

Al-Jarallah: Constant dialogue with US to release Guantanamo prisoners jailed for sectarian remarks



Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Khaled Al-Jarallah and China's ambassador to Kuwait Huang Jiemin during a ceremony celebrating China's national holiday on Monday evening, Sept. 26, 2011. (Al Watan)

Wafaa Qansour
Staff Writer

KUWAIT: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Khaled Al-Jarallah applauded on Monday evening the statements made by Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs Houshiar Zibari, who stressed the importance of maintaining good relationships with Kuwait in light of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port. Al-Jarallah said that he appreciates Zibari's efforts to have a strong relationship between the two countries, adding that the statements made by Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Al-Sabah for enforcing the decrees of the United Na-

tions stem from his keenness to push Iraq to regain its role among the international society. He noted that there are no developments regarding the port.

Concerning Kuwaiti prisoners in Guantanamo, he asserted that Minister Al-Sabah did deliberate the issue with Clinton, since Kuwait is constantly discussing that matter with the government of the United States.

Regarding Kuwait's preparations to host the Asian Dialogue Conference next month, he said that relentless efforts are being exerted to prepare for the conference. He also hoped that the discussions with the guests would be constructive and fruitful. However, he revealed that Kuwait

will not raise any new topics during the conference and would rather discuss several issues that include the economic challenges facing the Asian continent.

When asked about the return of Ali Abdullah Saleh to Yemen and claims that there will be an amendment in the Gulf initiative, he said that he was not informed that there will be any amendments, but believes that the atmosphere is suitable to respond to that initiative. Meanwhile, Al-Jarallah cemented Kuwait's keenness to strengthen Kuwaiti-Chinese relationships on all levels on the occasion of the country's national holiday. He described China as a 'strategic' partner, and praised its positive role in the international arena.

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti court Tuesday jailed a tweeter for three months for disparaging Sunni Muslims on the social network page, his lawyer said.

The sentence means that Nasser Abul, 26, will be set free because he has already spent more than three months in detention, his lawyer Khaled Al-Shatti said. Abul was arrested early June. "He was convicted on the charge that he wrote remarks on his Twitter account deemed derogatory to Sunni Muslims. We will appeal the ruling," Al-Shatti said.

The court acquitted him of a second charge that he also insulted the leaders of Kuwait Gulf partners Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the lawyer said.

During the trial, Abul denied the charges saying a

hacker had written the offensive remarks on his Twitter account and that he had deleted them as soon as he saw them. The Kuwait Society for Human Rights and Amnesty International have called for Abul to be freed, saying it believes he is a "prisoner of conscience detained for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression."

The same court on Sunday sentenced Sunni Islamist activist Mubarak Al-Bathali to three months in jail for writing remarks on his Twitter account deemed derogatory to Shiite Muslims. Several Kuwaiti MPs have strongly criticized what they described as a government crackdown on bloggers and users of social network sites Facebook and Twitter. -AFP

Al-Uthayna: Executing new hydroelectric projects worth KD 17 million

Khalid Al-Otaibi
Staff writer

KUWAIT: The Minister of Electricity and Water Engineer Salem Al-Uthayna announced that ministry will soon sign four contracts worth 17 million Kuwaiti dinars for developing the electricity and water network in the country and improving its performance. He indicated that the ministry has obtained recently the approval of Central Tender Committee to award tenders to four companies which submitted the best proposals for executing the projects. Al-Uthayna said, during a press conference held yesterday, that the projects include changing all old valves with new valves made from ductile iron worth KD12 million and the ministry will change the water network in several areas which was made of asbestos into ductile iron as well because the latter contributes effectively in protecting the environment and provides better services.

He added that the ministry will also sign a contract for maintenance of high-pressure lines

(400KV) worth four million dinars, in order to improve the performance of electricity network and avoiding electricity cut at this network.

The minister unveiled that ministry is currently reviewing the proposals of the companies which were submitted for executing the project of importing, running and installing new photoelectric cellular system wherein the devices of this system will be installed on the roofs of the buildings of the Ministry of Electricity and Water and the Ministry of Public Works. The ministry of Electricity and Water is interested in selecting qualified companies to execute this project because the project will be expanded later to cover more government buildings, therefore the relevant government authorities have already assigned KD 20 million for this project through several stages and assigned five million dinars for the first stage which is attached to the budget of the current fiscal year (FY). He noted that the ministry aims through this project to find a renewable alternative resource of energy in addition to producing power by the traditional ways.

Kuwaiti MPs' trial for death fatwa postponed

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti court on Tuesday postponed the trial of Member of Parliament (MP) Mohammed Hayef on charge of disseminating false information to Oct 18.

The interior ministry has filed a complaint against the lawmaker for requesting a fatwa (religious edict) on killing the Syrian ambassador to Kuwait Bassam Abdul Majeed.

The MP sought the religious edict during a rally held near the Syrian embassy in Kuwait City against the Syrian regime.

Hayef denied all the charges leveled at him by the court, *Al-Aan* news portal reported.

Comments on the Web site varied from full support to Hayef for allegedly speaking up for the nation to a total condemnation of his call to allow the killing of people.

Kuwait and Bahrain on Aug. 8 recalled their ambassadors to Syria for consultations, one day after Saudi Arabia asked its top diplomat in Damascus to return home.

Qatar was the first Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country to recall its ambassador in the Syrian capital after the embassy was attacked by an angry mob.

Doha also closed its embassy in Damascus after demonstrators attacked the building housing it. -Gulfnews

Amir to inaugurate upcoming Asia Cooperation Dialogue on Oct. 10

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah will inaugurate the opening meeting of the 10th session of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) at Bayan Palace on Oct. 10, a Foreign Ministry official announced on Tuesday. Ambassador Mohammad Ahmad Al-Mejren, the Director of the Asia Department, said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the main meetings of the session, scheduled on Oct. 10-11, would be preceded by a preparatory meeting on Oct. 9. Elaborating, he said a tripartite meeting would be held, on Oct. 8, at the level of ministry directors, comprising Kuwait, the chairman of the current ACD session, Iran, the chairman of the previous session, and Tajikistan, that would head the coming one, as well as Thailand in its capacity as the general coordinator of the forum. Work

sessions, due to get underway at night on Oct. 10, will be held for two days (at Sheraton Hotel), under chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Sabah, who would address the conferees, along with his Thai counterpart.

Ministerial meetings of the forum will tackle diverse issues, such as the global financial crisis, its impact on Asian nations, boosting cooperation among these countries in the economic, commercial, transport, environmental and cultural sectors, Al-Mejren said.

Shedding further light on schedule of the upcoming gathering, the director added that the forum would be crowned with the "Kuwait Declaration," to be followed with a joint conference by Sheikh Dr. Mohammed, his Tajik and Thai counterparts. Participating delegations will represent,

in addition to Kuwait, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

Steering committee will be headed by the Foreign Undersecretary, Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah, and will group the Director of the Asia Department Ambassador Mohammad Al-Roumi, the Director of the Protocols Ambassador Dhari Al-Ejran, the Director of the Financial and Administrative Affairs Ambassador Abdullah Al-Mansour, the Director of the Bureau of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Dr. Ambassador Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

The ACD is a body created in 2002 to promote Asian cooperation at a continental level and to help integrate separate regional cooperation organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

It also aims at promoting interdependence among Asian countries in all areas of cooperation by identifying Asia's common strengths and opportunities which will help reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for Asian people whilst developing a knowledge-based society within Asia and enhancing community and people empowerment, expanding the trade and financial market within Asia.

The idea of an Asia Cooperation Dialogue was raised at the First International Conference of Asian Political Parties, held in Manila between 17-20 September 2000. -KUNA

Minister Safar signs four contracts worth KD 9 million

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Fadhil Safar Al Safar signed on Tuesday four maintenance contracts in Al-Asimah, Al-Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates.

The total amount of the contracts amount to 8,625,200 Kuwaiti dinars.

Two contracts deal for maintenance on public roads and avenues in Al-Asimah governorate, worth KD 2.580 million, a second similar contract was signed worth KD 2.505 million.

The other contracts deal with roads, open areas in Al-Ahmadi governorate, worth KD 2.652 million and another contract of maintenance works in sewage and rain networks at Al-Ahmadi, Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates, worth KD 888,000. -KUNA

Ambassador discusses cooperation on antiquities, tourism with Saudi official

RIYADH: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah met on Tuesday with President of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

The ambassador told KUNA his talks with the Saudi official covered means to boost cooperation in the field of tourism and antiquities. He praised the great effort by the SCTA chairman and staff, which contribute to making the Saudi kingdom a great tourism destination for citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Sheikh Hamad Al-Jaber also noted there are great developments in the field of tourism in the kingdom, as regions and cities compete to host tourism, cultural, scientific, economic, national, and other festivals and events.

The diplomat also said the SCTA president's visit to Kuwait, due in October, would be a great opportunity to further cooperation between the two GCC countries in this field. -KUNA

'The people of Kuwait are able to confront corruption'

Faisal Al-Yateem
Staff Writer

KUWAIT: MP Jamaan Al-Harbash has urged lawmakers who expressed their intention to file interpellation motions against the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah at the beginning of the next legislative term, in addition to the motion filed by MP Ahmad Al-Saadoun at the previous legislative term and being looked into by the Constitutional Court, to withdraw their motions and to reach a compromise among the various political forces on filing a motion regarding bribery and corruption in the country.

During the symposium held Tuesday in the diwaniya of lawyer Osama Al-Shaheen, as part of the joint activities of political forces, under the theme "The Secrets of the Multimillion Accounts", MP Al-

Harbash said that there is an attempt to distort the issue as a money laundering case rather than a fact of bribery. He added that people who were involved in money laundering do not deposit such huge amounts of money in the bank accounts of famous people. He appealed to the lawmakers who have been referred to the Public Prosecution by banks, to sue the banks if they were innocent instead of launching statements.

For his part, representative of the National Democratic Alliance, former MP and former minister Dr. Abdulmohsen Al-Medij pointed out that corruption in Kuwait started at the mid-1970s, specifically after the death of late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, when an attempt was made to fake elections. He added, "In 1986 the Parliament was dissolved and the Constitution was suspended but the people of Kuwait united to confront

those who wanted to ignore the Constitution".

Al-Medij added, "We all hear about vote rigging but the government, which is supposed to confront corruption, cover up criminals. Honest people are being attacked by corrupt media." He stressed that the issue of the multimillion accounts is unprecedented and could be the end of corruption and appealed to the people of Kuwait to confront corruption.

For his part, member of the political office of the Salafi Movement expressed regret over the volume of corruption in Kuwait, which hit the parliament. He said, "We have the right to know who deposited the money in the bank accounts of the MPs and why he did so". Additionally, he stressed that the movement support all laws related to confronting corruption, including the financial disclosure law.

Canada seeks expanded airlines agreement with Kuwait

OTTAWA: Canada is seeking an expanded airline agreement with Kuwait, one year after relations were sullied with its Gulf neighbor, the United Arab Emirates, over the same issue.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced Canada's intention to seek an air transport agreement with Kuwait, after a meeting Monday with the country's Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, on Parliament Hill.

Officials in Harper's office did not have additional details of the proposed plan, but Sheikh Nasser said Canadian airlines are welcome in his country.

"We have, as I have mentioned to you Mr. Prime Minister, an open-sky policy ... Let me welcome all your airlines at any time," Sheikh Nasser said, standing next

to Harper. Canada signed a memorandum of understanding with Kuwait in July to use one of its military bases to support operations in Afghanistan.

The move was necessary after the UAE booted the Canadian Forces out of Dubai after Ottawa refused to grant more landing rights to two of its airlines.

The diplomatic damage caused by the UAE dispute led to the imposition of expensive travel visas for Canadian business travelers to the Arabian Gulf country.

Harper raised the possibility of the new airline agreement as he and Sheikh Nasser announced a new investment-protection agreement on what was the first visit of a Kuwaiti prime minister to Canada.

Harper said the new agreement would

offer significant investment potential for Canadian manufacturing and infrastructure companies in the oil-rich Gulf state.

"Kuwait already recognizes the advantages of investing in Canada, including our stability and relative strength in a time of global economic uncertainty," Harper said.

"This bilateral agreement will provide greater predictability and certainty for Canadians investing in Kuwait, and comprehensive protection for investors in both countries through a framework of legally binding rights and obligations."

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters group welcomed Monday's investment agreement.

"By providing businesses with greater certainty and predictability, this agree-

ment will improve Canadian manufacturers and exporters confidence in this growing market," Jayson Myers, president of the organization, said in a statement.

"Kuwait being an important member of the Gulf Co-operation Council, this agreement is also a positive step forward in improving our trade relations with a region that is increasingly important for Canadian business." Canada's trade with Kuwait is dwarfed by the amount of business it does with the U.A.E. Critics accused the Harper government of compromising Canada's business interests in the U.A.E. in the airline dispute.

Two-way trade between Canada and Kuwait totaled only \$129 million last year, with Canadian exports at \$97 million. -Canadian Press