

Local

Kuwait Airways announces earning KD 5 million profit in September

One of few airlines without financial support during pandemic

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) announced positive financial results this year. "Great efforts by the management resulted in achieving profits of KD 5 million in September 2021, while losses of KD 3 million were expected. Compared to the pre-pandemic period, KAC registered losses of KD 10 million in September 2019. Now we are expecting that results in October 2021 will be positive as well, which means that we are on the right path to reach our goals," KAC Chairman Ali Al-Dakhan said during a press conference yesterday, which was also attended by CEO Ma'an Razouqi and other directors.

"We are working on reaching the budget breakeven point, and to achieve this goal, we are working on the acquisition of a larger share of passengers by upgrading our services and focusing more on passenger comfort. This includes all our services at T4 terminal - from when they enter the terminal until boarding their flights," he added.

"We know the requirements of our passengers and what difficulties they face during their trip. Passengers have a full right to demand excellent services, and we are obliged to provide it at a top level. We work hard to make their journey on KAC a pleasant and comfortable one. For this reason, KAC has formed a special 'customer service committee', which seeks to develop better services to meet the expectations of our passengers. We have also set up

special numbers for customers to communicate through our social media channels," stated Dakhan.

Fleet renewal

Renewing the KAC fleet is a priority. "We are currently working with Airbus on modifying some of our aircraft booked in 2014. This will allow KAC to modify its operational and marketing plans that suit our future needs. KAC will now have a new fleet that will help the national carrier to attain growth and profitability. We hope that Airbus will meet our demands, especially since we are doing business with them since the early 1980s," he said.

The aviation industry has faced many difficulties due to the coronavirus pandemic, especially the tourism sector. "All airlines were affected and KAC was one of them. A new board of directors was appointed during the pandemic, and in the first year, we faced many obstacles. The most significant was the operational challenges during the coronavirus pandemic and finding new ways to improve and develop KAC's performance to bring it back to its peak," Dakhan explained.

KAC is one of the few airlines in the world that didn't receive any financial support during the coronavirus pandemic. "The company faced many obstacles, including suspending commercial flights for many months before resuming operations gradually at 30 percent capacity," he noted. This led to cutting a number of flights, which led to a hike in fares to cover the cost of flights. "Passengers complained



KUWAIT: KAC Chairman Ali Al-Dakhan speaks during a press conference yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

about the hike, which lasted till this month, when the airport began to function at full capacity after the efforts and cooperation of officials from the Directorate General for Civil Aviation," stressed Dakhan.

"The operations and support sectors were also

affected by the retirement of many experienced staff, who benefited from privatization law no. 6/2008. So we had to set up a new structure that suited our new size. This needed huge efforts from the new board of directors to set new principles for administrative, operational and technical

Gulf Bank extends partnership with Suffix Sports Management

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is launching its much anticipated 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' for the seventh consecutive year in recognition of the Marathon's integral role in the local community. As a mark of Gulf Bank's commitment to enhancing community sustainability, the bank has also renewed its contract with event partner Suffix Sports Management for the next three years.

The beloved community event is back this year both in virtual and in-person versions, inviting challenge-seeking athletes as well as beginners to participate in Kuwait's only accredited race on November 20, 2021.

Commenting on the annual event, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "We have cooperated with Suffix for seven years now, and we are very confident in their excellent performance and management of one of the most important sporting events in Kuwait. We are pleased to renew this strategic partnership with them for the next three years. We are also incredibly excited to announce that the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon is back, bigger and better than ever before! After a two year-long hiatus from in-person marathons, and we are looking forward to welcoming back our returning runners and meeting new participants!"

Ahmad Al-Huzami, CEO of Suffix Sports Management, said: "We are proud to extend our partnership with Gulf Bank for the seventh year in a row. The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon is more than a local sporting activity - it is a community event that everyone looks forward to, year after year. We are very proud to renew our partnership with Gulf Bank for the next three years, and look forward to carrying out a marathon that keeps raising the bar for



KUWAIT: Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank (left) and Ahmad Al-Huzami, CEO of Suffix Sports Management sign the agreement.

sporting events in the region. We are excited to see what Gulf Bank has in store, and can't wait to work together to set and exceed new standards of excellence for years to come."

It is worth noting that Gulf Bank's 642 Marathon has placed Kuwait on the map for international sporting events. As the only road race in Kuwait to have received accreditation from the World Athletics Label Road Races, the marathon acts as a qualifying race for international marathons.

Last year, Gulf Bank wrapped up a special virtual edition of its Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, in which contestants had the opportunity to participate over the period of a month from all around the world. The "Special Edition" virtual race attracted the participation of over 1,037 contestants from 18 countries, and was held in recognition of the role that exercise plays in enhancing both our mental

and physical wellbeing. By implementing creative technological solutions, Gulf Bank was able to successfully organize and carry out the annual marathon known and beloved by the local and international community.

Gulf Bank offers a distinct model for sustainability programs, implementing both internal and community-led initiatives year-round. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) social responsibility program, heading various educational initiatives throughout the year that have a sustainable impact on the lives of youth and society.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excel-



The Gulf Bank and Suffix Sports Management teams in a group photo.

ence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the Bank. Moreover, the Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various relevant parties to achieve this vision. For event registration and more information regarding participation as a corporate or in groups, please visit www.gulfbank642marathon.com or access the marathon's dedicated Instagram account @GulfBank642.

Kuwait real estate market witnessing...

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He added prices in the commercial sector were "inflated and overrated in most areas".

Abdulaziz Al-Dughaisheem of Al-Dughaisheem Real Estate Agency noted that supply outstripped demand for sea chalets in Khairan. He said the investment sector started recovering with a rise in demand,

which showed that the economic cycle has returned to normal. Emad Haidar, Deputy Chairman of the Brokers Union, confirmed investment and commercial sectors are recovering from the impact of COVID-19.

He expected the local market to witness a remarkable improvement with the full reopening of Kuwait International Airport, which will boost demand for private houses in Hawally, Salmiya and Farwaniya. Kuwait Finance House said in a recent report that real estate transactions in the second quarter of 2021 amounted to KD 1.1 billion (\$3.6 billion), 15 percent higher than the previous quarter, which registered KD 929 million (\$2.9 billion). — KUNA

families, business was good. We never thought we'd get to this point," he said.

Despite being officially closed, the border remained relatively porous as smugglers carried on a thriving trade in petrol and cheap manufactured goods - as well as more illicit items. But in 2013, the Algerian authorities launched what they said was a crackdown on the drug trade, stepping up patrols and digging trenches along the frontier, which prompted Rabat to erect border fences.

Technically, Algerians and Moroccans can fly between each others' countries, but for farming communities along the border, cut off from what could be a key export market, that is little comfort. Many Oulad Bouarfa villagers miss their smuggling years. "It was a good time. We worked on both sides of the border, bringing in fuel from Algeria and selling clothes over there," said resident Mohamed Haddouri. "Today we get by raising animals, but it's not enough to feed my kids. Our future looks tough."

Haddouri said virtually everyone in this part of Morocco has family in Algeria. The two areas have historic links, and late Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika was born in Oujda when both countries were under French rule. Meriem Hamouyi, a fellow villager with henna patterns on her hands, agreed. — AFP

Zionists using facial recognition tech in Hebron

HEBRON: The Zionist army has deployed a sweeping personal data collection program using facial recognition technology targeting Palestinians in parts of the occupied West Bank, an organization working with former soldiers said yesterday. The program sees Zionist troops collecting data of Palestinians in the flashpoint city of Hebron. It was first reported by The Washington Post based on soldier testimony given to the Breaking the Silence organization.

Soldiers on patrol equipped with specialized devices "take photos of every Palestinian that they see, completely arbitrarily," Breaking the Silence advocacy director Ori Givati told AFP. After the picture is taken, the system known as "Blue Wolf" generates four possible results, according to Givati who said the findings were based on testimony from six soldiers who participated in the surveillance effort.

A red result means the individual should be arrested,

yellow means the Palestinian should be detained while an army superior is consulted, and green indicates the individual is free to go. But no result means the Palestinian is not yet in the Blue Wolf system. That prompts the soldier to collect more data. Asked for comment on the reports about Blue Wolf, the Zionist army said it "conducts routine security operations" in the West Bank as part of its "fight against terrorism".

"Naturally, we cannot comment on the IDF's operational capabilities in this context," a spokesman said, referring to the Zionist Defense Forces. Hebron is the only Palestinian city with Jewish settlers living inside it, making the city "the best place" to test Blue Wolf. Breaking the Silence deputy director Nadav Weiman told AFP. He spoke in central Hebron near the holy site known to Muslims as the Ibrahim mosque and to Jews as the Cave of the Patriarchs.

The settlers are guarded by heavy military protection in an urban area, which increases contact between soldiers and Palestinian residents, and the city's vast network of security cameras has been integrated into Blue Wolf, Weiman said. According to Givati, soldiers have competed for prizes over who takes the most pictures. "We are talking about another layer of control. Another layer of things that we allow ourselves to do to the Palestinian people," Givati said. — AFP

which runs until the weekend, to "keep 1.5C alive". Based on latest national emissions cutting plans, Earth is set to warm by 2.7C this century, according to the UN.

Kofe said his nation of 12,000 people was "preparing now for the worst case scenario, where our lands disappear and our people must leave". He also said it was pursuing "bold legal avenues" to ensure that Tuvalu's borders are still recognized internationally if or when its land territory is lost to climate change. "We cannot wait for speeches when the sea is rising around us," he said. "We must take bold, alternative action today to secure tomorrow." — AFP

Closed Morocco, Algeria border...

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In August, after months of growing frictions over the Western Sahara and Morocco's normalization of ties with Israel, Algeria cut diplomatic relations with its neighbor, citing "hostile actions". Morocco dismissed the accusations. Then last week, things took a turn for the worse as Algeria accused Morocco of killing three Algerian civilians on a desert highway through an area of the disputed Western Sahara controlled by the Algerian-backed Polisario Front independence movement.

But despite the bitter rivalry between their governments, Algerians and Moroccans have deep cultural and family ties. "It's so sad to see two brotherly people separated by political decisions," said Bachir Chaouch, who was born in 1951 across the border in El Amria but moved to Morocco before Algeria won independence from France in 1962. Today, he has lost all contact with his uncles, aunts and cousins who stayed in Algeria. "Until 1994, it was different. We used to go and see our

Tuvalu minister films speech...

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Delegates are gathered at the COP26 summit in Glasgow to try and implement the goals of Paris Agreement of limiting global heating to "well below" two degrees Celsius and to a safer 1.5C cap if possible. Host Britain says it wants the conference,