

Local

Legal department scraps 60+ expat residency ban decision

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government's legal body, the Fatwa and Legislation Department, yesterday announced that a decision to ban expats aged 60 and above without university degrees from renewing work permits is "illegal", and accordingly, older residents can renew their work permits and residencies as usual. Head of the Fatwa Department Salah Al-Mesad said in a ruling to Commerce Minister Abdullah Al-Salman that the ban decision was issued from an unauthorized official, and as a result is null and void.

Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower Ahmad Al-Mousa issued the decision last year stating that residents aged 60 years and above who do not hold university degrees are not permitted to renew their work permits, which is a precondition to renew the residency. The decision, affecting tens of thousands of expats who spent most of their lives in Kuwait, was harshly criticized by many MPs and local human rights bodies as "inhumane", who repeatedly called on the government to cancel it.

But it was seen by some as a means to reduce the number of foreign residents, who form close to 70 percent of Kuwait's population of 4.5 million. Two weeks ago, the minister of commerce and industry sent a letter to the fatwa department asking for a legal viewpoint on the validity and legality of the decision.

The department wrote back yesterday explaining the decision was issued by unauthorized personnel, adding decisions regarding work permit regulations must be issued only by the board of directors of the manpower authority chaired by the minister himself. It added that Mousa, the director general, is not authorized to issue such decisions, and as such it is illegal and holds no legal status.

The ruling means that procedures regarding issuance and renewal of work permits for expats will return to the way they used to be before the decision was issued 14 months ago. But before the return to regular procedures, the commerce minister must issue an official decision scrapping the old decision, which should be a formality.



KUWAIT: An elderly vendor is seen at a shop in Souq Mubarakia. — Photo by Hussain Assad

Stable weather during weekend

KUWAIT: Stable weather is expected in Kuwait City during the weekend, with high temperatures during the day and moderate weather at night, Kuwait Control and Meteorological Center (KCMC) said yesterday. In a statement to KUNA, weather forecast supervisor Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said the change of seasons from autumn to winter is witnessing some stability in weather with a slight decline in temperatures.

Yesterday, Qarawi expected relatively hot and humid weather in coastal areas with moderate to northwesterly winds with a speed of 30 to 80 km/per hour. The highest temperature expected during the weekend is between 39 and 42 Celsius, and lowest temperature between 25 and 23 Celsius, with light northwesterly winds and low sea waves between 2-4 feet.— KUNA

Flu shots for over-60s at 58 clinics nationwide

KUWAIT: Some 58 clinics opened from yesterday to vaccinate people over the age of 60 and other vulnerable groups against seasonal respiratory illnesses, the health ministry said on Wednesday. These vaccines will be available to both groups upon receiving a third COVID-19 vaccine dose, ministry spokesman Dr Ahmad Al-Sanad said in a statement.—KUNA



DUBAI: Traditional dancers and musicians delight the crowd at Kuwait's Expo 2020 pavilion.—KUNA

Sustainability efforts highlighted at Expo; troupe spreads joy

DUBAI: Kuwait's pavilion at Dubai Expo, the first world fair in the region, organized on Wednesday workshops demonstrating the country's sustainability efforts, including measures it has taken to limit greenhouse gas emissions. These workshops are highlighting Kuwait's "path towards sustainability", chronicling the nation's history of solar energy projects, the first of which came to light in 1970, said Basem Al-Meslem, an engineer at Kuwait's electricity and water ministry.

A separate workshop by Khaled Nasser,

another ministry engineer, revolved around measures Kuwait has taken to cut greenhouse gas emissions, a main climate policy action. The country's geographical landscape, coupled with meteoric advances in technology, are very conducive to the use of solar power as a renewable energy source, the workshop showed.

To meet soaring power demand, Kuwait has completed the first phase of its Shagaya renewable energy complex, a marquee project seen as the cornerstone of renewable energy plans.

To the sounds of traditional Kuwaiti music, the Television Group, a troupe of traditional Kuwaiti dancers and musicians, delighted large crowds visiting Kuwait's pavilion on Wednesday. Filling the air with joy, the performers received a rapturous applause from the diverse group of onlookers at the global exhibition, hosted by Dubai until the end of March 2022.—KUNA

Kuwait plane makes emergency landing over bomb warning

ANKARA/KUWAIT: A Jazeera Airlines passenger plane made an emergency landing at Turkey's Trabzon airport yesterday after a bomb warning, the airline and the local governorate said. Turkish security officials evacuated the passenger aircraft, which took off from Kuwait and was bound for Trabzon on the Black Sea coast of northeastern Turkey, Governor Ismail Ustaoglu told reporters.

A total of 51 passengers and six staff of the Airbus A320 aircraft were evacuated and their luggage was being checked, he added. Extensive security measures were taken at the airport, where the fire brigade and ambulances were waiting. The bomb alert was made to the airline's headquarters in Kuwait, which issued a warning for all their planes in the air, including the one traveling to Trabzon, the governor said, emphasizing that the alert did not only cover the plane that had landed in Turkey.

In a statement, Jazeera Airways dismissed any potential security threat to their flights, saying it contacted Kuwaiti authorities to check the planes as a further precaution. "Earlier today, Jazeera Airways received a communication indicating a potential security situation. This communication was evaluated and deemed to be not credible," the airline said.

However, due to an abundance of caution, Jazeera engaged with authorities in Kuwait and in its network to protect passengers and crew, and all flights have been provided with additional screening measures as a precaution, it added. Jazeera Airways said its security team was closely monitoring the situation, apologizing for any delays that passengers might have experienced during this time.— Agencies