

Local

Energy Globe Award goes to Kuwait's Faisal Al-Fozan

For his work on the 'LOOP' recycling project



KUWAIT: Faisal Al-Fozan (center) receives the Energy Globe Award from Austrian Ambassador Marian Alexander Wrba (right) and Caroline Adenberger, Austrian Trade Commissioner for Qatar and Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Energy Globe Award was given to 17-year-old Faisal Al-Fozan of Kuwait, for his exemplary work on the project 'LOOP'. The award was handed over to him by the Embassy of Austria at the ambassador's residence in Rawda yesterday. Fozan was chosen as a recipient for the award for his outstanding and sustainable recycling project, using recycled plastic materials. "HH the Crown Prince of Kuwait recently underlined the great importance of environment sustainability and spoke about climate change. I believe that his work will serve as an inspiration to many, especially to the young generation. I am happy with this young man who has

the heart and care for the environment," Marian Alexander Wrba, Ambassador of Austria to Kuwait told Kuwait Times. "We want to recognize his effort and his love for the environment. We need more of these people for a better and sustainable future of this world we are living in," he added. He said people are becoming more committed to developing solutions for the most pressing environment problems "and the 'LOOP' project is one of them."

'LOOP' is a company founded by young people. It is the first of its kind in the Middle East where 3D printer filament is manufactured using recycled materials. The project aims to create economic value from waste, and reducing carbon footprint by having local micro-manufacturing of fil-

ament to eliminate long distance shipping associated with international deliveries of filament. "This is the first 3D manufacturing of filament in the Middle East," Fozan said. "We recycle plastic waste materials from various sources, and we turn them into filament then eventually turn them into money."

With more than 180 participating countries, the Energy Globe Award is one of the most important environment awards worldwide. Projects from all over the world are submitted, ranging from small and simple initiatives to large scale high-end ones. The national winners of the Energy Globe Award are published in cooperation with UNIDO at www.energyglobe.info.

KCCI participates in world chambers' conference in Dubai

DUBAI: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Chairman Mohammad Al-Saqer said the 12th World Trade Chambers Conference (12WCC), held yesterday in Dubai, is an ideal platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the world trade congress. This came after the inaugural session of the conference, which was held in Jumeirah under the slogan 'Future Economy: The Next Generation of Chambers of Commerce', where heads and representatives of chambers of commerce from 100 countries attended.

In a statement to the press, Saqer said this conference is one of the important world conferences that discusses all issues regarding world economy, showcasing the latest experiments, experiences and studies concerning the private sector and ways to boost it. The conference discussed many important

issues including the growing role of partnerships between public and private sectors, health and safety standards, business flexibility, preparedness for crises and future risks, and logistical support for the sector, and several other issues, added Saqer. He pointed out that the conference aims to link the chambers of commerce and industry together and re-stimulate global cooperation, as well as highlighting the chambers' role in boosting the flexibility and adaptability of the business community and forming the chambers' future role.

In a similar statement, the Chamber's second vice-president, Fahd Al-Joan, said that they discussed the prospects for economic recovery after an unprecedented period of challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic. The attendees reviewed the role of the chambers regarding the digital revolution and global economic changes, and the role the chambers must play to serve its members during the next stage, added Joan. The three-day conference, organized by Dubai Chamber in cooperation with the World Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the International Chamber of Commerce, includes 40 discussion sessions and a workshop attended by 80 specialists. — KUNA



DUBAI: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman Mohammad Al-Saqer (center) participates in the conference. — KUNA

Authorities may introduce new residency rules soon

KUWAIT: Following years of criticism directed at the sponsor (Kafeel system), Kuwait's government may be working on major changes that could also help attract business investors. Among these changes are plans to grant residency permits valid between 5-15 years for foreign investors, company owners and CEOs in certain jobs, a local daily reported yesterday

quoting sources with knowledge of ongoing discussions in this regard.

Despite widespread criticism of the sponsorship system and its negative effect on labor and the economy, little effort has been taken in Kuwait in the past years on ending it. However, the new changes being discussed could be an indication that the government may soon introduce different types of residencies that could be issued without the need for sponsors.

"The changes are supposed to come into effect soon, as concerned authorities are working on them according to line with the government's plans to diversify economy," the sources are quoted anonymously in a report published by Al-Qabas Arabic newspaper yesterday.

invest more in the project to revitalize the economy and encourage business and commerce, he said.

The development of the two Islands in addition to the southern and northern banks of the causeway was presented to the Municipal Council and Cabinet's Secretariat for approval. He affirmed that the municipality was in favor of all lucrative government projects, noting that a special session was held last August to discuss the nitty-gritty of the venture. — KUNA

to Germany and neighboring Denmark because of surging COVID cases. Austria meanwhile closed shops, restaurants and festive markets on Monday, the most drastic restrictions seen in Western Europe for months.

Zionist entity, which is part of the WHO's European region yesterday rolled out vaccinations for children aged 5 to 11, one of only a handful of countries to inoculate minors that young. About half of its recently confirmed cases were among those below the age of 11, it said. And France's fully vaccinated Prime Minister Jean Castex went into isolation late Monday following a positive test, after his daughter caught the virus. The regional director for WHO Europe, Hans Kluge, said Europe and Central Asia "face a challenging winter ahead."

He called for a "vaccine plus" approach, consisting of a combination of vaccinations, social distancing, the use of face masks and hand washing. The WHO said face masks reduce COVID incidence by 53 percent according to a recent study, and "over 160,000 deaths could be prevented (by March 1) if universal mask coverage of 95 percent was achieved". But the prospect of a winter under renewed restrictions has sparked unrest in several countries. — AFP

Kuwaiti activist talks diversifying economy at Doha conference



DOHA: Participants in the conference pose for a group photo.

DOHA: The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies organized a conference titled "Economic Diversification in the Gulf Countries: Opportunities and Challenges" in Doha, Qatar recently, in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Asrar Hayat, Kuwait Transparency Society's board member and social activist, participated in the event, which featured participation of researchers and economic experts from 16 different countries. During the event, Hayat presented a research paper on the importance of diversifying sources of income and applying this to Kuwait and focused on the transition from a single-resource economy in Kuwait to a diversified economy.



Asrar Hayat speaks during the event.

While the sources considered this move 'as loosening of the current sponsor system', they indicated that it would help boost efforts to attract investments to the country and grant company owners freedom of movement. Furthermore, the changes are expected to separate investors from the system of residency permits through the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), and grant investors their own residencies according to legal rules and procedures to be introduced soon, the sources explained.

The amendment will also be introduced on the mechanism of granting 'self-sponsorship' as there are plans to ease procedures for those who wish to apply for them - especially for those who have lived in Kuwait for a long time and served the country or

worked in government sectors, the sources noted.

Kuwait's sponsorship law has not seen any major changes since its inception decades ago, and has been in the center of discussion in many incidents where the country came under fire for violations of labor rights over the years. Under the sponsorship law, a foreign worker's residency status is tied to their work permit and can lose their legal residence in the country within three months of their termination from their jobs. Not only does this system effectively put the fate of workers - especially low wage laborers - at the hands of their employers, it also serves as a deterrent for foreign investors who see it creating a very risky environment for investment in Kuwait.

Kuwait seeks to attract regional...

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more leisure and commercial services to citizens and residents alike. The Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway is operational and now is the time to

Europe battles COVID surge...

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According to WHO data, COVID-related deaths in its European region of 53 countries increased last week to nearly 4,200 a day, doubling from 2,100 deaths a day at the end of September.

It said evidence was growing that vaccine-induced protection against infection and mild disease was declining. Several countries, including Greece, France and Germany, are moving towards requiring a third booster shot for someone to be considered fully vaccinated. Chancellor Angela Merkel has warned that Germany is not doing enough to curb its "highly dramatic" fourth wave of the pandemic.

With intensive care beds swiftly filling up and its weekly incidence rate at an all-time high of 399.8 new infections per 100,000 people, Germany's worst-hit regions have ordered new shutdowns, including the closure of Christmas markets. The US State Department has urged Americans not to travel

46 killed in Bulgaria as...

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said the bus was registered with the "Besa trans" tourist agency, which organizes tours to Istanbul.

Bulgaria's interim Prime Minister Stefan Yanev said a probe into the accident had been launched, dismissing the suggestion that road conditions were to blame. Images showed the carcass of the charred bus after it broke through the guardrails between the two sides of the highway.

North Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev told state news agency MIA that he had spoken to one survivor. "He explained that they were sleeping in the bus when an explosion was heard. They succeeded in breaking one of the windows and saved a few people. Unfortunately, the rest did not succeed," he said. "It is a great tragedy... 12 (victims) are under 18 years old, and the rest are young people about 20 to 30 years old," he added.

Bulgarian national police chief Stanimir Stanev said the bus driver died "immediately so there was no one able to open the doors". Survivors "jumped out of the windows", said Maya Arguirova, head of the treatment centre for severe burns where they were transported. Bulgaria's Interior Minister Boyko Rashkov was among those who rushed to the site of the crash. "It's a terrifying scene. I haven't seen anything like that before," Rashkov told journalists.

"Nobody can say for certain how many were there and who they were. The bodies are badly

burned and have to be identified one by one," he added. Frantic relatives of those on tours to Istanbul organized by the agency were trying to contact their loved ones in the hope they were not on the ill-fated bus. "We are calling Besa tours non stop, but no one is answering for hours," Xhelal Bakiu told reporters in Skopje, saying he had been unable to reach his cousin on the phone.

'Europe stands with you'

Bulgaria has a history of deadly bus accidents, but yesterday's disaster is the worst, according to officials. Twenty Bulgarians died in 2018 when their bus skidded on a wet road and overturned. EU chief Ursula von der Leyen sent her "deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who perished in the tragic bus accident" and wished "a fast recovery to those injured".

"In these terrible times, Europe stands in solidarity with you," she said. Russian President Vladimir Putin also expressed his "sincere condolences" and said he hoped for "the speedy recovery of all those wounded". A total of 628 people died in road accidents in 2019 and 463 in 2020 in Bulgaria, according to official data.

The accidents were often attributed to poor road conditions, outdated cars and speeding. Yesterday's accident occurred on a section of highway with steep gradients and without clear demarcation lines, where many accidents have taken place, according to Diana Roussinova of a road safety NGO, which has complained to authorities about the stretch in the past. In Europe, in one of the worst accidents in recent years, 43 people died in 2015 when a coach carrying a pensioners' club collided with a lorry and caught fire in southwest France. — AFP