

## Local

# Indonesian Embassy denies discussing domestic helpers' issue with Kuwait

## 'Indonesian government policy remains unchanged'

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** The Indonesian Embassy in Kuwait has denied any discussions were held with any Kuwaiti authorities with regards to the recruitment of domestic helpers. An embassy official who spoke to Kuwait Times on the condition of anonymity said the policy of Indonesia remains unchanged. "No official discussions were held on this matter. The policy of the government of Indonesia at present remains

unchanged," the official said.

In 2010, the Indonesian government decided to totally stop sending domestic helpers to the Middle East over allegations of mistreatment and abuse. Prior to the ban, the population of Indonesians in Kuwait was around 60,000 - with over 85 percent of them domestic helpers. Their numbers are down to less than 9,000 presently.

On Monday, Kuwait Times reported that officials from the Public Authority for Manpower are expect-

ed to meet soon with Indonesian officials to discuss regulations for recruiting Indonesians as domestic helpers, to resume a protocol that had been suspended for 11 years. The meeting could be held before the end of the year or by the beginning of 2020, said the sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, noting that the Indonesian side is expected to suggest a draft of the contract to be used in hiring domestic helpers, which mentions minimum wages, leaves and workers' rights.

The sources said foreign ministries of both countries are about to sign a memorandum of understanding in this regard in Kuwait, adding that discussions were resumed upon Kuwait's request. In addition, the sources stressed that once the agreement is approved and signed, Indonesian domestic helpers will be expected in Kuwait by the fourth quarter of 2020 and that their recruitment will be done through the Al-Durra Company for Domestic Labor Recruitment.

## Co-ops to step up bedoons' recruitment

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Social Affairs plans to increase the rate of recruiting stateless people at various co-op societies, provided they hold valid security IDs, well-informed sources said. An agreement was made in this regard between the ministry, Kuwait Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (KUCCS) and the Public Authority for Manpower to prioritize the employment of bedoons instead of expats and recruit citizens in leading positions after undergoing special

training courses, the sources added. The sources said various co-ops are currently receiving citizens' applications for those jobs, adding that bedoons and Kuwaiti women's children are next in priority for these jobs. "Allegations that co-ops will not terminate expats are completely false and that all expats are replaceable in various positions, including warehouse laborers or market supervisors," the sources stressed.

### Embassy denies allegations

Responding to recent social media and local media allegations that security staff at the Egyptian consulate in Kuwait held, assaulted and insulted a Kuwaiti man while also hurled insults against Kuwait, the consulate yesterday stressed that it had submitted the results of investigations conducted in this regard and a video showing all the details of the incident. The Egyptian consulate strongly rejected of any form of slander against Kuwait or its people and urged all media and public figures to verify allegations before responding to

them and circulating them.

### Incentives for firemen

Chairman of the parliamentary interior and defense affairs committee MP Askar Al-Enezi said the committee discussed the new Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) law yesterday with KFSD representatives and that the law needs some amendments. Enezi added that the new law will include more incentives for firemen and that the KFSD employees syndicate will be consulted regarding the new amendments. Committee rapporteur MP Nayef Al-Merdas said firemen had fears over the discussion of the bill and that the committee insisted on adding guarantees to protect current incentives and add more in the new bill. "This is why voting was postponed to reach a final version that satisfies all KFSD personnel," he said. KFSD Director Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad stressed that the new law will include more incentives without adding any new penal measures.

## Underground garbage containers in new areas

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said the municipality's general cleaning committee recommended using underground garbage containers in new residential areas currently under construction. "This technology must be included in those areas' infrastructure," he underlined in response to an inquiry filed by the municipal councilmember Meshaal Mohammed Al-Hamdhan.

In response to an inquiry by municipal councilmember Abdul Salam Al-Randi concerning the alleged theft of manhole covers by cleaners, Manfouhi stressed that contracts signed with cleaning companies include penal clauses for violations such as stealing manhole covers, operating machinery for purposes other than those contracted for and negligence by cleaners and operators. Manfouhi denied a lack of supervision over cleaning workers and stressed that stealing manhole covers are individual violations.

Meanwhile, Manfouhi said coordination with the finance ministry is in progress to initially implement the government finance management information system on listing education ministry properties around Kuwait, including all buildings and schools.

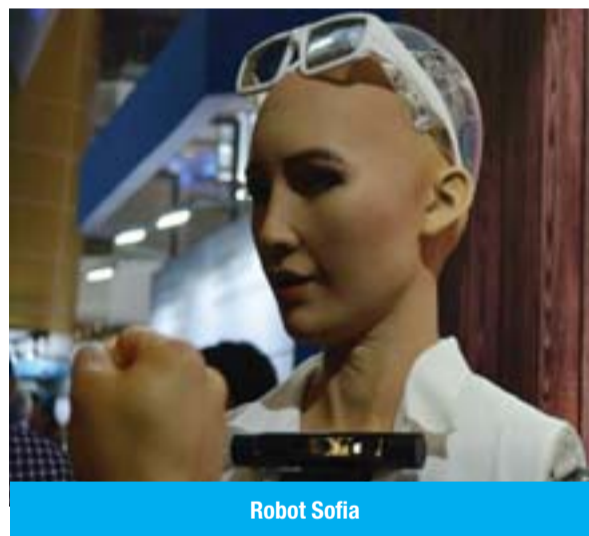
## Uber inquires about entering Kuwaiti market

**KUWAIT:** Uber has written to several Kuwait authorities informing them of its wish to enter Kuwait - separate from its subsidiary Careem, which is operating in Kuwait with a roaming taxi license, reported Al-Qabas daily. Sources said Uber is conducting economic feasibility studies and studying commercial and transport regulations in the Kuwait market, as well as the process of getting licenses and permissions necessary to operate without legal obstacles to transport passengers.

The sources said Uber's path will not be rosy if it decides to enter the market, because of legal obstacles related to getting commercial licenses for its activities, especially when it comes to interior ministry approvals, which has banned the majority of transport-related commercial licenses. Meanwhile, the sources urged government authorities to be aware of the importance of foreign investment in Kuwait and pay attention to major foreign companies that wish to operate in Kuwait such as Uber, which will add value to the local market. —Al-Qabas

## Kuwait organizes meeting with 'Sophia the robot'

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) announced yesterday a special event for Space Month that includes a scientific lecture and meetings with the famous robot Sofia and its inventor at the Kuwait Scientific Center on October 24 and 25. Sofia's inventor Dr David Hansen will deliver a lecture on robotics, artificial intelligence and how inventions and modern developments contribute to space exploration, said KFAS in a statement. The lecture by Dr Hansen alongside Sofia comes within KFAS Links, which is a series of dynamic talks and panel discussions of artificial intelligence and robotics, it added. In addition, KFAS special event will provide an opportunity for visitors to interact with Sophia tomorrow from 9 am to 12 pm and from 7:30 pm to 10 pm, as well as on Friday from 2 pm to 10 pm at the Scientific Center. Dr David Hansen has earned a global reputation for his invention of the world's most compassionate, intelligent and near-human robot by integrating figurative arts with science and engineering, new skin materials, facial expression mechanisms and intelligent robotics programs for direct interaction with humans. Sophia spoke to the UN General Assembly



Robot Sofia

and was selected as the first non-human citizen in Saudi Arabia. She possesses artificial intelligence, advanced ability to read faces, and empathizes with emotions and language. —KUNA

## Kuwaiti charities under 'rigorous' govt control

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwaiti government has implemented "rigorous" control measures over local-based charities, but the move does not aim to inhibit the country's well-chronicled philanthropic endeavors, a minister said yesterday. Among these measures is the need for charities to obtain a license before their activities could begin, Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Saad Al-Kharraz said in a statement at inauguration of a conference grouping representatives of local charities and addressing charitable work in Kuwait and abroad. He emphasized that the government closely monitors all local charities to make sure they strictly adhere to national laws, citing a newly-proposed piece of legislation dealing with the matter. On the aforementioned law, he said it would be a "sizable step" towards charity registration and regulation, which in turn, would help organize Kuwait's philanthropic activities. —KUNA

## Kuwait, EU discuss audit cooperation

**PARIS:** Kuwait's State Audit Bureau's Acting President Adel Al-Saraawi discussed with the President of European Court of Auditors (ECA) Klaus-Heiner Lehne aspects of their technical and occupational cooperation. The two sides affirmed the importance of exchanging expertise and knowledge, and boosting their affiliated-bodies' role to achieve a maximum occupational efficiency, Munira Al-Huwaidi, an auditor in the Pre-Audit and Technical Support Sector at the State Audit Bureau, said yesterday. They also discussed bilateral cooperation in the field of performance indicator, particularly in following-up with settling notifications mentioned in audit bodies' annual reports, added Huwaidi. ECA enjoys rich and accumulated expertise in performance indicator, she said, adding the two sides also discussed bilateral cooperation in peer review to evaluate the performance of supreme bodies, and values attained via audit products. The Kuwaiti-European talks also addressed experience in performance audit system, and aspirations to switch from the traditional audit system to performance audit as one of the main requirements for auditing aimed to implement sustainable development goals, said Huwaidi. Meanwhile, the ECA chief welcomed technical and occupational cooperation with Kuwait State Audit Bureau in performance audit and indicator, pledging to provide all forms of support through hosting workshops, forums, and ECA specialists in those fields. Sarawi affirmed that cooperation with ECA adds significant occupational and technical values to the State Audit Bureau's performance and staff's efficiency. —KUNA

## NBK conducts training program for KPC employees

**KUWAIT:** The National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) Human Resources, in cooperation with Foreign Corporate, Oil and Trade Finance Group, has launched the second phase of the training program held for employees of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries.

The training program, which was launched last year, comprises two phases of both practical and theoretical training and will extend for four weeks. The program is aimed at developing the technical skills of KPC employees. It covered several business divisions including Treasury, Finance and Accounting. The trainees have met with Emad Ahmed Al-Ablani, General Manager - Group Human Resources, National Bank of Kuwait; Pradeep Handa, General Manager of Foreign Corporate, Oil and Trade Finance Group, National Bank of Kuwait; Areej Yousif Al-Bahar, Deputy Managing Director for Financial Affairs at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation; and Ali Abdel Kareem, Financial Advisor at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

"This program reflects the NBK's endeavors to attain a key role in developing the human capabilities in the state-owned entities, since NBK acts as the



key financing partner to the Kuwaiti government," said Emad Ahmed Al-Ablani, General Manager - Group Human Resources, National Bank of Kuwait.

"The program primarily seeks to boost the technical skills of those working in the oil segment and dealing with the banking institutions, through delivering an introduction to the bank services offered to different categories of clients," Ablani added.

The training program will cover several business divisions including treasury, central operations, risk management, letters of guarantee, letters of credit, project financing, in addition to anti-money laundering. The program's goals came within NBK's commitment to maintaining the balance between the economic sustainability of both the Group and the whole country, in addition to the human capital, which receives training in line with the highest global criteria. On the other hand, Pradeep Handa, General

Manager of Foreign Corporate, Oil and Trade Finance Group, National Bank of Kuwait, said, "NBK has strong relations with the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation; the training plans come within the bank's efforts to raise a new competitive and productive generation."

NBK is committed to developing the human capital in line with its partnerships with public and private entities, as part of its social responsibility framework. NBK's training initiatives deliver on its profound vision to invest in the human capital. It allocates a team of prominent banking experts to share their expertise with the promising talents. The bank's annual initiatives came in line with its clear policies pertaining to its social responsibility framework. NBK's programs continue to reflect the leadership role it has undertaken for decades in the local sector.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's public relations department said Fahaheel fire station men responded to a call over a fire in five vehicles parked in an open area in Fahaheel. The blaze was put out and prevented from spreading to other vehicles. No injuries were reported. The cause of the blaze is yet to be determined. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun