out the relevant plan. This project goes in line with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's desire to support Kuwaiti youth, the minister concluded. — KUNA

EPA LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT LOCAL ISLANDS

KUWAIT: Environment Public Authority (EPA) announced yesterday it has prepared a national campaign to protect and rehabilitate some locations on Kuwaiti islands, namely Kubbar, Um Al-Maradim and Garuh.

The first campaign will be launched on Kubbar Island, as EPA holds daily meetings with various state institutions to prepare for this campaign, EPA's Director General Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said. The latest meetings were held with Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), he added.

EPA is working on rehabilitating Kubbar as it is the most visited island, thanks to its close proximity, big size and its biological diversity, he said. Kubbar has been subjected to many environmental violations, a matter that would necessitate cooperation be fostered among the state institutions to lift the wastes from this island, he added.

It is considered one of the most beautiful Kuwaiti islands and a touristic destination which requires great care to be made in order to protect and maintain



Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah

its wildlife, as it cherishes a large number of coral reefs and is a heaven for rare sea birds, he said.

Meanwhile, Kubbar is currently witnessing cleaning campaigns for its shores and coral reefs, he added. Um Al-Maradim and Garuh islands are the other two islands which need be given extra care to protect its natural richness, he concluded. — KUNA



The Kubbar island.