

Local

Legalese

Visa regulations for dependents

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Even as practicing lawyers in Kuwait, we are well aware of the confusion that may arise because of the continuously changing visa regulations, even more so for women who are accompanying their spouses to Kuwait. Many women come to Kuwait to support their working husbands and therefore have no access to information that their husbands may otherwise have access to at their work. I have answered some questions regarding visas for dependents.

Legalities

Q: I am a non-Kuwaiti working in the private sector - I want to know the legalities of sponsoring my wife and children and bringing them to Kuwait?

Fajer: I thought I will start with this general question as it seems that it is simpler for a man to sponsor his wife. Ministerial decree no. 3384/2016 provides specific requirements for this purpose - the salary needs to be a minimum of KD 450 for a non-Kuwaiti man to bring his family to Kuwait. This applies to both public and private sector expats.

Q: I am a female expat working in Kuwait - can I sponsor my husband?

Fajer: Unfortunately, a female expat cannot sponsor her husband or her children above 21 years of age. Only parents and children under 21 can be sponsored by a female expat. This is surprising to me, as ministerial decree no. 640/1987 does not mention that only a male can sponsor his wife, but instead is general, stating that spouses can sponsor - unfortunately, this is not applicable in Kuwait.

Dependent visa holder

Q: I am a dependent visa holder as my husband is my sponsor - does this permit me to work in Kuwait?

Fajer: As a dependent visa holder, you need to transfer your residency from 'dependent' to 'work'. To apply for the new residency, you need to submit the following documents:

1. Application form for residency transfer (to be signed by the former and the new sponsors).
2. Two personal photos (light blue background - 6x4).
3. Original civil ID.
4. A certificate of health insurance.
5. A certificate of criminal status.
6. Work permit (to be issued by the Public Authority for Manpower).
7. Original signature approval of the new sponsor.
8. A form of personal photo.
9. Prescribed fees.
10. Original passport.

If you ever have confusion about the requirements and the documents that you need, I would suggest that you visit the shuoon (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor) office closest to you and inquire about the administrative side of things. I want to also make it clear that even though unlike other countries there are no clear laws on visas and whether married women can volunteer, start a business or work part-time in Kuwait, I see no complications with such women volunteering or working with their artistic skills, as in taking/selling photos or having an exhibition of artworks, writing poetry etc. I hope the above was clear.

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

World Bank optimistic towards Kuwait's economic reforms

WASHINGTON: Director of the World Bank in Kuwait Dr Firas Raad has expressed optimism about the reform measures taken by the Kuwaiti government, especially in the field of improving the practice of business.

In a statement yesterday, Raad said that the discussions between the Ministries of Finance and Education in Kuwait, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the sidelines of the World Bank's annual meetings were "good and constructive" during which he reviewed the most important challenges facing the State of Kuwait.

He referred to the World Bank Group strategy announced by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim, which is based on

supporting economic growth that guarantees all sectors of the society, enhancing the ability of societies to cope with natural disasters and emerging crises and investing in human capital, especially in health and education.

Turning to the crisis of oil prices decline after 2014, which prompted oil producing countries to address it, Raad stressed that economic growth in Kuwait has not slowed significantly, ranging between two and three percent in 2015 and 2016 and this is due to continued expenditure in big capital projects.

Raad said that the World Bank's estimates in 2017 show that growth will slow because of the agreement between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other countries to cut oil production, however, he anticipated growth to rise in the two coming years to about 5.3 per cent by 2019 and return to what it was in 2015.

Raad stressed the need to take the necessary measures in the medium and long term to diversify sources of income in Kuwait, pointing out that the developmental vision of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah aims to diversify sources of economy and rely on the private sector to create jobs for Kuwaitis. "We are optimistic about the measures cur-

rently being taken by the government, both on the financial side and on the structural and economic side," he said.

In terms of improving the business environment, Dr Raad said that the Kuwaiti government has made a lot of achievements last year, including the establishment of the Kuwait Business Center (one window integrated management) under the umbrella of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, saying such step deserves "thanks and appreciation." He expressed the hope that the annual Doing Business report issued by the World Bank at the end of this month will include Kuwait's achievements.

On the other hand, Dr Raad spoke about the international conference to be hosted by Kuwait for the reconstruction of liberated areas in Iraq in early 2018 in line with its principles of supporting the Iraqis and due to its supportive humanitarian mission as a center for humanitarian action. He said that the World Bank is working with the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the Iraqi government to take the preparatory steps to organize this conference, which reflects the noble and humane direction of Kuwait's leadership, government and people towards the brothers in Iraq. — KUNA

Kuwait's inflation up 0.53 percent in September

KUWAIT: Average domestic inflation climbed 0.53 percent in September, as compared to the same month last year, said the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) yesterday. The index for the first main group (food and beverages) went up by 0.65 percent, compared to the same month in 2016.

The figure of the second main group (tobacco, narcotics) was up by 2.06 percent on annual basis and rose on monthly

basis by 0.09 percent, as the third group (clothing, footwear) rose by 1.91 percent on annual basis and climbed by 0.19 percent on monthly basis. Inflation of the fourth group (housing services) dropped by 1.75 percent on annual basis, and that of the fifth group (furnishing equipment and household maintenance) was up by 3.69 percent.

The sixth group (health) increased by 0.39 percent year-on-year, and the seventh (transport) went up by 1.72 percent on annual basis and 0.68 percent on monthly basis. Communications dropped 0.10 percent on annual basis while that of recreation and culture rose by 5.44 percent on annual basis. Education meantime climbed on annual basis by 1.9 percent. Restaurants and hotels edged up three percent on annual basis, and the last group (miscellaneous goods, service) witnessed an annual rise of 2.83 percent. — KUNA

Increased fees on expats part of health reform program: Minister

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi stressed that increasing health service fees for expatriates was necessary as part of a comprehensive health reform program. Harbi added that the nature of doctors' jobs and duties might make it difficult to impose the fingerprint system on them, because this might affect the healthcare procedures and requirements needed for patients. Harbi also stressed that it is hard to nationalize medical, nursing and technical jobs in the near future.

On another health concern, the Capital health zone director Dr Fatima Al-Asoumi said the new Amiri Hospital would be completed by mid-2018. She noted that the current Amiri Hospital's casualty department is being expanded to include 13 extra beds and develop its recovery rooms. "Expansion will be done in three phases, of which the first one is already completed and will be opened soon," she added, noting that work on the second phase will commence in three weeks and the third would commence after three months.

Fuel prices

Responding to local press reports published yesterday about Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) request to restudy prices of all fuel types pending increasing them, KPC yesterday issued a statement explaining that its role was only to review prices and that a committee was responsible for monitoring international

oil prices to use them as references in determining the prices of fuels in local markets. KPC also stressed that it reviews these products' international prices monthly, then reports the study results to the committee entrusted with restudying all government-provided subsidies at the finance ministry.

Gas consumption

Minister of Oil and Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq said Kuwait consumed 229 billion cubic feet of gas during the summer months (April-September), an increase of 14 billion cubic feet compared to the same period last year. Marzouq stressed that the highest consumption rates were in July with 41.666 billion cubic feet consumed, compared to 37.2 billion cubic feet in the same period of the previous year. Marzouq explained that Kuwait's consumption of gas in the same period of 2015 was 208.5 billion cubic feet, which jumped to 214.6 billion cubic feet in 2016 and 229 billion in 2017. Notably, Kuwait has signed three contracts with British Petroleum, Shell and Qatar Gas to import 2.5 million tons of liquefied natural gas annually for four years (2016-2020).



Dr Jamal Al-Harbi

Kuwait abides by OPEC's oil output quota

KUWAIT: Kuwait has affirmed its adherence to the crude oil output quota as set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Organization (OPEC), estimated at 2.75 million barrels per day. Jamal Jaafar, Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), said yesterday that the company is committed to the production share, as decided by OPEC, estimated at 2.75 million barrels per day, indicating that there "is no necessity to hike the (crude) production."

KOC's output capacity is forecast to reach 3.65 million barrels per day by 2020, Jaafar said in a statement, adding that the company production of non-associated gas has currently reached 210 million cubic feet and would exceed 500 million cubic feet in January. Jaafar was speaking at a ceremony organized by Schlumberger company, specialized in oil fields' services, on the occasion of employing Kuwaiti citizens. Maan Razzouqi, the head of the North Middle East at Schlumberger, said the company hired 20 nationals, adding that it planned to employ many Kuwaitis during this year. — KUNA

14 armed men attack port guards

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Fourteen men attacked officers at the Mina Abdullah refinery pedestrian gate with sharp objects. Interior Ministry said that while the security men were manning the gate, they found a laptop with an employee, which is not allowed in the premises. The employee later returned with 14 men and they attacked the guards. Investigations are underway.

Swindling

Public prosecution plans to refer an actor to court for trial on a swindling case against a Kuwaiti woman. The girl lodged a complaint against the actor stating that they met in 2012 and he convinced her to get married, so she gave him her student aid allowance of a total of KD 4,800. He disappeared with the money and lured into taking another loan two years later worth KD 10,000. Later, the actor's friend who took advantage of the situation made fake promises and kept withdrawing money from the victim's account using her ATM card for six months. On protesting, he threatened her with fake pictures. Police arrested both the actor who was jailed for 21 days and his friend, and they were later released on bail. The other man was re-

arrested and is being held at the criminal detectives department.

Suicide

A Jordanian woman was rushed to hospital following an attempted suicide in her Farwaniya apartment. The girl suffered from psychological problems after she was terminated from an ad agency, then a dispute took place with her family members, after which she used a sharp object to stab herself in the left hand. The girl was taken to hospital and faces charges of attempted suicide.

Legal trouble

A Kuwaiti man was arrested by Hawally police for being wanted for a debt of KD 1,350. He told police that he had taken a loan for his girlfriend who could not make the payment in due time causing him legal trouble.

Electronic crimes

A citizen claiming to be a member of the ruling family was arrested by criminal detectives for electronic crimes and debt. Several complaints were filed against a ruling family member who lured people with business deals. Detectives arrested him in Jabriya and found out that he was an imposter and was wanted to serve a jail sentence. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Hashish found

Thirty eight grams of Hashish were found in an inspection yard in Nuwaiseeb customs. The hashish was removed and a case was filed.

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