

Local

Grilling likely to force minister out of Kuwait Cabinet: Sources

Around 18 lawmakers in favor of planned no-confidence motion

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The grilling motion MP Adel Al-Damkhi filed yesterday against Minister of Social Affairs Dr Ghadeer Aseeri is not an individual act and was agreed upon by many lawmakers during a meeting held at MP Mohammed Hayef's office last week, well-informed parliamentary sources said. The sources added that the grilling motion is a manifestation of a reaction to a previous hostile attitude Aseeri had taken against the unified GCC stand concerning the 2011 events in Bahrain, when she was against the intervention of the Peninsula Shield forces and supported protestors in Bahrain.

Responding to a question about how to question the minister for a previous attitude and opinion, the sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that regardless of this detail, MPs plan to blame

the government for including a minister who had "embarrassed" Kuwait in front of sister countries. "How would the minister react in GCC meetings while she is against them - this would embarrass Kuwait," the sources noted. A session will be held on Jan 7 to debate the grilling motion filed against Aseeri, the sources said, adding that the government will have either to have her take the podium or resign from office, because lawmakers will strongly oppose referring the motion to the legislative committee or the constitutional court.

"Should the government succeed in doing so, another grilling will be filed against the minister within a month, which means that she will have to resign," the sources stressed. The sources highlighted that a no-confidence motion will be prepared before discussing the grilling motion and that there more than 10 (around 18) lawmakers in favor of the motion. "The

government should accept her resignation and appoint a new Shiite minister," the sources stressed, noting that MP Mohammed Al-Mutair plans to grill His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah if the government rejects passing the general amnesty law and dropping previous verdicts issued against former lawmakers for breaking into the parliament.

Sentence overruled

The court of cassation yesterday annulled a previous verdict issued acquitting a Bangladeshi man who had been charged of committing hostile actions against US and Britain and sentenced him to eight months in prison. The court also sentenced the same defendant to one year in prison, a KD 1,000 fine and deportation for misusing Instagram and threatening the British ambassador and the US Army commander in Kuwait.

Policemen arrested

Two policemen were caught red-handed while recklessly driving a vehicle and performing stunts near Sulabikhat cemetery. Security sources said on leaving the cemetery, MoI Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham spotted the vehicle and ordered to stop it. Both the driver and his companion turned out to be policemen, who were immediately arrested and the vehicle was impounded.



Minister of Social Affairs
Dr Ghadeer Aseeri

Union denies increase in Zubaidi prices

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Kuwaiti Fishermen Union Thaher Al-Sowayan stressed the union's keenness on providing fresh local fish for reasonable prices. Accordingly, Sowayan denied social media reports claiming that the price of 16 kilograms of Zubaidi (pomfret) fish climbed to KD 270, noting that the real price is only KD 207, or KD 13 per kilogram, which he argues is a reasonable price considering that it is not Zubaidi fishing season yet. "Local shrimp was sold for KD 100 per basket, while 10 kilograms of Iranian Zubaidi was sold for KD 125, or KD 12.5 per kilogram, and the Iranian shrimp basket was sold for KD 95," he elaborated, expressing criticism for the "fuss created despite the small difference in price between local and imported fish." Sowayan added that there is an abundance of She'em, Nuwaibi and Sbour fish in the market nowadays, noting that Pomfret fishing season starts in April.



KUWAIT: Shoppers walk in a makeshift market in Hasawi. — Photos by Ben Garcia

Crackdowns help achieve noticeable changes in Jleeb

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Some areas of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh - notoriously known as the slum of Kuwait - are now relatively cleaner than before. There have been some noticeable changes as the municipality continues operations to clean the area of garbage, makeshift markets, illegal stalls, etc. Full of old and dilapidated buildings and traffic chaos, the Hasawi area of Jleeb is now a bit better.

There were times in the past when low-income laborers staged protests in Jleeb against their employers, complaining mostly of unpaid salaries. Hasawi is now being cleared and put in order, particularly the main road running through the area.

Makeshift markets - which were a feature of this area - have been relegated to just one corner behind the main road. Vendors - mostly Bangladeshis - sell fruits and vegetables at very reasonable prices to cater to the low-income families living there. Kuwait Times noticed that side streets seem much wider after encroachments were removed. Many shops and businesses have been sealed by the authorities for operating without licenses and permits.



A shop closed by Kuwait Municipality.



A general view of a street in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

NCCAL announces state's 2019 awards winners

KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) yesterday announced the winners of the state's discretionary and encouraging awards for the year 2019. The winners' names were adopted at the meeting of the Higher Committee for State Awards, which was recently held under the chairmanship of the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri. In a press statement, the council said that the State Appreciation Award in the field of social sciences was won by Dr Fattouh Al-Khatrash, while poet Bader Buresli and artist Mohammad Al-Mansour won in the field of fine arts, theatrical and musical arts. The statement noted that the winners will be honored in a special celebration that will be held at the 26th Qurain Cultural Festival at exactly seven thirty in the evening on Saturday, the 18th of January at the Abdul Hussein Abduredha Theater. The Council Secretary-General Kamil Al-Abduljaleel congratulated the winners, praising their distinguished achievements in the field of arts, literature and humanities and their cultural, literary and intellectual contributions that have affected the cultural and artistic field. The state's discretionary awards are an indication of the country's sponsorship represented by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in Kuwaiti creators and their interest in promoting cultural development through the council's keenness to revive culture and heritage, he added. — KUNA

Investigations department sets up hotline

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry announced yesterday a hotline through which callers can submit complaints directly to the General Investigations Department. In a statement to the press yesterday, the relations and security information department at the interior ministry said the General Investigations Department has set up a hotline to receive complaints around the clock. The number is 1888988. Meanwhile, the service centers direc-

torate said yesterday that service centers that operate on weekends will remain closed on Saturday, Jan 4, 2020, on the occasion of the start of the new Gregorian year.

Yarmouk fire

Fire broke out in a two-storey house in Yarmouk Saturday night. Farwaniya and industrial Shuwaikh fire stations responded, and firemen found the fire was in the kitchen. Power supply was cut off and the fire brought under control. No

casualties were reported.

Training program

The training program "Preparing Security Plans - 4" concluded at the coordination command under the patronage and presence of director general of coordination command operations for the protection of domestic security Maj Gen Staff Dr Mohammad Al-Daihani. Sixteen officers participated in the program - 12 from the interior ministry, two national guards and two from the fire department.



A group photo of participants in the "Preparing Security Plans - 4" training program.



KUWAIT: Fire trucks seen outside a Yarmouk house where a fire was reported.

Kuwait, Saudi outline border in neutral zone

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Saudi Arabia agreed after talks in Riyadh last week to resume shared oil output in the neutral zone after setting up an officially-recognized border within the area, the Kuwaiti negotiating committee said on Saturday. Three new deals, described as being appended agreements, were reached on Tuesday after extensive negotiations. They come after an oil production halt in 2014 in the cities of Wafra, Kuwait and Khafji, Saudi Arabia both located within the neutral zone, which produces more than 470,000 barrels of oil per day through onshore and offshore fields. The new deals have set out two boundaries within the neutral zone, including two agreements for land and maritime borders, and a memorandum of understanding for the resumption of oil production. Signing the border agreements was Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Sabah Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud.

Meanwhile, the MoU was signed by both Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister and Kuwait's Oil Minister and Minister of Electricity and Water Khaled Al-Fadhel. "There is no new agreement," Assistant Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs and the deals' negotiating committee Deputy Director Ambassador Ghanem Al-Ghanem told Kuwait TV in an interview. "The current agreement is appended to the land border demarcation agreement of 1965 and the maritime demarcation agreement of 2000," he said. The new deal is "more accurate and more definitive" and outlines a clear-cut border between both countries in accordance with the previous agreements. It outlines complete sovereignty on the northern part of the zone for Kuwait and the same for Saudi Arabia for the southern part. "There was no clear cut text stating this in previous agreements," added the official. The natural resources located in both areas, however, will remain shared between both countries. The current agreements also state that the resources located within the zone will be governed by joint operations, not by a sole country.

The so-called joint operations mechanism carries out the integrated exploration of all the hydrocarbon resources in the zone and splits costs equally, he added. Explaining further, he said the MoU also outlines aspects of cooperation, including offshore investments in Durra field and onshore investments in Khafji. The neutral zone, an area of just under 5,800 sq-km, was left undivided when the two countries marked their border at the Uqair Convention in 1922, however, both nations had equal sovereign rights over land and resources, he added. This remained the case until the 1965 deal that split the area into demarcated northern Kuwaiti and southern Saudi portions but the natural resources remained shared between both.

Speaking about the breakthrough, Committee Director Ambassador Majdi Al-Dhifeeri said it "reflects the depth of the neighboring countries' strategic bilateral relationship, built on transparency, exclusivity, mutual interest and compatibility." It comes in accordance with the directions of both His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of Kuwait and King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, he added. The talks were described as having been reached after both sides saw eye-to-eye "completely and comprehensively" on the matters discussed "actually and not only verbally." "The goal is to be in accord, not to be divided," he said, adding Saudi Arabia is a "strategic depth" for Kuwait, just as Kuwait is to Saudi Arabia. — KUNA