

Local

Manpower Public Authority denies ignoring Filipino workers' complaints

Health ministry says not affected by Philippines' labor ban

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: A government official strongly denied rumors suggesting that Manpower Public Authority has ignored 1,000 complaints filed by Filipino employees working for a major company in Kuwait due to political reasons. "We only received 120 complaints from a total of 500 Filipinos working for the company," said Abdullah Al-Motoutah, deputy director for manpower protection affairs at the authority.

Motoutah added that the authority approved cancellation requests made by the laborers working for a major insolvent company who want to leave without consulting the employer, after paying them from the company's financial deposits. Motoutah said the authority's offices in various governorates continue to receive laborers' complaints and that the mobile labor disputes unit has already received 850 complaints.

The Public Authority for Manpower takes all legal actions against companies that fail to honor their laborers' rights, said the official who again denied that the authority has failed to fulfill its duties in terms of protecting manpower working for the private sector, namely those working for major companies. "The authority has taken gradual measures to protect workers and hold the companies accountable without causing any harm to government projects being executed by them," he said.

Motoutah added that those companies' contracts were suspended while concerned state departments were contacted and urged to pay laborers' overdue payments and deduct them from payments due to the companies, in addition to urging government bodies registered with the

Central Tenders Committee (CTC) not to renew contracts or sign new ones with these companies.

Not affected

Following a ban imposed by the Philippines even on nationals on vacation from returning to Kuwait, the health ministry's medical engineering department's manager Adel Al-Sarraf stressed that all ministry sectors will not be affected by such a ban. Sarraf said there are enough employees to cover for the missing staff members. He added that MoH does not depend on one nationality when contracting staff, but has a diverse workforce including a considerable number of Kuwaitis. Sarraf said that the nursing sector has the largest number of employees from the Philippines (35 percent), but stressed that even this sector will not be greatly affected if the ban continues.

Call for bedoons' sit-in on Friday

Bedoons' sit-in

Social media activists called on bedoons (stateless residents) to stage a sit-in outside Jahra Hospital on Friday. Commenting on the call, official security sources stressed that the Interior Ministry will not tolerate any unlicensed gatherings, adding it had not received any license requests. "There are some suspicious calls to disturb the hosting of two significant conferences in Kuwait," the sources said, noting that security forces are currently tracking down the origins of the calls.

Female teachers

The court of appeals yesterday approved a request contesting the teachers' law and demanding treating female Kuwaiti teachers equally as their expat colleagues. The court referred the request to the constitutional court to check the



MANILA: Overseas Filipino workers (OFW) look on after arriving in Manila from Kuwait at Manila International Airport yesterday. —AFP

constitutionality of the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) decision on paying rent allowance to female expat teachers and depriving Kuwaiti teachers married to non-Kuwaitis from the same. Notably, female expat teachers working for the Ministry of Education (MoE) currently receive a monthly rent allowance of KD 60 instead of KD 150. In a separate case, the criminal court yesterday sentenced a citizen to 10 years in jail with labor over charges of joining the Abdaly cell, spying for Iran and Hezbollah and possessing explosives.

Food safety

The Food and Nutrition Authority's chairman and general manager Essa Al-Kandari said the authority referred 15 related citations to the public prosecution, adding that some of them were serious ones beyond reconciliation. Kandari added that according to direct instructions from Health Minister Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah, the authority is keen on protecting consumers' health in terms of having access to safe and healthy food items.

No injuries in Salmiya restaurant blaze

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: A fire broke out in a Salmiya restaurant yesterday, prompting Salmiya and Bidaa fire stations to respond. The fire started on the second floor of the mall where the restaurant is located, so the entire building was evacuated before fire-fighters tackled the flames. No injuries were reported, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's Public Relations and Information Department said in a statement.

Firemen hurt

Meanwhile, two firemen were injured when their fire engine collided with a lamppost in Salmiya en route to a fire. The blaze was reported in a Salmiya apartment, and when firemen arrived, one of the fire trucks had an accident and hit the pole. Both firemen were taken to Mubarak Hospital, while the others put out the blaze.

Children fight

A citizen accused two Egyptian chil-

dren of beating her two sons in an elementary school and injuring them. The complaint was sent to the juvenile prosecution. The woman told police that the two Egyptians children attacked one of her sons and injured his knee, while her other son was hit on the head and suffered a laceration. The woman took her children to Farwaniya Hospital, then went to Khaitan police station and lodged a complaint.

Drug possession

An Egyptian woman failed in her attempt to escape from police after being caught along with a citizen with Tramadol tablets. Police noticed the two "dancing" in a car, so they pulled the vehicle over. The woman then got out of the car and started running, but was caught and found wanted on several cases. The citizen is an ex-convict wanted on drugs charges and a KD 13,000 debt. Both were sent to the Drugs Control General Department. Separately, a male cross-dresser was arrested with a liquor bottle and psychoactive drugs in Fintas after he was stopped for speeding. He was sent with the illicit material to concerned authorities.

Policemen attacked

Three drug users resisted arrest by

police and attacked them in Riggae when they were caught with drugs and a knife, while one of the suspects escaped. Farwaniya police stopped a motorist for a traffic violation, and discovered the driver and his two passengers were in an abnormal condition. The three got out of the car in an attempt to escape, and one of them threw a bag out. When the three were caught, they resisted and one got away. The bag contained drugs and a knife. Police later arrested the third suspect.

Abnormal condition

A police checkpoint in Nugra stopped a car carrying two men and a woman, all in an abnormal condition. The three said they were friends and see each other almost daily. Police found an envelope of shabu and 14 psychoactive pills, as well as drugs paraphernalia in the girl's handbag. All three were sent to the Drug Control General Directorate.

Domestic dispute

A citizen accused her husband of kicking her out of the house and kidnapping her five children. The woman said a dispute took place between the two that escalated to the point where her husband kicked her out, kidnapped their children and took them to a place unknown to her.



KUWAIT: Damage left by a fire reported in a Salmiya restaurant yesterday.

The prosecutor ordered the case be registered as a felony and asked detectives to work on it.

Man jailed for forging citizenship, ordered to pay back KD 83,000

KUWAIT: The criminal court sentenced a Saudi national to seven years in jail for forging a Kuwaiti citizenship. It also ordered him to return KD 83,000 and fined him KD 16,000, Al-Rai reported yesterday. The prosecutor general charged the suspect with forging official documents including a birth certificate, proof of Kuwaiti nationality and a passport, and presenting himself as a Kuwaiti by impersonating another individual. He was also charged with taking money from the place where he worked undeservingly (his salaries) and receiving a loan from a bank. He also received money from the housing care authority.

This comes while a decree was published in this week's issue of the national gazette 'Kuwait Al-Youm' to withdraw the Kuwaiti nationality from two people, based on article 13 of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law which entitles the Interior Minister to issue a decree to revoke the nationality of a naturalized Kuwaiti national in the following cases: Where naturalization has been acquired by virtue of fraud or on the basis of a false declaration. Kuwaiti nationality which has been acquired by any dependent of any such person may also be revoked: Where, within 15 years of the grant of naturalization, a person is convicted of any honor-related crime or honesty-related crime. In such case, the nationality of the convicted person alone may be revoked: Where, within 10 years of the grant of naturalization, a person is dismissed from public office on disciplinary grounds for reasons relating to honor or honesty: Where the competent authorities have evidence that a naturalized person has disseminated opinions which may tend seriously to undermine the economic or social structure of the State or that he is a member of a political association of a foreign State. Kuwaiti nationality which has been acquired by any dependent of any such person may also be revoked.

Furthermore, another decree was published in the national gazette stipulating the withdrawal of the nationality certificate from 15 persons, based on Article 21bis A' of the nationality law which stipulates that "a nationality certificate may be withdrawn if it appears to have been obtained by virtue of fraud or on the basis of a false declaration or on the basis of false evidence submitted by a witness. Such withdrawal shall be effected by Resolution of the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister of the Interior. Kuwaiti nationality which has been acquired by any dependent of any such person may also be revoked."

EQUATE recruits 34 new Kuwaiti technologists

KUWAIT: EQUATE Group, a global producer of petrochemicals, proudly announces that 34 Kuwaiti operations technologists have joined the company's growing team of talents as part of the 10th wave of training and recruiting local operations professionals to work at EQUATE's world-class industrial complex. This goes in line with steadfast commitment to grow its talent pool with constant and effective training programs that not only benefit every trainee, but the company's future as well.

The recruitment process follows an intensive training program delivered based on global standards of developing technical competencies. The newly recruited technologists first joined a 10-week program in preparation to work at EQUATE's industrial complex. The program focused on developing the trainees' English language skills, teamwork principles, educating them about the company's corporate culture and technical fundamentals. The program will be followed by six months on-the-job training to obtain the technical certification to work at EQUATE.

EQUATE's Senior VP Nasser Al-Dousari stated, "Today is another milestone in EQUATE's commitment to provide career opportunities to young individuals in our global industry. Thirty-four operators have joined our company and we provided them with qualified and certified vocation training program made to develop talent and help them grow in their jobs."

EQUATE continues to contribute to Kuwait's economic growth and social welfare due to the career opportunities it offers locals. Today, 54 percent of the company's workforce are Kuwaiti nationals, a significant percentage the company prides itself in as it reflects its national identity and illustrates its commitment to Kuwaitization.



Kuwait maintains Al-Ahmadi Refinery at \$16 million cost

KUWAIT: Overall maintenance of Al-Ahmadi refinery that began on January 20 would last for 35 days, with projected cost at KD 5.1 million (\$16.9 million), said a leading oil executive. The refinery is under maintenance as part of a standing policy to check installations and equipment once every four years, indicated Fahad Al-Daihani, Deputy Chief Executive Office at the refinery, which is affiliated to Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), at a press conference yesterday. He affirmed keenness that the works would not affect operations at the key refinery.

Wadhwa Al-Khatib, in charge of technical services at the KNPC, affirmed that the maintenance works would not affect the refining operations, noting that female Kuwaiti engineers partook in the operation. —KUNA