

## Local

# Kuwait plays central role in regional affairs: Tunisian Foreign Minister

## Kuwait, Tunisia missions in UN prioritized Palestinian question: Jerandi

**TUNIS:** Tunisian Foreign Minister Othman Jerandi spoke highly of the deep-rooted relationship between his country and Kuwait and appreciated as central the role of Kuwait in regional and global affairs. "Thanks to its composed foreign policy, the State of Kuwait expresses the true voice of the Arab world, bridging the rifts among different countries, and promoting international peace and security," he said.

Jerandi made the comments in an interview yesterday on the eve of his visit to Kuwait to take part in the consultative meeting of the Arab foreign ministers. Kuwait Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah will chair the meeting. The Tunisian minister said his country holds in high esteem the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people, and appreciates the principled stances of Kuwait in serving the Arab causes. "The State of Kuwait plays a leading role in using its good offices in finding peaceful solutions to crises inside the Arab region and beyond," he affirmed.

On the bilateral ties, he said Tunisia and Kuwait maintain close relationship and fruitful cooperation in various fields, thanks to the keenness of both sides to take the relations to a new height. At the behest of their leaders, both countries work dili-

gently to strengthen their ties and realize the aspirations of their peoples, he pointed out. In early October 2020, President Kais Saied, of Tunisia, visited Kuwait and met His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to offer condolences over the demise of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During the summit meeting, both leaders stated a shared desire to open new horizons for cooperation and deepen the friendly ties, the minister recalled. The relationship gained momentum through the noble decision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to provide a lifeline to Tunisia when it suffers severe shortage of medical supplies and oxygen in the peak of coronavirus outbreak in mid-July 2021. "His Highness the Amir also instructed providing Tunisia with advanced firefighting equipment to help control the wildfires in the northern areas in last August," Jerandi went on.

### Diplomatic school

On his diplomat career, the Tunisian foreign minister said he started as ambassador to Kuwait for nine years during which he was able to learn from the Kuwaiti diplomatic school founded by late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "The



Tunisian Foreign Minister Othman Jerandi

late Amir was a staunch defender of not only Kuwait's but all Arab causes as well; he was a true mentor for all diplomats on the Arab and international scales. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf follows the same path of his predecessor in pursuing a composed policy, bridging the gaps in inter-Arab relations and expressing the true voice of the right in all issues," the minister pointed out.

Dealing with diplomatic coordination, Jerandi said he is in constant contact with Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah to address the various bilateral, regional and international issues. "We have mutual confidence enough to address all files candidly and transparently. This coordination was thrown into sharp relief when Kuwait handed over its non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council to Tunisia in late 2019. There had been a chain of in-depth consultations four months earlier regarding the topics on the agenda of the Council," he recalled, not-

ing that the views of both countries proved to be identical on all issues.

### Palestine question

The missions of both countries to the United Nations in New York prioritized the Palestine question and were able to foil the attempts of some parties to exclude this issue from the agenda of the UN Security Council, Jerandi revealed. "Kuwait stuck to its honorable stance and was able to establish the rule of debating the Palestine question at the Council on monthly basis, and we have followed suit," he stated. Based on shared values, both countries maintain close coordination regarding the major issues of, inter alia, international peace and security, childhood, women and crisis management, he said, noting that their "two missions to the UN Security Council served as one for four years."

Jerandi commended Kuwait's efforts to achieve rapprochement among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries and address the Lebanese state of affairs. Regarding the Arab consultative ministerial meeting, he expressed optimism about the event being chaired by Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Nasser who took the initiative in convening the meeting. Jerandi voiced hope that candid, constructive and transparent consultations will help find viable solutions to the issues of Palestine, Syria and Libya, as well as the Arab national security, the Arab relations to Asia and Africa. He expected that the ministerial meeting will enhance the Arab solidarity ahead of the Arab Leaders' Summit, due in Algeria in March, and the Arab-African Summit, due in Saudi Arabia in the following month. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets UAE State Minister of Foreign Affairs Khalifah Shaheen Al-Marar. — KUNA

## Kuwait's Foreign Minister receives UAE counterpart

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday UAE State Minister of Foreign Affairs Khalifah Shaheen Al-Marar on his official visit to the country. The meeting touched

on the bilateral ties between the two countries and the latest regional and global developments.

Kuwait hosts Arab Foreign Ministers' consultative meeting today at Salam Palace to discuss the issues and challenges facing the Arab countries. This comes as Kuwait has been leading the foreign ministers' council since last September. During the 156th foreign ministers' session held in Cairo last September, Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah led the Kuwaiti delegation to the gathering. Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser, head of the current session, and Arab League's Secretary General Ahmad Aboul-Gheit will hold a news conference today. — KUNA

## Powerful winter storm slams into...

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Freeze alerts were raised as far south as Florida, where the National Weather Service (NWS) warned of "scattered to isolated falling iguanas from trees" as plunging temperatures temporarily paralyzed the large lizards, which can weigh up to 20 pounds. Salt machines and snowplows crawled along the streets of New York, where as much as four inches of snow had fallen.

Mayor Eric Adams had tweeted Friday that a foot (30 centimeters) of snow was predicted, and warned that "Mother Nature has a tendency to do what she wants." He urged New Yorkers to stay home if possible. Some 3,500 flights were canceled yesterday traveling within, into or out of the United States, according to flight tracker FlightAware, and 701 flights have already been canceled for today.

Cancellations on Friday totaled more than 1,450. The NWS warned of "dangerous blizzard conditions" along portions of the Mid-Atlantic and New England coasts, with predicted snowfall accumulations of more than two feet in the area around Boston. Snowfall rate would range from two to four inches per hour, and strong winds would cause "scattered power outages." "Expect white-

out conditions and nearly impossible travel at times," the service said.

The governors of New York and New Jersey declared a state of emergency, while Boston Mayor Michelle Wu declared a snow emergency. "It is going to get quite ugly out there," she said in an early-morning television interview from City Hall. "This is going to be a historic storm." Massachusetts residents had rushed Friday to buy groceries, as well as snow- and ice-melting pellets to help keep their sidewalks and driveways clear.

By yesterday morning, Boston Public Works said 500 snow plows were already hard at work on the city streets. The storm will produce extremely cold temperatures with dangerous wind chills today morning, the NWS said. "Get home safely tonight, remain home over the weekend, avoid any unnecessary travel." New York Governor Kathy Hochul said in a statement, singling out Long Island, New York City and the lower Hudson Valley for particularly deep snow.

She also urged people who had to travel to fill their car gas tanks and keep supplies such as ice scrapers, blankets and water in their vehicles. The NWS Eastern Region reported Friday that the storm was expected to intensify rapidly over the next 24 hours, a meteorological event sometimes referred to as a "bomb cyclone." The blizzard comes on the heels of a similar winter storm that blanketed a swath of Eastern North America - from Georgia to Canada - just two weeks ago, cutting power to thousands of homes and also disrupting thousands of flights. — AFP

The National Assembly's special session would be focusing on a parliamentary request to review the Cabinet's measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 and also travel restriction during the pandemic. The decisions made by the emergency health committee and the Health Ministry would be put under parliamentary scrutiny in light of the recent global trend, which is geared towards viewing COVID-19 as an endemic. Restrictions on the unvaccinated, the need for booster jabs, vaccinating the 5-12 age group, price of PCR tests, other coronavirus related issues would be on the table for discussion. — KUNA

## Cabinet 'will not' attend...

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leadership to coordinate with MPs to postpone the session for a few days to enable the ministry to fully address the lawmakers' inquiries. Al-Rajhi reaffirmed that the government was keen on informing the public on the measures to counter COVID-19 in a date agreed upon later.

## Indian Ambassador meets Kuwait's Health Minister

**KUWAIT:** Ambassador of India to Kuwait Sibi George met recently with Kuwait's Minister of Health Dr Khaled Mhawes Al-Saeed, and discussed with him, inter alia, ways to strengthen bilateral relations in health sector including the fight against COVID-19, Covaxin, recruitment of medical professionals from India and other diaspora matters.

Ambassador George had also met earlier with Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Dr Mohammad Al-Fares. During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields including hydrocarbons and renewable energy, in addition to engineers' issue and other diaspora matters.



Ambassador of India to Kuwait Sibi George meets Kuwait's Minister of Oil Dr Mohammad Al-Fares.

## Six rockets target Baghdad airport...

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two other rockets fell inside the US embassy complex, without causing casualties. In September, an "armed drone" attack targeted Arbil international airport in Iraqi Kurdistan, where a base hosts coalition troops.

Meanwhile, Iran's foreign ministry yesterday condemned a rocket attack against Baghdad airport that took place the previous day as an act that seeks to "destabilize" Iraq. Iran condemns "the targeting of Baghdad airport" in an attack that aims to "destabilize" Iraq, foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement.

"Such suspicious actions have created insecurity and unrest in Iraq, paving the way for the ill-wishers and the insurgents, and affecting the government's services to the Iraqi citizens," he added.

The rockets fell around civil installations at the airport, damaging an out of service Boeing 767 belonging to state-owned Iraqi Airways. The attack prompted Kuwait Airways to suspend its flights to Iraq, the airline said on Twitter.

Recent months have seen rocket and drone attacks target the United States embassy in Baghdad's high-security Green Zone, a US diplomatic facility at the airport and troops belonging to a US-led coalition stationed at Iraqi bases. Such attacks mounted after the US assassinated the commander of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, Major General Qassem Soleimani, and his Iraqi lieutenant Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, in a January 2020 drone strike near Baghdad airport. — AFP



BAGHDAD: Iraqi soldiers man a checkpoint in the capital Baghdad, following a reported rocket attack on the country's airport. — AFP