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Sixteenth meeting of UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group takes place today

Defense subgroup to discuss training, joint exercises

KUWAIT: The first of the sub-groups of the sixteenth meeting of the biannual UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group, which is the Defense subgroup will be held virtually today. The meetings of the UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group reflect the two countries' commitment to working together to advance the close Kuwait-UK relationship to the benefit of both countries. The UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group covers a wide range of issues, including trade, investment, migration, security, defense, cyber security, healthcare, education, higher education, scientific research, environment, culture and international development.

The defense subgroup will focus on ways to strengthen cooperation between the two countries especially on training and joint exercises. The discussions will cover Exercise Desert Warrior, emergency planning and crisis

response, training of Kuwaiti forces in the UK, and progressing government-to-government procurement discussions among other subjects.



Facing challenges presented by COVID-19

The British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport said: "Over the next few weeks the UK will be hosting virtual working groups in

the framework of the UK/Kuwait Bilateral Joint Steering Group (JSG). I am delighted that this 16th JSG will take forward our work across key areas of bilateral Kuwait-UK co-operation, starting with a meeting of the Defense Working Group on July 29, which I look forward to attending.

This will be followed by working groups focusing on next steps in bilateral co-operation on security, including aviation security, cyber security, health, trade and investment, international development, education, culture and science. I am most grateful to Khaled Al-Jarallah, Deputy Foreign Minister, Waleed Al-Khubaizi and their cross-ministerial teams for their support and encouragement in our joint endeavor to deepen our co-operation and jointly face the challenges presented by COVID-19."

George takes over as India's new ambassador on Aug 2



Sibi George

KUWAIT: Sibi George will assume office as India's new ambassador to Kuwait on August 2. He will succeed K Jeeva Sagar who has completed his tenure in Kuwait as India's ambassador, informed sources said.

George, a 1993 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, has been India's Ambassador to Switzerland since 2017. He was first appointed as political officer at Indian High Commission in Pakistan. He also has served various Indian missions in Cairo, Doha, Tehran, Riyadh and Washington DC in various capacities prior to his appointment in Switzerland.

The Kuwait government had earlier approved George as India's new ambassador to the country, who will be submitting his credentials on his arrival in Kuwait, the sources added.

Kuwaiti charity trains 100 Yemeni youth

KUWAIT: Kuwait Relief Society (KRC) launched yesterday technical and vocational youth empowerment project, which aims to develop the capabilities of 100 young people in Taiz Governorate in electrical supply and maintenance of solar energy, within the framework of the 'Kuwait by your side' campaign. In his speech during the inauguration ceremony, the First Deputy Governor of Taiz Abdul-Qawi Al-Mikhlaifi praised Kuwait's humanitarian, relief interventions and the generous support towards relief organizations in Yemen, and its people, especially in the humanitarian, health, environmental and development projects for more than five years. He added that these courses improved young people's life and turned them into productive self-reliant individuals to support their families and improve their living conditions, pointing out that the authorities provide all support and facilities to establish such activities. Director of Response Corporation, who implemented the project Mohammad Al-Katheeri stated that the 30-day training comes within the interest of KRC and Response Foundation in rehabilitating youth abilities to improve their living standards. He showed that the course also includes another 10 days of training to acquire the skills of entrepreneurship and managing small projects, so that they can raise their ambitions to start their own projects. —KUNA



Gulf Bank carries out employee wellbeing campaign

KUWAIT: In response to the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the current ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Gulf Bank has launched the 'Employee Wellbeing Program' to assist its employees cope with the drastic changes and its effects on their emotional and mental wellbeing. The program, which offers employees access to professional counseling through a series of focused workshop sessions, is designed to target specific challenges facing the bank's workforce, particularly the customer facing employees. In partnership with Dr Amar Behbehani, who holds a PhD in Creative Psychology and Design Education, the sessions offer up to 40 hours of group counseling where employees discuss the state of their psychological wellbeing and are offered the tools and advice to cope with any emotional or mental challenges they face.

The initiative was at first launched as public webinars targeting employees in the banking sector during Kuwait's full lockdown to monitor the psychological effects this period had on employees and to provide the guidance and advice on coping mechanism. Using a multitude of interactive tools and polls, attendees discussed issues related to personal, social and career wellbeing in light of the psychological challenges employees have been adapting to during the past few months on both a personal and career level.

The current ongoing workshop sessions, exclu-

sive only to Gulf Bank employees, offers a more focused approach towards raising awareness on various topics such as mental health, human relations, creative problem solving and motivation. Dr Amar leads these workshops with particular attention to frontline and customer-facing employees who constitute the majority of attendees.

On the importance of this program, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources Salma Al-Hajjaj has stated: "We are committed to looking after our employees' well-being, even as we continue to serve our customers, which is why we believe this initiative will be of great benefit to them. We designed this program to address specific challenges and provide employees with the tools they need to adapt. Being fully aware of the mental and emotional implications this pandemic has had on the masses, we believe it is an essential recovery program."

Gulf Bank is currently welcoming customers at a select number of branches throughout the country, and is keen on applying all the necessary precautionary measures to ensure the regular sterilization of its locations. These measures include taking customers' temperatures at the entrance, maintaining physical distance, and ensuring both customers and staff are wearing gloves and masks at all times. Gulf Bank is committed to applying the best preventive health measure to ensure the safety of both its clients and staff.



Salma Al-Hajjaj

KNPC opens new petrol station



KUWAIT: Kuwait's state-owned gas firm on Monday inaugurated a fuel station in the country's Jaber Al-Ahmad residential area, the fourth in a string of similar facilities the company has recently opened nationwide. The new gas station is one of 18 stations set to spring up across the country, most of which will be in residential areas to meet consumers' demand for fuel, Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) said in a statement. Sabah Al-Ahmad and Saad Al-Abdullah

residential areas were also among the new locations for these gas pumping stations, added the statement, highlighting the 'modern' architecture used to construct the environment-friendly facilities, all of which were equipped with 'cutting-edge' solar panels. The station in Jaber Al-Ahmad also includes an adjacent convenience store, ATM machine and an auto repair shop, amongst other miscellaneous services, KNPC statement added. —KUNA

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