

Local

In partnership with Zain, KON continues to instill spirit of innovation in next generation

Company joined launch of 10th season in strategic collaboration with LOYAC



Participants of the 10th season of the program.

KUWAIT: Zain took part in the opening ceremony of the 10th season of the KON Social Entrepreneurship Program, held at the American University of Kuwait (AUK), celebrating a decade of achievements and initiatives that have empowered thousands of young people under the long-standing strategic partnership between Zain and the non-profit organization LOYAC, which spans over 21 years. This special occasion shed light on the accomplishments of the program since its inception 10 years ago, as part of the collaboration between LOYAC and Babson College, one of the world's most prestigious academic institutions in business and entrepreneurship.

Zain played an active role in the initiative as a key supporter of youth empowerment and entrepreneurship.

The ceremony featured a welcome speech by Faisal Al-Duwaihees, Youth Empowerment and Community Partnerships Specialist at Zain Kuwait, alongside remarks from LOYAC and Babson officials and strategic partner representatives. The event also showcased inspiring presentations and testimonials from KON alumni, with a wide audience including current participants, past graduates, trainers, mentors and entrepreneurs.

KON is one of the most impactful youth initiatives that Zain proudly supports every year, given its tangible impact in nurturing the skills of participants aged 12 to 16. The program includes interactive workshops, training and mentoring sessions, and field visits, through which participants gain exposure to key concepts such as management,

critical thinking, teamwork and tackling social and environmental challenges.

Zain expressed its pride in the strategic partnership with LOYAC, which has yielded a series of high-impact programs that have empowered Kuwaiti youth and equipped them with the tools to shape their futures. This aligns closely with Zain's sustainability strategy focused on supporting education and entrepreneurship. In the weeks ahead, KON participants will continue their training journey, which will culminate in presenting their startup projects to a specialized judges panel comprised of experts and professionals from Zain and leading private sector companies. The most outstanding teams will be selected and honored during the closing ceremony later this year.



Al-Duwaihees delivers Zain's opening speech.



Indonesian Ambassador Lena Maryana, British Ambassador Belinda Lewis, Head of the NATO Office at the NIRC, Nora-Elise Beck and Canadian Ambassador Aliya Mawani take a group photo.

Kuwait bids farewell to four women diplomats

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: The departure of four women ambassadors from Kuwait's diplomatic corps was marked on Wednesday with a farewell lunch hosted by Indonesian Ambassador Lena Maryana at her residence in Mishref. The gathering honored British Ambassador Belinda Lewis, Canadian Ambassador Aliya Mawani, US Ambassador Karen Sasahara, and Head of the NATO Office at the NIRC, Nora-Elise Beck.

Ambassador Maryana described the gathering as more than a farewell — it was a tribute to the connections formed through shared purpose, respect and sisterhood. "It's a bitter situation," she said, referring to the departure of what she described as "four strong ladies." British Ambassador Belinda Lewis who completed her tenure with a focus on education, security, and cultural exchange, expressed gratitude for the solidarity she found among fellow women diplomats. "I've learnt a great deal from so many of you, and I will take that sense of camaraderie and strength with me wherever I go."

Lewis spoke candidly about the challenges that come with leadership roles and the comfort found in having a trusted circle of peers. "Sometimes we just have hard days," she said. "There are times where I sit there and I'm not sure who to ask, and I'm nervous or scared that I'll get it wrong. But knowing there are people you can turn to, who will listen and not judge you — that's worth its weight in gold." Canadian Ambassador Aliya Mawani reflected on her three-and-a-half years in Kuwait with a similar tone of gratitude. "So many people in this group have been instrumental in my learning about Kuwait, in my really feeling at home," she said. "This isn't just a network — it's a group of women who lifted each other and helped each other grow."

She also highlighted the practical value of having a supportive community. "Many of us are first-time ambassadors and working parents. Just hearing someone say, 'You don't have to show up to everything — I know you have things to do,' made all the difference." Nora-Elise Beck, who headed NATO's presence in Kuwait, reflected on her experience as a woman in the security field, often having to counter gender-based assumptions. "I get asked, 'As a woman, how do you do your job in security?' And my response is always, 'As a man, how do you?'" she said. "That kind of question wouldn't even be asked of them."

She added, "One of the reasons I'm able to do my job is because of the support I got from all the women in Kuwait." Despite her extensive experience across the Middle East, Beck noted that the professional solidarity she found in Kuwait was unlike anything she had encountered before. "This kind of professional backing among women — I haven't experienced it before. I hope it's not unique to Kuwait. I hope we can replicate it in other environments."

Although US Ambassador Karen Sasahara was unable to attend due to departure preparations, she was remembered fondly by her peers and honored for her leadership and warmth throughout her time in Kuwait. Ambassador Maryana concluded her remarks with a heartfelt message to the departing diplomats: "Though your time here will be finished soon, the mark you've left is lasting."

Cabinet reviews outcomes of Amir's visit to France

KUWAIT: The Council of Ministers held its weekly meeting Tuesday morning at Bayan Palace, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Following the session, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shareeda Abdullah Al-Maousherji outlined the key outcomes of the meeting, including a review of the recent official visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the French Republic on July 13 and 14.

The Cabinet was briefed on the official talks held between His Highness the Amir and French President Emmanuel Macron, which focused on enhancing the deep-rooted bilateral relations between Kuwait and France. The discussions addressed ways to expand cooperation across various fields to achieve mutual benefits and included consultations on regional and international developments. The Cabinet also noted the signing of two key declarations of intent during the visit: - A strategic investment partnership between Kuwait and France covering the period from 2025 to 2035. - An agreement to enhance cultural cooperation and celebrate the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations in 2026.

His Highness the Amir and his delegation attended the Bastille Day military parade in Paris, marking the French National Day alongside President Macron. The Cabinet reviewed the outcomes of His Highness' meeting with French Minister of Foreign Trade Laurent Saint-Martin and members of the French Chamber of Commerce. During the meeting, His Highness emphasized Kuwait's commitment to attracting investment in key sectors, fostering strategic partnerships with major French companies, and transferring knowledge to develop national human capital and create job opportunities for youth.

Additionally, His Highness met with Professor Fabrice Barleset, CEO of Gustave Roussy Hospital, and international advisor Remi Theollet, where he underscored the importance of advancing Kuwaiti-French cooperation in the healthcare sector. The discussions focused on improving medical services, developing

Heritage markets revive the spirit of traditional souq

KUWAIT: Head of the Voluntary Work Center (VCC) Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah extended her heartfelt gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his directive to establish two heritage markets modeled after Al-Mubarakiya market in the northern and southern regions of the country. In a statement to KUNA on Wednesday, Sheikha Amthal said the initiative reflects His Highness the Amir's dedication to supporting the needs of citizens and promoting cultural and economic activity across Kuwait.

She noted that the heritage markets aim to serve residents in those regions while enriching Kuwait's cultural landscape. His Highness has entrusted Minister of Information and Culture, and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi with overseeing the study and implementation of the projects, given their historical and national significance.

"We deeply appreciate His Highness the Amir's generous and caring gesture, and his keen interest in addressing the needs of the northern and southern communities," Sheikha Amthal said, praying for His Highness' continued health and well-being, and



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Council of Ministers holds its weekly meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

healthcare infrastructure, and enhancing treatment standards to raise the quality of life in Kuwait. The Cabinet also reviewed a number of letters received by the Amiri Diwan from heads of state of brotherly and friendly nations, which focused on bolstering bilateral cooperation and strengthening relations with Kuwait.

The Cabinet also examined a visual presentation delivered by Sheikh Ahmad Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Government Performance Follow-Up Agency, highlighting the Agency's 2024 annual report. The report addressed six areas, including: Government agency compliance with Cabinet Resolution No. 713 of 2024; Ministerial decision follow-ups; Progress on major government projects; Public opinion assessments; Review of the Audit Bureau's report on the 2023-2024 budget and other assigned tasks.

The Cabinet commended the agency's efforts in enhancing government's efficiency and directed all ministries and entities to address the report's observations and implement its recommendations, while updating the agency on their progress. In a separate briefing, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Abdullah Al-Ajeel presented the launch of the second segment of the third phase of the Capital Market System Development Program. The Minister emphasized the program's importance as a transformative initiative included in Kuwait's national development plan.

The project, led by the Capital Markets Authority in cooperation with the Central Bank of Kuwait, Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait Clearing Company, and other financial entities, is designed to modernize financial infrastructure and elevate Kuwait's classification to an advanced emerging market. The Cabinet praised the combined efforts of all stakeholders involved in this national financial initiative. The Cabinet also reviewed a presentation by Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on the Cultural Path Project in Kuwait City. The project aims to create a vibrant cultural and tourism hub that reflects Kuwait's national identity and preserves historical heritage through an integrated urban development plan.

Minister Al-Mutairi explained that the design incorporates elements of Kuwaiti architecture, sustainable development, and modern transportation, while serving as a platform for cultural events and creative industries under Kuwait Vision 2035. The Cabinet referred the Cultural Path Project to the Joint Ministerial Committee for Economic Affairs and Public Services for further study and to provide recommendations. At the close of the session, the Council of Ministers reviewed several items on the agenda, approving a number and referring others to specialized ministerial committees for further evaluation and implementation. — KUNA



Head of the Volunteer Work Center, Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inspects an old heritage market in the southern region of the country. — KUNA photos



for Kuwait's ongoing security, prosperity and stability. She also expressed her appreciation to Minister Al-Mutairi for involving the Voluntary Work Center in the initiative, citing the center's prior experience in developing Al-Mubarakiya market in collaboration with the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait and the Kuwait Heritage Society.

"This project seeks to revive the spirit of tradition-

al Kuwaiti markets while integrating modern elements that respect both cultural authenticity and contemporary needs," she said. Sheikha Amthal further extended her thanks to Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Meshari, as well as the Kuwait Municipality, for their role in designing and initiating the establishment of the northern heritage market in Jahra. — KUNA