

## Local

# Kuwait prepares pilgrims, sets measures for hajj in Saudi

## COVID-19 vaccine, PCR test required prior to departure

**KUWAIT:** As the hajj season nears with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aiming to host around one million pilgrims this year after easing COVID-19 restrictions, the Kuwaiti authority is working on necessary preparations to facilitate hajj for those embarking to complete this pillar of the Islamic faith. Kuwait's hajj pilgrims this year amount to 3,622 with conditions being set that only nationals were allowed to head to Saudi Arabia. The pilgrims must have taken two jabs of the COVID-19 vaccine, should not be over 65 of age and must provide a negative PCR test 72 hours prior to departure in line with Saudi authority guidelines.

Speaking to the press regarding this hajj season, Assistant at the Ministry of Awqaf (Endowment) and Islamic Affairs Mohammad Al-Mutairi revealed that a joint committee consisting of the Ministries of Awqaf and Health as well as the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) was established to look into preparations for Kuwaiti hajj pilgrims. He added that the committee was coordinating with Saudi hajj authorities to make sure that pilgrims from Kuwait attend to their rituals during this special journey. In a similar statement, head of the Ministry's hajj and Umrah affairs Sattam Al-Mezyan affirmed that the ministry was working on several measures to facilitate hajj for pilgrims. He revealed that Umrah and hajj tour providers obtain necessary permits to be able to organize their campaigns and offer services.

Several steps must be taken to allow both pil-

grims and the officials running tours to attend hajj and this includes registration in the state's official hajj website, he indicated, noting that various states' entities were working together to facilitate hajj pilgrimage. On Thursday, the Kuwaiti supreme committee for hajj had assigned its members and teams to put the final touches and prepare pilgrims for this great ritual.

Saudi Arabia welcomed last week its first batch of hajj pilgrims since before the coronavirus pandemic, which prompted authorities to sharply restrict the annual ritual. One of the five pillars of Islam, the hajj must be undertaken by all Muslims who have the means at least once in their lives. Usually one of the world's largest religious gatherings, about 2.5 million people participated in 2019. But after the onset of the pandemic in 2020, Saudi authorities announced they would only let 1,000 pilgrims to take part. The following year, they increased the total to 60,000 fully vaccinated Saudi citizens and residents chosen through a lottery. Barring overseas pilgrims caused deep disappointment among Muslims worldwide, who typically save for years to take part.

In April, the kingdom announced it would permit one million Muslims from inside and outside the country to participate in this year's hajj, which will take place in July. The hajj consists of a series of religious rites that are completed over five days in Islam's holiest city, Makkah, and surrounding areas of western Saudi Arabia. — Agencies



**JEDDAH:** Muslim pilgrims arrive at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah on June 5, 2022, prior to the annual hajj pilgrimage in the holy city of Makkah. — AFP

## Kuwaiti, British officials discuss regional, int'l issues



**LONDON:** Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhefeeri meets British Minister of State for Europe and North America James Cleverly. — KUNA

**LONDON:** Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhefeeri met British Minister of State for Europe and North America James Cleverly on Thursday to discuss a range of regional and international issues of common concern. The meeting, held at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, dealt with the historical cooperation and exemplary relationship that kept growing steadily over the past 123 years, according to a statement from Kuwait Embassy in London. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the level of partnership in all areas and stressed the need to continue building on the distinguished ties to serve the common interests of both countries and promote their roles in the regional affairs. — KUNA

## Dr Mahdi: Kuwait keen on supporting IFAD

**ROME:** The State of Kuwait is keen on supporting efforts by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) to feed the poor and aid progress worldwide, said a Kuwaiti official on Friday. Speaking to KUNA in an exclusive interview, Dr Khaled Mahdi — Kuwait's candidate for the IFAD's Presidency — said that his country in addition to Saudi Arabia had helped establish the fund in 1977 with the aim of developing rural areas as well as aiding the most impoverished and

hunger-stricken regions in the world. Over the course of 45 years, the State of Kuwait had a key role in supporting the fund in all its efforts, recounting the Kuwaiti presidency of the fund in 1993 through compatriot Fawzi Al-Sultan. Regarding his bid to lead the fund, Mahdi said that he would work on facing challenges facing the fund and finding solutions to urgent matters facing those most unfortunate.

He revealed that his campaign would focus on developing human resource via helping people to help themselves and achieving the items set by the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

IFAD's first special session of the Governing Council on July 7 will appoint the new President of the Fund. IFAD consists of 177 country members. Since 1978, the fund offered \$2.23 billion in low



**ROME:** Kuwait's candidate for the IFAD's Presidency Dr Khaled Mahdi. — KUNA

interest loans to fund projects benefiting 518 million people around the globe. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Firemen battled a blaze reported Saturday evening at two warehouses that belong to the farmers' union in Abdali. No injuries were reported in the incident, Kuwait Fire Force said in a statement, adding that an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.



**KUWAIT:** Indian Ambassador Sibi George with resident ambassadors and members of the diplomatic community in Kuwait.

## India Environment Week ends with a grand finale

**KUWAIT:** The weeklong 'India Environment Week,' hosted by Indian embassy, Kuwait concluded with a grand finale on June 9. The event sought to highlight India's contribution to climate action and generate awareness on climate change which is one of the most crucial challenges the world faces today.

In his opening remarks, Indian Ambassador Sibi George underscored India government's commitments to combat climate change through its several programs and schemes including National

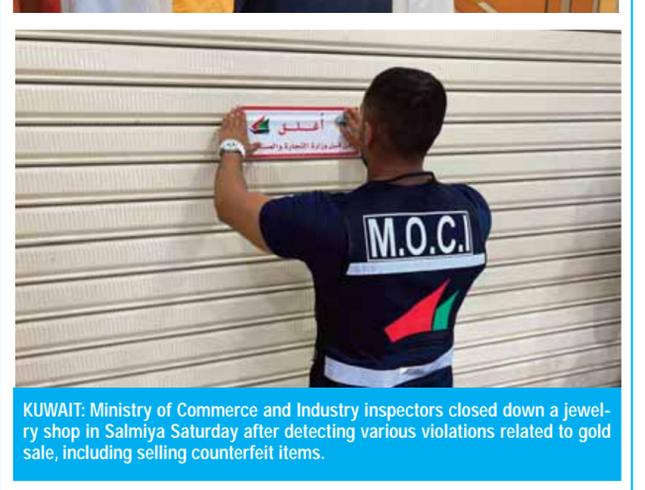
Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC), National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change to support the areas that are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change etc. He underlined the significant progress India has made in its efforts to save the planet, a press release issued by the embassy said.

During the week, the embassy organized a series of activities which commenced on 5 June with the symbolic planting of a mango tree at India House. The embassy highlighted the rich flora and fauna of India, shared information on Indian Ocean, India's rivers and islands and its herbs. Daily online quizzes, painting and drawing competition and presentations on India's successful climate action were also held during the week.

An exhibition on Indian herbal medici-

nal plants was inaugurated by the ambassador along with the resident ambassadors present at the celebrations. During the event, a speech by Prime Minister of India at the launch of LiFE movement was shown to the audience. The ambassador felicitated the winners of painting and drawing competition and daily online quiz conducted during the week.

Indian dance school Anjali School of Dance presented classical dance items in Bharatnatyam and Kuchipudi styles in addition to a few semi-classical items. The event was attended by many resident ambassadors and members of diplomatic community in Kuwait, media persons and members of the Indian community. The event witnessed enthusiastic response with people from different walks of life in Kuwait participating virtually as well as physically, the release added.



**KUWAIT:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry inspectors closed down a jewelry shop in Salmiya Saturday after detecting various violations related to gold sale, including selling counterfeit items.