



## نربط الكويت بالعالم Linking Kuwait To The World

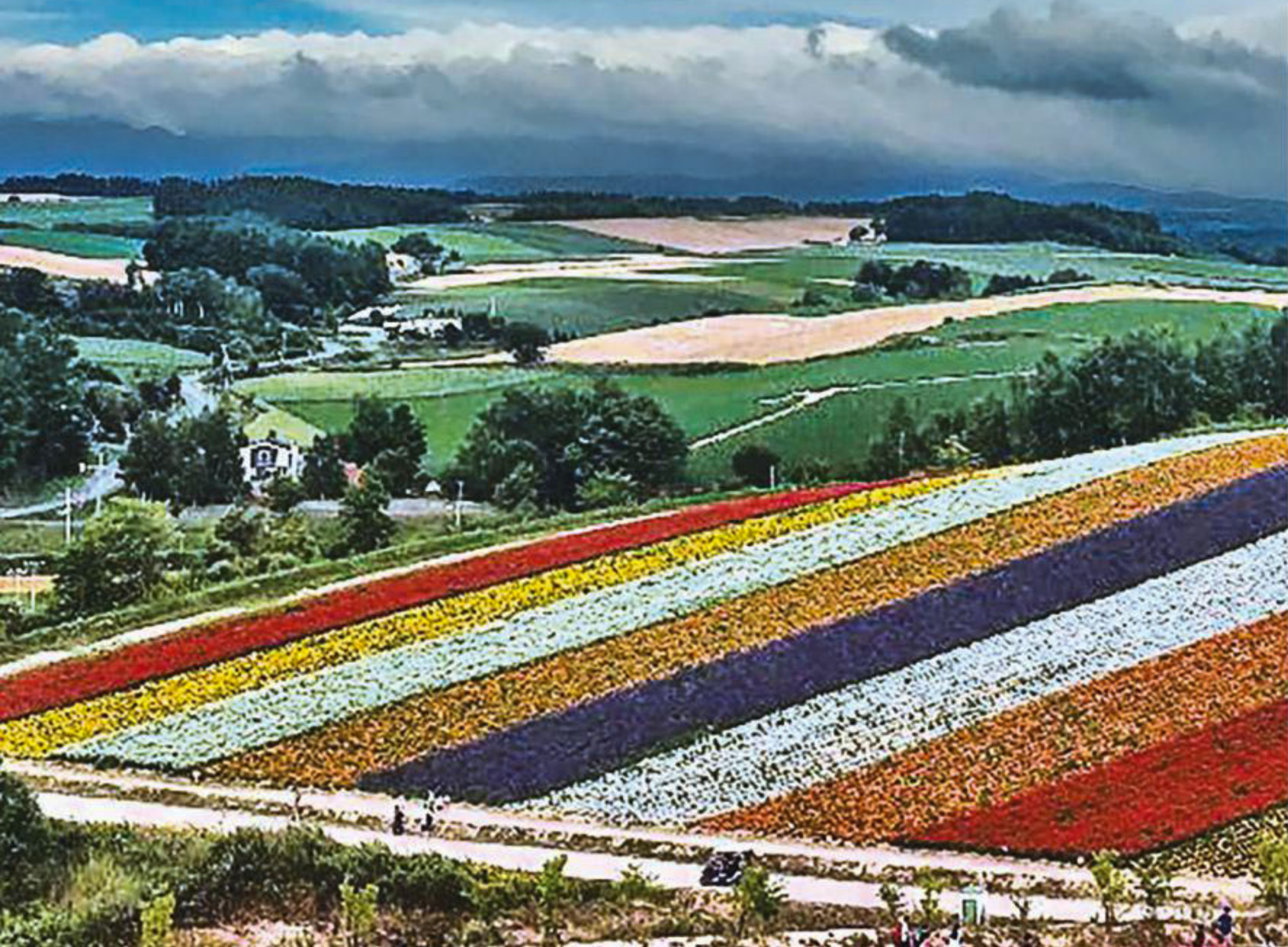
The first layer was a light undershirt, followed by the yukata, the size of which made me look like a child wearing an adult's clothes. With a few expert pulls, and the help of some ribbons, the length and width of the yukata was tucked down to my size. A stiff band, akin to a cummerbund, was wrapped around my waist, followed by a long piece of coloured cloth called an obi.

Learning to walk in a yukata with traditional Japanese wooden slippers took a couple of minutes to get used to, and I was soon on my way to see the temples and old streets of Kyoto.

I won't lie, the whole day, I kept sneaking glances into mirrors or anything reflective. I loved wearing the yukata. When the day was done and I returned to my hotel, having returned the yukata, I must admit I missed it dearly.

First stop was the ladies' lounge. I deposited my luggage in a locker, and a quick glance showed me a living area with a huge TV. Through a curtained door was the bathing area. Public baths in Japan often feature large gender segregated communal baths, but hotels also have private shower rooms. After showering, guests then change into cosy pajamas provided by the hotel, which I also did. Then it was bedtime.

Tapping my key at the door granted me access to the women's capsule room. It was a fairly large room, with rows of numbered capsule beds in columns of two. I found mine and climbed in. A lot of people are sometimes surprised to find just how spacious capsule beds actually are. Mine came with a TV (with headphones so the neighbours aren't disturbed), air conditioning, phone charging station, a small shelf for my stuff, and a tablet that



### TRYING A CAPSULE HOTEL IN JAPAN

I reached my hotel from the Kyoto train station just before the pouring rain. The capsule hotel phenomenon in Japan — cubicle beds in capsule pods, rented for the night — took the internet by storm a while back. Having stayed at a capsule hotel before in Osaka, I knew the process pretty well.

Shoes must come off immediately upon entering the premises, and kept in a mini shoe locker and be replaced by specific indoor hotel slippers. Once the check-in was done, and the rules and layout of the hotel explained, I was handed the key. Now this key is special. It comes with a spiral cord to wear on your wrist, because you need it to gain access to everything. Since you are sharing lounges, changing rooms, and capsule rooms with the other guests, the areas are separated by gender.

controlled cabin lighting, alarm clock, etc. Even with the 'door' shut with a roll down screen, I did not feel claustrophobic. The bed was very comfortable and soon, I was asleep under the enormous fluffy duvet.

There was free breakfast the next morning in the common room, where they served chocolate rolls, butter croissants and matcha bread. Tea and coffee was free all day. The common room was on the 10th floor, which provided for an incredible view of Kyoto, but we had to leave soon. Check-out time was at 10AM, and mandatory for all, as during the day time, the hotel is thoroughly cleaned. Those staying multiple nights could leave their luggage in their lockers and check-in later in the evening, using a numbered token. And thus came to end my stay at a capsule hotel in Japan.

Photo: Sheema Hossain