

## KUWAIT

### Speedy award for Arab organisations' office

The contract to build the prestigious Arab organisations' headquarters building has been awarded to a local company just three days after bids for the job were opened.

The winning contractor is the local **Al-Ahmadiyah Contracting & Trading Company**. It submitted the lowest of the six bids returned on 21 May with KD 16.9 million (\$71 million). The lump-sum contract for the job was formally signed at midday on 24 May. "This was one of the quickest evaluations of a project I have ever seen," one contractor says.

The local bidders for the contract were **Mohamed Abdulmohsin Kharafi; Al-Hani Construction & Trading Company; Kuwait & Italy Company; and Consolidated Contractors Company (Conco)**. Dubai-based **Al-Habtoor Engineering Enterprises Company** quoted for the project in partnership with the local **Fawaz Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Company**. Their offers ranged up to KD 21 million (\$88.4 million).

Seven companies were originally invited to bid for the job. Lebanon-based **Contracting & Trading Company** dropped out of the competition.

The building is to be occupied by five organisations now housed separately — the Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development, the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), the **Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation (IAIGC)**, the **Arab Maritime Petroleum Transport Company**, and the Chemical Fertilisers Producing Association.

Work on the contract starts on 1 August and is for completion in 40 months. The building is designed with highly sophisticated features and comprises 10 storeys above ground and two basement floors, mainly for parking. Total area of the 12 floors is around 5,000 square metres. The consultant is the local **Pan Arab Consulting Engineers (PACE)**.

Contractors say the speed of the contract decision reflects several factors. The project was extremely well-specified, allowing swift evaluation of competing bids on the basis of comparative costs. The clients also wanted to ensure that work could begin in time for concreting to be done in the cooler winter months.

#### IN BRIEF

● The audit bureau has accused Kuwait municipality of failing to collect penalties from contractors late in completing work. A report from the bureau says contract terms make contractors liable to penalties for each day's delay, but these are sometimes being avoided. It cites one case where the municipality did not collect a KD 1.5 million (\$6.3 million) fine for

#### Kuwait stock exchange: Alshah index

	Wednesday 18 May	Wednesday 11 May
Banking sector	39.09	39.86
Investment sector	41.01	40.99
Insurance sector	38.71	38.71
Overall index	36.89	36.76

Trading volume for Kuwaiti shares in the week to 18 May reached a daily average of 4.16 million, a 26 per cent decrease on the previous week. The daily average value of shares traded was KD 580,000 (\$2.1 million), 17 per cent down. Nevertheless, the overall index recorded an increase of 0.13 points. Because of Eid al-Fitr, trading took place on only two days.

work on the waterfront project that was delayed for 150 days.

● People failing to renew their civil identity cards after renewing their residence permits will be subject to fines at the end of 1988, according to the public authority for civil identification. In a new system also to be introduced at the end of 1988, residents will be notified one month before their identity cards run out. Staffing at the public authority has been increased by 50 per cent to speed up the cards' distribution. About 3,000 cards are issued a day, the daily Arab Times reports.

● Three leading airlines have resumed a policy of price-discounting on flights to and from India, the daily Arab Times reports. This ends an agreement signed on 28 April by the three airlines — **Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC)**, **British Airways (BA)** and **Air India** — to charge the official fares. There are about 100,000 Indians living in Kuwait.

● The Communications Ministry has announced plans to drop the KD 500 (\$2,100) deposit paid by private-sector users for telephone connections. It will be replaced by a KD 30 (\$126) annual subscription, the daily Arab Times reports.

● The creation of a higher state authority for computer systems has been called for in a study of the government's use of computer hardware and software. The report, by a government committee, says the authority's board should include four ministers representing the departments that use computer equipment most. It says the government is failing to make proper use of its equipment because of lack of contact among departments, a shortage of qualified staff and inadequate financial incentives to encourage employees to become computer-literate. The report adds that only 14 of the 45 government agencies investigated are co-ordinating their software purchases.

● The foot-and-mouth epidemic that broke out earlier this year is under control, the daily Arab Times reports. Cows in 82 farms have now been inoculated against the disease, which was first reported in March.

● The Electricity & Water Ministry is reviewing plans for a 750,000-gallon-a-day desalination plant to be built on Failaka island, government officials say.

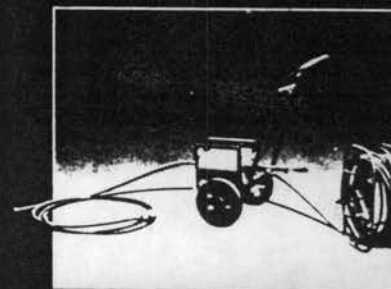
● The two men killed on 18 May when a bomb they were carrying in their car exploded have

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