

Mai Al-Nakib's 'stories will resonate with all readers'

'The Hidden Light of Objects' launched in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: The Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) in conjunction with Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing hosted the launch of Mai Al-Nakib's book, *The Hidden Light of Objects* on April 2. The Kuwaiti writer was introduced by Thalia Suzuma, Head of English Publishing at Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation. The author's introduction was followed by a presentation and reading from the book by Mai Al-Nakib.



In her introduction of Mai Al-Nakib, Thalia Suzuma, Head of English Publishing, Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation, said:

"I'm delighted to introduce Mai Al-Nakib. BQFP is very proud to be publishing Mai's debut collection of short stories, *The Hidden Light of Objects*. As an editor, you can't really have favorite books, it's like a parent having a favorite child. But Mai's collection is particularly close to my heart: full of dichotomies between the personal and the universal, the political and the individual, these are stories that will resonate with all readers as it captures memories, traces reflections,

and adds colors to the transience of life. I really hope you enjoy the collection."

The *Hidden Light of Objects* is a collection of loosely connected short stories set mainly in the Middle East. They trace quiet, ignored moments in a region overwhelmed by geopolitical, military, and religious forces. Although the stories engage familiar



Some photos during the launching of Mai Al-Nakib's 'The Hidden Light of Objects.'



events in the region—the invasion of Kuwait, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the civil war in Lebanon—the focus is on the everyday lives of people who live there. The stories are linked through character, place, tone, and, most importantly, a series of objects. *The Hidden Light of Objects* is about loss and memory, war and love, and the strange longing objects

can unexpectedly trigger. About her collection of stories, Mai Al-Nakib said: "I think of the stories as experiments with memory. Why do we remember what we do? I am particularly interested in how remembered moments motivate writing but, beyond that, how they motivate people (and characters) to narrate their lives in highly specific and singular ways."

Hanan al-Shaykh, author of *Beirut Blues and Only in London*, describes Mai Al-Nakib's collection as follows: "The old world and the new. The strife in the Gulf, once peaceful and reflective. East and West, Arabic and English, the poetry of the heart, the eye of the hawk; all these elements produce the lustrous pearls of Mai Al-Nakib's short stories."

While critically-acclaimed American author A. Manette Ansay, author of *Vinegar Hill* and *Blue Water*, considers the book to be: "The most original first collection of short fiction I have read in years."

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Mai Al-Nakib is an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Kuwait University. Her academic research deals mainly with cultural politics in the Middle East. *The Hidden Light of Objects* is her first collection of short stories. She is currently working on a novel.

Upcoming Events:
8/4/14, 6 pm: Reading and Talk; American University of Kuwait; Salmiya.
9/4/14, 7 pm: Reading and Book Signing; Sultan Gallery; South Subhan.
15/4/14, 7 pm: Lecture and Reading; Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya; Maidaan Hawalli.
7/5/14, 5 pm: Interview and Reading; Gulf University of Science and Technology; West Mishref.
For full details and updates LIKE: www.facebook.com/maialnakib



KUNA photo
President Gul being seen off at Kuwait airport by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Gul wraps up 3-day official visit to Kuwait

Turkish President Abdullah Gul on Thursday wrapped up a three-day official visit to Kuwait during which he held talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

President Gul was seen off at Kuwait International Airport by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, ministers, senior commanders and chiefs of the Army, the Police and the National Guards. (KUNA)

'An oasis of

Continued from Page 1

endeavor the UK and Kuwait were to provide anchors for stability and security in a region where instability and insecurity is rampant. "Today Kuwait is an oasis of tranquility in a desert of turbulence", he remarked.

He emphasized that isolation is a policy of yesterday as the world is becoming more integrated and more interdependent than previous years.

He noted that at first he too looked up the Arab Spring with apprehension, as many did, to be followed with optimism, "It felt like a tide was turning. The people empowered by technology were ready to usher in a new era for men and women who had grown tired of broken promises and repressive tactics."

He was quick to point out however that reality has turned out to be far more contesting, controversial and complicated than the optimistic and in some cases complacent predictions of contemporary commentators. "History teaches us that change takes time and yet sometime the instant gratification of social media and the insatiable beast that is rolling news prevents us from seeing this eternal truth", he asserted.

He reiterated the UK's commitment to Kuwait's security while advocating a deeper partnership on international development aid. "The Kuwait fund is one of the oldest and most respected development organisations in the world. The UK's department for international development is the leading exponent in the western world for development assistance."

He also highlighted that other countries could learn a lot from the Kuwaiti approach to international relations, "As a small country in a turbulent neighbourhood, the Kuwaiti ability to manage the competing interests of powerful nations is hugely impressive and the combination of clever positioning and genuine understanding allows Kuwait arguably, more so than any other Gulf nation, to be an honest broker in a region full of suspicion and mistrust."

In business, he iterated, the British have traded in Kuwait since before independence. Shell, one of the sponsors of British Week, has been here for 55 years. Kuwaiti businesses are equally familiar in the UK with Kuwait banks operating in London and Kuwaitis even own the Mayor of London's office. He also drew attention to the fact that in the last two years alone, bilateral trade has doubled to £4 Billion.

The volume of bilateral demonstrates the potential that exists with the relationship, he opined. "Properly fostered, it can become an agent for growth in both our countries. The key point to making this work is partnership and the opportunities are there for everyone who wishes to look for them."

He shared that the national development plan of Kuwait offers an impressive vision for the future. Meanwhile the UK after developing the infrastructure for the Olympic Games in 2012 has the recent knowledge and experience to deliver huge projects on budget on time and with unrivalled quality.

But the opportunities are not only in Kuwait, he emphasized, "The UK is now mercifully out of recession with the high-

est growth rate in G7 countries and this growth rate is rising. The British government has committed to massive investment in infrastructure projects such as high speed rail and nuclear power."

He relayed that the opportunities for UK — Kuwaiti partnerships are obvious and the Kuwait owned UK based Gatehouse Bank is currently investing in regeneration in Northern England while KIA in London has set up a new office solely to look at infrastructure projects.

But he also stated that the most original avenue for future partnership is in neither in the UK nor in Kuwait but UK Kuwait joint ventures in third countries. "The UK is the logical gateway for business across the whole of the EU and Kuwait could be the gateway to the wider GCC and potentially Iraq or further down the line hopefully, Iran as well."

Speaking on the challenges both countries face, he shared that the UK faces huge and sensitive issues around upgrading our national infrastructure, caring for an ageing population, ending social exclusion, among others.

Kuwait too, has her own set of challenges in freedom of expression, corruption, social inclusion and integration between various groups. He noted that in order to solve problems of poverty and statelessness, first there must be resources and second there must be will. "The first law of being able to help anybody is to have the resources and abilities to do so, the first concern is to make sure the economy is sound and there is growth."

With regards to the Crimean situation today, he reassured the audience that modern Russia is very different from the erstwhile USSR in its capability to create mischief, the USSR being a much more dangerous proposition than Russia is. "My personal view is that by effectively annexing Crimea, Russia has made a very big mistake that she will come to regret very quickly and for a long time."

Immediate implications for Russia include a significant fall in their stock exchange values, a big outflow of capital with investment into Russia falling. On account of the relationship that has been created, they will continue to fall for a long time to come, he said. "In addition to that there are some long term implications. It is very likely that the EU will look for alternative energy supply that is going to be damaging for Russia. It is also very likely in the years ahead, because of what Russia has done, the defense expenditure in Western Europe will inflate and rise again."

British Ambassador to Kuwait, Frank Baker, commented, "Today brings to an end, what has been for me, a remarkable two weeks. The great British week has given us the opportunity to bring the best of United Kingdom here to Kuwait." He highlighted that in the previous year, over a quarter of the Kuwaiti population had visited the UK. "These two weeks have given us the opportunity to bring Britain to all of those Kuwaitis who haven't yet had the opportunity to visit the UK and see the very best of what my country can offer. In the last two weeks we have seen the best of British fashion, cooking, cars, music, technology and innovation. It was thus fitting to conclude this fortnight with the lecture delivered by Sir John Major that focussed on the British Kuwait relationship."

Mol seeks to put in place 'mechanism' for issuance of visas to all nationalities

Kuwait will begin issuing work visas for Pakistanis: envoy

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: The Ministry of Interior will hold a preparatory meeting Monday with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of Kuwaiti embassies to put in place a mechanism for the issuance of visas within specified legal and security regulations, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The sources added the Immigration Departments will continue issuing visas and that there will be no change in procedures.

The sources said the visas will also be issued to all nationalities, including Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

It is worth mentioning the decision to give authority to Kuwaiti embassies abroad to issue visas — family, commercial and tourist — is to facilitate the issuance of visas and make the work more flexible.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Hassan was recently quoted as saying the government of Kuwait will begin issuing work visas for Pakistanis after a break of nearly three years, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

He said this will open the door and an opportunity for doctors and engineers and trained technical staff to work in Kuwait.

He also said barbers and tailors make only one percent of Pakistani workers.

NA discusses MoE's delay in verifying certs

KUWAIT CITY, April 3, (KUNA): The parliament on Thursday continued its discussions over the Ministry of Higher Education's delay in verifying certificates of Kuwaiti overseas university graduates, whose tuition expenses were covered personally.

The National Assembly's education, culture and guidance committee had earlier met representatives of the graduates from Greece, Slovakia and the Philippines, in addition to the Minister of Education and Higher Education Ahmad Al-Mulaifi, the committee's chief negotiator Khalil Abdallah told reporters.

A number of questions were posed to the minister, and the committee awaits an official response through a report, which will be raised to the parliament for further discussion.

Separately, the lawmaker said that the committee has decided to form a team, including several experts, whom will discuss "encouraging traditional values" within ministry programmes and curricula. The team will also consist of lawmakers Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran and Awda Al-Ruwai.



Above: Some photos from the dinner party.

Photos by Sameer Shiqr

Sheikh Nasser holds dinner party in honor of Turkish President

HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad organized a dinner party at his dewaneya in honor of the visiting President of the Republic of Turkey Abdullah Gul.

Former speaker of the National Assembly Jassem Al-Kharafi, CEO of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ali Al-Ghanim, Editor-in-Chief of Arab

Times and *Al-Seyassah* newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah were among the many dignitaries, business tycoons, officials and public figures who attended the event.

Briefs

Amir receives CP: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Wednesday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

Minister meets KES board: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Wednesday Kuwait Engineers Society board members.

During the meeting, the minister discussed with them the society's activities and urged them to serve their nation and society. (KUNA)