

Local

Top Health Ministry officials referred to prosecution

Suspected corruption in medicine purchases, supply contracts

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Public Anti-Corruption Authority referred three top Ministry of Health (MoH) officials to the public prosecution on the basis of a report it previously received concerning suspected corruption. The authority added that thorough investigations were made and eye-witnesses were cross-examined concerning suspected corruption in medicine purchases and supply contracts. Having found the suspicions to be true, it referred the case to the public prosecutor for further investigations. The prosecution will decide whether to press charges against them or shelve the case.

Violations

MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said the violations mentioned in the State Audit Bureau reports about various government bodies for the fiscal year 2016-2017 are too many and were detected in various sectors. Otaibi added that most violations had been repeated over years, such as violating the rules of paying various contractors, unlawful bonuses, twisted recruitment and failing to collect overdue public funds. "These violations are like a cancer consuming Kuwait's body," he said, noting that every minister and official should respond to the Audit Bureau's remarks to stop draining public funds to ensure keeping his position. Otaibi added that he has filed inquiries to various concerned ministers in this regard.

Regional developments

MP Osama Al-Shaheen warned that regional developments, in addition to domestic and foreign challenges, call for forming a special Cabinet capable of dealing with such

exceptional challenges. He added that the new government should be one that respects the constitution, the people and itself in a way that will help achieve success and stability. Shaheen added that Kuwait should always maintain its neutrality as instructed by HH the Amir. "Thanks to Allah, Kuwait is not part of any of the accelerating disputes, but we must take security, diplomatic, health and food precautions," he explained, urging the government to periodically brief lawmakers concerning various related developments.

Meanwhile, MP Khalil Abul said that in view of the current regional circumstances, the new Cabinet formation should be in office as soon as possible, although he believes that "the presence of a government will not make much of a difference". "We only call for the speedy formation of the new Cabinet because we are about to go through exceptional situations," he added, noting that the coming Cabinet should be one of emergency and political stability and that it should work on reinforcing the domestic front and be ready to face various possibilities. "The new government should be capable to attend parliamentary sessions without fearing any threats of grillings," he added. Abul denounced all talk about sectarianism in Kuwait and urged everybody to focus more on consolidation and solidarity. "Some animal-like people who had

been burying their heads underground are now trying to lift them with such calls," he warned.

Zone for conflicts

The Islamic Salafist Alliance (ISA) yesterday issued a statement in which it warned against attempts to turn the GCC into a zone for conflicts and wars, similar to those going on in Iraq, Yemen and Libya. ISA also called for shura (consultation), cooperation and consolidation to navigate

through such hard times by complying with the instructions of HH the Amir rejecting racism and sectarianism. It slammed parliamentary practices to gain more votes at the expense of public interests. ISA also called economic reform, reinforcing the value of work and avoiding unconstitutional practices. "Everybody should realize how dangerous the current political, security and economic

situations are," it underlined, calling for fighting corruption and favoritism, equal law enforcement on everybody and stopping rumors, false and misleading stories, namely those circulated through social media networks.

Resignation

A National Assembly panel probing Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) said yesterday that forcing the resignation of former KAC Chairwoman Rasha

Al-Roumi was wrong. The committee blamed the government for not providing legal financial aid to the national carrier.

Statistics

The Capital Municipality cleaning department removed 122,284 cubic meters of debris and waste, in addition to 235 abandoned vehicles in October, said the department manager Meshaal Al-Azmi, noting that the department also issued 5,181 notices, marked 10,173 abandoned vehicles and vehicles displayed for sale and filed 1,166 citations. Azmi stressed that inspection campaigns would be launched to track violators of ministerial decision number 9/87 pertaining with littering by throwing tissues and cigarette packs and butts on sidewalks and squares, noting that violators would be subject to a fine of up to KD 200.

Co-ops' stock

Chairman of the Kuwait Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (KUCCS) Ali Al-Kandari invited all union member societies to attend a meeting at noon today to discuss their stocks of strategic goods. The meeting will be held at the KUCCS headquarters in Hawally.

KD 1.8 billion collected in fees

Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) Undersecretary Mohammed Boshetri said the ministry has collected KD 1.8 billion in fees for various services it provides to consumers. Boshetri stressed that the consumer sector is collecting more fees from consumers after launching easier payment methods through smartphones apps. Boshetri added that maintenance operations at various units had started in October in preparation for the summer.



Union reviews co-ops' stock

local spotlight

No to war!



By Muna Al-Fuzal
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Will the Arab and Gulf region witness a devastating new war? This is the most important question that many analysts are racing to write about and discuss. A lot of people have turned into analysts, thinkers and predictors of the future of the Gulf countries. They are acting according to their sources, faith and wishes. Indeed, things seem mixed up with them and others. This article will shed light on what is happening now and its fallout on the future in light of the accelerated geopolitical changes due to the alteration in the decision-making process. I believe that only a very small circle knows for sure what will happen in the next few hours - others are mere spectators.

Arabs do not read history - I do not know exactly who said this, but the fact is that many Arabs are dealing with political events as a media story without looking into their sources and history, because not every statement is real or inevitable. An example of this is a statement by the former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in an interview with a newspaper in the US. He said "the Third World War is at hand".

These words made the headlines of several Arab newspapers. Many supporters of a war in the region applauded these words for various reasons - some of them for sectarian purposes, while others for economic and personal wishes and fantasies. But why do some believe that a world war is inevitable soon? The problem is that things on the ground in the Arab region are not promising. For example, the war in Yemen, the armed conflict with the Houthis, the heated differences with Hezbollah, etc fuel the extreme religious divide between Sunnis and Shites or other religions. The intensification of sectarianism has negative outcomes on the region in the presence of multiple media channels that have their supporters and financiers. It's like a wrestling championship and everyone has an audience clapping for them, but the knockout blow is expensive and deadly.

Conflicts here undoubtedly affect the stability of the region in the short and long term, especially with the continuation of the crisis with Qatar, although the severance of relations will not lead to a war, despite the darkness of the situation and its malaise. The dispute with Qatar is a bad indicator of the ineffectiveness of the Gulf Cooperation Council, but it cannot be a reason for a world war here. I believe that instability can lead to the transfer of capital from one country to another more secure and stable location and the emergence of new industries, as well as new investments in weapons, and this does not seem encouraging to the countries of the region or its people.

The other confusing element for thinkers and observers is the strategic transformation in Saudi policy, including the internal one. Decisions by Saudi Arabia to arrest government officials and businessmen recently on corruption charges have become a matter of daily talk on US channels, sometimes with a clear lack of understanding of the Middle East and its past. Some US statements, for example, are fearful, hasty and ignorant, only to contradict the US' presidency, management and relationship with Saudi Arabia.

One of the Americans described Saudi Arabia as being involved in upsetting the status quo throughout the region. But, I can claim the same about the US foreign policy that has been upsetting many people and countries for quite a long time, and even recently, when it dropped out of climate change agreement. The United States to a considerable degree is complicit in this chaos around the world. I believe that Arabs are not familiar with the speedy radical change in the process of decision making and new leadership. I am happy for this.

It is evident that the role and influence of non-governmental organizations such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and IS in Syria and Iraq is increasing. They control large areas of land in a contested jostle for power, influence and support from different countries. Continuing armed conflicts without engaging in major wars and confrontations is a possible scenario.

I don't see the area moving towards a world war, but the continuation of an armed conflict is likely to occur. My concern is that such events will have impacts on the area on all levels. If there is a tip to be said here - inner security of countries is essential. Security control of internal movements of extremists and contacts with foreign organizations should be tightened.

Municipality announces 18 camping sites

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Director General of the Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi issued a circular regarding organizing spring camps for the 2017/2018 camping season. Public Relations Director Abdelmohsen Aba Al-Khail said the municipality has designated 18 sites in north, west and south Kuwait through its official website: <http://www.baladia.gov.kw>. Campers can fill the application and pay the fees and deposit to get the license on this site, in addition to four other sites for general services. He said the applicant must be at least 21 years of age, and it is not allowed to apply for more than one license. The camping area is 1,000 sq m, and the applicant must pay KD 50 in non-refundable fees and KD 300 as a refundable deposit if conditions are met. The camping season starts Wednesday and ends on March 15, 2018.

Awareness

The awareness and guidance department at the civil defense carried out an awareness campaign at the educa-

Man arrested for bribing detective

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Residency detectives arrested an Arab man red-handed while trying to bribe a detective. The suspect offered an employee at the department money in order to release a detained Asian man - he was then arrested during the exchange.

Campaigns

Security departments in Kuwait's various governorates carried out several campaigns resulting in the arrest of 531 wanted people and 905 residency violators, in addition to dealing with 114 drugs and liquor cases.

'Villain'

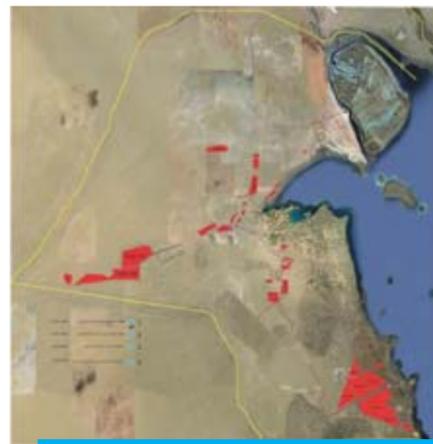
A thief turned on the cooking gas after he failed to find anything to steal. A citizen told police that when he returned home, he found his house's contents scattered around, while the smell of cooking gas was very strong. When he went to the kitchen, he discovered that the thief had cut the hose of the gas cylinder after seemingly failing to steal anything. "A policeman remarked: "This is not a thief - he is a villain."

Molester at large

Farwaniya detectives are looking for yet another child molester, as a Bangladeshi man told police his son was raped. He said the eight-year-old boy was lured by sweets in front

Romania urged to intensify search for missing Kuwaiti

BUCHAREST: The Kuwaiti Ambassador to Romania Talal Al-Hajri has discussed with Chairman of the Romanian Senate Kalin Popescu-Taricanu the disappearance of



KUWAIT: A map released by Kuwait Municipality yesterday shows camping sites designated around Kuwait.

tion ministry and private schools. Booklets and brochures on civil defense procedures for students and teaching faculty were distributed.

Unfinished business

Paramedics rushed a citizen to Mubarak Hospital after he was stabbed in the head by nine citizens who stalked him in order to settle a score between them. The attackers were arrested. The injured man was rushed to the ICU and required 17 stitches for his head wounds. Investigations continue.

Drug possession

Two citizens were sent to the Drugs Control General Department charged with possession of drugs. The two were arrested following an attempt to escape, one of them by foot. A source said police stopped the suspects' car at a checkpoint in Salwa, and one of them refused to give police his ID and attempted to escape with a bag. He took out some substances out of it, besides swallowing tablets and throwing an envelope suspected of containing cocaine. He was also found wanted by authorities. The second suspect was in an abnormal condition. The vehicle was impounded.

Multiple charges

Police at a checkpoint in Abdullah Al-Mubarak noticed drugs paraphernalia in a car that police stopped with three men inside. The car was searched and a detectives' flashing light, a wireless, seven mobile phones, and several wallets containing IDs that do not belong to the persons in the vehicle were found. One of the men was found wanted over a KD 1,278 debt. All were arrested on charges of having drugs paraphernalia, posing as detectives, debts and suspicion of robberies.

Deportation

Nineteen expats were sent to the deportation department for selling used goods in an open yard. Police went to the area after being tipped and arrested the 19, including a Jordanian woman for begging. All were taken to Jleeb police station, then to the deportation department.

Kuwaiti citizen Mohammad Al-Baghli in the European country.

The ambassador called for exerting greater efforts to determine his whereabouts and destiny. Ambassador Hajri said yesterday that the Senate's chairman affirmed his concern toward this case and pledged to nudge the relevant authorities to do more for locating the Kuwaiti national, who has been missing in Romania since August 5, 2015. He indicated that he asked the chief senator to support Kuwait's request that the European Union relieve Kuwaiti nationals of the Schengen visa. — KUNA

Legalese

Visa regulations



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Visa regulations have been one of my most common topics in my few years as a legal columnist for the newspaper, but it seems that the regulations keep on changing. I have also written multiple times that I trust my government's decisions on making these changes and completely support it, but I also hope that I am able to share my opinion on how we can make Kuwait a better place by welcoming more people and treating those who work in this country better (not just by writing but in practice as well).

We are extremely fortunate as Kuwaitis to be living in a place as diverse as Kuwait, with so much talent and culture. The Kuwaiti people have always been welcoming, so it saddens me to see all these negative media reports on expats in Kuwait, and even more when I get emails with questions from expats who are afraid to move to Kuwait. Kuwait is a lovely place and I hope those who want to work in Kuwait can do so.

New changes

Question: What are the new changes in visa laws? Is it true that no expats under 30 will be provided with a work visa to work in Kuwait?

Fajer: I know that 'visa laws' can be confusing, especially since it is not just one law but different bylaws and ministerial decisions. The newest decisions state that starting from Jan 1, no work permits will be provided to expats younger than 30 in the private and oil sectors. I do not understand the logic behind this decision, although I hope that the government based this decision on a need. I see a lot of hardworking expats in Kuwait who are younger than 30, like teachers or construction workers or journalists.

There have been other changes as well. New visit laws now allow businessmen (or women) to enter Kuwait on a business visa valid for up to one year. Visas will also allow foreign students to study in private universities in Kuwait, and medical visas will be provided to those seeking treatment in Kuwait.

Tourist visa

Question: I have many friends working in Kuwait on a tourist visa or on their husbands' visas - is this legal?

Fajer: No. It is not legal to work under a tourist visa in Kuwait or on a dependent visa. With that said, I have seen this many times, especially with teachers. It does not make sense that schools are allowed such practices - teachers need to be qualified to be teaching our students and there have to be strict regulations in place. If you are going to do so, be prepared to be deported for violating visa regulations as it is a violation to work under tourist visas in many countries, resulting in deportation or even a ban from the country or region.

Temporary visa

Question: If my visa/residency has expired and I have a case at the shuon (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor) against my employer because of visa-related issues, what can I do? I am really worried about moving around in Kuwait without a visa.

Fajer: If your working visa/residency has expired and you have a case against your employer, then you need to get a temporary visa from the shuon. You need to ask the shuon for this. The process could be very complicated, but it is important that you take this step. They can give you a visa ranging from a month to three months, giving you enough time to find a lawyer in Kuwait to represent you so you can go back home or find a new sponsor.

Should you have any questions or concerns, or you require a consultation, please email me at ask@fajertlawyer.com.