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Kuwait welcomes dropped UK visa requirements for citizens

Thais scrap pass

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (Agencies): Kuwait's embassy in Britain welcomed on Monday a new travel scheme that would exempt Kuwaitis and other Gulf Arab nationals from visa requirements, saying the measure will save both time and effort.

Under the new rules, Kuwaitis will only need to acquire an electronic travel permit in advance before visiting Britain, a move that encapsulates "long-standing and enduring" bilateral relations, according to an embassy statement.

On the new scheme, which comes into effect next year, it said it was the culmination of strenuous work on the part of the Kuwaiti foreign ministry, aiming to simplify travel to a country long considered a hotspot for citizens.

Kuwait's embassy will continue to work with relevant bodies in the UK to finalize the remaining details of the new travel plan, added the statement.

Gulf Arab nationals will no longer need to obtain a visa before visiting Britain starting next year, making travel procedures simpler for one of the country's most ardent visitors, Home Secretary Priti Patel said on Monday.

Travel permit

Under the new scheme, Gulf Cooperation Council citizens will need to acquire an electronic travel permit in advance, replacing the conventional visa requirements, while the new measure will not apply to students or those on prolonged visits, the minister told the press.

She went on to describe the measure as a step towards a more "digital border" that will allow for an accurate counting of people who enter or leave the country, in addition to keeping any potential security threats at bay.

On these travel requirements, the UK minister said Gulf Arab nationals will be among the first "beneficiaries" of these simplified procedures, while Britain's ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis hailed the rules as a "testament" to long-standing bilateral relations.

All six Gulf states - Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain - by moving to Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) will become non-visa nationals, meaning they will not require a visa to visit the UK.

ETAs enhance the Government's ability to screen travellers and stop those who pose a threat to the UK by ensuring everyone wishing to travel to the UK (except British and Irish citizens) has permission to do so in advance.

The ETA scheme is an important part of the UK Government's move to a fully digital border by the end of 2025. It will broadly apply to passengers visiting or transiting through the UK who do not currently need a visa for short stays (for example, because they can already use the EVW scheme), or do not currently hold another UK visa. The ETA will not apply to students attending courses or other categories of travellers who wish to visit the UK for longer than a short stay.

Security measure

It is a straight-forward application process and will act as an additional security measure allowing the government to block threats from entering the UK, whilst also providing individuals with more assurance at an earlier point in time about their ability to travel. Once granted, an ETA will be valid for multiple trips over an extended period.

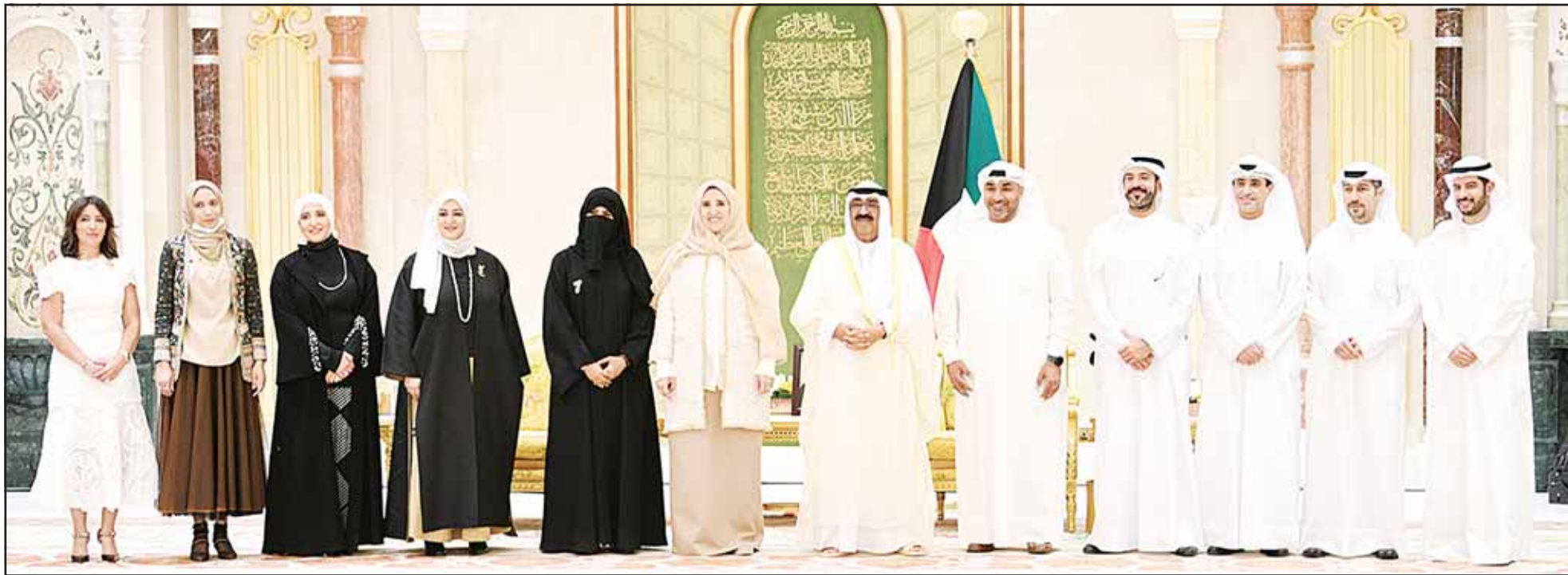
British Ambassador, Belinda Lewis said: "Waiving the visa requirement for Kuwaiti nationals making short visits to the UK next year is fantastic news. It will bring our two countries even closer together, reflecting our longstanding bonds of friendship, trade and cooperation across a wide range of areas. With so many direct flights between Kuwait and the UK, including Kuwait Airways' new route into Manchester, it will be easier than ever to keep in touch and enjoy the best that each country has to offer."

The Civil Aviation Authority said on Monday that it informed the airlines of the new arrival conditions that will come into effect starting from next July as the Thailand Pass system needed for entry has been removed.

The Thai authorities mentioned that they will completely cancel the COVID-19 testing requirements for the vaccinated to enter the country by air.

Fully vaccinated passengers can enter by air without the need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test upon entry, it stated, pointing out that those who are not vaccinated or partially vaccinated must get a negative test 72 hours before arrival.

Zahed Matar



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, during a ceremony honoring the winners of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award. KUNA photo

Crown Prince represents Amir in honoring 'informatics award'

Award celebrates 20 years since establishment

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): His Highness Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sponsored on Monday His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah informatics award ceremony, also celebrating 20 years since its establishment, and was represented by His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During the ceremony, taking place at Bayan Palace, the Crown Prince gave a speech in which he conveyed the greetings of the Amir, his pride in the 20 years of invaluable efforts, perseverance, and diligence, all to enable local informatics, and help youth and establishments develop necessary skills.

His Highness the Crown Prince honored the memory of late Sheikh Sabah

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's by speaking of his continuous sponsorship of this award. He also hailed His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, calling him an extraordinary character.

His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Sabah commended the efforts of all those working on the award, valuing their efforts, and voiced his pride in those who won.

The leadership of Kuwait is well aware of the importance of technological scientific innovations, the limitless digital horizons, and the effect of this sector on the world in making it a safer more prosperous world, the Crown Prince stated affirming their support to such technological developments in what serves the citizens residents and establishments.

After that, Head of award board of trustees Sheikh Ayda Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah stated in a speech that their long-term vision of the future and the groundwork of digitalization they had laid helped combat the emergent conditions posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

She also touched on role of late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and went on to say that His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is steering the ship to the much sought-after, digitalization, with the Crown Prince by his side.

Sheikha Ayda praised the winners of the award and the volunteers for their tireless work and excellent performance.

Furthermore, Diwan undersecretary Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Sabah gave speech on occasion of awarding late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah the honorary award of informatics, in which he voiced his pride and honor at having received this award on behalf of the late Amir.

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Investment Company (KIC) declared on Monday that its board approved planned application for the Central Bank of Kuwait to establish a "digital bank" in a consortium with a group of businesses.

The KIC said in a statement posted on Boursa Kuwait (the national stock exchange) that currently, there is no "financial impact on the company's financial status" as a result of the revelation.

The KIC was established in 1961 as the first investment company in Kuwait and the region. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The exchange rate of the US dollar on Monday remained stable against the Kuwaiti Dinar at KD 0.306 and the Euro at KD 0.323 compared with Sunday's rates.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin that the sterling pound rose by 0.11 percent to KD 0.376, the Swiss franc remained stable at KD 0.319 and the Japanese yen at KD 0.0022.

Exchange rates declared by the CBK reflect average prices and not rates of actual transactions. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday received a written letter from Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on boosting the bilateral relations.

The message was delivered by the Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait, Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, to Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Ministry of Interior called, Monday, on drivers and sea-goers to exercise caution due to windy and dusty weather conditions causing decreased visibility.

The ministry urged people to contact 112 in case they are in need of help. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi departed on Monday on an official tour to visit Oman and Bahrain.

During his tour of the region, Al-Sisi will discuss with the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said and King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa the close bilateral relations that unite Egypt with both countries, Spokesman of the Egyptian Presidency Ambassador Bassam Rady said in a statement.

Al-Sisi will also tackle consultation and coordination on various regional and international issues and crises of common concern during the current stage, the spokesman added. (KUNA)

Ukraine to get anti-air system

ELMAU, Germany, June 27, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday underscored the urgency of helping his country's military improve its position against Russia in a video meeting with leading economic powers, who in turn pledged to support Ukraine "for as long as it takes."

Zelenskyy addressed the delicacy of the moment for Ukraine in its war with Russia to the Group of Seven summit as the leaders of the major economies prepared to unveil plans to pursue a price cap on Russian oil, raise tariffs on Russian goods and impose other new sanctions.

In addition, the U.S. was preparing to announce the purchase of an advanced surface-to-air missile system for Kyiv to help Ukraine fight back against Vladimir Putin's aggression. The official announcement would come shortly after Russian missiles hit the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv for the first time in weeks and as the Russian military has continued a full-on assault on the last remaining Ukrainian redoubt in the Luhansk province in order to take control of the eastern Donbas region.

Ukrainian officials stressed the need for more air-defense systems on Monday after Russia launched a missile attack on a crowded shopping center in the central city of Kremenchuk. Officials said 1,000 civilians were in the mall with at least twenty injured and two dead.

The new aid and efforts by the G-7 leaders to punish Moscow come as Zelenskyy has openly worried that the West has become fatigued by the cost of a war that is contributing to soaring energy costs and price hikes on essential goods around the globe. The Ukrainian leader discussed his strategy for the course of the war, which has transformed into a bloody artillery battle in the country's west and east.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Zelenskyy's top request was for further air defense systems, followed by economic support to help his government meet its financial obligations. Zelenskyy also briefed the G-7 leaders on how his administration is

Steel shut in cyberattack

DUBAI, June 27, (AP): One of Iran's major steel companies said Monday it was forced to halt production after being hit by a cyberattack, apparently marking one of the biggest such assaults on the country's strategic industrial sector in recent memory.

The Iranian government did not acknowledge the disruption or blame any specific group for the assault on the state-owned Khuzestan Steel Co., which constitutes just the latest example of an attack crippling the country's services in recent months amid heightened tensions in the region.

A little-known hacking group claimed responsibility for the attack on social media, saying it targeted Iran's three biggest steel companies because of their links to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and volunteer Basij militia.

The group shared what it claimed to be surveillance footage from the Khuzestan Steel Co. factory floor that showed a massive fire erupt on a steel billet production line after the purported disruption.

"These companies are subject to international sanctions and continue their operations despite the restrictions," the group said. No other targeted company acknowledged a cyberattack.

Khuzestan Steel Co. said the plant had to stop work until further notice "due to technical problems" following "cyberattacks." The company's website was down on Monday.

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Police officers give first aid to an elderly woman wounded by the Russian shelling in the city center in Slavyansk, Donetsk region, Ukraine, Monday, June 27, 2022. (AP)

Opinion

Real reform starts in the ruling house

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

FOR the first time in decades, a royal speech of this level of clarity and openness has been delivered. It includes measures, or rather a roadmap, that guide towards formulating constitutional institutions that represent the people effectively, and away from the usual interference in general elections or parliamentary committees.

The speech defines the responsibilities and sources of deficiencies in the executive and legislative authorities. It sets a benchmark for what the days may carry if the performance does not change.

The Amiri speech was what could be characterized as much stronger than the two speeches regarding the dissolution of the National Assembly and suspension of the constitution in 1976 and 1986. Incidentally, it is very important to go back to that stage and compare its situation with what is currently happening in Kuwait.

If the parliamentary suspension in the two aforementioned years was marred by a lot of hardship in the process of selecting representatives of the state who were below the level of challenges of that period, the situation today requires reforming the ruling house first, as the local and regional situation calls for the unity of the ruling family because it is one of the guarantor tools of governance and the state.

This means exiting from the bickering and conflict among different parts of the ruling house, so that there is no army of electronic files against a sheikh, or statements issued under pseudonyms paid by another sheikh, and so that no sheikh issues a statement from London, Washington, Paris or Geneva. Everyone of them must adhere to the general lines drawn by the elders of the ruling family. They should, as is the case in all the ruling Gulf families or even the kingdoms of the world, stick to the responsibilities of each person that are determined according to the task entrusted to him.

There is no doubt that in the ruling family, there are many young, educated, and cultured individuals. These are the kits of the future who, together with the people, constitute an elite group that works sincerely to rebuild institutions, and get out of the tunnel of self-seeking, selfishness, and ambushing other ruling family members in an effort to acquire a particular position and employ it for personal interest, or to burn the bridges to reach to a certain position.

Reforming the ruling house is the first step for a radical reform in the country. It is a major historical step, starting with choosing the fittest and those most familiar with the tasks of the Prime Minister and the ministers entrusted with the sovereign docket.

It should not be the ones who depend on social status, making their positions more like fortified castles, closing their doors,

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