



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah meets KUNA Chairman Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah. —KUNA

INTERIOR MINISTER APPRECIATES AMIR'S TRUST IN SECURITY FORCES

'CAMPAIGNS WILL CONTINUE TO ACHIEVE LAW AND ORDER'

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Premier Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the national celebrations of the 55th of the National Day and 25th of Liberation Day. The Minister also extended greetings on the occasion of His Highness the Amir's 10th anniversary of ascending the throne.

The minister made these remarks in his office yesterday, while receiving Chairman of the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA), and Board Chairman and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled expressed his appreciation to His Highness the Amir for putting his trust in security forces for keeping the country's security. "This trust is a great incentive to keep giving," he said.

His Highness the Amir not only cares about

the safety of Kuwaitis inside the country but also look after them elsewhere, pointing to His Highness the Amir's endeavors towards releasing Kuwaiti detainees at the Guantanamo Bay. He added that His Highness the Prime Minister and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem spare no effort in supporting the country's security's apparatuses.

"The Government does not fall short of protecting the country and its people and Kuwait will always remain safe and secure," he reassured. "We will not allow anyone to jeopardize the security of this country. We will not compromise people's rights and freedoms," he affirmed.

Security campaigns

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled added that security campaigns will be carried out in many areas of the country in order to achieve "law and order". He encouraged violators of the residency visa to rectify their legal status to avoid taking any disciplinary measures against them.

To ensure further safety in the country, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled noted the min-

istry collected weapons and ammunitions from the public. Also, it is striving to get the approval to mount surveillance cameras in many vital locations for greater security measure, in addition to encouraging the application of an environment law.

On freedoms, the Minister reassured that "freedom is prerogative for everyone in the country," promising that people's rights will not be touched unjustly once the genetic data law is applied; "its goal is to provide a comprehensive database that will be beneficial for everyone."

On terrorism, he pointed out that Kuwait has succeeded in combating terrorism by taking precautionary measures. "It is important to go after terrorism before it gets to us," stressing that the country's security forces will not allow any harm to come to the country and its people.

Furthermore, the Minister pointed out that there is a multiple cooperation agreements among Kuwait, GCC, Arab and international nations to exchange information and to monitor criminal and terrorist acts. —KUNA

CABINET LAUDS AMIR'S EFFORTS TO FREE KUWAITIS AT GUANTANAMO

KUWAIT: The cabinet yesterday commended His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's efforts to free Kuwaitis at Guantanamo, which eventually led to the release of the last Kuwaiti citizens there.

During a weekly meeting held at Seif Palace and chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the cabinet stressed that the US authorities responded to His Highness the Amir's efforts and set free the last Kuwaiti detainee at Guantanamo.

The move reflects the deep-rooted ties between Kuwait and the US, said Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. Fayed Al-Kandari has been recently released, and returned home.

As yesterday's meeting started, the cabinet was informed of two messages to His Highness the Amir from Presidents of France Francois Hollande, and Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev, on means of promoting bilateral ties, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah added.

GCC meeting

Then, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the cabinet on the outcome of the GCC Ministerial Council meeting held in Riyadh on Saturday, which discussed the aggression on the Saudi embassy and consulate in Iran. In a statement issued by the meeting, the GCC states voiced support to all measures taken by the Kingdom to counter terrorists and agitators.

They held the Iranian authorities fully responsible for the aggression, in line with Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963) and the International Law.

The GCC also stressed that such acts serve neither peace nor security in the region, or the world at large. They contradict with principles of good neighborliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and respect of a state sovereignty. They can ignite the fuse of more crises in the region.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, also notified the cabinet of the outcome of the recent emergency meeting for the Council of the Arab League on the same issue. The Cairo meeting formed a committee from the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt to follow up developments of the crisis with Iran, and discuss means to combat its interference in internal affairs of Arab countries.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also briefed the meeting on the outcome of the recent visit Iraq's Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

paid to Kuwait. The visit discussed means of enhancing bilateral ties in all fields, besides regional and international security and political developments of common concern, topped with the attacks on the Saudi embassy in Tehran and the consulate in Mashhad.

In addition, the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister apprised the ministers of the outcome of the recent visit to Kuwait by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Morteza Sarmadi. During the visit, Kuwait renewed its rejection of the aggression on the Saudi diplomatic missions, and reiterated solidarity with the Kingdom and fellow GCC member states in this regard.

The cabinet lauded the statements issued by the recent meetings of the GCC in Riyadh, and the Arab League in Cairo. It reaffirmed Kuwait's solidarity with the Kingdom and the GCC, as well as its rejection of violating the sanctity of diplomatic missions, and the interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Relocation

Meanwhile, the cabinet approved a recommendation on a request by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to move the administration of the Department of Disabled Care and the Vocational Training Center to be affiliated to the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs. It also agreed to shift supervision of private kindergartens from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to the Ministry of Education.

Concluding yesterday's meeting, the cabinet appreciated the hard efforts by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and members of the Standing Committee of the celebrations of Kuwait's national holidays. This followed a video review of the preparations for the 2016 celebrations of the National Day and the Liberation Day next month. —KUNA

ACTIVISTS CALL FOR AMENDING COMMERCIAL MONOPOLY LAWS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Speakers at a seminar titled 'National Assembly: Between commercial monopoly and the nation's interests' unanimously agreed that parliamentary proposals and laws on commercial monopoly do not serve consumers, and called for amending them. Speaking at the seminar held in Andalus, Nasser Al-Shulaimi, Secretary General of the '11/11' movement stressed that they were not against merchants and were only fighting greedy ones, which were few but had enough power to have some legislations passed like a 'shadow government'.

Former minister Jassim Al-Oun stressed that governments worldwide have defined agendas and programs and that bills and parliamentary proposals do change by changing some people. "Our government lacks such concepts," he underlined, noting that once the government proposes a bill, the bill is subjected to change according to the interests of the group new ministers assuming power belong to.

Oun added that comparing various proposals made under the same name, one would find 180 degree changes, though the monopoly law affects all citizens and expats. "The government seems to be held hostage by each group for a while," he said, noting that it was politically unacceptable to change government policies when changing ministers.

Enormous burdens

MP Mohammed Tana Al-Azmi said that the agencies' bill would be reviewed today and that both the government and the parliament have enormous burdens and need to join hands to fight corruption and get the development wheel moving forward. Azmi added that he was surprised with amendments the financial committee made to article one of the bill in a way that alienates the principle of banning monopoly. "Laws should not be set to meet certain interests



KUWAIT: A photo showing the speakers at a seminar titled 'National Assembly: Between commercial monopoly and the nation's interests,' held Sunday night. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

or agendas," he underlined.

Also speaking at the seminar was management sciences professor Dr Youssef Al-Mutairi, who stressed that the articles discussed would make the law come out differently and that certain parties were actually working in favor of enhancing monopoly. Representative of the Civil Society for Consumer Protection Mohammed Al-Ali said that the state was heading towards reducing subsidies and at the same time try to keep prices under control. "With monopolizing certain goods, prices will never go down," he said. Former minister Ahmed Baqer stressed that Kuwait still has only one stock market while the UAE has two. "Competitiveness is very important and we had a competitiveness law passed in 2007, but it was never put into practice," he rued.

Victimizing citizens

Meanwhile, MP Faisal Al-Kandari strongly rejected passing the commercial agencies law in a way that takes merchants' side at the expense of citizens. "Passing the law with some amendments that changed its essence would victimize citizens and place them under the mercy of merchants," he said, noting that all anti-citizen and pro-merchant amendments will be rejected. Kandari added that the law had been set to protect agents' rights and achieve honest competitiveness amongst commercial agencies in order to eventually provide consumers with the best goods and services. "How can competitiveness be achieved when the law was amended in a way that bans the presence of more than one agent or distributor?" he wondered.

WORLD-CLASS AMBULANCES JOIN MEDICAL EMERGENCY FLEET: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi announced on Sunday that 51 world-class ambulances joined the fleet of medical emergency services (EMS), reaching up to 219. In a festival marking this occasion, Obaidi said this move is part of the ministry's plan to expand and develop emergency services so as to upgrade skills of staff and ambulances through cooperating with international centers in this field. He stressed the necessity of benefiting from international techniques to develop systems of communications among EMS main operations room and all ambulances.

Asked about the service of air ambulances, the minister said that it started last March and has transferred about 400 cases so far from remote areas. He revealed that services of EMS are provided to people through 64 centers across the country, noting that the department has up to 1,500 employees.

167,000 cases

The department's staff dealt with more than 167,000 cases last year, he said, stressing the importance of implementing "the national project for training", which aims to train about 10 percent of Kuwait's population on first aid skills and life-saving. High rates of injuries are due to road accidents and high rates of heart diseases are among challenges facing the department, he stated. Meanwhile, the ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Medical Service Affairs Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said that ambulances

are equipped with internal cameras so as to communicate easily with hospital's casualty departments to help doctors achieve their missions.

Cooperation protocols

In other news, the Ministry of Health said it intends to sign a number of cooperation protocols with some Egyptian and Jordanian universities in areas of training and development so as to upgrade skills of psychologists and social workers at ministry. This came during a speech by Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Majda Al-Qattan at a workshop on medical social care.

She said that the workshop, which was co-organized with Egypt's University of Helwan, focused on social workers at the ministry's hospitals, noting that the event featured more than 250 social workers. She urged the ministry's employees to acquire science and knowledge from all sources, and develop themselves through training courses, workshops and conferences.

Qattan stated that social care is a humanitarian profession which interests in concerns of people, appealing to workers to cope with the latest developments in this field in order to provide better services for people. Meanwhile, Dr Sara Al-Mutairi, a senior official at the ministry, said in a similar speech that the workshop discussed several topics, including skills of social workers and preparations for researches and studies. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Hawally prevention department at Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) carried out an inspection campaign at public and private hospitals in the Hawally Governorate. Brigadier Khalid Al-Ajmi said KFSD is keen on carrying out those campaigns because they are related to places with special nature such as hospitals. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

GCC TO SIGN VAT AGREEMENT BY JUNE

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is due to sign an agreement on applying value added tax (VAT) by June at the latest, after all requirements needed to pass it were completed, said the Saudi Okaz newspaper. According to Okaz, a special schedule will be prepared to indicate member states' readiness pending actual application by the beginning of 2018.

Draft laws

The government yesterday referred two draft laws to the parliament on psychiatric health, psychiatric patients' care and social care for senior citizens.



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi speaks during a ceremony to announce acquiring 51 world-class ambulances. —KUNA photos