

Local

Only govt can cancel fees' increases

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The ministerial health and social affairs committee said increasing fees for various services, such as health services for expats and the fuel price increase and others, were only up to the government to decide and that no other party has the right to discuss or call for cancelling them. Sources within the committee stressed that suing the government to cancel the fees is everybody's right and that the judiciary had already issued a verdict about the fuel price increase and that the same is expected concerning the health fees. "The government has thoroughly studied these health fee increases and came up with the decision to increase them with some exceptions," the sources stressed, noting that the Ministry of Health is authorized to cancel such exemptions or exceptions in the future, except for bedoons, domestic helpers and Kuwaitis' spouses and children.

Education reform

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) educational sectors are currently going through a number of structural reforms to meet changing market demands. Speaking at the Gulf International Schools Forum in Dubai, PricewaterhouseCoopers' education manager Roland Hancock stressed regional educational sectors have to

undergo five main changes, emphasizing the links between major ministries seeking the provision of interconnected services and focusing on early education. Hancock also said that GCC states depend on increasing private sector contributions, including public-private-partnership education projects.

Head of Middle East and India Research at ISC Research Nalini Cook said the UAE was ranked first amongst regional countries in terms of the number of international schools, followed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Kuwait. Cook also said that UAE came first in the total number of students registered in English-speaking schools, with around half a million students. She added that regional international school fees were around \$8,000, with an average of \$7,747 in the UAE, \$6,325 in Saudi Arabia, \$8,069 in Kuwait and \$9,235 in Qatar.

Pharmacists' demands

Manpower and Government Restructuring Program's (MGRP) Secretary General Fawzi Al-Majdali met a delegation from the Kuwait Pharmacists Society for the second time in three weeks to discuss a number of topics related to Kuwaiti pharmacists' demands and rights in the private sector. The society's secretary general Ali Hadi said the meeting focused on discussing co-ops' condition to only hire male pharmacists to work in pharmacies located in various co-ops, in an attempt to cancel it to achieve gender equality, especially since females make up two-thirds of newly-graduated pharmacists. Hadi said the meeting also discussed job opportunities for Kuwaitis in various pharmacies and setting a minimum salary for Kuwaiti pharmacists in the private sector in order to encourage more of them to move from the public to the private sector.

Kuwait's Public Authority for Manpower, pointed out that labor recruitment can only be productive with cooperation between exporting and importing nations.

On the ILO meeting, he said that Kuwait and Egypt are exploring labor opportunities using "new and unconventional methods," where both countries have formed ad hoc committees to inspect new labor systems. Ali added that Kuwait continues to revamp guidelines to recruit expatriate workers from countries such as India and Sri Lanka. The two-day ILO meeting delves into labor recruitment in the Middle East, including strategies to curb illegal practices in that field. — KUNA

Kuwait eyes efficient labor recruitment

BEIRUT: A Kuwaiti official said yesterday that his country has made significant progress in foreign labor recruitment, which proves beneficial for exporting and importing nations alike. Speaking on the sidelines of an International Labor Organization (ILO) meeting, Jaber Al-Ali, the head of international relations at

Ooredoo announces partnership with Flying Start Triathlon Kuwait



(From left) Hamed Al-Hazim, Ahmad Al-Majed, Yousef Al-Shallal, Sarah Al-Qabandi and Ahmed Al-Huzami.

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced its strategic partnership of the tenth edition of the Flying Start Triathlon at a press conference held yesterday at its headquarters in Kuwait City as a testament to its support of Kuwaiti youth and athletes.

The triathlon will take place during the weekend on October 27th and 28th at Green Island. The activities will be launched on October 27th and will include exciting activities such as swimming, running, and biking.

Commenting on this, CSR, Sponsorships and Social Media Senior Manager at Ooredoo Kuwait Yousef Al-Shallal said: "This strategic partnership goes in tandem with our belief in supporting youth initiatives and athletes in Kuwait. We are proud to be sponsors of the Flying Start Triathlon, and we wish all the participating athletes the best."

"After following triathlons for a while now, especially after our sponsorship of Kuwaiti champion Abdulaziz Al-Rashed, we noticed that there is a great deal of engagement from the youth in these types of athletic activities," Shallal added.

Also commenting on this, CEO at Provision Sport

Management, Ahmed Al-Huzami said: "We consider the strategic partnership between Ooredoo and Provision as ideal due to its leadership position in the private sector and its support towards the youth. We are looking forward to a long relationship with Ooredoo."

CSR and Sponsorships Manager at Ooredoo Kuwait, Sarah Al-Qabandi reiterated the company's dedication and support towards the youth segment and she praised Ahmed Al-Huzami and Ahmad Al-Majed's passion towards this sport.

Commenting on this partnership, Executive Manager at Provision Sport Management, Ahmad Al-Majed said: "We consider the triathlon to be the biggest races in the Middle East, and our goal today is to create a new sports culture built on ethics, discipline, and sportsmanship. We are expecting 600 participants this year from all over the world to join us in the tenth edition of the Triathlon. It is also worth mentioning that we have added two new segments to the sport, which are the children's segment and the beginner's segment. The aim of adding the aforementioned segments is to give everyone the opportunity to participate in this sport."

Fake companies sponsor 110 workers

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's relations and security media department said residency affairs

detectives discovered 15 closed companies that were sponsoring 110 laborers. Case papers indicate that detectives were tipped off concerning a number of companies that were officially closed down but still had commercial licenses, which they used to sponsor 110 employees. Further investigations revealed that the companies were fake, and accordingly, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's inspection department was contacted to take proper measures against those companies.

Kuwait, Iraq mull gas for compensations swap

Kuwait ready to host forthcoming GCC summit

KUWAIT: Minister of Oil Essam Al-Marzouq unveiled that talks are going on between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi governments over a proposal to barter the remaining war compensations for Kuwait with gas supplies from Iraq. "Part of the talks is related to a proposal to import Iraqi gas," the minister told reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony held by the German embassy in Kuwait to mark their national day.

Marzouq, also Minister of Electricity and Water, said that the two sides are negotiating the price of Iraqi gas. He projected that the Kuwaiti imports of Iraqi natural gas would start with 50 million cubic feet and then the imports would increase to reach 200 million cubic feet. He added that an agreement in this regard would be signed soon.

Common understanding

Kuwait hoped Tuesday it would reach a common understanding with Baghdad over options to pay \$4.6 billion, the last payment of compensations of damage caused by Iraq's 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The Geneva-based UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) approved request by Kuwait and Iraq to extend compensation payment negotiations for two months, to allow both countries reach an agreement over payment options, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah told reporters while attending the reception.

Jarallah said the approval was a "positive" sign, "and we are confident we will reach a common understanding with the Iraqis regarding the possible payment options." The options are the sale of natural gas at an "agreed price" between the two countries, negotiating the decrease of Iraqi oil and derivative imports, lessening the dues according to the Paris Club sustainable solutions or transforming the amount to a bilateral debt.



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah (center right) attends the German embassy's national day ceremony. — KUNA

However, said Jarallah, the natural gas sale option was "the most preferable."

GCC summit - Al-Jarallah

Meanwhile, Jarallah indicated that Kuwait is ready to host the upcoming Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit next December, hoping that the high-level meeting would be held on time. "There are no contacts with the leaders of the GCC about convening the summit, but naturally we are ready

for it and hope it will convene on time," Jarallah told reporters.

Asked about Kuwait's mediation to solve the Gulf dispute, Jarallah said "the mediation by Kuwait is ongoing and will continue until we see an end to this dispute." Jarallah, meanwhile, described Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz's upcoming visit to Russia as "historic and important." This is the first visit by a Saudi King to Russia, he said, and it would benefit security of the region. — KUNA

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