

Local

307 landmine sightings reported in six weeks

Public warned from approaching foreign objects in desert

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's relations and security media department yesterday repeated earlier warnings to the public from approaching or handling any foreign objects they might find in desert areas, noting that those might be dangerous explosives washed out by the recent heavy rain. The department added that in the period from November 1 to December 13, 2018, it has so far received 307 reports about sighting objects suspected to be military waste, further explaining that when bomb squads arrived to the scenes of the reports, they discovered that the objects were in fact landmines and cluster bombs that were immediately dealt with. The department also urged the public to immediately call the emergency hotline 112 on finding any foreign objects, and to stay off the site until a bomb squad arrives.

Car fire

A citizen sustained serious hand and neck

burns when his vehicle caught fire at Jaber Al-Ahmad desert area yesterday, said security sources, noting that Doha firemen rushed to the scene and dealt with the blaze. The man was rushed to hospital for treatment and further investigations are in progress to determine the cause of the fire.

Another fire broke out in a first floor apartment in Hadiya, said security sources, noting that firemen from Mangaf and Qurain fire stations rushed to the scene where they had to evacuate the entire house and deal with the blaze. No casualties were reported.

In the meantime, a fire broke out in the basement of a 500-square-meter complex in Hawally. Security sources said that firemen from Hawally brigade rushed to the scene where they evacuated all the complex's visitors and controlled the fire successfully. The basement included food stuff, refrigerators and other inflammable materials, the sources added. No casualties were reported.



KUWAIT: This picture released by the Interior Ministry yesterday shows an explosive unearthed by recent heavy rains that hit the country.



Flames engulf a vehicle at Jaber Al-Ahmad desert area yesterday.

Residency Affairs chief chairs high-level meeting

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Residency Affairs Maj Gen Talal Maarafi chaired a high-level meeting with officials at the Residency Affairs Departments to discuss ways of improving the process of work at residency affairs and service centers around the country. Meanwhile, the ministry's Relations and Security Department denied reports claiming that Maarafi had held a similar meeting on Wednesday.

A news service had reported on its website that Maj Gen Maarafi met with heads of residency departments and received a detailed report about crowds of people applying to extend one month visit visas for their relatives, which affected work progress in those departments, according to the report. Furthermore, the report suggested that Maarafi announced during the meeting extending the family visit visas for parents and wives' parents to three months instead of one. However, the Interior Ministry denied yesterday that any decision was made, and urged media outlets to avoid re-

porting any news unless it is released by the Relations and Security Media Department.

In other news, statistics issued by the Residency Affairs Department showed that the total number of who visited Kuwait this year reached 2.2 million, including visitors using commercial, touristic and family visit visas.

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh announced that a new decision on expat labor visa transfer in the private sector would be issued soon. She added that the Public Authority for Manpower's new board of directors had already approved some resolutions on regulating the local labor market, adding that those resolutions would be revealed soon. On another concern, the ministry's assistant undersecretary for social development affairs Hana Al-Hajri announced that the ministry offered for public bidding two tenders to maintain, develop and rehabilitate wedding halls in various governorates.

Responding to social media comments about the deteriorated situation of those halls, Hajri added that most of them were in the same condition of lack of maintenance and old furniture when the ministry took over the responsibility for running them. "Special technical teams immediately started making reports about the halls' conditions, and the ministry is currently awaiting the finance ministry's approval to fund the two tenders," she explained.

Forged degrees' suspect sentenced to five years in jail

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday sentenced an Egyptian man, who works for the Ministry of Higher Education and is identified as the prime suspect in a university degrees' forgery case, and another accomplice to five years in jail. The court also sentenced a citizen who had his degree forged and used it in applying to a public prosecutor job to five years in jail as well.

Notably, the Ministry of Higher Education had announced on July 18, 2018 that they discovered a number of fake university degrees issued in an Arab country, noting that they arrested an expat working for the ministry involved in the matter.

34 street vendors arrested

A joint inspection committee yesterday

launched an inspection campaign in Kabd, which resulted in arresting 34 street vendors, said the Public Authority for Manpower's official spokesperson Aseel Al-Mezyad said, noting that 21 of the suspects were in violation of the private sector residency laws, while 13 were absconding domestic helpers. "All suspects were referred to relevant authorities," Mezyad added, noting that the authority receives complaints about peddlers and beggars on a 24/7 basis on its hotline number 66626716, as well as on its social media accounts. The joint inspection committee comprises members from the Public Authority for Manpower and Ministry of Interior.

KD 17.9 million in subsidies

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) yesterday announced that it had spent KD 17.9 million last November on various types of subsidized foodstuff and construction materials. KD 6.8 million of that amount were spent on basic foodstuff, KD 368,000 on subsidized baby formula and 21 on other nutrients, whereas KD 10.8 million were spent on construction materials, the ministry explained in a statement, adding that the total number of beneficiaries was 2,049,185 citizens.



KUWAIT: Maj Gen Talal Maarafi chairs a high-level meeting with officials at the Residency Affairs Department.



KUWAIT: Despite authorities' instructions to avoid camping as the risk of landmines unearthed following last month's heavy rains has forced a delay of the camping season, tents continue to be set up illegally in desert areas as Kuwait Times first reported two weeks ago. — KUNA photos