

# KUWAIT GIVES GREEN LIGHT FOR AIRPORT TERMINAL CONSTRUCTION

PROJECT TO INCREASE CAPACITY TO 25 MILLION BY 2022

**KUWAIT:** Officials in Kuwait have made significant progress on long-awaited upgrades to Kuwait's International Airport (KIA) by signing a \$4.4 billion contract to kick-start construction on a new terminal. Industry stakeholders are optimistic over the KIA expansion, with the recently signed contract indicating the government's intention to deliver new aviation facilities to meet rising demand, as part of the broader goals outlined in the Kuwait Development Plan (KDP) 2015-20.

### New terminal moves ahead

In late May, Ali Al-Omair, Minister of Public Works, announced the government had signed a contract for KIA's new terminal with Limak Construction, part of Turkey's Limak Group. The announcement brought an end to the political gridlock that had postponed progress on the new terminal, which had also seen a re-tender process in 2015 after initially being awarded in 2014.

The terminal is expected to increase passenger capacity from the current seven million per year to 25 million by 2022. Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) estimates that future development could eventually bring total passenger capacity at KIA to 50 million. Slated for completion in 2022, the new terminal will accommodate all types of aircraft at 51 gates, an increase from the airport's current 21 gates, and will also be able to serve 21 Airbus A380 jumbo jets at the same time, according to Omair.

The new terminal will have five levels - one below ground and four above ground - with 120 check-in counters and a baggage system capable of handling 2930 pieces of luggage per hour. The expansion is expected to offer significant benefits for the industrial sector, with more than one million cubic meters of concrete and over 100,000 tons of steel required for the terminal's construction.

To facilitate access to the new terminal, a new road will be constructed connecting to the King Faisal Motorway 51 and the 7th Ring Road. Additional plans are under way for a new metro line connecting Kuwait City Centre with the airport, which is located

15 km outside of town. Kuwait's low-cost airline Jazeera Airways' plans to build a terminal were put on hold in 2014, with limited development on the project reported until recently. However, in mid-July the carrier was granted approval by the Kuwait Council of Ministers for the land needed to build the dedicated terminal as well as parking lots at KIA. The investment is valued at KD14 million (\$46 million) with an expected construction phase of 15 months, according to press reports.

### Rising volumes

To accommodate increasing passenger and air traffic, Kuwait's DGCA has signed a raft of aviation deals recently, including air transport agreements with the UAE and Turkey. New routes are also servicing the country. In 2014 Philippine air carrier Cebu Pacific Air launched a Manila-Kuwait route, and in 2013 Kuwait resumed flight services with Iraq for the first time since 1990.

The number of scheduled aircraft movements at KIA rose from 37,166 in 2004 to 83,443 in 2014, while passenger volumes increased from 4.8 million in 2004 to 10.1 million in 2014, according to the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (KCSB).

Since 2013 high air traffic volume has made it necessary for some passenger flights to divert to the Sheikh Saad Al Abdallah General Aviation Terminal near KIA, which is generally reserved for private aircraft, as well as flydubai flights, the only commercial airline to exclusively use the terminal.

### A broader program

The KIA expansion project falls under the KDP framework, which aims to direct major investments into transport and logistics infrastructure with the goal of establishing Kuwait as a regional trade and financial center. Enhancing air and sea links to improve connectivity with the region and further afield is a major priority of the state as a mechanism to drive non-oil economic growth. — Oxford Business Group



## SMART SCHOOLS TO BE OPENED SOON: MINISTRY

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Education is to open many smart schools in the future where they use technology platform as a medium between different locations, such as school and home, without comprising the quality of education. The Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa told the press yesterday that these smart schools will drastically improve education in the country. He made this remark after opening a smart school (Um Kalthom bin Oqba) in Eshbilya area.

The opening of this school was carried out before its designated dateline which was supposed to be in October 2016; many more schools will be opened before the school year starts, the Minister said. He added that KD 2.9 million was put into carrying out this smart schools project. A smart school is one that uses a technology platform as medium on which distance learning and specific teaching expertise are made available to remote locations including the home, without compromise to the quality of information transfer and certified teaching methods developed locally, regionally or internationally. — KUNA

## SOUTH MUTLA PROJECT SOLUTION TO KUWAIT'S HOUSING DILEMMA

**KUWAIT:** The South Mutla City project is considered a key solution to the growing housing dilemma and high rent rates in Kuwait. The project, approved by the legislative and executive authorities, aims at providing Kuwaitis with housing in a short period of time.

In several interviews, most citizens view the project as a beacon of hope for their dreams in owning a house in the near future. Accompanying the project is a network of new highways and roads which the citizens deem as a solution to the traffic congestion problem plaguing the country.

### Lowering rents

Professor of media at Kuwait University (KU) Dr Mahmoud Al-Hashimi said that he hoped that the South Mutla City project will help not only in solving the housing problem, but also in lowering the high rent rates in Kuwait. The project will help in the expansion of residential areas into the vast desert, said Dr Hashimi. The academic expressed hopes that previous mistakes in constructing older housing projects will be avoided in the South Mutla.

For Kuwait University student Khaled Ahmad, the South Mutla project will be beneficial for the new generation in terms of decreasing the worries over where to live in the future. The involvement of well-established international companies in the project says a lot about the authorities' keenness on the success of South Mutla, said the student. The South Mutla project must provide top-notch services for the dwellers of the city, said Ahmad who expressed high hopes for the project's success.

### Great incentive

Similarly, government employee Mishari Al-Fassam said that the geographical location of the project, which is slightly above sea level, was considered as a great incentive for those eager to live there. According to him, those applying to live there are between the ages of 30 to 45, making the city the youngest age demographic-wise. Other interviewed citizens hoped that the project would provide more incentive for future dwellers of the city, proposing that each house should be built at an area of roughly 600 to 800 square meters.

The South Mutla City project is expected to house a population of 400,000 citizens with some 30,000 housing units to be constructed. A number of 12 suburbs are expected to be built along with various public facilities such as schools, mosques, and so on. The project is 40 kilometers away from Kuwait city and is located north-west of Jarha city. — KUNA

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