

## Local

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

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EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125  
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

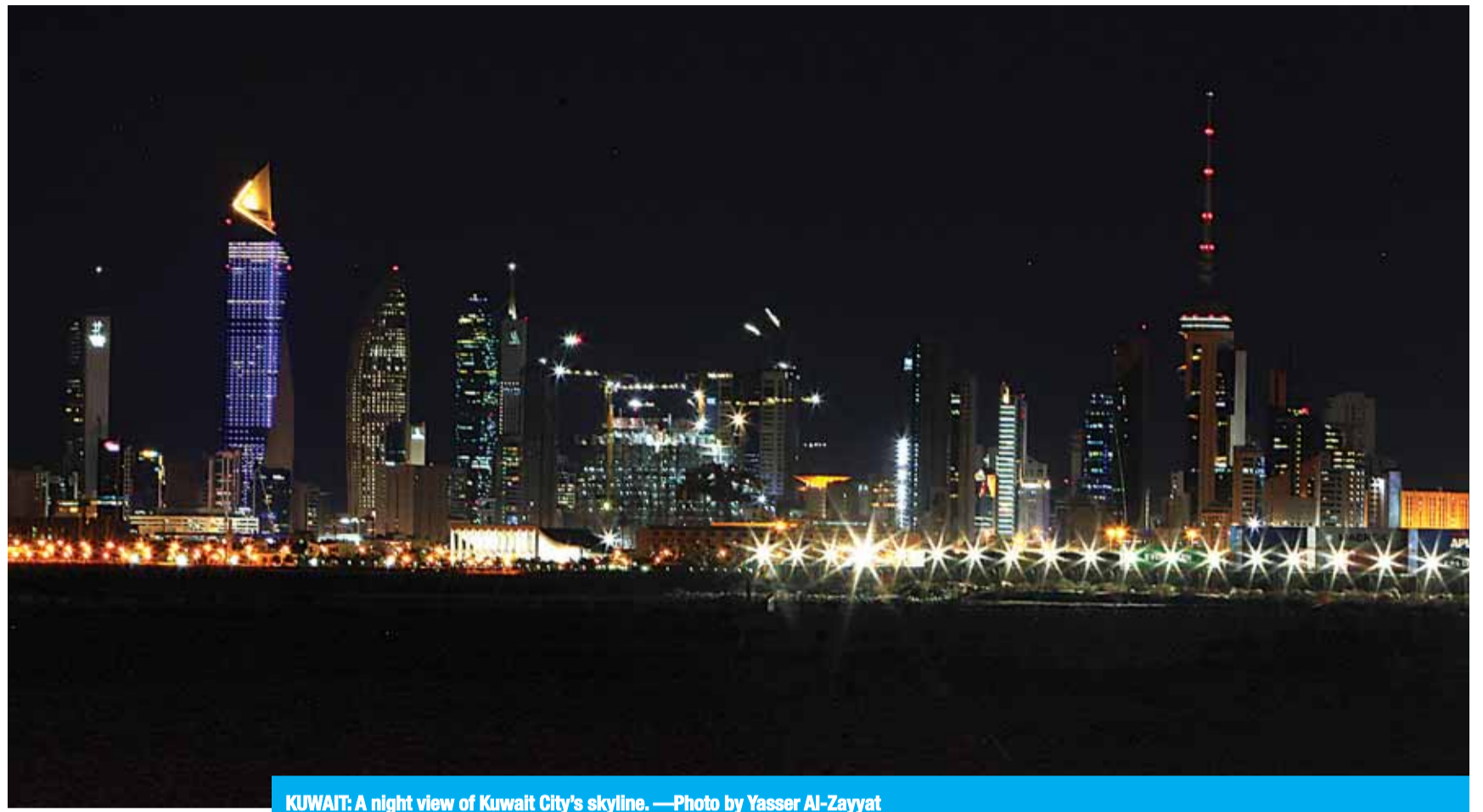
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## Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan down

**TOKYO:** Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan fell 21.9 percent from a year earlier to JPY 22.2 billion (\$214 million) in November, down for the 8th month due to weak exports, government data showed yesterday. However, Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 12 years and 10 months, as exports still offset imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Overall Kuwaiti exports to Japan went down 20.0 percent year-on-year to JPY 38.0 billion (\$367 million) for the eighth straight month of decline. Imports from Japan shrank 17.1 percent to JPY 15.9 billion (\$153 million), down for the 7th month. Middle East's trade surplus with Japan also tumbled 59.1 percent to JPY 199.9 billion (\$1.9 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region diving 45.9 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 93.2 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, decreased 47.6 percent.

The region's overall imports from Japan went down 15.8 percent, due to declining sales for automobiles, manufactured items and electric machinery. The world's third-biggest economy posted a global surplus of JPY 366.8 billion (\$3.5 billion) in November, marking the fifth straight month of black ink. Exports dropped 4.2 percent from the year before, as the coronavirus pandemic continued to batter overseas demand, especially for mineral fuels, steel and vehicles. Imports fell 11.1 percent on falling energy bills, mainly crude oil, LNG and coal. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. —KUNA

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A night view of Kuwait City's skyline. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## stc receives 6 awards during Arab Media Forum

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it received 6 awards during the 8th edition of the Kuwait Creativity Award 2020 forum. The awards were presented by the Arab Media Forum in appreciation of stc's unique TVC productions, creative advertising concepts, as well as other initiatives introduced while implementing its effective CSR agenda.

The company released a statement indicating that the honoring was officially announced during the ceremony held by the forum's organizing committee. Held under the patronage of Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, creative individuals, sponsors, participants, and volunteers were honored, with stc amongst the top of the list.

stc added, "These recognitions come in appreciation of the various initiatives and continuous support stc has projected towards the Kuwaiti community

throughout 2020. Despite the unprecedented circumstances witnessed locally and worldwide due to the novel Coronavirus outbreak, stc continued to implement and adapt its effective CSR agenda."

The Company highlighted that the honorable recognition was accepted by Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, on behalf of the company. The award also served as a token of appreciation for the innovative and creative ideas implemented through the company's CSR program, which included a range of sponsorship and community-based initiatives.

In her role, Jasem said, "Accepting the awards this year felt unlike the previous years since this recognition was the first of its kind under our new identity, stc, following our rebranding exercise. The awards come as a testament to the dedication and hard work placed forth by stc throughout the year, in addition to the steps taken to implement the digital transformation strategy and enhance the range of innovative offerings to both individual and corporate customers."

Jasem added, "During 2020, we were keen to enhance our leadership role in the local market by offering an array of new-to-market and pioneering telecom services, leveraging the strong infrastructure and wide coverage of stc's 5G network. Throughout this time, we did not overlook our vital role of sup-

porting and giving back to the Kuwaiti community."

In relation to stc's CSR agenda, Jasem said, "In line with our CSR strategy, we focused, in our various activities, on the diversity and breadth of what we offer to the community. Our goal was to blend innovation in all that we do by collaborating with creative agencies, having said that, we are keen to continue supporting our society, as well as various sectors, such as healthcare, sports, technology, and education, in addition to implementing our internal initiatives that engage the stc family." In her concluding statement, Jasem extended her gratitude to the Arab Media Forum organizers, with a special thanks to Madhi Al-Khamees, General Secretary of the Ara Media Forum.

stc launched several community-based initiatives and awareness campaigns during 2020. These included joining the people of Kuwait in welcoming the holy month, sponsoring the Kuwaiti Football Association in its various activities, supporting the Kuwaiti Association for Learning Differences (KALD), and launching 5G LIVEBUS, a safe and innovative bus supported by super-fast 5G connectivity. The Company also released several TVCs throughout the year that were recognized during the forum, which included a TVC introducing stc's new brand identity, "Her Love is Known" produced by Doors Production in celebration of Kuwait's national day, and "Ramadan Lives On" produced by Wunderman Thompson.

## Celebration of Victory Day of Bangladesh

**V**ictory Day is celebrated on December 16 to commemorate the victory of allied forces over Pakistani forces in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. In 1971, Bangladesh fought against Pakistan to become an independent country, which resulted in the secession of East Pakistan from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and established the sovereign nation called Bangladesh.

On March 7, 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, gave a speech at the Ramna Race Course in Dhaka to a gathering of over one million people. It was delivered during a period of escalating tensions between East Pakistan and the powerful political and military establishment of West Pakistan.

In the speech, Bangabandhu proclaimed: "This time the struggle is for our freedom. This time the struggle is for our independence." The speech inspired the Bengali people to prepare for a war of independence amid widespread reports of armed mobilisation by West Pakistan. On October 30, 2017, UNESCO added the speech in the Memory of the World Register as a documentary heritage.

On the night of March 25, 1971 the Pakistan Armed Forces launched Operation Searchlight in the capital of East Pakistan. Tanks rolled out on the streets of Dhaka. The troops massacred students and intellectuals in Dhaka University, as well as many civilians in other parts of the city. It set major cities ablaze and crushed resistance from the police and the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR).

Just before his arrest on the night of March 25, 1971 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sent a message about attacks on EPR and police barracks in Dhaka, and declared the independence of Bangladesh. This message was broadcast from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro (Independent Bangla Radio Centre) on March 26, 1971, and was widely reported in newspapers all around the world.

The war pitted East Pakistan and later India against West Pakistan, and lasted for a duration of nine months. The war was one of the most violent wars of the 20th century: it witnessed large-scale atrocities, the exodus of 10 million refugees and the killing of 3 million people by the Pakistani armed forces. After nine months of bloody war, Bangladesh was liberated on December 16, 1971.

The celebration of Victory Day has been taking place since 1972. The Bangladesh Liberation War became a topic of great importance in cinema, literature, history lessons at school, the mass media, and the arts in Bangladesh. The ritual of the celebration gradually obtained a distinctive character with a number of similar elements: Military parade by the Bangladesh Armed Forces at the National Parade Ground, ceremonial meetings, speeches,



lectures, receptions and fireworks displays.

Victory Day in Bangladesh is a joyous celebration in which popular culture plays a great role. TV and radio stations broadcast special programs and patriotic songs. The main streets are decorated with national flags. Different political parties and socioeconomic organizations undertake programs to mark the day in a befitting manner, including the paying of respects at Jatiyo Smriti Soudho, the national memorial at Savar in Dhaka District.

The day's highlight is the national holiday parade on Dhaka's National Parade Ground, hosted by the Bangladesh Armed Forces and involves personnel from paramilitary forces such as the Bangladesh Police, Border Guard Bangladesh, Bangladesh Jail and Bangladesh Ansar and also freedom fighters. The parade is reviewed by the President of Bangladesh in his capacity as Commander in Chief.

Kuwait recognized Bangladesh on November 4, 1973. Since then, the two friendly countries have been maintaining excellent bilateral relations in the field of trade and economic cooperation, export and import, education and cultural cooperation, labour market and defence cooperation. We deeply acknowledge the contribution of Kuwait in the natural calamities and making socioeconomic development in Bangladesh through Kuwait Fund and hosting around 350,000 migrant workers.

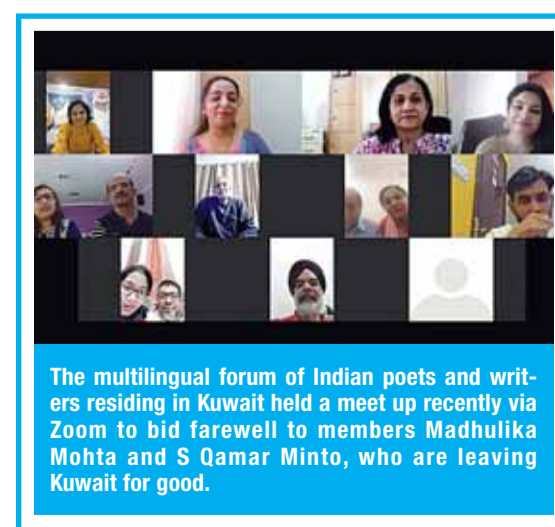
Similarly, whenever situation demanded, Bangladesh stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our time-tested friend Kuwait. Participation of Bangladesh Army as a part of coalition forces during liberation of Kuwait in 1990, presence of Bangladesh Military Contingent since 1991, sending of a 100-man emergency medical team during this COVID-19 period are worth mentioning.

On this joyous Victory Day, we convey our best regards and gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the beautiful people of Kuwait. May Bangladesh and Kuwait friendship live long. —Embassy of Bangladesh



## Kuwait lists 261 new COVID cases, no deaths

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait listed 261 new coronavirus infections yesterday, which raised the total number of cases to 146,971, while no deaths were recorded over the past 24 hours as the death toll remained unchanged at 913, the health ministry said. The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood yesterday at 3,149, with 54 of them in intensive care units, according to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, who revealed that 6,633 swab tests were conducted over the same period, bringing the total up to 1,196,920. The ministry had earlier reported that 310 patients had recovered from the virus within a 24-hour span, raising total recoveries to 142,909. Dr Sanad urged the public to abide by health precautions, mainly following social distancing rules, which he said is instrumental to halting the spread of the virus. —KUNA



The multilingual forum of Indian poets and writers residing in Kuwait held a meet up recently via Zoom to bid farewell to members Madhulika Mohta and S Qamar Minto, who are leaving Kuwait for good.

## Taiba Hospital featured in int'l COVID-19 response recognition program



**KUWAIT:** Taiba Hospital was recognized at the International Hospital Federation Beyond the Call of Duty for COVID-19 Program for its response action plan along with over 100 hospitals from 27 countries. Taiba Hospital received the recognition badge after a thorough review of an international review committee consisting of 16 industry experts from the healthcare industry.

Recognized hospitals of the International Hospital Federation Beyond the Call of Duty for COVID-19 Program are featured in an extensive international media campaign honoring hospitals and health service providers worldwide in their fight against COVID-19.

**Taiba Hospital procedures included the following:**

- Triage and examination using pathological identification of cases, signs and symptoms, temperature measurement at all hospital entrances.
  - Separating suspected cases from other patients and preventing them from being together in waiting rooms.
  - Provide isolation rooms to isolate suspected patients.
  - Commit to personal protective equipment and hand hygiene.
  - Continuous sterilization and cleaning throughout the hospital in line with international standards.
- IHF Chief Executive Officer Ronald Lavater said the outstanding work in response to the pandemic is transforming the future of healthcare. "One of our motivations in creating this recognition program is to highlight the diversity and agility of the hospital industry in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic forced hospitals to develop, implement and adopt new ways to operate and many of these changes have accelerated positive transformation in the delivery of care."

The International Hospital Federation Beyond the Call of Duty for COVID-19 Program is sponsored by the Ashikaga - Nikken Group and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA).