

Local

Kuwaitis building fourth floor for their newlywed children to avoid high rents

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: As housing prices continue to rise, it is becoming increasingly difficult for young couples to afford renting their own apartments. In Kuwait, many Kuwaiti newlyweds find themselves struggling to pay high rentals while waiting to receive their government houses, which often leads to financial stress. So Kuwaiti families have adopted a potential solution that can alleviate this problem, which is building an extra floor in the parents' house for newly married couples. Such an arrangement provides benefits for both the newlyweds and their parents.

By living in the same household with their parents, the couple can receive practical and emotional support and lower living costs, since parents usually let the couples live for free or pay nominal rent. Despite the multiple benefits of this move for Kuwaiti families, some people discourage this, especially when houses exceed three floors.

Ayoub Al-Saffar, a real estate consultant said: "This phenomenon is spreading among Kuwaitis due to the housing crisis, which has forced people to build a fourth floor on top of their private houses for their newly married children to live near them and prevent paying high rent. This step is related to two main factors: The high cost of housing and rental apartments and directly related to the slow process of distributing government houses to Kuwaiti couples, which leaves newlywed Kuwaitis

with no choice but to either find an apartment on rent or build an extra floor and live in with their parents."

Building an extra floor is an efficient solution for Kuwaitis when compared to renting an apartment. Additionally, parents' houses are often located in neighborhoods the couples are familiar and more comfortable with. However, Saffar discourages exceeding three floors, as he said that it affects the infrastructure of the area and its services. "Each area was designed to accommodate a population density of only 210 percent, while the situation has exceeded 350 percent. We have only seen paper distributions lately. Houses in Mutlaa entered the implementation stage only a short while ago, while in South Saad Al-Abdullah, they are still on paper," he added.

Building an extra floor for newly married couples in their parents' house can be an attractive solution, but as with any major decision, it is important to carefully consider the legal and financial implications before proceeding. The Municipal Council has approved requests to allow Kuwaitis to build a fourth floor in their private houses, but



Ayoub Al-Saffar



based on certain regulations. Saffar said as long as building a fourth floor is not officially legalized in Kuwait, homeowners cannot benefit from the

extra value that is supposed to be added to the house, because it cannot be sold, which makes the expenses and the risk worthless for many people.

Attending coronation reflects deep ties: FM

LONDON: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said His Highness the Amir's Representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's presence at UK King Charles III's coronation ceremony reflects deep ties between both sides' leaders, peoples and royals. In a statement to KUNA and Kuwait Television on the sidelines of his participation in the coronation ceremony on Saturday, he said His Highness the Crown Prince met King Charles III at a reception at Buckingham Palace on Friday and conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The foreign minister added that King Charles III expressed gratitude for the bilateral ties, and thanked His Highness the Crown Prince for participating in the coronation ceremony. He pointed out that King Charles III visited Kuwait eight times when he was Crown Prince of the United Kingdom, and is familiar with Kuwait and appreciates it so much. He stressed that the coronation day is a historic day for the British, and the leadership and people of Kuwait share joy with the British people on this day, wishing the King of Britain further best of luck. — KUNA



Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



KUWAIT: A student at The Universal American School (UAS) in Hawally receives his bonus from the Bankee program.



Sulaiman Al-Marzouq is seen during the tour aimed at following up on the implementation of the Bankee program.



NBK delegates are seen in a photo with students and UAS staff.

Price surges coming to more health services

KUWAIT: Official sources said the health ministry is going ahead with increasing other medical services' fees for residents following its decision to impose additional charges on blood bags for non-Kuwaitis who are residents or visitors.

The sources said the health ministry was hoping to limit its services to Kuwaitis only during this year, but Daman Health Insurance company needs more time to start full service, so health ministry will increase fees to be somewhat close to prices in the private sector.

The sources said the next step will be increasing fees at the maternity hospital, x-rays, in addition to selling medicine and not just paying KD 5 fees at the health center to dispense the doctor's prescription.

They said the current dispensing of medicine has some squandering despite the latest fees as the patient is receiving more medicine than he needs as some doctors want to help some patients and this will be faced by selling medicine and not just by charging a fee, but that in addition to instructing pharmacies to dispense just one box of medicine even if the prescription has more on it.

The sources said the health ministry will not make its fees similar to the private sector but the fees will be increased to be suitable with the international increases in medical services, that in addition to start banning some services for expatriates due to its cost and will be limited to Kuwaitis only and will not wait for Daman's full operations.

NBK 'Bankee' program promotes financial literacy

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues its ongoing follow-up of the pilot phase of "Bankee" financial literacy program for government and private school students, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority "Nazaha". In this context, the bank organized a visit to The Universal American School (UAS) in Hawally, as part of the executive management's tour to follow up on the program's implementation.

The visitors included Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO of NBK - Kuwait, Athraa Al-Arrak, Senior Supervisor, Private Education at Ministry of Education, Yasmine Al-Sharhan, Observer of Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations at "Nazaha", Norah Al-Ghanim, Owner and Director of UAS, and Sumayah Al-Jasem, Founder, Managing Director at Creative Confidence.

During the tour, the visitors reviewed all the details of implementing the "Bankee" program, including the virtual bank experience that allows students to have a financial account in which they can trade using the "Bankee" virtual currency, and how students receive bonuses as a result of accumulating the program's currency in their accounts. They also visited the classrooms to witness how the program has become part of students' daily lives.

Additionally, they engaged in discussions with teachers and students and listened to various ideas and opinions aiming to enrich the program, as well as all the details of the program's day-to-day implementation in the school.

On the sidelines of the visit, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq said: "Through our follow-up visits to the schools participating in the Bankee program, we witnessed the great success of the program's pilot phase and the high engagement from all stakeholders including students, families, teachers and the program's superintendents. We also felt how the programs positively reflects on the students' behavior and understanding of core financial concepts and practices."

"We focus on aligning NBK's leading CSR's contributions with the government's and the Central Bank of Kuwait's strides to promote financial literacy and increase financial inclusion, recognizing how crucial is spreading financial culture in achieving comprehensive and sustainable development," Marzouq added.

"Bankee combines two key pillars in our strategy to achieve sustainable development. On one hand, it aims to promote financial literacy and support the endeavors to achieve financial inclusion, whereas on the other hand, it serves the endeavors to develop education. We are confident that the program will advance these endeavors in a significant and effective manner moving forward," he explained.

Marzouq mentioned that the program serves as an exemplary for private sector's delivering on its CSR's commitments, and also reflects how the concerted efforts of the private sector, government and civil society contribute to the success of such key initiatives.

"Bankee's substantial success according to all indica-

tors proves that the program will be a milestone in NBK's rich CSR record, as well as in the endeavors to promote financial inclusion and financial literacy in Kuwait, as it introduces a new, integrated vision to advance these endeavors," he noted.

"NBK firmly believes that the human capital is crucial for achieving sustainable future growth. Accordingly, it greatly focuses on supporting all initiatives aiming to up-skill and develop young Kuwaiti people, whose response always exceeds the expectations," he concluded.

The "Bankee" program was introduced in selected Kuwaiti schools by NBK in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and Kuwait Anticorruption Authority (Nazaha). The program's goal is to enhance financial literacy among students by teaching them financial literacy through practical and engaging experiential methods.

The program is the first-of-its-kind in Kuwait to be introduced by NBK to explore innovative solutions to promote financial inclusion and sustainable financial literacy among society members, especially school students. The program's primary goal is to teach students core financial concepts such as earning, spending, saving, and financial responsibilities. This goal is achieved by employing applied learning and gamification techniques to simulate a real-world economy within the classroom.

The pilot phase will span the entire 2022/2023 academic year, with nine schools from various governorates (for boys and girls), including six government and three private schools. The primary objective of this phase is to evaluate the program's implementation settings by engaging teachers and students in introductory workshops to assess, enhance, and modify implementation features to align with the existing educational curriculum.

KFF to use Flyboard in some fire accidents

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) announced on Sunday that it will start using the Flyboard in some fire accidents that take place in narrow places. In a press release, KFF said that it had conducted several trials on the Flyboard in the presence of the KFF Chief Lt-Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad. It added that this experiment seeks to improve the quality

of KFF services and equipment. Several high-ranked members of the KFF have attended the trials, it noted.

In other news, the public relations and media department at the KFF has received a report to the central command administration on Sunday which reported that workers have been trapped by a scaffold on duty. "The search and rescue department went to the site of the incident. Upon the team's arrival, it was found that the building consisted of eight floors and there were two workers trapped by the scaffold while they were doing the external cleaning of the building between the fifth and sixth floors," the KFF announced. — Agencies



KUWAIT: A member of the Kuwait Fire Force practices using the Flyboard. — KUNA



The fire force's rescue and search department helps two workers trapped while cleaning a building.