

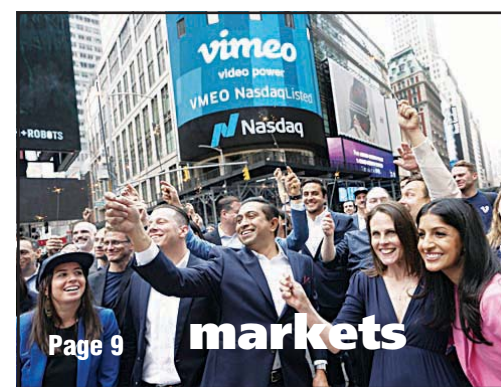


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ARAB TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT
Established in 1977 / www.arabtimesonline.com



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THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021 / SHAWWAL 15, 1442 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 17698

16 PAGES

150 FILS

Kuwait backs UN accountability find



KUNA photo

The Kuwaiti aid convoy headed Wednesday from Cairo to the Rafah crossing in preparation for entering the Gaza Strip to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. In a statement to KUNA, Head of the Kuwaiti delegation, Director of Disaster and Emergency Department at Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Yousef Al-Maraj, said that the Kuwaiti Red Crescent is 'the first volunteer team to enter the Gaza Strip'. Al-Maraj added that KRCS responded urgently to provide support, food, and medical supplies to Gaza Strip, in addition to providing materials to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. He noted that medical aid will be delivered to the Palestine Red Crescent Society for distribution to hospitals suffering from a lack of medical supplies. He said that the Kuwaiti convoy was carrying 85 tons of aid, including nearly 1,000 food baskets that were bought from the Egyptian local market.

Opinion

Gaza reconstruction, not Hamas pockets

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IT is easy to wage wars, but it is very difficult to rebuild what has been destroyed, especially in an international pariah area such as the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by the Hamas group that is classified as a terrorist group globally.

The firm American position was based on this aspect. President Joe Biden said, "We will prevent Hamas from benefiting from the funds intended for the reconstruction program of the Gaza Strip. We will mobilize international support necessary for this reconstruction campaign".

It has been clear since last Friday that this group, which works according to Iranian directives, has realized that the pressure cards it exercised during the conflict are no longer valid during the time of ceasefire and negotiations on the basis of the American initiative for the establishment of two states.

The Hamas leader Khaled Meshal tried to block the support project, saying, "The movement is sticking to directing funds for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip through its channels", supplementing the missing part of the picture that the Head of the Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh declared in his last speech when he said, "... by the efforts of the benevolent Arabs, we will work to reconstruct Gaza ..."

The benevolent Arabs that Haniyeh is talking about are the ones whose photographs the supporters of Hamas had burned in some Arab capitals, that is, the Gulf states. These states' rights were violated by the leaders of the Palestinian factions in Gaza after decades of financial and political support. These leaders gave credit for their achievements, if any, to Iran, which employed them in its expansion project and provided them with a few missiles to attack Israel whenever orders came from Tehran.

There is no doubt that the US administration's position to "coordinate with the Gulf countries and donors to deliver funds through the United Nations and the Palestinian Authority to the affected people" is what Gaza really needs. This will happen only according to an international fund under the supervision of the United Nations so that the money does not go into

the pockets of blood merchants in the Gaza Strip as usual.

The haters may have realized that there is no solution to the issue except through international peace references. Any disturbance in this matter will increase the burden of the problems that the sector suffers from, because the international community, which supports Israel's right to defend itself, will neither allow these terrorist groups to lead the march nor obstruct it.

Therefore, all eyes have turned to Ramallah, where the internationally recognized authority will determine the direction that should be taken. It has expressed its position clearly through its Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki who said, "The positions of the American administration come in the right direction and can be built upon. The Palestinian side is dealing positively with the American positions and tendencies to achieve peace according to international references, foremost of which is the two-state solution for peace".

As per this fact, all of the Brotherhood's remnants in the Arab countries, including Kuwait, should stop embarrassing their countries by deliberately pushing them to adopt extremist positions that affect their international relations, presenting themselves as supporters of terrorism, and calling for "no normalization of ties with Israel".

The fact is that they are well aware normalization will happen inevitably, and whoever does not board this train will be trampled under the wheels of international ostracism and isolation.

In conclusion, the reconstruction of Gaza will not happen with Gulf money going into the pockets of the Hamas leaders to repeat the massacre that they recently committed in Gaza in a bid to raise the Arab shares of the Mullahs regime and the Muslim Brotherhood Group. It will go to the people of Gaza, who undoubtedly have today realized the extent of the terrible crime that Hamas has committed against them.

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Other Voices

Decisions applicable to some people only!

By Ali Ahmed Al-Baghli
Former Minister of Oil

THE selective decisions of the young minister - Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah - led to the bankruptcy of hundreds of young owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This is in addition to ruining the psyche of thousands of Kuwaitis and others who are sitting in their homes; while depriving them of the chance to meet their parents, brothers and friends.

Surprisingly, these decisions that affected millions of citizens and expatriates do not apply to some. A friend who is like a brother told me that while driving along Gulf Street, Sheraton Roundabout, Fahd Al-Salem Street and Al-Salhiya Complex last Friday; he saw hundreds of Asian men and women sitting beside each other without masks and no precautions were taken at all!

Therefore, we say to the geniuses of the Ministry of Health that these Asians work in our homes. We, Kuwaitis, will definitely contract the coronavirus once they are infected; considering they interact with us and supervise everything in our homes starting from our cars and others since they are employed as

drivers, cooks and household workers. Under such circumstances, what will happen to the Kuwaiti - who has been deprived of dozens of things which he has been accustomed to throughout his life due to the epidemic - if someone who drives his car, cooks his food or serves his meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner is infected?

We hope the young minister sheikh and the Council of Ministers will go to the street starting from the National Assembly building, up to the palace of Sheikh Nasser Al-Muhammad - may God prolong his life, Jahra Roundabout, Fahd Al-Salem Street and the bus stops to see with their own eyes what my friend and brother who was shocked to witness such a scenario last Friday. In this manner, they can see with their own eyes that the decisions of their young minister sheikh are applied only on certain people.

The new Indian corona strain called 'black fungus' causes closure of the lungs and kidneys. Treatment requires removal of the eyes or the nose. It caused the death of famous Egyptian comedian Samir Ghanem. This strain could have moved to Egypt through the Egyptian community in the United Arab Emirates who interacted with several millions of our Indian brothers in humanity living in the sisterly state - the Emirates.

We give the information in this article to the young minister sheikh, his assistants and members of his cabinet.

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Al-Baghli

S&P sees \$88.7 bln in the hole

Kuwait to register highest deficit to GDP ratio in Gulf

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Standard & Poor's (S&P) credit rating agency is expecting Kuwait to record the highest deficit to GDP ratio among Gulf countries in the current year by 20 percent, followed by Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates with 6 percent, Saudi Arabia with 5 percent, Oman with 4 percent, and Qatar with one percent, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The agency estimated that the cumulative deficit of Gulf governments would reach about \$355 billion during the period between 2021 and 2024.

According to the report issued by the agency, Saudi Arabia acquired about 60 percent of this deficit (equivalent to \$213 billion), and then Kuwait by 25 percent (equivalent to \$88.7 billion), the UAE by seven percent (equivalent to \$24.8 bil-

lion), and Oman by four percent (equivalent to \$14.2 billion). Kuwait, Abu Dhabi and Qatar may rely more on liquidating part of their assets to meet the deficit.

It is likely that Kuwait will issue a public debt law in 2021, but the size of the fiscal deficit that the agency expects until 2024 implies that it is likely to be exhausted, and the borrowing will be licensed under the law, which was previously proposed to have a limit of KD 20 billion, within three years.

Sustainable solutions that last for a longer period could include a comprehensive program of reforms and measures to control public finances such as by reducing subsidies, filling the gaps in expenditures, and imposing new taxes, like many other Gulf countries.

Egypt ... again

GENEVA, May 26, (Agencies): Kuwait is keen to push forward the outputs of an upcoming United Nations Human Rights Council emergency session on the implications of the humanitarian and human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, the ambassador said on Wednesday.

The session aims to highlight the need to adopt a Human Rights Council draft resolution to establish an international investigation committee and activate accountability mechanisms for the Israeli occupation's attacks on Gaza, Kuwait's permanent United Nations and international organisations in Geneva representative Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim said.

The remotely-held session, which comes to fruition after pressure by Kuwait and several Islamic countries, are being held in the wake of Israel's violations of the Geneva Convention provisions, said the diplomat in a statement.

Stemming from its commitment to defending the humanitarian and human rights conditions of the Palestinian people, Kuwait's Foreign Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah will make an intervention during the session, the statement mentioned.

The intervention will give impetus to the work of this session and its outputs in support of the just Palestinian position, Ambassador Al-Ghunaim added. The move's significance is also due to it being the first intervention of a Kuwaiti foreign minister at the Human Rights Council, since it was established in 2006.

The session will also be an opportunity to review and document Israel's violations, and to prevent further aggravating the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people.

The emergency session will be the ninth held by the Human Rights Council to discuss Israel's grave violations in the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken jetted to Egypt on Wednesday as he pressed ahead with a diplomatic mission aimed at shoring up a cease-fire that ended an 11-day war between Israel and the Gaza Strip's ruling Hamas militant group.

Blinken landed in Cairo a day after holding intensive talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. In Egypt, he met with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and other top officials. Later he traveled to Jordan to meet with King Abdullah II.

Blinken has vowed to "rally international support" to rebuild the destruction in hard-hit Gaza while promising to make sure that none of the aid reaches Hamas. He is

instead trying to bolster Hamas' rival, the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority.

Blinken has set modest goals for the trip, his first official visit to the Middle East as secretary of state. His main goals have been to help rebuild Gaza and lower the tensions in contested Jerusalem that helped fuel the war.

But he has made it made clear the US has no immediate plans to pursue peace talks between the sides and done little to address the underlying causes of the decades-long conflict, though he expressed hope for creating a "better environment" that might lead to negotiations.

In Cairo, Blinken on Wednesday met with el-Sissi for nearly two hours. Meeting with American diplomatic staff afterwards, he described Egypt as a "real and effective partner" that helped end the Gaza war and is helping "build something positive." El-Sissi spoke to President Joe Biden last week before and after the ceasefire was announced.

"I think we both believe strongly that Palestinians and Israelis deserve equally to, to live in safety and security to enjoy equal measures of freedom, opportunity and dignity. And we're working on that together," Blinken said before departing to Jordan.

Both Egypt and Jordan are key US allies that have peace agreements with Israel and frequently serve as mediators between Israel and the Palestinians. Egypt maintains ties with Hamas, but also enforces a tight blockade on Gaza, along with Israel, with a shared goal of preventing the Islamic group from arming.

The stop in Cairo, along with Biden's phone talks with el-Sissi, signal a closer relationship between the countries after a cooler beginning, when the US expressed concern over el-Sissi's human rights record.

The Gaza reconstruction effort will be an important test. The 11-day war killed more than 250 people, mostly Palestinians, and caused heavy destruction in the impoverished coastal territory. Preliminary estimates have put the damage in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Ahmed Aboul Gheit, secretary-general of the Arab League, said US commitment is critical for the region. Before the Gaza war, the Biden administration had kept its distance, preferring to focus on higher foreign policy priorities like China and Iran.

"In the absence of an effective role for the US, we should expect nothing but more cycles of violence and bloodshed of innocent people," he wrote in the Saudi daily Asharq Al-Awsat.

One of the US goals is to ensure that any assistance be kept out of the hands of Hamas, which opposes Israel's right to exist and which Israel and the US consider a terrorist group.

In Gaza, Hamas leader Yehiyeh Sinwar told journalists Wednesday that the group welcomed international reconstruction aid, as long as it did not come from Israel, and had no objections to international oversight.

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: At least 1,408 people have been diagnosed with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) over the last 24 hours, taking the total infections to 301,863, Spokesman for the Ministry of Health Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said on Tuesday.

The number of those recovered from the disease hit 1,158 over 24 hours, raising the overall recoveries to 287,357, he told KUNA in a statement.

Five patients succumbed to the coronavirus pandemic, he noted, indicating that the death toll has risen so far to 1,746.

Up to 12,760 patients are receiving treatment at hospitals, in addition to 146 cases at intensive care units, he stated.

Overall medical swabs rose to 2,545,841 after conducting 10,812 in the same period, Al-Sanad made clear. The

ratio between recoveries and swabs is 13.02 percent.

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health set today, Wednesday, the health measures necessary to leave and return to the State of Kuwait, including the need to register on the (Kuwait Traveler) platform and the (Shlonak) application.

The ministry said in a press statement that all (immunized) citizens are allowed to travel outside the country from Kuwait International Airport, while the ministry excluded from this procedure four categories, the first of which is citizens who have obtained a certificate approved by the Ministry of Health stating that they cannot obtain the vaccine for health reasons. (KUNA)