



KUWAIT: Could expatriates soon face the reality of paying more for public services?

GOVT MPs MEET TO DISCUSS NEW FEES ON EXPATRIATES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A government-parliamentary meeting will be held in September to prepare new financial fees on services and review subsidies and rations, informed sources said. The government is in communication with MPs to adopt a method to achieve economic reforms including imposing new fees on expatriates and services presented to them as other Gulf countries have done, the sources explained. The start will be by imposing health insurance on visi-

tors, they said, adding that the parliamentary-government agreement is very clear and it is certain that fees will be imposed on health services for expats residing in Kuwait, and not only visitors.

Meanwhile, the sources said that the executive and legislative authorities are not in agreement on implementing health fees and banning expats from treatment at public hospitals, because the health insurance hospitals are not ready yet; and those hospitals will not be able to treat expats without the participation of public hospi-

tals. Kuwait has plans to build up to three hospitals in the future to treat expatriates insured by a new insurance policy that would replace the current KD50-a-year insurance plan that entitles foreigners for treatment at public hospitals. Political discussions have intensified in recent years to impose new fees on public services enjoyed by expats in Kuwait, and increase current charges as government officials and lawmakers scramble to mitigate the effect of the state budget deficit caused by the drop in oil prices.

'OIL TANKERS' UNION SUPPORTS 'GULF OIL' STAFF DEMANDS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Head of the workers union at Kuwait Oil Tankers Company (KOTC) announced the union's support and participation with workers of Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGO) in all measures the union is taking. Mutairi expressed regret over the latest developments with KOGC workers and the deadlock in negotiations, which may lead to uncertain results. He said KGO gave official undertakings not to apply the biometric based employee time clocks for workers at the joint Khafji operations in the divided zone, until the system is implemented for all workers of other oil companies.

Mutairi said that among the aims of labor unions is to care for the workers' interests and improve their financial and social conditions. He said we are keen on seeing our national economy improve as well as our oil production but within the laws and international treaties.

Mutairi found it strange for the company not to negotiate with the union to resolve the workers' issues, and wondered when employers will understand the role unions play.

He said that workers' demands must be considered seriously and KGO must respect the rules that regulate the relationship between it and the union, as well as signed agreements, and stay away from abusing the rights of workers and contain the crisis that is growing daily. There must be a solution, he added.

Mullet fishing

President of Kuwait Fishermen's Union Thamer Al-Suwayan said there is a rise in the numbers of blue-spot mullet fish, along with an increase in demand. He said customers come to the market early to buy fresh mullet, but some government authorities forbid its sale until the auction, which takes place after Asr prayers. Mullet used to be sold all

day long without any auction, but a new system banned that. He said some consumers wonder why the sale is delayed until after Asr, although the fish is available in the market. Suwayan said areas where fishing mullet is allowed are east of Ouha, Miskan, Failaka and Boubyan islands, where the fish is rare, while it is abundant in Kuwait Bay, where fishing is banned.

Health licenses

Municipal Council member and president of the technical committee Fahd Al-Sane said the committee recommended the approval of his proposal to add new activities to the commercial activities that receive health licenses from the municipality. Sane said the committee approved the first southern zone and the fifth regional zone as mentioned in the studies of the executive department which allocated the locations of land in both areas.

TRIO ARRESTED WITH MIXTURE OF DRUGS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Coast Guard officers foiled an attempt to smuggle drugs by sea. A group of people agreed with an Egyptian man outside Kuwait to smuggle drugs into the country, so police followed this lead and eventually arrested three people; two Egyptians and one Kuwaiti. They found on them 47 kilograms of a substance suspected to be hashish, as well as one kilogram of heroin and 9,000 captagon tablets. The suspects were sent to concerned authorities.

Hawally fire

A sixth floor apartment in a Hawally building caught fire yesterday. Firemen from the Hawally and Salmiya fire stations were dispatched, and were able to extinguish the fire before it could spread. No injuries were reported in the incident as police launched an investigation to determine the cause of the blaze.

Inspection tour

The emergency team of Ahmadi



KUWAIT: Drugs found with three people arrested for smuggling.

municipality held an inspection tour of all foodstuff shops and stores in Fahaheel. A store was closed and 18 violations were issued, including for storing materials in an unhealthy environment, non-compliance with hygiene regulations, working with-

out medical certificates and running shops without a license from the municipality. The emergency team said its campaign aims to protect the health and safety of Kuwaitis and residents, and end the sale of foul products.



Kuwait Municipality inspectors write tickets during a recent crackdown in Fahaheel.



MP TABTABAE URGES CONCERTED EFFORTS TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

CAIRO: Kuwaiti lawmaker Waleed Al-Tabtabaie yesterday called for concerted efforts in order to combat the phenomenon of "Islamophobia." Speaking after a meeting of the Arab Parliament's Economic and Financial Committee, Tabtabaie said the lawmakers discussed several steps and issued some recommendations to combat ideas of those who connect terrorism with Islam, mainly in Europe. The recommendations include holding dialogue with the

European Parliament to show tolerance values, rights of minorities and other provisions stipulated in the Arab legislations based on Islam, he said.

Tabtabaie, also a member of AP, affirmed that terrorist operations committed by the so-called Islamic State and other terrorist groups contribute to distorting the tolerant image of Islam. Some topics were tackled during the meeting of human rights, and legal and legislative affairs committee, he noted. — KUNA



Waleed Al-Tabtabaie

WATANIYA AIRWAYS LAUNCHES 1ST FLIGHT TO GEORGIA JULY 11TH

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Wataniya Airways will run its first flight to the Georgian capital Tbilisi on July 11th, with an average of three trips per week. Wataniya Airways will also operate flights to the Azeri capital Baku and Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, starting July 12th and 13th, respectively, head of Wataniya's public relations department Lana Al-Rashaid said.

She revealed that 10 new destinations will be added to Wataniya's itinerary after proper procedures are completed, encouraging travelers to book their tickets through travel agencies or online. The Wataniya Airways official added that the airline has set out a plan of providing 'top notch' service to all travelers, who will be well looked after onboard their flights. — KUNA



Lana Al-Rashaid



KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr. Jamal Al-Harbi held a press conference recently to announce that the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS) has earned recognition from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

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