

Local

Officials pave way for domestic helpers' recruitment from Philippines, other countries

Private sector provides 20 percent of medical services in Kuwait

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Relevant Kuwaiti authorities have finished resolving all problems related to laws, regulations and remarks concerned with facilitating the recruitment of domestic helpers from the Philippines and other countries, said informed diplomatic sources. The sources added that the Kuwait-Philippines joint committee will meet next month to sign a number of agreements and discuss the Philippine president's visit in December. The sources added that the Kuwaiti coordination team concerned with Kuwait-Philippines talks on domestic helpers' recruitment, headed by the assistant foreign minister for consulate affairs Sami Al-Hamad, had recently met representatives from the foreign, interior and social affairs and labor ministries and as well as the manpower authority to discuss related concerns.

Heads of medical departments

The Ministry of Health (MoH) set Wednesday, September 26, as the deadline for newly-appointed heads of medical departments to submit their plans to develop work within their departments, adding that officials who fail to submit such plans will be replaced. In this regard, informed sources said that the legal tenure of new heads of departments will end on Aug 26, 2020 and that their development plans should be handed to the minister's office in written form, including the plan and its schedule. Each head of department will be fully responsible before the minister for implementing it. Notably, the health minister recently appointed new heads of various medical departments with the aim of injecting 'new blood' and providing more opportunities and skills to match medical develop-

ments. In another medical concern, MoH statistics showed that the total number of surgeries made by 12 private hospitals in Kuwait was 46,086 for males and 13,122 for female



No senior officials with fake degrees

patients. Statistics also showed that the total number of doctors working for private hospitals is 27,000, in addition to around 6,000 nurses, providing 20 percent of medical services in Kuwait.

Fake degrees

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh denied that the list of names of holders of fake or uncertified degrees that the education ministry reported to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) includes any senior officials in any ministry, adding that full coordination is in progress between the ministry and CSC to track such degrees. Saleh explained that CSC has taken several measures concerning proven forgery cases including undoing all administrative decisions or promotions, recollecting



all incentives unlawfully paid and contacting the manpower authority to suspend national labor support allowances and retrieve the sums paid. In other news, CSC has suspended recruitment through the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) and the Public Authority for Manpower until their merger process is completed, well-informed sources said.

Social care

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh said tenants of social care homes can be temporarily moved from one care house to another in case of maintenance. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry made in this regard by MP Saleh Ashour, Sabeeh added that the decision is usually made by the concerned administration with the aim of providing care house tenants with the best and most comfortable accommodation.

'Beautiful' woman blackmails eight well-to-do men

KUWAIT: A "beautiful" woman blackmailed eight well-to-do men after having affairs with them. She then gave them an ultimatum to either pay up or they will be exposed. The woman is still free, but being monitored by police. The woman's modus operandi is as follows. After establishing what seems to be a good relationship, the woman starts asking for money, which is seen by the victim as normal. This continues for several months, then after a few months, she asks for a sizeable amount of money. If the man pays, she ends the relationship with him a few days later. If she is met with refusal, she pretends to remain in a relationship before going to the police and claiming she was raped, and submits 'evidence' to prove her claims. When the victim realizes he will face a scandal, he tries to settle the matter, and the woman makes him pay double what she asked for earlier. A security source said the woman will be arrested soon, adding she is free because there is no legal proof of her criminal actions.

Patrol boat damaged

The Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) held a citizen responsible for repairing a boat after three Egyptian fishermen who manned a boat he owns were found fishing in an off-limit area. They then collided with a patrol boat and damaged its engine, then escaped. Deputy Director General of PAAAFR Marzouq Al-Azmi said patrolmen noticed a violating boat with three men onboard and they were asked to stop. But they revved the engine and cut the rope, causing a collision with the patrol boat. The coastguard recovered the violating boat and charged its owner. The three are being sought by police on charges of attacking PAAAFR employees, escaping and violating fishing laws.

Chalet burned

Jahra detectives are looking for two men accused of burning a citizen's chalet. The interior ministry received a call about the fire, so firemen responded and put out the blaze. A police source said the chalet's owner lodged a complaint against two persons he knows over setting the blaze. Investigations are underway.

Bootlegger arrested

Police arrested an Indian man for selling homebrewed liquor and found 160 bottles with him. He was sent to concerned authorities. — *Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai*

MoH to keep abreast of int'l developments

KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health for Quality and Control Dr Mohammad Al-Khashti yesterday affirmed that Kuwait's third Infectious Disease Conference reflects the Ministry's keenness to keep abreast of international developments. The conference also aims to exchange expertise, work protocols and preventive and curative care to cope with emerging infectious diseases, Dr Khashti said in a speech during the conference.

Dr Khashti pointed out that infectious diseases

are a source of concern and threaten global and regional health security, despite the achievements of the world in eradicating and containing many epidemics and reducing effects of many of these diseases. He stressed the importance of applying the World Health Organization's (WHO) Convention to the International Health Regulations related to environmental determinants, climate change and neglected diseases. "We must continuously strengthen the capacity of the health system to prevent, monitor, diagnose and treat them under the umbrella of comprehensive health coverage," Khashti added.

Meanwhile, Director of the Infectious Diseases Hospital, Dr Jamal Al-Duaij said in that the conference comes in cooperation with the University of London. The conference aims to identify the latest developments and access to scientific papers, transfer of experiences and expand research in the field of infectious diseases in Kuwait, he added. — KUNA

Stray dogs increase in Kuwait



KUWAIT: An increasing number of stray dogs have been roaming Kuwaiti streets, especially in industrial and new residential areas, creating an issue of concern for people and the environment. — KUNA

Consulting engineering offices helps prevent mishaps: Union

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Union of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses urged the Kuwait Direct Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) to commit to engineering regulations and encourage Kuwait's engineering and consultancy sectors by having them design and supervise the execution of development projects in order to prevent repeated mistakes and mishaps.

Referring to a recent fire and the collapse of giant beams during installation, the union's Chairman Bader Al-Salman stressed that the presence of a local engineering and consultancy house in a major development project will help achieve and impose safety and security conditions as well as achieve quality execution as per certified conditions and specifications. Salman added that the major reason for the aforementioned mishaps was violation of safety and security conditions.

In other news, the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) announced that 51.6 percent of Al-Ghoush Street development project has been completed, noting that the project linking the Fifth and Sixth Ring Roads will include six intersections, three flyovers, a tunnel and a footbridge. The authority added that 66 percent of the west Fifth Ring Road development project has so far been completed.

local spotlight

Are cleaners beggars?



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The municipality announced that it will deport any cleaner working for a cleaning firm under contract with the municipality if he is caught begging and the company will be fined. Kuwait Municipality's Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said in a statement that "all companies working in all governorates were informed of these regulations." According to the report, if a cleaner is found begging or acting contrary to public order, he will be punished and his company penalized.

Inspection campaigns will commence from this week, which includes joint teams from the Public Authority for Manpower, interior ministry and the commerce and industry ministry, in addition to the municipality. The official said "these measures were designed to reduce widespread begging by cleaners that affects Kuwait's reputation."

In June 2017, local newspapers published a statement from the municipality which reported that 33 cleaners had been caught begging in four areas after being monitored. According to the statement, their companies were fined for violating the terms of the contract. Now, there is no doubt that the municipality sees these workers as employees of a company and getting paid, so begging and asking for money from people is legally prohibited because this employee is not entitled to ask money from passersby or act in a manner that suggests that he is asking for money. This is understood.

Personally, and this is my opinion, I have never come across a cleaning worker who came to me asking for money explicitly and directly. I do agree that some of them may suggest so by giving you a pitiful look, and thus you may feel that he needs a little money. But I have never seen a cleaner in my life who said to me in the face "I want money". On the contrary, several women dressed in full black with their faces covered have approached me in parking lots and started talking about living in poverty and asked for money directly and openly. These women should be arrested and deported.

I know that some people have a lot of derision and contempt for these poor workers who work in very difficult conditions and unbearable climate in summer or winter with a meager income, but the streets will not be clean without them.

I don't think there are many people who disagree that the cleaners are poor and that the workers are not considered beggars or entered the country with the intention of begging - but I wonder why no one looks at the subject from another angle and asks what prompts them to beg or behave in a way that suggests that they are begging or accept money from people?

For many years, there have been rumors about the exploitation by such companies of their workers, that salaries are not paid in full or regularly and that they live in difficult circumstances. But I haven't seen extensive investigation campaigns to find the truth, and if there is exploitation by the companies, I hope the municipality will take such reports into account.

As for violating companies, I do not see how to punish the company as it may be an individual action of the worker and the company has no direct responsibility. But the head of the workers - who is usually of the same nationality as the workers - has a significant role in directing these workers, so if a worker is arrested while begging, the head worker must be investigated.

I have another question - what if a person willingly gives some money or food to these workers? Will they be prevented from accepting money or food out of caution and fear of punishment or deportation? There will always be kind and charitable people who will keep giving money and food to these workers. I believe it is time to look at the situation of workers from all aspects.