

Local

Kuwait, Saudi, UAE discuss fiscal balance program with Bahrain

Kuwait affirms importance of GCC sustained development

MANAMA: Finance Ministers of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE discussed yesterday along with their Bahraini counterpart latest updates on Bahraini fiscal balance program initiatives that the Arab Monetary Fund is monitoring as a consulting agency. Bahraini News Agency (BNA) mentioned that this came during a meeting in which the ministers displayed latest updates regarding the initiatives, in light of the effects of the pandemic on the executive process. The initiatives are implemented in order to achieve financial balance between government expenditures and revenues for the year 2024. The agency also stated that the three ministers commended Bahraini efforts in executing the program and achieving development irrespective

of the challenges proposed by coronavirus pandemic. The ministers affirmed their support for Bahraini efforts in furthering reforms, boosting financial stability and supporting sustained economic growth. The three countries have provided the kingdom of Bahrain with financial support for its program, according to an agreement signed in 2018 between them and Bahrain as well as the Arab Monetary Fund.

Separately, Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Abdullah Al-Salman affirmed yesterday the importance of achieving sustained development within the Gulf region, in what serves a combined vision of positive change for all GCC states. This came by the minister in a statement to the press on the sidelines of the GCC standardization organization meeting with the commercial collaboration committee between member states' ministers in Bahrain. Salman said that achieving this requires collaboration between several partners from both public and private sectors in Gulf countries, as well as utilizing available instruments to implement standard national regional and international specifications to accomplish sustained development objec-

tives. He also stated that member states of the Gulf council comprise a homogenous mixture in which committees can work to alleviate obstacles ensuring economic and commercial integration. The minister also stressed the importance of such meetings and communication to boost joint collaboration in what serves economic unity.

Salman mentioned that observing committee meetings' outputs and recommendations contributes to solidifying Gulf relations and facilitating trade exchange, as well as easing commodity transport and encouraging trade between member states. He also indicated that achieving such objectives guarantees positive change in all Gulf countries and improves life standards for Gulf citizens.



Cooperation between GCC private, public sectors

Continued consultation

The consultative meeting of GCC commerce ministers and heads of chambers of commerce and industry had kicked off Tuesday in Bahrain. Bahrain's commerce and industry minister Zayed Al-Zayani said the meeting comes out of faith in the importance of continued consultation and cooperation between the GCC private and public sectors in all fields. He pointed to the key role played by the private sector in pushing ahead economy in a way that has a positive impact on the GCC commercial and economic status. He noted this fruitful meeting discusses the GCC leaders' recommendations to reach their desired goals and ambitions so as to rapidly implement what has been agreed upon regarding a road map to reach the economic unity among the GCC countries by 2025.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Nayef Al-Hajraf said that the GCC Secretary is looking forward to further efforts to enhance cooperation amongst ministries of commerce and industry, and contribute to



MANAMA: Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Abdullah Al-Salman attends the GCC standardization organization meeting with the commercial collaboration committee between GCC ministers. — KUNA

removing obstacles and challenges facing the private sector in the Gulf States. He stated that the GCC leaders' efforts, implementing health measures as well as providing financial incentives reduced the negative effects during the peak of the pandemic. "We see a tangible success in the economic stability in the GCC countries and the rapid return to growth," he said. The GCC countries are still making more efforts to recover and return to normal eco-

nomical growth, he went on to say.

Hajraf pointed out that the General Secretariat submitted the recommendations of the previous consultative meetings to the position of the supreme council to issue its directives. The GCC leaders expressed their satisfaction about continuous cooperation between the public and private sectors, calling for continuing and strengthening this approach, he said. — AFP

Kuwait Premier receives chief auditor



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets State Audit Bureau Chairman Faisal Fahad Al-Shaya. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received State Audit Bureau (SAB) Chairman Faisal Fahad Al-Shaya at Seif Palace yesterday. Shaya presented to His

Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled a copy of the SAB report on the outcomes of check and review of state bodies' budgets and final statements of accounts for the FY 2020/2021. — KUNA

Kuwaiti envoy attends Gulf War event in France

PARIS: France's President Emmanuel Macron hosted a celebration on Tuesday to mark his country's involvement in the 1990 Gulf War on the grounds of the military monument, Hotel des Invalides, attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador Sami Al-Sulaiman. Also in attendance, were senior French army, navy and air force commanders and chiefs-of-staff, past and present. Under the military codename, Operation Daguet, some 12,000 French troops, alongside allied nations, took part in the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq's occupation. Iraq, at the time, was led by the late former president Saddam Hussein. In a speech on the occasion, Ambassador Sulaiman said Kuwait is grateful for "France's principled and courageous stance" during that time, and its "protection of the independence and sovereignty of Kuwait." He went on to describe



PARIS: Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Sami Al-Sulaiman (center) attends the event. — KUNA

the historic events leading to Kuwait's 1991 liberation as a "timeless national epic." The ambassador appreciated Paris' continued commitment to the security and stability of the Gulf Arab region, including Kuwait. In a

separate statement, the Elysee Palace said France was a "major contributor" to the war, through its commitment by air, naval and land resources amid a United Nations-mandated coalition. — KUNA

Amir asks high-level panel to set rules...

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The Islamic Constitutional Movement welcomed

the outcome of the national dialogue that was launched between the government and MPs - including opposition lawmakers - to find solutions for ongoing political disputes.

MPs said on Tuesday that it had been agreed to pardon a number of convicted Kuwaiti activists, including former opposition MPs, who have been living in exile in Turkey since the summer of 2018 to escape jail terms for storming the National Assembly building in 2011.

to make the reopening a success. He said restrictions could be re-imposed if the number of cases rises sharply or new variants are detected.

The minister said PCR tests will remain in place for travelers arriving to Kuwait, and unvaccinated arrivals will be quarantined. To enter the country, foreigners must be fully vaccinated with authorized vaccines in Kuwait, while those who have taken other vaccines must take a third booster dose of a vaccine authorized by Kuwait. Sheikh Basal also insisted that the "pandemic has not ended. It is still there". The minister said health authorities have begun giving the booster dose to certain sections of the society in a bid to boost their immunity.

that went viral, the animal managed to battle the strong currents and swim to safety.

Uttarakhand reported 178.4 mm rain in the first 18 days of October - almost 500 percent more than the average, the Hindustan Times reported citing Indian Meteorological Department data. And the state's Mukteshwar area reported 340.8 mm rainfall in the 24 hours until Tuesday morning, the most since the weather station was set up there in 1897, the newspaper said. The Indian Meteorological Department forecast a "significant reduction" in rainfall in the state from yesterday. — AFP

Attacks kill 27 in Damascus...

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"We hadn't seen violence of that type in a long time," a fruit vendor who gave his name as Salman told AFP at the scene. "We thought we were done with such attacks. I hope this will be the last bombing."

Damascus had been largely spared such violence in recent years, especially since troops and allied militias retook the last significant rebel bastion near the capital in 2018. The attack is the deadliest in Damascus since a bombing claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group targeted the Justice Palace in March 2017, killing at least 30 people.

Around an hour after yesterday's attack, Syrian army shelling struck the rebel-held town of Ariha in Idlib province. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said rockets struck a busy area as students were heading to school. Four children were among 13 people killed, the Britain-based war monitor said. It was the highest civilian toll since a March 2020 truce deal brokered by Turkey and Russia effectively put fighting in Idlib on standby, the Observatory said.

"At 8 am (0500 GMT) we woke up to the bombardment. The children were terrified and were screaming," said Bilal Trissi, a father of two who lives nearby. "They bombed us in our neighborhood and in the market. There are children who died and people who lost their limbs... We don't know why, what are we guilty of?" The UN children's agency condemned the shelling, calling it a "reminder that

the war in Syria has not come to an end".

The Damascus bombing too will challenge the government's assertion that the decade-old war is over and stability guaranteed for reconstruction efforts and investment projects to begin in earnest. President Bashar Al-Assad's regime has been striving to claw itself out of international isolation and had been making inroads in recent months. Iran's foreign ministry condemned the "cowardly" Damascus attack, saying it "will not undermine the determination of the Syrian government and people in their fight against terrorism".

The conflict that erupted with the brutal repression of unarmed protests demanding regime change in 2011 has left around half a million people dead. Assad's position once hung by a thread, but Russia's military intervention in 2015 marked the start of a long and bloody fightback. Government forces, also backed by Iran and its proxy militias, have recaptured nearly all key cities in the country, with US-backed Kurdish forces still running the northeast.

The IS group's "caliphate" that once straddled swathes of Syria and Iraq shrank to its death in eastern Syria in early 2019. Since then, the government's main focus has been the Idlib region, now home to many rebels who were forced to surrender elsewhere. It is dominated by the jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which includes leaders of Al-Qaeda's former Syria franchise and over which Turkey has some sway. HTS has not claimed attacks in Damascus in years.

Also yesterday, six members of a pro-government militia were killed in an arms depot blast in the central province of Hama, the Observatory said. The pro-government Al-Watan daily reported the same death toll and said a "technical error" caused the explosion, without elaborating. — AFP

Kuwait returns to normal life...

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Kuwait's land border and sea terminals will also operate at full capacity.

Health Minister Sheikh Basal Al-Sabah said figures show that the health situation is improving and the pandemic is on the decline. He however warned against failing to comply with the necessary health conditions, especially wearing masks,

Floods, landslides kill 116 in India...

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through knee-deep water near Nainital lake, a tourist hotspot, and the Ganges bursting its banks in Rishikesh. The floods almost swept away an elephant near the Corbett Tiger Reserve - home to 164 of the big cats and 600 elephants - but in a video