

Local

Estonian President lauds Kuwait's role in regional, int'l peacebuilding

Kuwaiti humanitarian work a role model for other countries to follow: Kaljulaid

KUWAIT: The President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid has commended Kuwait's role in regional and international peacekeeping, and the Gulf State's solid efforts toward achieving peaceful settlements in the Middle East region. Kaljulaid made her remarks in an exclusive interview with Kuwait TV and KUNA, after holding official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior Kuwaiti officials. "As I've said to His Highness the Amir: we admire Kuwait's role in peacebuilding, tedious and hard work towards peaceful development of the region. We admire your democracy and your parliament, and the hard work which you are making in a really not so stable area," she said.

The UN's naming of His Highness the Amir as 'Humanitarian Leader' and Kuwait as 'Humanitarian Center' is well-earned due to the Gulf country's humanitarian efforts around the world in aiding people suffering from harsh living conditions due to conflicts and natural disasters, Kaljulaid noted, adding the Kuwaiti humanitarian work should be a role model for other countries to follow. "I think this is a recognition. You have been able to build bridges with Iraqi people and all neighboring people. You have a deep understanding of their concerns, and you have been ready to contribute. We see you in this region as somebody who we could follow," said the Estonian President.

Future peace and prosperity

"We do not have lots of experiences in the region as

we only have one newly-established embassy. So, we do have and plan to rely extensively on your vast understanding and experience on how to, patiently and tirelessly, work towards better solutions for future peace and prosperity," she added. Furthermore, Kaljulaid mentioned that her country, despite being geographically far away from the region, has been very much present in the NATO mission in Iraq, helping to state-build and develop that country. "We've also been very active in UNICEF and UNHCR to solve the humanitarian crises in the region. So, you are (Kuwait) the beacon from the region that guides us on how to move forward," she remarked.

On her visit to the country, Kaljulaid indicated that despite this being her maiden visit: it is, however, the second official visit for an Estonian President to Kuwait since former President Lennart Meri's visit in 1993, during which Kuwaiti-Estonian diplomatic relationship was established. "We've just celebrated the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries," she said, noting "we brought with us a big business delegation with all the important players in Estonia, who are actually active in the Middle East region and helping to develop e-services. This has been one of the main aspects of our visit."

"We've also signed a memorandum of understanding in digital development, and currently working on the agreement of multi-protection investment, which awaits an EU approval," added the Estonian President. "We are also moving forward with the avoidance of double-



KUWAIT: The President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid. — KUNA

taxation agreement between the two countries. As I said, we already have signed MoU on digital development. On these three pillars, we could actually build a great cooperation," she added. The Estonian President also mentioned that the other aspect of her visit aims at bolstering the potential investment, digital, and business cooperation between Estonia and Kuwait on a "regional dimension."

Investment opportunities

"Estonia is the front-runner of the Three Seas Initiative, which is a regional development forum, and we really would like to see Kuwaiti investors participate in such a discussion platform about infrastructure development in Eastern Europe," said Kaljulaid. "We've

offered cooperation through the Three Seas Initiative, where we have the leverage of other 11 countries beside the Estonian market. Estonia is part of the EU; so if you are on our market, you are on one of the world's biggest and richest markets," she said. Moreover, Kaljulaid mentioned that her country offers the opportunity to establish companies and operate them under a low-bureaucracy environment. "You do not have to be an Estonian to file taxes for the company. In addition, you can do all these things online. There is a great opportunity to enter the European market through Estonia," affirmed the Estonian President.

"Kuwait is very active in development cooperation. The technologies that we use in state-buildings are very popular among African Union countries. So, we could match your experience and resources with our knowledge and work together in that region to the benefit of those countries, and also to the benefit of our businesses," she noted. "Estonia enjoys a bureaucracy-free business environment. You can run your business from far. If you become an Estonian e-resident, you gain access to all digital services and all businesses and procedures with the Estonian government. This can be done online," she added.

Kaljulaid also said that her country, beside of having a very useful low-bureaucracy business environment, is part of the EU as well, affirming "we're an attractive business environment indeed, even if we are traditionally a European social market economy." Estonia is a place where several various new technologies need an investment, she said, noting even though Europe is well-connected in its eastern and western parts; the interlinkage between east, west, north, and south is not so much present. There are several infrastructure projects in the European region that Estonia and Kuwait could jointly develop with the aid of Kuwaiti experience and capacity there. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid meets with Honorary President of Kuwaiti Women's Cultural and Social Society Lulwa Al-Qatami, along with society members. — Amiri Diwan photo

Estonian president receives feminist society chief

KUWAIT: Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid wrapped up yesterday an official visit to Kuwait during which she held official discussions with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Estonian President, along with her entourage, were seen off at the airport by Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Prior to her departure, President Kaljulaid met in her residence at Bayan Palace with Honorary President of Kuwaiti Women's Cultural and Social Society Lulwa Al-Qatami, along with society members. Earlier in the day, she visited Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center where she

toured its historical and cultural facilities that reflect Kuwaiti civilization. She was accompanied by head of the mission of honor, Amiri Diwan Advisor Ali Al-Rashed. President Kaljulaid also visited Al-Shaheed Park on Tuesday. Furthermore, President Kaljulaid received on Tuesday the Chairman of the Kuwaiti Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ali Al-Ghanem. She also held talks with the chief of Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Salem Al-Othaina.

In the meantime, Kuwait's Finance Ministry said that a full exemption of taxes on Kuwaiti

private and public investments in Estonia was agreed as a ministry delegation visited Tallinn. The decision will apply to dividends and interest profits obtained by the Kuwaiti government and privately-owned businesses alike, read a statement by the ministry. The agreement will benefit the prospects of investments by Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund, KIA, and companies, particularly with Estonia being distinguished in digital technology and telecommunications. The talks, which will be followed by another round in Kuwait at a future date, also witnessed discussions related to dual taxation avoidance and tax evasion prevention. —KUNA

Nazaha hosts workshop on financial disclosure

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) held a workshop on Nazaha's establishment law and the provisions of financial disclosure at its headquarters yesterday. During his presentation, executive Saleh Al-Taneeb, who is also the director of the department of the committees to examine reports and preparation of financial disclosures, said the workshop comes from the role of Nazaha in raising awareness about the provisions of law no. 2 of 2016 on the need to submit financial disclosure forms within the legally prescribed dates.

Taneeb added that this workshop was held due to the imminent period of updating the financial disclosures of approximately 13,000 citizens starting from mid-November 2019. "This workshop aims to identify the components of financial disclosure and the way to inquire about the date of updating the declaration, and how to fill it in a proper and complete form. This is in addition to the definition of the role of inspection committees and the role of the commission in maintaining the pri-

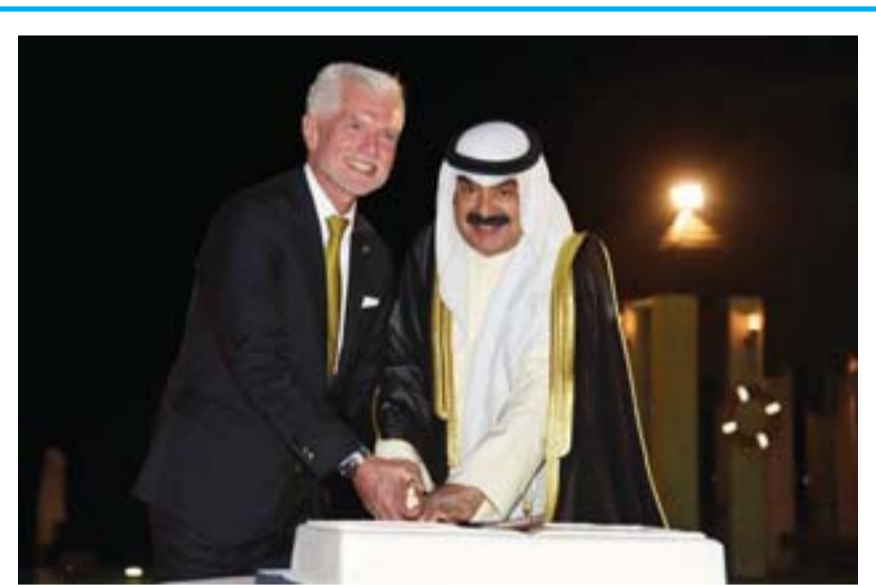


KUWAIT: Nazaha executive Saleh Al-Taneeb speaks during the workshop. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

vacy, confidentiality and security of these declarations," he said.

On the role of the committees, Taneeb said that the committees for examining financial disclosure reports check whether there are illegal earnings. Then the inspection committees prepare a report about illegal gains and pass judgment after hearing statements of the

person in question. The workshop included a presentation on Nazaha's establishment law and the goals and priorities of Kuwait's integrity and anticorruption strategy. The presentation also elaborated on the financial disclosure system and how to fill and update the relevant forms as per the dates determined by the law.



KUWAIT: German Ambassador to Kuwait Stefan Mobs hosted a reception Tuesday night to celebrate his country's national day. Senior Kuwaiti officials led by Deputy Foreign Minister Khalid Al-Jarallah, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat