

Local

Municipality ready to build temporary accommodations for projects' laborers

Land allocated to accommodate 25,000 Clean Fuel Project workers

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Following up the recent statements made by Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel concerning plans to build temporary prefabricated dormitories for expatriate workers at each project site so that they could be removed when the project is finished, Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi expressed the municipality's readiness to allocate special land for all government projects to use for building temporary accommodation sites, adding that the municipality had done the same by allocating land to accommodate 25,000 laborers at the Clean Fuel Project's site. Meanwhile, Manfouhi said that in a bid to fight the housing of 'bachelors' in private residential areas, the municipality had allowed various factories to build special accommodations for their laborers on a maximum of 10 percent of the factory's area.

Bedoons' hajj

The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs contacted both the Zakat House and the awqaf secretariat general and asked them to provide financial support needed to contribute in making bedoons' low-budget hajj easier, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Sholah said. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice announced yesterday that it had issued 1,742 governmental and non-governmental transactions and documents for bedoons in 2018, in cooperation with Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents. Undersecretary of Ministry of Justice Abdullatif Al-Suraiye said that legal documentation department has issued 1,121 marital documents, 547 divorce documents and 74 marital revision documents for illegal residents from January until December 2018. Suraiye affirmed that all documents were issued according to the terms and conditions of the ministry and in cooperation with the Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents.

Kuwaiti jobseekers

Minister of State For Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel said that the total number of Kuwaiti jobseekers registered with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) is 240,667 including 236,085 already nominated for jobs and 4,582 still waiting for employment. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry by MP Bader Al-Mulla, Aqeel stressed these numbers are variable, adding the numbers she mentioned are estimated until the date of the inquiry.

Excellent performance bonuses

Manager of the Financial Affairs Department at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Fahd Al-Obaidli announced excellent performance bonuses had been deposited in deserving employees' bank accounts. Obaidli added 2,950 out of a total of 3,600 employees will get KD 250-1,500 according to their positions,



KUWAIT: This archive photo shows a laborer working at a project's site in Kuwait. This photo is used for illustration purpose only.

with a total value of KD 2 million.

Mail company

The Ministry of State for Services Affairs submitted a bill establishing the Kuwait Mail Company to the Fatwa and Legislation Department demanding shifting the supervision of this sector to the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA). According to the proposed law, CITRA will



Temporary housing helps fight 'bachelors' residence

be responsible to set mail policies, execute them, ensure provision of regular high-quality mail services at reasonable prices, supervise service providers, open the market for fair competition, encourage local and foreign private sector to invest in mail and issue the law's executive chart.

Universities' list

Well-informed sources said the board of directors of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance (NBAQ) will meet next week to review updating the list of accredited universities in some countries. The sources added that the board will review reports by some delegations dispatched to foreign countries to visit a number of universities. The sources also expected the board to approve new lists of some European universities.

Legal action

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced taking legal action against users of government-owned land plots who had so far not paid the 'symbolic' price of the land nor checked with the Kuwait Credit Bank to finalize the procedures needed to utilize those plots. The authority's official spokesperson Ibrahim Al-Nashi stressed that in a measure meant to protect public funds, the authority found some users had been utilizing these lands for over 10 years without paying or checking with the Credit Bank to arrange for deducting the price from their loans they get to build their houses. "These land plots are still empty," Nashi added, noting owners are requested to check with the Kuwait Credit Bank within 60 days to sign their construction loan applications.

Firemen handle two fires, accident around Kuwait

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A fire broke out yesterday morning in a garbage container and two trucks parked in an open yard in Shuwaikh Industrial, said security sources. Firemen from Shuwaikh industrial area and Ardiya rushed to the scene and managed to control the flames, preventing the fire from spreading to other parked trucks. No casualties were reported. Further investigations are in progress to determine the cause of the fire.

Meanwhile, a fire broke out in a house in Siddiq, said security sources, noting

that firemen from Subhan and Farwaniya stations rushed to the scene, where they immediately evacuated the house and managed to control the blaze, which had started on the first floor. No casualties were reported. In the meantime, a water tanker truck turned over in Doha, said security sources, noting that on arriving at the scene, Sulaibikhat firemen found the driver trapped in the wreckage and suffering from various injuries. The driver was rushed to hospital while firefighters removed the truck from the road. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the accident.

Reports denied

Responding to recent social media reports about sand dunes accumulating along outer highways and allegations of the absence of interior and public works ministries' elements at the scene, the interior ministry's relations and security department strongly denied the report and stressed that its teams and traffic and security patrols are deployed at the scene



KUWAIT: Firemen battle a blaze reported in Shuwaikh Industrial yesterday.

in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works to remove the sand and open the road to traffic, which has been already done. Meanwhile, the interior

ministry strongly denied some press and social media reports on referring 80-100 investigators and public attorneys to retirement.



A fireman extinguishes a truck's fire.



Firemen seen battling the blaze in Shuwaikh.



A water tanker truck heavily damaged after it turned over in Doha.



The exterior of a building where a fire was reported in Siddiq.

local spotlight

Labor market



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

Since the past few years, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has tried to regulate the labor market in Kuwait by applying laws to achieve public interest, taking the necessary decisions to address the imbalance in demographics and preserve the rights of workers and Kuwait's international reputation in front of human rights organizations, especially with regards to visa traders.

However, the road is still long and there are those who exploit and violate the law, which is expected under the reality of corruption, but we should not be complacent. Inspection campaigns recently by the manpower authority at the worksites of the Ministries Complex led to the arrest of 43 workers in violation of article 18, seven workers in violation of article 20 and some other violators.

The deputy director general of PAM's planning and development division said the inspection campaigns are within the framework of the application of the provisions of labor law no. 6 of 2010 and the domestic employment act no. 68 of 2015 to prevent irregularities. He added the authority is working to intensify inspection campaigns at all worksites and commercial complexes to ensure the application of the provisions of the law and regulate and control the labor market.

It is worth mentioning that in the file of international relations, efforts exerted by Kuwait in regulating the labor market and protecting the labor force have been commended. Forty workers have been sent back home through the implementation of a voluntary repatriation project in cooperation between the shelter and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the creation of job opportunities through the shelter for 101 female workers who want to continue working in Kuwait.

I think Kuwait is still attractive for expatriate workers. In 2017, BMI International said in a study that Kuwait has a relatively safe operating environment. In the report, BMI, which is a subsidiary of Fitch, identified a number of attractive factors and challenges to improve operational risks in Kuwait. According to the report, the infrastructure is good, but needs constant development in the face of some challenges such as tightening of policies for foreign investment.

I believe it is unreasonable to establish a free economic zone that does not have facilities, services and logistical support, as well as the availability of public facilities and means of transportation, along with the absence of taxes that should be an attractive factor. I believe that the state should work to improve the business environment and facilitate procedures for small business owners as well as attract foreign investors and engage expatriate workers and citizens in an equal, just and beneficial manner.

As for the imbalance in the demographic structure, I do not believe expatriates have a hand in it. This issue of imbalance in the population structure has been on the table since the 1970s. It is known that demographic imbalance is caused by government policies supported by visa trade, and expatriates and citizens are both victims of such policies. The solution is easy - by monitoring companies and workers' rights, especially financial and humanitarian.

I think that one of the most important achievements of the authority is the electronic link between the authority and official bodies for queries and data extraction, which helps in checking the conditions of workers and busting false guarantees. In addition, approximately 450,000 Kuwaitis under the age of 20 are entering the labor market, so the improvement of the work environment is important. The needs and skills needed by the state should be considered, whether for expatriates or citizens.

I think that the National Assembly should work to develop a system of economic legislation in conjunction with the legislative authority and the private sector. The efforts of the public authority for manpower are good, but continuing cooperation with all official authorities is necessary to regulate the labor market.