

Local

Labor law amendments expected to raise salaries, annual leave days

First 'pro-expat' law to be passed in parliament in nine years

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: As the National Assembly decided to pass the amendments to the private sector's labor law in its first reading in a unanimous vote along with the government's approval, this makes it probable that it will be passed during the sessions of March 19 and 20. Sources described the law as the first legislation to be issued by the National Assembly in favor of expats in nine years. It is expected to raise annual leave for 1.7 million expats working in the private sector to 40 days and increase the monthly salary and indemnity by 15 percent, according to specialized economic sources. This law is among the conciliatory legislations by the government and parliament to strengthen legislative gains despite fears expressed by financial parties that this law will raise the cost of labor in Kuwait and constitutes a burden for some companies.

Residency sticker

The interior ministry is coordinating with the foreign ministry to prepare the plan of implementing the decision of scrapping the residency sticker for expats and use the civil ID information instead, a security source said. The sources said coordination with the foreign ministry will be in case the civil ID is lost outside Kuwait - in the expat's country - because they will not be able to leave the country and will not be allowed

in Kuwait unless they have a civil ID, which will hinder the return of expats, especially teachers, doctors, nurses and others.

The sources said the solution will be to coordinate with the foreign embassy to inform Kuwaiti embassies abroad to receive expats who lose their civil IDs in their countries, provided that they produce a lost certificate from their country. Then the embassy will write to the Kuwaiti interior ministry to enquire about the expat's data and their residency, and when confirmed, they will be given an entry paper from the embassy with the required information.

Housewives' licenses

A security source at the traffic department said no driving licenses will be given to housewives except in eight cases. The sources said the exempted cases include homemakers who have children whose husbands are public prosecution members, advisors, experts, faculty members of universities and institutions, doctors, pharmacists and general managers and their aides, provided that their salaries are not less than KD 600. The source said traffic departments in the six governorates are not authorized to issue driving licenses to

Syrian homemakers, and only the assistant undersecretary for traffic affairs and his assistant for licensing affairs have the authority to make a decision. He said it is not true that engineers' wives can get licenses, adding that engineers are not among the exempted professions in the latest ministerial decision.

KD 110 million

Informed sources said the health ministry collected around KD 110 million from expats in health insurance last year, adding that the money was transferred to the ministry's account through the contracted company. Sources said KD 62.5 million was collected in cash, KD 41 million through electronic stamps from machines available at health

Expats paid KD 110 million in health insurance



centers in Fahaheel, Sabah, Farwaniya, Jahra and Jabriya, KD 107,600 through regular stamps and KD 192,000 through the K-Net. The sources said KD 5.6 million was collected from government bodies in which employees' residencies are renewed, at KD 50 per expat. They said the fee collection continues through the online service or insurance centers that work two shifts during the week, except for holidays.

670 teachers

The education ministry needs 670 teachers of both genders for the 2019-2020 school year to cover a shortage in nine specialties, especially with the opening of new schools. Informed sources said the required specialties are English, French, science, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, geology and physical education. Educational sources said the ministry will consider those who apply locally, then it will decide on the number of foreign contracts before traveling to three countries - Palestine, Jordan and Tunisia. In case committees cannot get the required number of teachers, and when it is absolutely necessary, they will consider contracting teachers from Egypt.

Framework of coordination

Deputy Director General for Labor Affairs at the Public Authority for Manpower Hassan Al-Khader said that within the framework of coordination and cooperation with the commerce and industry ministry, a meeting was held on Monday, March 4, 2019 to discuss the mechanism of registering licenses related to the files of employers at the authority, besides other subjects. Khader said that the meeting ended with positive results with regards to the rules related to registering commercial licenses issued by the ministry, based on which files are opened.



KUWAIT: An accident was reported yesterday at Fahaheel Expressway, which disrupted traffic on the key road. No injuries were reported. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Ardiya man stabbed to death during fight

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A homicide investigation was opened in the death of a Kuwaiti man whose body was found in Ardiya yesterday. Police reported to the scene in response to an emergency call, and found the body had several stab wounds. Preliminary investigations indicate that the man was stabbed to

death during a fight.

Separately, police are searching for three persons who attacked a high school student and left him bleeding outside his school. The youngster told police that the group attacked him with knives and an axe as soon as he came out of the school, before fleeing. Nineteen stitches were required to close the gashes left across the boy's body.

States entitled to handle domestic issues by national rules: Kuwait

GENEVA: Kuwait has emphasized, during a session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), every State's right to deal with domestic issues according to national rules. The Kuwaiti stand was expressed by the State Permanent Representative to the United Nations and International Organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, addressing the council's 40th session. He was reacting to the annual report by the UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet. Commenting on a part that addressed conditions in Saudi Arabia, Ambassador Ghunaim said the Kingdom has made grand and qualitative leaps in the realm of human rights, particularly women's rights, despite challenges, thus it "deserves all praise and support on our part."

Kuwait affirms communities' right to choosing adequate values, principles and approaches for protecting and boosting human rights, calls upon the council to respect principles of neutrality, dialogue and boosting constructive international cooperation that all warrant averting double standards, cherry picking, attempts to politicize and complicate the council's

tasks. The world is currently at a "decisive phase," preceding the date set by the international community to attain sustainable development goals; such objectives essentially imply human rights that are necessary for attaining security, peace and prosperity for all mankind. Kuwait is convinced the international community's success in this regard basically hinges on capacities of this community to establish an effective international partnership according to common responsibility to deal with the human rights.

The Kuwaiti Constitution stipulates a long list of economic, political, civil and social rights for citizens, namely the right to education, work, possession of private property, freedom of belief, opinion, forming societies and union on bases of guarantees by the laws, in addition to the freedoms of the press and publishing. Many of the constitutional articles are in harmony with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely equality, Ambassador Ghunaim continued. Kuwait has turned into a minaret for democracy and freedoms in the Gulf region and has proven, day after another, that it has turned out to be an open country, respecting all types of rights.

Establishment of the National Diwan for Human Rights as a national and independent authority, according to Law 67/2015, is a significant achievement in the realm of human rights. This council, the first kind of which was formed in September, will examine means of boosting human rights in relevant existing legislations in addition to promoting the culture of human rights. Kuwait is alarmed at deterioration of "the humanitarian status" in some parts of the region (the Middle East) where armed conflicts have been raging, breaching basic rights of some sisterly peoples. — KUNA