

ACK, LSE to study attitudes towards electric vehicles

KUWAIT: The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) has signed a two-year collaboration agreement with the prestigious London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Representing ACK, the agreement signed by the President, Prof Isam Zabalawi, and on LSE behalf, David Coombe, Director of Research and Innovation. The agreement intends to create mixed-methods study of attitudes towards the use and purchase of electric vehicles in Kuwait.



Dr. Andri Ottesen

Every year, the Middle East Center of London School of Economics awards funding towards innovative projects submitted from various educational and research institutions in the country. This year, the proposal submitted by Dr Andri Ottesen,

Assistant Professor of Management at ACK, concerning 'Breaking the ICE reign: a mixed-methods study of attitudes towards using and purchasing EVs in Kuwait', was one of the two proposals that won the bid for funding.

The project will take place under the supervision and leadership of Dr Ottesen along with Dr Alasdair Jones, Associate Professor in Qualitative Research Methodology at LSE. Split into many operation phases, the project will include capturing the experience of existing electric vehicle owners in Kuwait and their perceptions of the future of electric vehicles in Kuwait, outlooks of electric vehicle sales from the perspectives of automobile dealers, also, capturing prior knowledge and attitude towards electric vehicles from general vehicle owners.

In addition, to host decision makers and authorities in the field of ground transport to understand precisely their vision of mass electric vehicle adoption and their objective towards a sustainable Kuwait for 2035. After the conclusion of the study, ACK is planning to host a conference inviting related stakeholders and researchers in the electric vehicle market in order to discuss the findings of the study along with the challenges facing the industry and implementation of technology in Kuwait.

Highlighting the importance of the research for the future of Kuwait, Dr Ottesen noted that the project can help build the expertise needed in order to help lower carbon dioxide emissions and benefit the environment in Kuwait and the world. He added: "We are trying to make a small step for a better world."

Kuwait's Nazaha: One step ahead, two steps back?

By Humaidi Al-Dhafiri

In a strange and shocking news report, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) called for protection for whistleblowers from the abusive use of administrative powers by "some" government sectors, without specifying exactly which government sectors they mean nor clarifying further details and indications on which government sectors they are talking about and what kind of "abusive use of administrative powers" is being taken against "whistleblowers", leaving those concerned in a state of shock and bewilderment.

Since its established by law no. 2 of 2016 issued on Jan 24, 2016, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) was set up for the purpose of combating corruption and in response to the requirements of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). This comes after nine years of Kuwait's ratification of the UNCAC treaty on Feb 16, 2007 in pursuance of international commitments, as UNCAC is considered to be the only international legally-binding anti-corruption convention in the world in which state parties are obligated to take actions against corruption according to the provisions of the convention. This also serves Kuwait's national interests to be a corruption-free state.

However, the road to corruption-free status was

Aquabike World Championship Kuwait Grand Prix opens today

Over 60 participants from 27 countries take part in international event

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Over 60 participants from 27 countries will take part in the UIM-AUP Aquabike World Championship Kuwait Grand Prix, which will be held at the Marina Crescent from Nov 11 to 13, 2021. The event also includes side activities and entertainment. The opening ceremony for the public will be at 5:30 pm today with fireworks, laser show, flyboards and freestyle show by the riders.

Dr Saqer Al-Mulla, Deputy Director General for Competitive Sports, said this championship is an international event and Kuwait is pleased to host it. "We are glad that interest in this sport is



KUWAIT: Officials take part in a press conference yesterday to announce the UIM-AUP Aquabike World Championship Kuwait Grand Prix. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

“ First race outside Europe after pandemic ”

growing. This is the second time Kuwait is hosting this championship. The Public Authority for Sport is always supportive of all kinds of sporting events. We are happy and welcome all these champions to Kuwait. We wish them success," he pointed out.

Lavinia Cavallero, Vice President H2O Racing, noted that this is the first time a race is being held outside Europe after the pandemic. "After the race on Saturday, the new world champion 2020/2021

will be announced, as this will be the final stage of the championship". Mohammad Al-Zanki, President of Water Sports Club, said seven Kuwaitis are participating in this year's championship along with participants from 27 countries.

Raimondo Di San Germano, GM, H2O Racing, praised the great organization of this event, expressing his satisfaction over the previous race held in Kuwait, expecting to witness a thrilling contest. Marco Pietrini, Aquabike Race Director, spoke about the details of the race. "On Thursday (today), participants will test the circuit and warm up with their aquabikes in the free practice hours of the morning and get ready for this contest. This will be the qualification session that will define the order of the start time for the first race," he said.

"Races will start on Friday morning and continue on Saturday, where riders will get points. There will

be two sessions - one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The schedules are on the website. The activities will start on Friday at 10:30 am till 12:30 pm, then again from 2:00 pm until 4:30 pm," Pietrini added. In the following two days, riders will compete in races called motos. "The motos will give points to the riders that will be valid for the grand prix and for the aquabike world championship. The riders will be divided into two groups. The fastest rider at the end of the race will be the winner of the grand prix".

Pietrini also explained the slaloms, flags and other information about the race. "The race will be monitored from land and water by referees and judges to ensure the safety of riders, which is our priority, and respect for the rules of UIM. Freestyle riders will be given points by the judges according to UIM rules," concluded Pietrini.

NBK extends Sadan Soccer Academy sponsorship

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to provide all sorts of support to young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) extended its sponsorship of Sadan Soccer Academy for two years. This comes as part of NBK's efforts to promote public health and the practice of sports activities, underscoring its commitment towards delivering on its social responsibility and striving to achieve sustainable development. Sadan Football Academy located in Adailiya provides education and training sessions including all the basics of football for children aged 3 to 13 years, through a highly professional

team of international coaches, and is managed by a group of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

On this occasion, Mohamed Al-Othman, GM - Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said: "We seek to provide the necessary support to promising young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, with whom NBK has a partnership relationship from the beginning of their business journey by encouraging them and providing the required solutions and expertise for the success of their business." "We always strive to provide sponsorship and create partnerships with leading institutions in all fields, in line with NBK's commitment to deliver on its responsibility towards all segments of society, especially the youth, and to enrich our customers' banking experience," he added.

Othman stressed that NBK is keen to promote and raise awareness on the importance of practicing sports and following a healthy lifestyle, in line with its leading strategy to achieve sustain-



KUWAIT: NBK and Sadan Soccer Academy officials at the signing ceremony.

ability. It is worth mentioning that National Bank of Kuwait has a leading position and plays a vital role in supporting private sector enterprises in Kuwait in the areas of social and economic sustainability and entrepreneur-

ship. The bank is also committed to maintain this role and boost its noticeable impact in providing the necessary support to develop entrepreneurship and creativity among youth and all national cadres.

Kuwait Equestrian Federation launches showjumping league

KUWAIT: The newly formed Kuwait Equestrian Federation (KEF) announced the launch of the 2021-22 showjumping league, which kicks off tomorrow including eight local competitions. The league, which ends in April 2022, will begin with a two-day competition for the beginners, intermediate and advanced classes at Kuwait Riding Center, with similar events hosted by the Hunting and Equestrian Club and Messila Equestrian Club. The federation,

established early this year, has prepared an ambitious plan to raise the levels of the sport, preparing Kuwaiti riders for international participations, KEF Secretary Nabila Al-Ali told a press conference. To this effect, KEF has enlisted the help of Switzerland's Olympic silver-medalist Markus Fuchs, tying him down to a contract for the training of Kuwait's up-and-coming riders for future international competitions, according to board member Ali Al-Kharafi. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A scene from the Kuwait Equestrian Federation's press conference. — KUNA

of whistleblowers and having a look at Nazaha's charter 5, articles 37-43, we see it gives exclusive protection to reporting persons, starting with article 37 by reminding people of their legal obligation to report corruption crimes and assuring the legal obligation on Nazaha under article 40 to protect whistleblowers along with their husbands/wives, relatives and all people closely related to him/her when needed. However, we see that there are no articles in the charter mentioning any such protection for witnesses, experts and victims, as they must also be protected no less than the reporting persons, as clearly stated and assured under article 32 of UNCAC, leaving Nazaha's charter suffering from a serious legal loophole that can compromise the safety of many witnesses, experts and victims and having their rights violated even more than the whistleblowers.

Under article 26, paragraph A, Nazaha's charter states that "Persons may not refrain - without a legal excuse - from providing the authority with any documents, records or information that can be useful to expose corruption acts". However, given the missing provisions in the charter for protecting witnesses, experts and victims, it will be difficult for those mentioned to be guaranteed their safety under the charter when being asked by the authority to provide the needed documents for aiding and assisting the authority's work, without having clearly mentioned articles in the charter and enforcing those articles as a means to protect them. So an urgent amendment, in my view, is needed to insert this protection for witnesses, experts and victims to comply with UNCAC provisions, as they should not be less protected than the reporting persons, given the high risks they can face when being called by the authority.

Kofi Annan, the former Secretary of the United

Nations, commented on corruption by saying: "Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish."

Since the birth of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority and looking at the abovementioned facts and progress until this moment, Nazaha had faced, and is still facing, difficult times to fight the "insidious plague" of corruption and uphold the responsibilities of its charter to accomplish the state's goal of a "corruption-free" Kuwait, and is failing to protect those who risk their lives, reputation and work to report corruption. With the ninth session of the Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption just around the corner, as it will be held less than a month from now for state parties to present their periodic reports about their progress in combating corruption, it's important for Kuwait - in order to protect its national interests and uphold its international obligations in combating corruption - to take great steps in changing its current situation in combating corruption by providing more support to Nazaha and push forward the needed amendments by enhancing the legal status of protected whistleblowers and inserting the needed provisions to protect those who are not mentioned in it - witnesses, experts and victims - along with more cooperation to facilitate the work of the Anti-Corruption Authority.

- Humaidi Al-Dhafiri is a legal expert and researcher in public international law, with an LL.M in transnational crime and justice.