

PANEL DISCUSSES FIGHTER JETS DEAL

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliament's budgets and final statement committee is scheduled to discuss the defense ministry's budget today with the attendance of representatives from the defense and finance ministries, the State Audit Bureau and the auditors' apparatus. The meeting's agenda includes discussing a \$9 billion deal with Italy to purchase 28 fighter jets. The agenda also includes the measures taken by the ministry to undo remarks made earlier about purchasing military equipment.

Meanwhile, the parliament's legislative committee is scheduled to discuss lifting the immunity of MP Abdulhameed Dashti over two cases filed against him.

Major tenders

MP Ahmed Al-Qudhaibi stressed that the State Audit Bureau's remarks about

major tenders should be taken into consideration and not be ignored by the government. "The government has been ignoring the Audit Bureau's reports," he said, blaming both the legislative and the executive authorities for this.

Housing projects

The Public Authority for Housing Affairs (PAHW) plans to assess the experience of hiring a South Korean company to construct the new South Saad Al-Abdullah City, informed sources said. If things go right, the new South Sabah Al-Ahmad City will be built the same way without conditioning that the same company executes the project, they added. "It could be the same or other companies, like Chinese ones for instance," explained the sources, adding that the authority plans to build a solar power station in Saad Al-Abdullah City.

Property licenses

Minister of Commerce and Industry Yousef Al-Ali issued a decision banning the publication of any commercial ad on selling and promoting property inside or outside Kuwait without a license from the ministry's real estate department. He added that violators would be subject to 15 days closure, then for a month in case of repeating the violation. The decision was made upon Cabinet instructions to monitor real estate expos and regulate the real estate market. The decision also mandated showing accredited ownership documents, project blueprints, marketing plans and powers of attorney fully endorsed by relevant authorities and Kuwaiti embassies in concerned countries.

Municipality efforts

Minister of Communications and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Essa

Al-Kandari hailed Kuwait Municipality's Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi and heads of municipality sectors, thanking them for the efforts they exert in reforming and developing the municipality's executive body and fighting all violations. Kandari also stressed that the ministry's consumer protection sector was constantly working to prevent commercial fraud and control prices. He also urged consumers to report all violations to the ministry's hotline 135.

In a call he made during Manfouhi's meeting with senior municipality officials, Kandari stressed that through his tours, he sensed that the municipality's message was clearly conveyed to politicians, investors, merchants and citizens, that it was serious in law enforcement. Manfouhi expressed happiness with the municipality managers' efforts, noting that they proved very fruitful in a very short time and urged them to exert more efforts.

Local Spotlight

KOREA, THE FUTURE - PART I



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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A year ago, I received an invitation from the Korea Foundation to join an international media delegation to visit Korea on a weeklong trip. The visit aims to enhance goodwill and friendship between Korea and the global community. Time passed quickly and by the time I was due to leave Kuwait on May 22, I felt that all I had was my Samsung mobile and little info about the country. Now I am back with new ideas and perspectives of Korea as a nation and its history, culture, economy, population, hopes, food and habits. I want to share my unique trip with Kuwait Times' readers and all those who have not visited this beautiful land called South Korea.

South Korea, officially known as the Republic of Korea, is a sovereign state in East Asia, constituting the southern part of the Korean Peninsula. It has been long past half a century since Korea, a homogeneous nation with a 5,000-year-long history, was divided into two states by foreign forces. Korea was admired as "The Land of Morning Calm," and is addressed as "North Korea" and "South Korea" for the past 70 years.

It was a long flight from Kuwait, but it was well-organized. I was well-received by KF staff at the airport and I was handed the week's program, which seemed full and included everything I needed to know about Korea, its past, present and future.

The invitation included an important trip to Jeju Island to attend sessions held by the Jeju Forum and listen to remarks by international speakers like the UN Secretary-General and other elite guests. The Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity (Jeju Forum) was launched in 2001. The forum is an international comprehensive forum in East Asia by which officials aim to address stability and security issues within the region through international cooperation.

The media delegation was invited to a panel discussion about Korean unification and the international community, and the role of international media. The two-hour discussion raised some important points presented by Korean professors and two professional media colleagues from the US and France as well, with comments by other colleagues including myself. The session presented some views and ideas on how to support the unification of the two Koreas, with some conservative views on the best moves for the process.

National reunification seems top be a burning desire for the Koreans, who have lived with painful sorrow for such a long time of separation. Korean reunification refers to the potential future reunification of North Korea, South Korea and the Korean Demilitarized Zone under a single government. The process towards such a merger was started by the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration in June 2000, where the two countries agreed to work towards a peaceful reunification in the future. Nevertheless, the process of reunification has faced many difficulties due to the ongoing tension between the two states, which have become politically and economically different since their separation in the 1940s. But, it was clear to me that no one is expecting that reunification will take place any time soon.

Reunification for Koreans has a mythical quality as most Koreans dream of a time in the future when the North and the South will join together to recreate the Korea that existed before the division and Japanese colonialism. It's a nice idea indeed, but it was not clear what strategy can be formulated to achieve this goal and overcome obstacles.

President Park Geun-hye made an official visit to Germany on March 2014. She unveiled her government's vision of Korean unification at that time. This was the first official stage where she laid out a roadmap of her unification agenda, when she dubbed unification as an "economic bonanza" and expressed the readiness for unification as her administration's priority. In her landmark speech in the former East German city of Dresden, Park made a three-point proposal to North Korea for the "humanity, co-prosperity, and integration" of the two Koreas. The North Korean Defense Ministry described the unification of the two Koreas plan as "ridiculous and meaningless". Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, is concerned that this initiative aims to harm the doctrine of North Korea and its socialist system.

I made a comment at the panel discussion expressing my views as a Middle East journalist and observer, using the Iranian model and its nuclear activity in the region, and the Gulf countries' concerns of such a dangerous activity on their peace and security, including sanctions and US-Iran nuclear agreement. I believe imposing sanctions is a long-term process and may not achieve its goal in the short term. Nuclear power must not be used as a threat against neighbors. The unification of Korea will not be like the German model because of the different circumstances and the presence of China as a large power in Asia. The US is facing a new election and the new president may not support the South Korean plan. We need to slow down, considering all options.

To be continued...



PRE-RAMADAN FOOD SAFETY CAMPAIGNS CONTINUE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: In preparation for the upcoming month of Ramadan, Kuwait Municipality inspection teams launched several inspection campaigns on food outlets in Shuwaikh, Daiya, Qadsiya, Mansouriya, Mubarakiya, Saliya and Bneid Al-Gar. The campaigns resulted in destroying three tons of foul frozen mutton (317 sheep carcasses), filing 10 citations, destroying 22 kilos of sheep offal, destroying 12 kilos of fish and closing down nine stores.

Motorist hurt

An Arab man was injured in a collision involving four vehicles reported on King Fahd Expressway, said a security source,

noting that Qurain firemen were dispatched to deal with the accident.

Patrol car catches fire

A police patrol car caught fire in Qurain, said security sources, noting that Qurain firemen rushed to the scene and managed to control the blaze without any casualties. Separately, a vehicle caught fire in Salmiya, said security sources, noting that firemen from Salmiya rushed to the scene and managed to control the fire. No casualties were reported. Another vehicle caught fire while parked outside a house in Rawda, said security sources, noting that firemen controlled the fire without reporting any casualties.

Smuggling foiled

An Arab woman was arrested on arrival at Kuwait International Airport with 80 illicit pills and two bottles of whiskey that she tried to smuggle into Kuwait, said security sources.

Liquor factory busted

Narcotics detectives raided a home-brewed liquor factory in Wafra that was run by an Asian man who did not have any ID, said security sources. Detectives found 41 barrels of liquor, seven cartons of yeast, 32 sugar sacks, 20 cooking gas cylinders, 36 bottles full of liquor, eight large jerry cans of liquor, four evaporation barrels, four distillation barrels and four stoves, the sources noted. Another factory was raided in Kabd

by chance when a suspect seemed nervous on spotting a police patrol and ran into a farmhouse to hide. Pursuing him, the police found the factory with 55 liquor barrels.

Gas cylinder explodes

Firemen were dispatched to a house in Um Al-Haiman where a cooking gas cylinder exploded, destroying the kitchen roof and starting a fire. No casualties were reported.

Prostitutes arrested

Vice police raided eight brothels in Jleeb Al-Shuyukh where they arrested 25 African and Asian prostitutes. Security sources said that the suspects were referred to relevant authorities for further investigations.



A police patrol vehicle damaged by fire.



Firefighters tackle flames in a car in Salmiya.

2015-2020 DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENT: SCPD

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Development Plan (2015-2020) includes some clear policies and goals based on the protection of environment, especially wild and marine ones, said Secretary General of Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD).

The SCPD drew up the strategic plan approved by the National Assembly and Cabinet, Dr Khaled Mahdi said in a statement issued on Saturday, on the occasion of World Environment Day (WED), which falls on June 5. There are clear goals related to the diversification of the marine and wild environment, as well as air pollution and means of improving air in Kuwait, he said.

He added that these goals were included clearly in the development plan with the aim of enhancing international standards on one hand, and local ones on the other hand. He said the environment axis covers all external and internal economic and social aspects, indicating that there is a project in the 2017-2018 plan aiming to improve marine and wild environment.

Meanwhile, UN Development Program Resident Representative Zainab Benjelloun referred to a discussion panel, concurrently with the WED, to focus on the issues of environment internationally and locally, and the role of civil society organizations so as to achieve the agenda of sustainable development.

Kuwait has been interested in environment protection, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, an environment activist, was quoted by the statement as saying. He said that there were several bodies across the country paying attention to environment, pointing to many ways to preserve environment. —KUNA

KUWAIT'S DEFENSE ATTACHE TAKES OVER PRESIDENCY OF CORPS IN BRUSSELS

BRUSSELS: The outgoing President and Dean of CAMNA (Corps of Defense Attaches) in Brussels, Lieutenant Colonel Heino Matzken of Germany has handed over his responsibilities to Brigadier General Khaled Al-Ragem, Kuwait Defense Attache. "Today is the handover of the Presidency of Corps of defense Attaches in Brussels to my dear friend Brigadier General Khaled Al-Ragem of Kuwait," Matzken said during the handover ceremony held at the German Embassy late on Friday.

"The President is the key leader of the CAMNA here in Brussels and he has to foster community of the attaches, as well as their families," he said. "I am very happy and proud that I could convince my dear friend Khaled to take over this post. I of course wish him my best in the next years to come and I am sure that he can manage this task," he added.

Meanwhile, Ragem said, "we, as Defense Attaches, represent our countries with pride, ambition and hope for the future. We are here today to improve our Military relationships, through the Kingdom of Belgium, to help create a solid unity between us." Matzken, who held the post for two years, also clarified that seniority is not an absolute condition to take over the Presidency and he himself was not

the senior most when he took over as President of CAMNA.

Ragem has made history by becoming the first Attache from an Arab country to be elected as Dean of CAMNA in a European country

when he was elected on May 28. The duration of the post is four years. There are 67 Defense Attaches based in Belgium and they include Military, Naval and Air Attaches accredited to the Kingdom. — KUNA

SECURITY CHIEF HOLDS TALKS IN SINGAPORE ON JOINT TOPICS

SINGAPORE: Chief of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, currently on a visit to Singapore with other officials, discussed on Friday with Singaporean Minister of State for Defense and Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman issues of joint concern for the two friendly countries.

The bureau said in a statement, released in Kuwait, that Sheikh Thamer conveyed to Minister Dr Bin Osman, during the meeting, attended by the State of Kuwait Ambassador to Singapore Yaqoub Al-Sanad and other visiting Singaporean officials, greetings of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Sheikh Thamer and his delegation arrived in Singapore, on Thursday, to take part in the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD), scheduled on June 3-5. It is organized by the

International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

The chief of the Kuwaiti security bureau will address various issues during his participation in the gathering; namely complex security challenges, revamping military capacities with latest technology, managing military competition in Asia, challenges pertaining to resolving strife, security challenges emanating from illegal immigration, cooperation against terrorism, determining common interests in the virtual world, electronic and cyber security. Kuwait, a key member of the international community, takes part in this convention the first time. It is participating in the event in response to an invitation from the IISS, which organized over the past 12 years the annual Manama Dialogue Summit. Kuwait is also a key participant in this top-level gathering. — KUNA