

Local

Kuwait Crown Prince receives state officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Nazaha (integrity) Enhancement Abdullah Al-Roumi. — KUNA photos

Heads of authorities meet upon Amir's directives



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem (right), His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (center) and President of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Court of Cassation Justice Ahmad Al-Ajeel meet at Bayan Palace yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photo

KUWAIT: Upon directives from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the heads of the three authorities met at Bayan Palace yesterday. The meeting included Speaker of the National Assembly

Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and President of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Court of Cassation Justice Ahmad Al-Ajeel. — KUNA

Drought forces Iraq farmers to...

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in a coffee shop in Iraq's second city. Once the seat of the Islamic State group's self-styled "caliphate", Mosul is still rebuilding after the devastating 2017 battle which ousted the jihadists. "Sometimes I get small jobs, just enough to feed my family," said Abbas bitterly, who longs for the old days when he harvested wheat and barley like his father and grandfather before him.

His plight is shared by many farmers in the Nineveh Plains. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 447 families who were forced from their land in Nineveh by IS and then returned to it after the jihadists' defeat were forced to leave again between June and July this year because of the drought. "Nearly all, if not all, the families were displaced due to inability to feed their cattle," the IOM said.

For centuries, the Nineveh Plains were the breadbasket of Iraq, with 6,000 sq km of arable land, said

agriculture ministry spokesman Hamid Al-Nayef. But this year, Nineveh province has been Iraq's "most affected" by drought and exceptionally high temperatures. In 2020, 927,000 tons of wheat were harvested in Nineveh, making it a "self-sufficient" province, said Abdelwahab Al-Jarjiri, who heads the local cereal authority. This year production plunged to 89,000 tons because of the drought.

The effects of low rainfall have been exacerbated by falling water levels on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as a result of dam-building in neighboring Turkey and Iran, said Samah Hadid of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). "Iraq is facing its worst drought in modern times. This is due to record low levels of rainfall, reductions in water flow from its neighbors - which has primarily hit the Euphrates and Tigris rivers - and there is no doubt climate change has contributed to this crisis," she said.

"Far from being a problem in the distant future, climate change is already taking effect in the region and we see this clearly in parts of Iraq." This month, a dam near the northern town of Zawita dried up completely for the first time since its construction in 2009, the head of the local irrigation authority Hega Abdelwahid said. The dam, which used to contain up to 50,000 cubic meters of water, was fed by melting snow but there was very little rain this year, Abdelwahid said, and all that is left is cracked earth. — AFP

him in Zintan has repeatedly refused to hand him over to The Hague-based ICC, and freed him in 2017. A spokesman for the ICC, Fadi Abdallah, told Libya's Al-Ahram television that the court still wants Seif al-Islam.

Analysts say Seif al-Islam's bid for the presidency will be problematic for Libya's electoral process. "This is only going to complicate the electoral process further," said Wolfram Lacher, a senior associate at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

World powers meeting in Paris warned Friday that Libya was at a "crossroads" which would determine its future. "We urge all Libyan stakeholders and candidates to respect their commitments towards holding elections on 24 December 2021 (and) to accept the results of free, fair and inclusive elections," they said in a statement.

Despite a year of relative peace following a ceasefire between eastern and western camps, the process has been overshadowed by wrangling over the legal basis for the votes and the powers attached. Jalel Harchaoui, a Libya specialist at the Global Initiative think-tank, said that "the fact that Seif has submitted his candidacy can only add to the fragility of the election project".

Speculation has also been mounting over possible presidential bids by eastern-based military chief Khalifa Haftar and current Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah. Former interior minister Fathi Bashgha has confirmed he will run, while others expected to do so include diplomats Aref Al-Nayed and Ibrahim Dabbachi, as well as comedian Hatem Al-Kour.

"On December 24, Libyans will be able to choose a president... from among a former aggressor, a man who committed war crimes to seize power, and another one known for his obscene corruption," said Tarek Megerisi, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. He was alluding to Seif al-Islam, Haftar and Dbeibah. — AFP

ACK students secure first, second places in Hackathon 2021

KUWAIT: Five Engineering students from the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) won first and second places in the Digital Transformation Hackathon 2021 competition, organized by the Ministry of Oil. The competition took place from April 26, and concluded on May 30, 2021; yet, the winners of the competition were announced only on November 1, with an award ceremony held to honor them.

The Digital Transformation Hackathon competition brought together students and recent graduates from numerous universities in Kuwait, along with professionals in the oil industry, to compete in developing applications that can be added to the AGORA platform, which is an open, secure and scalable platform enabling oil and gas industry to connect physical assets to the digital world.

The competition had students compete in teams in various category groups. ACK students competed in the contestant Group A, which consisted of active students from different universities, and in Group D that consisted of fresh graduates or employees with less than five years senior-

ity in a non-oil and gas industry related company.

The team that won the first place (Gold Award) in Group D included two ACK Alumni: Aiya Chen Daoliang, Petroleum Engineering Graduate, and Ahmad Hatem Al-Sheikh, Civil Engineering Graduate. As for the team that won the second place (Silver Award) in Group A, it was composed of Sayuri Chamathka Gunawardena, Petroleum Engineering Graduate; Taiyeba Almgir Almgir, ACK Petroleum Engineering student; and Zahra Ali Sayed AlMousawi, ACK Electrical Engineering student. Both teams were under the supervision of Dr Mohamed Omar, Assistant Professor of Petroleum Engineering at ACK, and Dr Mohamed Mabrok, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Physics at ACK.

Commenting on the success of the students, Dr Mortadha Al Saba, Head of Petroleum Engineering department and Assistant Professor at ACK, said: "This achievement shows the dedication, commitment, and creativity of our engineering students at ACK along with continuous support from our faculty."



KUWAIT: A group photo featuring the winning students and staff from the Australian College of Kuwait.

After COP26, world needs...

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are looking in the right direction, but we need to start moving and global emissions need to decline, immediately, rapidly, and extremely urgently." The agreement in Glasgow was the first time after 25 previous conferences that the words "fossil fuels" and "coal" - the main culprits of global warming - have made it into the final text.

"This is long overdue but very welcome," said Chris Littlecott, fossil fuel transition specialist at the think tank E3G. Their inclusion "confirms that coal is on the conveyor belt to the great trash compactor of history". He said the world now has a decade "to accelerate coal's demise and expand efforts to oil and gas too".

Recognizing coal and oil by name in the text was a painful process, with India and China managing at the last moment to further soften the wording to "phase down" instead of "phase out". The concession prompted a tearful Sharma to apologize to the world. Beijing's shift came as it announced on Wednesday a surprise deal with the United States, the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China. President Joe Biden, who at the start of the summit lashed out at his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping for his absence in Glasgow, is due to hold a video conference with him today.

Beijing needs to deliver on promises made in Glasgow "with action - through putting an expiry date on domestic coal, said Byford Tsang of environmental group E3G. "How countries establish new cooperation to deliver more short-term action over the next 12 months will be the real test of success at Glasgow," the group said, highlighting other COP26 promises on reducing methane emissions, deforestation and the financing of the fossil fuel industry.

If countries, particularly the major emitters, stick to their incremental, "business-as-usual" policies, they will "condemn current and future generations to a world of untold suffering and harm", warned the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). The poorest countries,

those least responsible for global warming but which are bearing its brunt, fought in Glasgow to obtain specific funding for "loss and damage".

But they reluctantly gave in, agreeing to further dialogue so as not to jeopardize the broader fight against global warming. "We always knew that Glasgow was not the finish line," said US envoy John Kerry on Saturday evening. It was a sentiment echoed by other rich-world politicians. "Now is the time for action and implementation," Dutch premier Mark Rutte tweeted.

French Environment Minister Barbara Pompili said that while COP26 was "far from having saved the planet, it put it on the right track." Pompili told RTL radio that while the final declaration was "not the most ambitious in the world" it represented a "compromise" that had at one point looked elusive. "We have a deal, we have the Glasgow Pact and I can tell you that until last night that was not a given." But Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg said the talks had achieved nothing but "blah, blah, blah", echoing earlier comments.

The final text urged nations to accelerate efforts to "phase down" unfettered coal and "phase out" inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. Large emitters China and India had opposed the mention of the polluting fuels, and the language in the final text was significantly more nuanced than earlier drafts. The deal also called on all countries to accelerate their emissions cuts by submitting new national plans by 2022, three years earlier than agreed in Paris.

But after resistance from rich nations led by the United States and EU, the text omitted any reference to a specific finance facility for the loss and damage climate change has already caused in the developing world. It instead only promised future "dialogue" on the subject. "For some loss and damage may be the beginning of conversation and dialogue," said Shauna Aminath, the Maldives environment minister. "But for us this is a matter of survival."

Although host Britain said it wanted COP26 to keep the 1.5C temperature cap in reach, a UN scientific assessment last week said countries' latest climate plans put Earth on course to heat 2.7C. The text noted "with deep regret" that wealthy nations had also failed to stump up a separate annual sum of \$100 billion they promised over a decade ago. — AFP

Amir accepts govt resignation...

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MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa said the reappointment

of Sheikh Sabah to lead the next Cabinet "will take us back to square one", adding that he will not cooperate with him.

MP Fares Al-Otaibi reiterated that he will not cooperate with Sheikh Sabah if he is appointed as premier. He added that the national dialogue committee equated between those who acted against the interests of the nation and those who defended the country.