

Local

\$4.4 billion mutual trade between Kuwait, UK in 2018: London Mayor

Kuwait succeeded in luring foreign investments: Roudhan

KUWAIT: Lord Mayor of London, global ambassador for the UK's financial and professional services industry, Peter Estlin said yesterday that the total worth of mutual investments between Kuwait and UK reached about \$4.4 billion in 2018. The amount of investments reached about GBP 3.5 billion, with an increase of eight percent since 2017.

"Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) has been investing in the UK since 1952 and it is considered one of the oldest leading investment funds in the world," said the Mayor during a meeting held in the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). The Mayor affirmed that Brexit does not affect UK's leading financial role because of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) supported by the British rules, in addition to his country's commitment to training and education provided by the best universities in the world.

"We do not look at Brexit as a challenge, we look at it as an opportunity that gives us stronger collaborations with people outside Europe, such as Kuwait," the Mayor continued. "London is the biggest international center in financial and banking technology considering the amount of workers that reached 45,000 with an income estimated GBP 6.6 billion about \$8.4 billion," the Mayor added.

Foreign investments

In other news, Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-



Mayor downplays Brexit's effect

Roudhan yesterday affirmed significance of the achievements in the Kuwaiti economy, recoded over the past two years, namely successful attraction of foreign investments. Roudhan, speaking at the 'second Kuwaiti-American economic forum,' has mentioned some of the



KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan speaks at the 'second Kuwaiti-American economic forum' yesterday. — KUNA

concrete steps at this level; that foreign investors have been allowed to possess and trade in stocks of Kuwaiti banks, that Kuwait has improved its ranking in the international competition in 2018 and Bursa Kuwait has been uplifted to the level of an emerging market.

Meanwhile, Ali Al-Ghanim, Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said in a statement following the forum session that the chamber has been seeking to elevate its bonds with many states at the economic levels—namely the ties with the United States of America. The relations between the United States have significantly improved, particularly following the visit by His Highness the Amir to Washington in 2017, minister Roudhan added.

Earlier, the chamber deputy chairman, Abdulwahab Al-Wazzan, said during the session that the US is the second commercial partner for Kuwait, with trade exchanges between the two countries estimated at \$7 billion. The US lured more than half of the Kuwaiti public investments, he said, adding that both the private and public Kuwaiti businesses in America are valued at \$600 billion. — KUNA

Assembly office moves to accelerate legislation

By Bzzak

KUWAIT: Assembly speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem yesterday chaired an extended meeting for the assembly office to discuss ways to accelerate the pace of approving legislation that has been slow. Ghanem said that 26 lawmakers representing heads and rapporteurs of various assembly panels debated the issue, adding that the pace of legislation has been below ambitions. He said the meeting agreed to form a five-member committee that will coordinate between the speaker and heads of various panels who will be encouraged to submit their priority issues.

Ghanem said based on the decision, the assembly will start approving legislation in February and March and if the experiment succeeds, it will be adopted on permanent basis. Head of the financial and economic affairs committee MP Salah Khorshid said the new panel will follow up with committees' reports and place them on the assembly agenda for debate.

In the meantime, rapporteur of the legal and legislative committee MP Khalil Abul said the panel has again delayed its final decision on the legality of a grilling filed against the prime minister. Abul said the delay this time came in order for the opinions of the assembly constitutional experts to arrive.



KUWAIT: Lawmakers meet to discuss ways to accelerate the pace of approving legislation. — KUNA

About two months ago, opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri filed to grill the prime minister holding him responsible for the failure of the government to deal with the devastating effects of unprecedented heavy torrential rain.

Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah charged that the grilling violated the constitution and demanded that it be referred to the assembly's legal committee for its opinion. The committee has so far held sever-

al meetings with constitutional experts but MP Muwaizri refused to attend its deliberations because he said its work was against the law.

Meanwhile, the assembly public funds protection committee yesterday began debating charges that the public authority for agricultural affairs has distributed state-owned agricultural plots and stables for breeding animals to fake companies. The charges say that such companies were established through forged documents.

Panel reviews 2019-2020 budget

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliament's budgets and final statements committee yesterday held a meeting to review the new state's budget of the new fiscal year (2019-2020), the final statement of the awfaq secretariat general and the related State Audit Bureau and auditors' remarks. The committee's chairman MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the meeting was also attended by representatives from the finance ministry, the awfaq secretariat general, the State Audit Bureau and Civil Service Commission (CSC). Abdulsamad added that the finance ministry reviewed the proposed oil price used in the budget and expected payroll increases, adding that the committee was not satisfied with the review, which excluded the ministry's maximum proposed revenues and expenses and some other data included in the budget. Abdulsamad noted that the finance ministry saw the proposals made by government bodies were too exaggerated and far from following instructions concerning sustainability and controlling expenditure.

Solving problems

Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Busheiri held several meetings with Ministry of Public Works assistant undersecretaries to discuss various problems facing projects executed in their respective sectors and work on resolving them, said informed sources, noting that the problems discussed included accelerating work pace of various projects, gravel on various roads and delayed road projects.

New KU branch

Kuwait University's (KU) supreme council approved using the land allocated to it in Sabah Al-Ahmad City as a new branch for KU until the law of government universities is passed, well-informed sources said. The sources added that the government plans to build more universities to expand university education, adding that more government universities will be soon launched after KU moves in the Shadadiya campus, using its current campuses for a new university and building a third one in Sabah Al-Ahmad. The sources said some council members expressed concerns about building a new university in Sabah Al-Ahmad because the allocated land is located in a pathway where torrents occur.

Power grid upgrade

The Ministry of Electricity and Water will soon launch the largest study ever conducted in two decades to determine the power grid requirements until 2035, said informed sources, noting that the study will be done by a specialized international consultancy firm. The sources added that Central Agency for Public Tenders has already awarded the consultancy contract with the aim of providing the needed infrastructure to expand the power grid and meet the growing demand for electricity resulting from building new cities and population growth. The sources also explained that this comes within a strategy to achieve the New Kuwait 2035 vision all ministries are working on through developmental projects. Separately, the Ministry of Public Works extended the deadline to file bids for a consultancy contract for the second phase of Kuwait International Airport project till Feb 6, 2019 instead of the previous date of Nov 25, 2018, which had also been extended to Jan 8, 2019. Notably, the companies invited to file bids include CH2M (USA), EGIS (France), Hill International (USA), ENECO (Spain), Louis Berger (USA), Parsons (USA), NC-Lavalin (Canada) and Turner & Townsend (USA). The contract includes providing consultancy for 12, which is currently under construction.

Molded copper exports banned to fight thefts

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan yesterday issued a ministerial resolution banning the export of molded copper without written approval from the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW), said informed sources, noting that the decision was made upon a request from MEW. The step comes in a bid to fight theft of high voltage cables which thieves steal from power transform-

ers, extract copper from inside then export that copper as scrap metal.

Social aid

Ministry of Social Affairs' acting undersecretary Hana Al-Hajery said the ministry recently finished automating 100 percent of all aid given in 2018 in a bid to reduce the burden of citizens receiving such aid, adding that automation included interconnection with 15 government bodies pending connecting with others by the end of the year. Hajery added that this was one of the ministry's achievements in 2018, in addition to automating the cooperation sector and co-ops' elections, electronic barcoding and entrepreneurs' complaints. Hajery said automating the cooperation sector helped increase sales to KD 900 million and reduce the value of unsold goods from KD 5.2 million to only KD 1.6 million.

Kuwait-India talks focus on aviation cooperation

NEW DELHI: India and Kuwait yesterday held bilateral talks in India's financial capital Mumbai to enhance cooperation in the field of civil aviation and air transport. During the talks, the Kuwaiti delegation was headed by President of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, while the Indian side was represented by Union Minister of Commerce,

Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu. In the presence of Kuwait's Ambassador to India Jassim Al-Najim and senior Kuwaiti officials, a number of issues of mutual concern in the field of civil aviation and air transport were discussed. The meeting also underlined the importance of more dialogue between technical teams from both sides to enhance cooperation, increase flights and deepen coordination among airlines from both nations. Kuwaiti National Carrier, Kuwait Airways, was part of the Gulf state's delegation, which included Chief Executive Officer Kamel Al-Awadhi along with Jazeera Airways CEO Rohit Ramachandran and Deputy Director General for Aviation Safety and Air Transport Affairs Engineer Emad Al-Jlewi. The meeting aims to boost cooperation with the Indian authorities in the field of civil aviation, according to Al-Jlewi. — KUNA



NEW DELHI: Kuwaiti and Indian officials meet in Mumbai yesterday. — KUNA

News in brief

310 news websites licensed

KUWAIT: Acting Information Ministry Undersecretary Mohammad Al-Awash asked the municipality to divide the three lots allocated for use by non-daily newspapers, magazines, satellite channels and information services to six equal lots of 1,500 sq m each. Awash asked for allocating new lots to the information ministry so that they could be distributed to the largest number of beneficiaries. An informed source said the information ministry is contemplating granting lots to Kuwaiti satellite channels according to rules to be determined later. The source said the electronic media law commits the information ministry to provide care and support to news websites, but this does not mean granting them land. He said the number of licensed news websites is 310, so the ministry is working on allocating premises for a news websites union with offices for them. — Al-Qabas

Electronic crimes dropped

KUWAIT: Informed sources said the percentage of electronic crimes the prosecution investigated in 2018 dropped to nearly 50 percent from 2017, as the information prosecution that investigates such crimes registered 1,250 cases last year out of 1,500 it received. The sources said the drop of this type of crime last year to 1,250, during which 2,400 IT cases were registered out of 2,700, is due to implementing laws pertaining these crimes. She added the drop is also due to the increased legal awareness by individuals about the danger of crimes committed on various social media, in addition to the issuance of many convictions during the past years. She said the surprise in the statistics was the drop of crimes committed by newspapers and satellite channels after registering nearly 250 complaints against papers and violation of copyright and the electronic transactions law, which indicates that crimes are being committed on social media instead of papers. — Al-Jarida

5.9 percent divorce rate

KUWAIT: A study by the Justice Ministry on marriage and divorce rates during the years 2007-2017 showed the percentage of divorce between Kuwaitis in the first year of marriage reached 5.9 percent in the 10 years included in the study. Justice Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Information Technology Department and Statistics Heba Al-Abeljalil expected the number of divorce cases to reach 8,145 in 2022. She said that among the 100,017 marriages between citizens from 2007 until 2017, 5,926 divorces occurred in the same year of marriage. About the most important reasons for divorce, Abdeljalil said the study found several causes and factors, most importantly the personal affairs law 51/1984, which is one of the most important reasons for divorce, as it encourages the woman to ask for divorce because she would get alimony, car, maid, driver and residence. — Al-Anbaa

Rumors denied

KUWAIT: Commenting on social media warnings not to photograph environmental law violators, the interior ministry's relations and security information denied the claims attributed to environmental police. It said the claim is false and has nothing to do with environmental police, adding that item 14 of the procedures law says that "reporting is the duty of whoever sees the act and photographs the event on condition of not defaming anyone", and asked social media users not to publish any statement from security sectors without referring to official sources. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Dogs bite two at border

KUWAIT: Paramedics carried out first aid on two Bahraini women who were bitten by dogs at Abdaly border outlet. One of them suffered superficial wounds and scratches, and both refused to lodge a case. The two women arrived in a bus from Iraq and were attacked on their way to the toilet. An informed source said the dogs are fed by an employee despite complaints by customs officers to remove from there. — Al-Rai

Policeman questioned

KUWAIT: A female citizen accused a police colonel of beating her inside a police patrol after she was arrested on a debt charge. The woman, after paying the due amount, was released. She then went to Zour police station and told police that while on her way from the chalets, she was stopped at a checkpoint and was taken to a patrol car, where an argument with a colonel took place. "He verbally insulted me and beat me, causing injuries as stated in a medical report," she said. Investigations are ongoing. — Al-Rai