

Local

# Ambassador hails EU Commission request to lift Schengen visa requirements for Kuwaitis

The decision is ‘culmination of a lot of hard work from many people’

**BRUSSELS:** Kuwait's ambassador to the European Union, NATO and Belgium, Jasem Al-Budaiwi Wednesday lauded the decision by the European Commission to lift Schengen visa requirements for Kuwaiti citizens as a “momentous day for Kuwait.” “Today we are added to a list of countries whose nationals will be exempted from visa to the Schengen area for short term stays. This is a culmination of a lot of hard work from many people, colleagues,” Budaiwi said on his twitter message. “The people of Kuwait have increasingly looked to Europe and all the EU member states for tourism, education, health, investment, business, and much, much more,” he noted. “This breakthrough will positively facilitate this trend and ensure that Kuwait remain important partners,” he stressed.



## Momentous day for Kuwait

Kuwait and EU share a special bond that will only continue to grow deeper with this new decision, he said. The Kuwaiti ambassador expressed a “big thanks to the efforts of EU High Representative Josep Borrel and his team for guiding and supporting Kuwait through its endeavor to achieve visa free travel for its citizens.” He also thanked European Commission vice-president Margaritis Schinas for his relentless support and assistance and advice and voiced his gratitude to EU Commissioner for interior affairs Ylva Johansson for constantly pushing and championing Kuwait's

efforts to obtain a Schengen visa waiver for its citizens. Budaiwi added on his twitter account that “he is looking forward to even closer cooperation with our EU partners.”

Kuwait's mission to the European Union in Brussels welcomed the European Commission's announcement of inclusion of Kuwait in the list of countries whose nationals will be exempted from the Schengen visa. In a statement, it noted that this is a start of a series of official final negotiations between Kuwait and the European

Union aimed at exempting Kuwaiti citizens from the Schengen visa, stressing However, this declaration reflects the distinguished and strong relations between the two sides at all levels. The statement stressed that the decision's entry into force requires time, affirming the need for citizens wishing to travel to the Schengen area to obtain the required visa until the completion of those procedures and the official announcement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. —KUNA



Ambassador Jasem Al-Budaiwi

## Kuwait welcomes UN's ‘exceptional’ veto resolution

**NEW YORK:** The State of Kuwait late Tuesday welcomed the UN's “exceptional” resolution requiring veto justification. “It is natural to have opposing views on veto use, and this resolution would guarantee transparent and constructive discussions on the matter,” said Minister Plenipotentiary Bader Al-Munayekh, Acting Charge d'Affaires of Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, addressing its assembly. Earlier Tuesday, the UN's 193-member General

Assembly adopted the Liechtenstein-spearheaded resolution by consensus. Veto abuse had previously contributed in the Security Council's inability to shoulder its responsibility, which eventually led to jeopardizing international peace and security, noted the Kuwaiti senior diplomat. “I anew, in this session, the State of Kuwait's full commitment to multilateralism, coinciding with the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace,” he noted. Tuesday's resolution does not eliminate or limit the veto power of the permanent members - the US, Russia, Britain, France and China. But for the first time it will require the General Assembly “to hold a debate on the situation” that sparks a veto in the Security Council within 10 working days. The US, Britain and France were among the majority of countries that joined Liechtenstein in co-sponsoring the reform. Neither Russia nor China were among the sponsors. —KUNA



NEW YORK: Minister Plenipotentiary Bader Al-Munayekh makes his address at the United Nations General Assembly. —KUNA

## Kuwait rejects Iraqi MP's allegations of attacking fishermen

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Majdi Al-Dhafiri met Wednesday Iraq's Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Manhal Al-Safi, and they discussed bilateral ties between both countries. The two sides tackled the latest remarks of an Iraqi Parliament Member, regarding claims of attacking Iraqi fishermen. Dhafiri expressed the rejection and resentment of Kuwait regarding those remarks that do not reflect the deep ties between both countries, and do not meet the principles of good neighborliness.

Dhafiri refuted such allegations and highly trusted the integrity of the procedures followed by the Kuwaiti Coast Guard forces. He praised the continuous cooperation between the Kuwaiti Coast Guard Force and the Iraqi Naval Forces in dealing with the violations of Iraqi fishermen of sailing into Kuwaiti territorial waters. —KUNA

## DGCA expects 352,140 passengers during Eid holiday

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said Wednesday that the movement of passengers to and from Kuwait

International Airport is expected to reach 352,140 passengers during Eid Al-Fitr holiday, distributed as 207,760 departing and 144,380 arriving to the country.

Speaking to the press, Deputy Director General for Planning and Projects Affairs Saad Al-Otaibi confirmed the readiness of civil aviation in all operational sectors for the Eid holiday during the next nine days, in line with all governmental and non-governmental agencies operating at Kuwait's air-

port. Up to 2,800 flights will be operated during the period from April 28 to May 7, distributed over 1,400 departing flights and 1,400 incoming flights, he said, noting that 76 additional flights will be operated during Eid. He commended the efforts of all government agencies working at the airport, led by the Ministry of Interior and the General Administration of Customs, in addition to the great efforts made by all workers in civil aviation to make the holiday plan a success. —KUNA

## Gulf Bank wraps up successful month of Ramadan events



**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank successfully wrapped up a successful month of Ramadan events, with multiple initiatives under its belt during the holy month. The initiatives, which encompassed family-friendly sports and health activities, also included celebrations of authentic Kuwaiti customs and humanitarian and relief efforts for disadvantaged families, debtors and refugees.

On this occasion, the Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Ahmad Al-Amir, stressed that social responsibility is one of the main pillars of Gulf Bank's strategy, which aims to support all members of the local community and engage directly with various groups. Al-Amir continued: “As a testament to its slogan, ‘Always With You,’ and in line with its five-year strategy, Gulf Bank presents a distinct model for sustainability programs at the community, economic, and environmental levels - through strategically selected initiatives that are designed to benefit all segments of society.”

### Health and fitness activities

As part of its ongoing initiatives for community sustainability, Gulf Bank launched the “Gulf Bank Fit” week of activities at 360 Mall, in collaboration with local fitness studio, 9Round. The initiative encompassed multiple sports and health events, competi-

tions, and prizes, and falls within the bank's efforts to engage with the local community with various “GB COMMUNITY” events.

### Aiding disadvantaged communities

As part of its commitment towards social sustainability and in order to support the efforts of local civil society organizations, Gulf Bank announced its participation in the humanitarian campaign led by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to distribute electrical appliances to local families in need.

### Ramadan iftars

As part of its social responsibility program, and in keeping with Gulf Bank's various charitable initiatives during the holy month of Ramadan, Gulf Bank distributed Iftar meals in multiple areas in Kuwait. The initiative was held as part of Gulf Bank's strategic partnership with the Kuwait Food Bank for the fifth year in a row.

### Alleviating debtors

During the holy month of Ramadan, Gulf Bank also announced its participation in the campaign “Charity Begins at Home” organized by local organization, Allakaful. The campaign aims to alleviate the distress of debtors, who are burdened with debts and have

been unable to pay them due to various economic conditions.

### Refugee relief efforts

As part of the Bank's commitment to supporting the United Nations' various institutions and achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, Gulf Bank supported the Zakat Fund set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The initiative provided aid and covered costs for refugee and forcibly displaced families' basic needs during Ramadan, including rent for housing, food, health services, and cash assistance.

### “Nuqsat Al-Khamees”

In celebration of Kuwaiti customs and traditions, and in support of local SMEs, Gulf Bank also organized a weekly “Nuqsat Al-Khamees” initiative. The initiative, which encompassed collaborations with multiple Kuwaiti restaurants and bakeries throughout the holy month, is part of a long roster of community events that the Bank spearheads for its customers and community during the month of Ramadan.

### Last 10 days of Ramadan

As part of its community initiatives during the holy month, Gulf Bank distributed water bottles and cold

refreshments to worshippers at the multiple local mosques, following Tarawih and Qiyam prayers during the last 10 days of Ramadan.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 “New Kuwait” and works with various parties to achieve it.



Ahmad Al-Amir