

## My beloved father

By Prof Suzanne A Al-Bustan

Professor Ahmad Al-Bustan (1938-2020), may Allah bless his soul as he rests in peace, was born in 1938 and sadly died on Sept 24, 2020, leaving behind his devoted wife, six children and 17 grandchildren who were all blessed by his unconditional love and support.

Prof Ahmad, a humble and proud man, strongly believed in education and was always upholding the saying "pursue education even if as far as in China", affirming that education is the best weapon that anyone can possess. His dedication is also the reason and motivation behind all of his children to have successfully completed their higher education.

Our father (may Allah Almighty have mercy on him and forgive him) not only encouraged his children and grandchildren to have a university and higher degree (PhD), but also encouraged hundreds of young people to complete their education, most of whom succeeded and to this day testify to his guidance and mentorship. He would constantly remind us that we should take responsibility and serve our community, quoting "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country".

He was a kind, giving and generous man who respected people regardless of their background and status, and was always ready to lend a helping hand. He would always quote "Treat people equally with respect and how you would want others to treat you". Having raised us with that, we were all blessed that he had earned a lot of people's love and respect.

He was very optimistic always, quoting "think pink", affirming the importance of thinking positive and not allowing obstacles to defeat one's goals and ambitions. Even during his struggle with different diseases and lastly with the cancer that claimed his life, he would smile and tell happy stories. He continued to give advice and teach morals and to this day, his voice can still be heard in our minds, guiding us into making informed decisions. After giving his opinion and advice to us, he would end by quoting "what parents can't teach you, time will", allowing us to be independent and responsible. He would never force us into anything, quoting "You can drag a horse to the water but you can never make him drink it". Most of the time we would go by his advice and thankfully prevail.

Though he has departed our world (may he rest in the Heavens above) his loving, kind, and generous spirit will live on through us and through his grandchildren who, we pray, continue on with his legacy while keeping his spirit alive in our hearts and minds. He left us with great memories, wisdom, and lessons which we will always cherish as they made us who we are today.

A year has passed since his heartbreaking departure, a day that left us fatherless, a day that broke our back. BUT his zest for life, optimism, inspiration, and wisdom has given us the strength to move on and live by his valuable lessons. Our strong faith in Allah Almighty and belief in that he is in a better place eases our pain and heals us day by day.

Our memories of him, the quotations he recited and the stories he would tell brings a smile to our faces. I pray that he is as much proud of us as we are proud to have had a wonderful father whom we miss enormously. We were truly blessed with a great man in our lives, and in our hearts he will always be.



Prof Ahmad Al-Bustan

# Kuwait concerned over fate of missing people in Syria

GENEVA: The State of Kuwait yesterday expressed grave concern over the fate of people missing in the conflict in Syria, including those who were kidnapped. Parties to the conflict are responsible for determining fate of people who were missing due to hostile operations and to establish channels of communication with their families during the search missions, Jamal Al-Ghunaim, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organizations in Geneva, said.

Ghunaim, addressing UN Human Rights Council's session, supported a call on all parties to the conflict to take measures to prevent people from being missing, immediately release hundreds of individuals as well as urgently disclose fate of missing, including children. Kuwait believes there is no military solution for the 10-year-old conflict in Syria, he asserted, and a peaceful solution should meet aspirations of the Syrian people in line with the 2012 Geneva Communique and UN Security Council resolution 2254.

Kuwait "strongly condemns human rights viola-

tions against the Syrian people and calls for ending this conflict and finding a just and comprehensive solution meeting aspirations of all the Syrian people," he said. "The State of Kuwait is worried about continuous blatant violations of international humanitarian law and the international law on human rights by all parties of the Syrian conflict," he added.

Ghunaim also condemned "random and deliberate" assaults against innocent civilians. He recalled UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' call last year on all parties to conflicts around world to cease hostilities in order to provide humanitarian aid for people in need. He said military operations were posing a threat to lives of civilians and expressed worries about collapse of the health system in Syria due to declining number of hospitals and escape of health care workers.

Ghunaim urged all parties to allow aid to reach the internally displaced people (IDPs) "because millions of Syrians are suffering from shortage in basic needs in addition to their suffering from



RAQQA: A Syrian student walks to school past damaged buildings in the northern city of Raqqa, on September 23, 2021. —AFP

spread of COVID-19." The State of Kuwait, said Ghunaim, hosted, and participated in, international conferences for the Syrian people and pledged \$1.7 billion. He thanked neighboring countries for hosting Syrian refugees. —KUNA

## NBK organizes seminar on COVID vaccine's importance

KUWAIT: As part of its social responsibility efforts to combat the coronavirus, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a seminar for its employees to raise awareness about the importance of the COVID-19 vaccination.

The seminar was attended by a selection of Kuwaiti physicians including Dr Maytham Hussein, Consultant of Clinical Immunology, Dr Mohammad Al-Ghounaim, Pediatric Infectious Diseases Specialist and Medical Microbiologist, and member of the Vaccination Committee at the Ministry of Health, as well as Dr Hamad Al-Yaseen, Associate Professor of Genomic Medicine at Kuwait University.

In the seminar that witnessed a remarkable attendance from the bank's employees, the lecturers stressed that the fast pace of vaccination increases the number of people immunized against COVID-19 infection, which slows the spread of the disease, and contributes to herd immunity and returning safely to normalcy.

The lecturers emphasized that the WHO-approved vaccines are safe, having undergone rigorous testing in clinical trials to ensure that they meet internationally accepted safety and efficacy standards, as well as provide protection against new mutated versions of the virus.

Participants cautioned against inaccurate information about the COVID-19 and vaccines, stressing at the same time that misinformation can cause doubts and fear during any health crisis, thus leading to leaving people unprotected or more vulnerable to the virus. They always called for continuing to adhere with precautionary measures to protect the public, including wearing face masks, social distancing, and washing hands frequently. They also added that vaccines provided protection for the more vulnerable segments of society, such as the seniors, immunocompromised and chronic diseases patients.

## Kuwait Heart Foundation marks World Heart Day

By Abdellatif Sharara

KUWAIT: Secretary General of Kuwait Heart Foundation Dr Rashid Abdelaziz Al-Owayesh said the coronavirus pandemic prevented people from marking World Heart Day last year, "but it gifted us the idea of communicating through social media to reach the largest possible number of people and make them aware of heart diseases and their risks". World Heart Day is marked on Sept 29 every year.

"We will participate in the celebration this year. The World Heart Federation was keen for



KUWAIT: A view of the seminar in progress.

On this occasion, Lulwa Mishari Al-Fozan, Head of Employee Relations at National Bank of Kuwait said: "Organizing a seminar for the bank's employees to raise awareness about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination is a continuation of the many initiatives and campaigns held by Group Human Resources to contribute effectively to supporting the national vaccination drive in Kuwait, which is moving towards achieving herd immunity soon."

Fozan noted that NBK's employees have shown a high sense of responsibility towards their colleagues, families and society, as reflected in their great interest in getting vaccinated over the past months. Fozan stressed that, since the beginning of the pandemic, NBK has been making unwavering efforts to ensure the safety of its employees through many initiatives and campaigns aimed at creating a safe work environment that also contributes to contain the spread of the virus.

As the largest private sector institution, NBK has a national responsibility to provide a role model to follow. In this context, the bank was one of the first private sector institutions to launch a program to motivate its employees to get vaccinated and actively contribute to supporting the country's national vaccination drive, she elaborated.

It is worth mentioning that over the past months, NBK intensified direct communication with its

employees providing them with reliable and credible information about the safety, efficacy and side effects of available vaccines, including information about approved vaccines and how to register for the vaccine, in cooperation with the concerned authorities in Kuwait.

In addition, through its social media platforms, the bank held several discussion sessions with physicians and leading public health figures to share scientific information and answer employees' inquiries about the efficacy of the vaccine, and how it contributes to returning to normalcy.

NBK recognizes the importance of improving the health and safety of its key stakeholders, including employees and customers, as an integral part of its sustainable development approach. To this end, it continuously updates its health and safety policy developed based on regional and international best practices in relation to health and safety matters.

The bank also raises the motto of "employees' health and safety first" in all measures and decisions that have been taken since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. This is manifested in launching many programs and activities that focus on promoting a healthy lifestyle and raising awareness on the importance of conducting medical examinations for the bank's employees to avoid physical and psychological exhaustion during the pandemic.

## Rapid antigen test kits for students: Report

KUWAIT: Health authorities in Kuwait are planning to ease entry of students and teachers who do not wish to receive COVID-19 vaccines to schools before the start of the school year on Oct 3 by providing PCR testing at six health centers. The health ministry also plans to import rapid antigen test kits and making them available in hospitals, laboratories and pharmacies in the private sector, Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday.

Health officials quoted in the report said the rapid antigen tests will be imported within two days and will be distributed as soon as the regular procedures are complete, adding that it is a simple test that gives results within five to 15 minutes only. About the charges of the test, official said it will not exceed KD 3 in pharmacies and laboratories in the private sector. Officials said the test is officially registered at the health ministry and is approved by WHO.

## Kuwait Friendship Society honors donor

KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait Humanitarian Friendship Society Khaled Mohammad bin Sabt said the Board of Directors is keen on continued contacts with donors, including individuals as well as public and private establishments. He said Chairman Ahmad Al-Sarraf and himself visited Aqeel Yousuf Behbehani, a supporter of the society, in order to recognize him for his generous donation, and presented him with a plaque. Behbehani thanked them for their gesture and wished them all success.



Heart Day logo containing a heart to be publicized to remind them that caring for the heart is very important. They should be aware on how to reduce the risks of heart disease, including lifestyle changes, eating healthy food, exercising and refraining from smoking," Owayesh said.

"Everybody knows that we in Kuwait, like all developed countries, suffer from heart diseases. The latest statistics for 2019 showed that 43.5 percent of deaths in Kuwait are due to heart problems, in addition to other diseases such as tumors (13 percent) and traffic accidents (6.5 percent). This calls upon us to care for the heart and make people aware of its diseases, as the more we spread awareness and correct information, the more people will be aware of how to maintain their health," he added.

Dr Owayesh said Kuwait Heart Foundation is a voluntary nonprofit organization that was founded in 1982 by Kuwaiti businessmen in cooperation with cardiologists to spread aware-

ness among citizens and residents. The foundation has carried out many activities and covered all societal sectors, including the elderly, youth, the ill and doctors. He added the foundation has had contacts with various communities in Kuwait and provided them with awareness about heart diseases, including a mobile unit in which tests are conducted.

Owayesh said 80,000 individuals have been tested from 1996 until now, adding the tests included those for blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. They were given advice and instructions by specialized doctors, in addition to leaflets with valuable information.



Rashid Al-Owayesh