

letters to **Badrya**

Madam,

Thank you for your lovely article about expats. I grew up in Kuwait, went to school there and was in grade 10 when the invasion happened in 1990. I had to leave with my parents and sister and never went back. Although I am Indian, I have always thought of Kuwait (and the Middle East) as my home, my people.

What you said in your short piece is very humane. You're absolutely right. If expats aren't needed, they can be given notice and sent home. After all, we all will retire and return to our homeland someday, sooner or later. But mistreating someone is not a very nice thing. Your other point is also poignant, about training one's own next generation for the roles and responsibilities that are needed to be taken on for their own nation.

Kudos to you!
Jennifer Pinto



Madam,

I read your article. It was excellent. I am an expat in Kuwait from India. I truly agree with your viewpoint and acumen. I really love being in Kuwait and feel happy if I could initiate something that leads to the country's prosperity.

But in the past days, the government seems very aggressive in dealing with expat matters. No doubt, illegal residents and other activities must be stopped with a strong hand. But at the same time, many decent expats are really working hard for the country's prosperity.

A recent decision by the government was to stop visit visas for those above 50. What is this? Prior to this, visit visas were reduced to one-month stay, and now this age factor. This is a strong human rights violation issue. Day by day, expats are treated very badly.

Let's hope for the best.
Satya



Madam,

We thank you from the bottom our hearts for what you have written. We always wondered why expats are targeted as we follow the rules. In the past months, there have been articles and pictures showing expats being taken away from their beds at 3 am in the morning after the raids were conducted. They were handcuffed and taken away like criminals.

One has to notice that every expat that has been caught is a loss in one way or the other. For example, every expat pays the following to the country:

1. House rent: Goes directly to Kuwaiti owners.
2. Mobile connection: Subscription fees go directly to the government and mobile companies.
3. Vehicle fees: Money goes directly to the government.
4. Health insurance: Paid directly to the government.
5. Visa fees: Paid directly to the government.
6. Essential food: Purchased from co-ops - revenue goes to Kuwaiti owners.

All expats are paying out of their salaries to live here. Where do they go wrong? If the salary is good and an individual can afford a single bedroom apartment, he will definitely live in one. The only reason many expats of low income live in sharing accommodation is because they cannot afford a single apartment, since salaries are defined by companies and rents are high.

Every expat living here spends money in the country to live that directly or indirectly goes back to the Kuwaiti people. The government must train people who are looking for jobs in various sectors and train them to the level that they can carry out all the jobs and systematically reduce the expat population.

Expats are a source of revenue for the country. We really applaud you voicing our pain. God bless you.

Jerome Michael



Madam,

I am from India and I daily read Kuwaiti newspapers. I agree 100% with your opinion in the article 'At Least with Decency'. Yesterday, I came across an article that the government has imposed a restriction on visit visas for those above 50, because medical expenses are huge for these visitors. Last year, the government also imposed restrictions on parent visas on the same medical expenses ground. Due to these restrictions, I am not entitled to get a Kuwait visa. I am writing both to the Indian government and the Kuwait government to get the visa on genuine grounds. If the Kuwait government has a problem with medical expenses for visit/dependent visa holders, the respected government should insert a clause banning such visitors to get treatment from public medical facilities. But it is unfair to not issue them visit/dependent visa. I suggest you to raise this issue through your column in Kuwait Times.

Vinod Mago



Madam,

Is this serious? A citizen publicly stating something that will most probably offend the nation! If it's true, then you're very brave and two thumbs up to you. Kuwait is my second home and I probably love it more than my real home. Despite all the negativity, there are still a lot of good things, like the initiatives in sports where I'm currently a participant and all the other citizens who are exerting full efforts to give back to Kuwait.

With everything you said, I hope that you have some initiatives that will bring change to Kuwait for the betterment of everyone, and if an extra hand is required, please let me know. I would love to be a part of this.

Gracias/Salamat. From the three stars and a sun - Philippines!

Teresa Biniola

STATE DEPARTMENTS ASKED TO LAY OFF 'UNNECESSARY' EXPATS

By **A Saleh**

KUWAIT: The Cabinet has recently instructed different governmental bodies to stop recruiting expatriates with the exception of doctors and teachers in fields the state needed, well-informed governmental sources said. The instructions also included laying off extraneous expats, the sources said, noting that this would be considerably done in the coming fiscal year. "Government bodies will have to do so before the end of this year and each laid-off expat will be given a three-month notice," the sources said.

Payroll law

MP Ahmed Lari stressed that it was high time for the government to pass the payroll strategic alternative law because it would help cut the cost of salaries in the state budget.

Senior officials

Informed sources said that the government would approve a law on appointing senior officials that is due to be discussed by the parliament's human resources committee tomorrow.

Younger generation

MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran hailed Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah's decision on referring investigators who had concluded their legal tenures to retirement, noting that this step was the result of the reforms carried out by Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled to make way for younger generations.

Stateless residents

A total of 17 lawmakers recently signed a request asking to allocate two hours of the March 1 and March 15 sessions to discuss the government's policy in dealing with stateless residents.

Municipality law

Well-informed sources said that the government had rejected any amendments to its new municipality law, adding that it insisted on increasing the number of Municipal Council members in order to foil current attempts to delay government projects and plans.



Minister Hind Al-Subaih

NEW LAW WON'T CURB NGOS' FREEDOMS: SUBAIH

By **Meshaal Al-Enezi**

KUWAIT: A proposed law for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will not restrict freedoms or obstruct NGOs' work, a senior government official said yesterday. Social Affairs and Labor Minister Hind Al-Subaih stressed that the ministry will continue receiving suggestions and recommendations from various NGOs over a new law the ministry is currently preparing. Speaking on receiving a delegation from Kuwait Public Relations Society, Subaih said that the new law's draft has been distributed to various NGOs and that feedback from over 30 of them had already been received.

Domestic labor

Inspection teams from the domestic labor department yesterday inspected more places in various governorates after the interior minister's decision to double the teams' members. The tours resulted in detecting several citations, arresting domestic laborers present in offices and summoning some owners for further investigations.

Unlicensed camp

Kuwait Municipality stressed that various unlicensed camps, electoral headquarters and ads were removed on the morning of election day.

Water back

The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) announced that maintenance works were completed and water supplies were reconnected to 12 areas ahead of the schedule it had previously announced. MEW explained that maintenance operations started by 8:00 pm Friday and were concluded ahead of schedule.

KFSD WARNS OF 'DANGEROUS' CLEANING SUBSTANCES

By **Hanan Al-Saadoun**

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Services Directorate warned housewives, domestic workers and people working in the cleaning business of mixing certain cleaning substances out of fear of chemical reactions that might produce hazardous effects.

Some chemical cleaning substances with concentrated formulas have been found in local markets, said Colonel Khalil Al-Amir, Public Relations and Media Department Director at KFSD. He warned that those substances, which he did not name, would create 'highly dangerous' reactions when mixed with others. "When mixed," Amir explained, "those substances lead to some dangerous chemical reactions that cause suffocation by some toxic gases and vapors in addition to severe burns."

INDIAN EMBASSY CALLS ON COMMUNITY TO HELP CONTACT DECEASED'S FAMILY

KUWAIT: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait released the following statements concerning difficulties faced in transporting the body of Indian national who passed away in Kuwait back to her home country:

It has come to our notice that the body of the Late Kumadam Lalita Kumari (Passport No. F-1051441), an Indian National of Andhra Pradesh, is lying at a local mortuary since early January 2016. For transportation of the body to her relatives in India, the Embassy has written to the District authorities (thrice) in the district of Kaddappa (AP) asking them to inform the relatives of the deceased for their confirmation with regard to receiving the body on arrival at Hyderabad airport. No response has been received so far from the relatives.

The Embassy seeks urgent help from the members of Indian community in locating near and dear ones of Late Kumadam Lalita Kumari so that

her mortal remains are sent to India at the earliest. A K Srivastava, Second Secretary (Community Welfare) may please be contacted in this matter on Mobile-97229914.

During 2014, a total of 559 Indians died in Kuwait, while mortal remains of 434 nationals were sent to India. The facility of local burial was permitted after taking consent from the respective family members in 125 cases. Free transportation of mortal remains was provided in 29 destitute cases and the Embassy incurred KD-4,013 on airfreight and coffin box etc from ICWF. Similarly during the year 2015, there were 611 deaths of our nationals, while mortal remains of 504 persons were sent to India. Local burial was permitted in 107 cases by their family members. Free transportation of mortal remains was provided in 35 destitute cases by the Embassy incurring KD-4,456 on the expenses of airfreight and coffin box out of the ICWF.

CRIMES DROP BY 9% IN 2015: MINISTRY

KUWAIT: Crime rates have dropped by nine percent in 2015 compared to 2014; a good indicator of the efforts exerted by the Interior Ministry to fight and limit different types of crimes, the ministry's Relations and Security Media Department said in a press statement yesterday.

A statistical report issued by the ministry shows that drug-related crimes have dropped by 17 percent, while suspects arrested in relation to drugs dropped by 15 percent. Meanwhile, crimes

with unidentified culprits dropped by 28 percent, whereas cybercrimes increased by 20 percent, the statistics show.

The report also showed that financial crimes dropped by 22 percent, crimes of reputation have dropped by 18 percent while homicide, attempted murder and severe injury crimes dropped by 11 percent. The total number of cases filed in 2015 was 24,453 with a 9 percent drop compared to 2014 when 26,894 cases were filed, the report showed.

Local **Spotlight**

ENDING SERVICES OF EXPATRIATES



By **Muna Al-Fuzai**

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The government's step to correct the labor market composition and its demographics is indeed a required one, but it must be well-organized and implemented in a humane manner, taking into account the culprits in this mess and not the expats. The government's decision to end of services of expats who reached the age of 50 by March was not well received by many expats. This was bad news, especially for those who have worked here for many years.

Kuwaiti employees number 264,155 in the public sector workforce, while non-Kuwaitis number 83,371. So I do not see expats in this sector as a major problem because their percentage is moderate. On the other hand, Kuwaitis in the private sector number 65,604, with 1,335,684 non-Kuwaitis. This is where the issue becomes complicated. The Civil Service Commission revealed in its report of 2015 that expats in the government sector make up only 25 percent of the total number of employees. So we must consider the jobs being occupied in the private sector that are maybe causing the problem.

I know those who look at these figures find a big difference and clear imbalance in the population structure, but the solution is not to issue hasty and inhumane decisions. After all, we allowed this person to come to Kuwait and settle down with his family, so sudden moves like these are improper. Let us bear in mind that this is our mess and we have to fix it, but not at the expense of expats. Decisions must have certain requirements so as not to do injustice to expat workers.

The private sector comprises of large companies to small grocery shops and also companies who have contracts with the governments to do various jobs like cleaning services. I know that we will always need these services, but do we need such a large number of workers? According to studies, 56 percent of expatriate workers in Kuwait are working in jobs that are difficult for Kuwaitis to perform or replace, such as couriers, farmers, servants, drivers and other low-income jobs.

The total population of Kuwait is 4,262,125 people, with Kuwaitis making up 1,311,403 people and non-Kuwaitis 2,950,722. The state's needs for employees, whether local or foreign, must rely on studies and information from the public and private sectors, so that estimated requirement figures will be set by the number of real projects, volume of work and the number and type of required labor in order to determine the actual necessity of the requested number compared to the work.

But unfortunately, we in Kuwait we see workers sitting in the streets waiting to be assigned work, a phenomenon that existed years ago and continues to exist without a radical solution. Given the actual labor market, we find that labor assessment is not done in accordance to accurate figures and studies. It should be prepared by human resource advisors and in the form of a scientific study.

The correction of the labor market composition and its demographics is important and essential to maintain the security of society, but it must have criteria to be fair for all. This issue has different and possibly negative consequences, therefore it must be dealt with cautiously.



KUWAITI DIVERS REMOVE TON OF DUMPED PLASTIC PIPES FROM SEA

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Dive Team removed plastic pipes weighing a ton from the seabed off Al-Sharq shores clearing the way for boats cruising to and fro across the territorial waters. The operation was part of ongoing efforts to clear the coastal regions

of waste and abandoned objects, harmful to the wildlife and sea-goers, team leader Walid Al-Shatti said.

The divers had to cut the 40-m-long pipes before lifting them up to the surface. They have been pulled out during

low tide, when the waters turn shallow, thus such a task become much easier to accomplish. The cleanup was done in coordination with Kuwait Municipality and Equate Petrochemical Company, in addition to others. — KUNA



MUNICIPALITY DENIES CORRUPTION REPORTS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality strongly denied newspaper reports which accused it of wasting public funds, saying that claims about alleged corruption in contracts signed with cleaning companies on November 25, 2012 are 'untrue'. Commenting on a report published by an Arabic newspaper yesterday, the municipality stressed in a statement that all legal procedures were taken when the cleaning contracts were signed in all six governorates, adding that all needed documents were submitted to auditing bodies including the State Audit Bureau.