

Local

Mother wins custody after child tells judge about 'abusive' father

Visa formats' adjustment delays work permits

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: In a tragic family dispute case, a child was brought before the judge at the Ja'afari court yesterday in accordance with the child's law, and was asked which of his divorced parents he would like to live with. The child kept silent and nodded down, which touched the hearts of everybody present in the courthouse. The judge stepped down from his bench, kissed the child and reassured to pass a sentence according to his choice. The child responded, saying that he wanted to live with his mother because his father beats him and that they do not like each other. The mother's Attorney Howra' Al-Habib demanded that the court grants custody to the mother, which was sentenced.

Work permits

Issuing work permits was suspended in various

labor departments as a result of ongoing operations carried out by the Ministry of Interior to adjust the entry visa formats. The Public Authority for Manpower is currently working with the Interior Ministry to solve the problem as soon as possible in order to avoid stacking piles of unfinished transactions. The malfunction appeared when electronic orders to issue work permits were given and on investigating the matter, IT staff found out that MOI had changed the entry visa forms' format, which caused a printing failure at the manpower authority.

Air quality

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) revealed plans to offer a tender for bidding to build new air quality and pollution detection centers around Kuwait, EPA sources said. They added that 28 fixed mobile

units were already in service, including 15 run by EPA and 13 owned by the Ministry of Oil. The new units will be distributed in various areas, namely in new cities as a part of a project to monitor pollution through fixed and mobile units to develop air control monitoring programs. The project includes building national plants to detect all types of pollutants within the 2020-2035 plan.

Food safety

Farwaniya department at the public authority for food and nutrition resumed its inspections yesterday in Rabiya, Khaitan, Farwaniya and Rai. The crackdown which resulted in filing various citations including hiring laborers without health certificates, using expired health certificates and not maintaining proper hygiene. The campaigns also resulted in confiscating and destroying 300 kilograms of inedible meat.



MP Fahhad blasts delay in procedures over prisoners

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Islamist opposition MP Abdullah Fahhad Al-Enezi yesterday lashed out at those who are delaying procedures regarding completing the trial of opposition activists currently jailed for storming the National Assembly building six years ago. Enezi said that the procedures have been delayed "beyond the natural" duration and asked to whose interest the delay was.

The appeals court late November sentenced 67 opposition activists, including a number of MPs, to several years in jail for storming the National Assembly after they had been acquitted by the lower court. A large number of them had been taken to jail waiting for the court of cassation to start its procedures to look into their cases. But the procedures had been delayed which means the convicts will stay longer in jail.

Fireman hurt in Salmiya blaze

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Firemen dealt with a blaze reported in a five-storey Salmiya building yesterday. Firefighters from the Bidaa and Salmiya fire stations responded and evacuated the building before putting out the flames. A fireman suffered from smoke inhalation and was taken to hospital.

KD 1 million debtor caught

Hawally police arrested a man wanted for several debt cases totaling more than KD 1 million. The suspect, Kuwaiti, was sent to the Civil Investigations Department, Al-Rai reported. Meanwhile, a Syrian man was arrested on a KD 7,316 debt and sent to concerned authorities.

Mall inspection

Ahmadi violations removal team conducted an inspection in a Fahheel mall to check if signboard licenses were up to date and if workers' health certificates were valid. Head of the team Mohammad Al-Khalidi said 90 stores were inspected and 13 citations were issued.

Enezi deplored the "deliberate" delay of the court procedures and held the government responsible for any harm that may be inflicted on the prisoners. He said that legal experts have said that the prisoners are being held hostage because they are not either freed nor sent to court.

The lawmaker said that article 34 of the constitution bans any moral mistreatment of prisoners which includes delaying their trial. He said the situation have been aggravated after a number of prisoners went on hunger strike to protest mistreatment.

In the meantime, Kuwait Society for Human Rights yesterday declared its support and backing for the prisoners who began a hunger strike. The society said the prisoners have full right to observe a hunger strike to press for human rights demands or to protest ill treatment.

Among those who went on strike is MP Waleed Al-Tabtabai who was sentenced to seven years in jail. The strikers stress that the court handed them harsh sentences without enabling them to make their defense in a proper way.

Early retirement

In another development, a controversy erupted

Drug possession

Farwaniya police arrested a Kuwaiti citizen with possession of three envelopes of heroin. The man was sent to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD). Meanwhile, an Indian man was arrested with possession of four pieces of hashish and four envelopes containing shabu (meth), and he was sent also sent to DCGD.

Bootleggers arrested

Two Asians were arrested for selling liquor to their compatriots. Both were sent for deportation. The duo were caught after a failed attempt to escape, and more than 5,000 liquor bottles were found with them.

Addicts busted

A woman and two men were found in an abnormal condition inside a car in Andalus. They were arrested and sent to DCGD. Patrol officers grew suspicious of the car that was parked in a space in the area, and found the three individuals sleeping inside. None of the three carried any IDs with them.

Thefts

Farwaniya detectives are looking for a thief who stole KD 1,000 from a Farwaniya Co-operative branch Society branch during Dhuhr prayer. The man reportedly switched off the CCTV cameras at the store to avoid being identified. Investigations are ongoing.

among lawmakers yesterday over a decision by the financial and economic affairs committee to refer a draft law on early retirement to a think-tank for revision. The draft law was supposed to go before the assembly for debate and voting today. A number of angry MPs strongly criticized panel members who supported the move.

A number of MPs however said they will reject the committee decision in today's session and insist it be debated immediately. But members of the panel said their decision was purely technical to know the exact consequences of the law. They also insisted that they also support the law but want to make sure that it is studied properly. The pension fund meanwhile said the cost of the law is too high and will impact the future of the fund.



MP Abdullah Fahhad Al-Enezi



KUWAIT: A firefighter tackles a blaze inside a Salmiya building yesterday.

Separately, chocolates and candies worth KD 660 were stolen from a vehicle owned by a sweets shop. In another case, a Syrian man informed police about goods worth KD 8,000 that were stolen from a warehouse. The stolen material included 125 stationery boxes, 150 boxes of kitchenware, in addition to a frozen food making machine. Detectives are working on the case. Meanwhile, an unknown person broke into a men's gym in Fintas and stole a bag containing KD 12,000 and mobile phones. Detectives are investigating.

Rental Laws in Kuwait

Legalese



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

The new year has started and people have been making changes in their lives, from new health and lifestyle options, to better careers, or new homes. So it is no surprise that I have been receiving many questions regarding rental laws in Kuwait and one major question has been about paying rent online.

When discussing housing laws, one thing that needs to be mentioned is that, thanks to technology, there has been a shift in rental laws around the world. New innovations were introduced, such as peer-to-peer housing like Airbnb and online Fintech solutions for payments, such as the local tech companies. The rental laws in Kuwait have not changed; in fact, the Kuwait rental law 35 has been in effect since 1978! But with that said, I think there is a shift in the Kuwaiti market with local concepts such as Ajar Online and Ajarity, online payment platforms for rent collection.

Local app

Question: My landlord has asked me to pay my rent using a local app, through a notice, stating that the company will no longer accept cash or bank deposits. I am not sure if I should pay the rent online, as I am not sure if this will legally hold up in court. Can you please let me know if it is legal to pay rent online or not?

Fajer: It is legal for you to pay rent online, and when you are using online payment methods, there will still be proof of payment through the bank. I would just make sure that I am receiving electronic receipts and that you are not being forced to pay commission or other fees for using the app.

Auto-renewal

Question: I have been living in an apartment for 18 months, but only had a one year contract. Does that mean that my contract automatically renewed itself for a year? And if so does that mean I cannot leave till the remaining six months are over?

Fajer: If the term of your rent contract ends, yet you continue to occupy the space and pay the rent in a timely manner, then your contract is renewed for the period of your rent payment. For example, if you pay monthly, then your contract is renewed month-by-month even though you initially had a one year contract. To put it in simple terms anything beyond the initial term of your contract is renewed according to what you are paying for.

Different amount

Question: My rent is KD 600 but my landlord wants to put KD 800 on the rental contract and rental receipt. I am not agreeing to this and as a consequence they are refusing to let me pay rent or issue me a receipt. My discussions were all verbal with the haris (janitor) as the manager does not speak English. How do I deal with this?

Fajer: Your landlord is not being logical and although I do not want to assume things, but putting a higher price for the apartment than what it really is could give your landlord a lot of advantages, they can raise the rent even more than the KD 800 in five years, or they can even say that you have not been paying the actual amount!

I suggest you bring in a friend that speaks Arabic to try and talk to them and let them know that this is not acceptable, and if they refuse to take the rent, then you can pay your rent in court.

Questions or queries can be sent to ask@fajertelawyer.com



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