

Local

Travel restrictions complicate situation of deportees in Kuwait

Inmates threaten to commit suicide due to prolonged incarceration

KUWAIT: The deportation center is experiencing unprecedented overcrowding due to unavailability of flights to take inmates back to their countries, Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday. The number of those awaiting deportation is around 800 violators from five Asian and African countries. Some of them are in police station holding cells, the deportation prison, residency violators' holding cell, criminal detectives' holding cell and the Drugs Control General Department for nine months.

Security officials attribute this to the air travel ban to 35 countries, adding it has negatively affected the deportation of nationals of these countries due to exorbitant ticket prices. They said that most of the detainees are from Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Madagascar, including entire families with women and children. There are no direct or transit flights to deport them, so they are looking for flights with multiple stops, which require more money than they are able to pay. The interior ministry was able to obtain tickets for some of them through NGOs and charity societies.

Security sources also said they decided to sus-

pend security campaigns until further notice so as not to cause overcrowding and spread infectious diseases among the detainees. Meanwhile, informed sources said the interior ministry invited the Sri Lankan ambassador several times and arranged a meeting with inmates at the deportation center so

conveyed to their embassies, which are being held responsible for not accepting them.

Digital platform

In other news, Al-Anbaa Arabic daily yesterday quoted an informed source at Kuwait International Airport who said a unified health digital platform will be launched at the airport, most likely next week. He said preparations are being made to carry out PCR tests as per the Cabinet decision, which calls for taking swabs of all arriving passengers by private healthcare providers at T1, T3, T4 and T5, which are also expected to start working next week. The source said that work is ongoing to restart commercial operations at 30 percent capacity after deciding to reduce the number of arriving passengers.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Airways categorically denied social media reports about suspending flights to London and New York, adding that the current halt is due to the coronavirus pandemic and its effect on supply and demand, and in compliance with instructions by health authorities. It added the New York-London route has been suspended for years due to



commercial reasons, Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday. Reports on social media claimed that Kuwait Airways cancelled its New York and London routes after Israeli passengers won a court ruling to force Kuwait Airways to accept them on its flights to London.

Exorbitant ticket prices delay release

he can convey their suffering to his country's officials. Many inmates, particularly Sri Lankans and Vietnamese, have threatened to commit suicide due to being held for a long time at the center. This was



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force announced launching its 'Shamel' comprehensive training program, which includes training courses in rescue, backup, emergency, and other fields.

Kuwait issues regulations for citizens' access to personal data

KUWAIT: Minister of Justice Dr Nawaf Al-Yassin yesterday announced issuance of executive regulations of the Law 12/2020, whereby affirming citizens' right to retrieve information and documents of personal concern. The decision will be effective in March, the minister said in a press statement, explaining that the law and regulations grant the right to nationals to have access to information, decisions and documents concerning their rights. A citizen applying for data collection should pay a KD5 for each document. Minister Yassin noted that the regulations boost transparency and integrity in government and administrative transactions. The law, minister Yassin, elaborated, is warranted by the UN from the member states. Moreover, it is stipulated in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (2020). Furthermore, its enactment boosts Kuwait's international status with respect of indices concerning freedoms and combating corruption. The CPI is an index published annually by Berlin-based Transparency International since 1995 which ranks countries "by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys." —KUNA



Minister of Justice Dr Nawaf Al-Yassin

Kuwait lists 635 new COVID cases

KUWAIT: Kuwait Health Ministry yesterday listed 635 new coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and no deaths registered during the past 24 hours, raising the caseload of contaminations with the virus to 165,257 while fatalities' overall count steadied at 959. The ministry had earlier announced that 527 patients recovered from the novel coronavirus during the same period, increasing total recoveries to 157,931. The ministry's spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said in a statement that number of people who are receiving treatment at intensive care units stood yesterday at 58, while the whole count of the confirmed infection cases that remained under medical care stood at 6,367. He pointed out that 8,994 swab tests were conducted in the same period, bringing the total of such examinations to 1,529,581. — KUNA

In my view

A new role for translators

By Azzah Al-Ghamdi

In this article we will focus on the most important challenge facing anyone who falls sick while traveling abroad. If they are visiting a country where they do not speak the language and maybe also don't speak a common third language, like English, how can they communicate easily with doctors?

This is an opinion and not medical research. I suffered from such an experience. I got ill while abroad and could not explain to the doctors the reasons for the pain I suffered. The doctors could not speak Arabic or English and I could not speak their language.

This may sound silly, but in some circumstances such a situation could be life-threatening, especially for elderly patients who travel abroad. It is possible through x-rays and blood analyses for doctors to diagnose a sick patient, but these won't always be 100 percent accurate and may not reveal the true reasons or severity of an illness.

So what's the solution?

What if we encourage hospitals to hire translators? This would make the work of doctors and nurses in hospitals that deal with many foreign patients much easier. In every country, there are colleges of literature and languages with a ready supply of students studying other tongues. These colleges could be a source of translators for hospitals.

Some people may argue but the costs will be high and add to the budget of the hospital. But I say this is an important issue and we can't ignore it. We can ask governments to assign translators of major languages and they can conduct research to find out which languages are most common among the expatriate communities in their countries as well as among tourists. This will provide reliable healthcare for everyone - no matter their language background - when they need it.

- Al-Ghamdi is a law graduate from Kuwait International Law School

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

