

Local

Govt pushes citizens' employment in private sector as companies 'reluctant' to hire Kuwaitis

More efforts expected to examine expat laborers' degrees

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The government reviewed a report about Kuwaitis' employment in the private sector and implementing the replacement policy in the government sector in specialties Kuwaitis have, informed sources said. Reports on employment obstacles were presented to the government as well as opportunities for Kuwaitis in the private sector, said the sources, adding that private companies are still reluctant to hire Kuwaitis despite the increase in their employment compared to previous years.

In the meantime, the sources said the coming period is expected to see further procedures to verify the authenticity of expats' degrees in cooperation with professional societies as well as the higher education ministry, adding that the examinations may reveal many forgeries committed by expats. The sources said a decision to increase percentages of Kuwaitis' employment in the private sector may be issued before the end of the current year, and will increase the percentage to 90 percent for banks and telecommunications companies.

Meanwhile, labor statistics report for GCC countries from 2013 to 2017 revealed that expat labor in Kuwait rose by 1.8 percent compared to the population. The report showed a drop in Kuwaiti workers in 2017 by 1.3 percent compared to previous years. Compared to numbers mentioned in Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) stats of the total number of workers until the start of this year, expat labor rose to 81 percent of the total workforce in the country, a jump from 66.5 percent.

In other news, informed sources said the com-

pletion percentage in the expat labor cities projects south of Jahra is 65 percent, adding that work on the project began in 2014 and is expected to be completed in 2021. The sources said Kuwait aims to create integrated cities at a highly organized level that provide the necessary services that guarantee a dignified life.

They said that quickly building labor cities is highly important for the Kuwait society because it is related to dealing with a group that did not have suitable residence for a long time, which created negative repercussions on the society. They said the project will provide residence to more than 20,000 laborers in south Jahra at a cost of KD 135 million.

441 percent

The parliamentary budgets committee said estimations of expenses related to the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition for the year 2019/2020 are higher by 441 percent compared with the previous fiscal year, including around KD 2 million to equip laboratories, while the authority continuously finds hurdles to carry out its role. The committee said the authority's expenses during the fiscal year 2017/2018 amounted to KD 6 million, 85 percent of which was spent as the authority carried out 17 financial transfers at a total of KD 402,000, which indicates the budget has lost its importance as a tool of control, supervision, follow up and performance evaluation, as transfers in 26 percent of the total budget items were made due to a lack of technical and financial studies.

The shortage of food testing labs will negatively reflect on prices in the vegetable market on most imported products due to delays in releasing them. The committee said actual expenses of the authori-

ty amounted to KD 5 million, while it collected KD 52,000, with the finance ministry financing the difference according to closing accounts data. Estimation of expenses for the current fiscal year is KD 31 million, with only KD 2 million expected to be collected.

Contracts and agreements

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah instructed the drugs and medical supplies sector to implement the rules pertaining to contracts and agreements to be signed between the ministry and companies that are contracted to supply materials or render services to the ministry, according to the fatwa and legislation establishment law 12/1960, the rules of law 49/1960 and the rules of law 49/2016 with regards to public tenders and law 30/1960 to establish the Audit Bureau. It is important to comply with the following: The supervisory authorities must be provided with a unified contract number; Names of companies and contract values should match those mentioned in the approved letter from the Central Agency for Public Tenders; Complying with the amendments of the fatwa and legislation department; Writing the full guarantee data (guarantee number, value, bank name, dates of starting and ending); Printing the name of the company representative and his civil ID on the front of the contract, and not handwritten it; The legal representative of the second party must be authorized to sign, and the authorization should be authenticated by the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry; All papers of meetings minutes of the permanent drugs committee should be submitted; Contracting procedures should not be delayed.

MPs propose raising pensions

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Five MPs yesterday submitted a proposal to increase pensions paid to retired Kuwaitis by KD 60 monthly every three years instead of KD 30 currently, MPs Ali Al-Deqbasi, Faisal Al-Kandari, Salah Khorshid, Ahmad Al-Fadhli and Khalaf Dumaitheer, who filed the bill, also called for the need to revise the amount of the increase once every five years depending on the rise in the cost of living. The lawmakers said they submitted the proposal to help retired people cope with the steady rise in the cost of living, especially since many pensioners totally depend on such pensions for their living.

In other Assembly news, opposition MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari yesterday declined an invitation by the National Assembly's legal and legislative committee to discuss with him a grilling he had filed against the prime minister and which the Assembly decided to refer to the committee to decide whether it is in line with the constitution. MP Saadoun Hammad, a member of the committee, said Kandari did not attend the meeting and the committee invited the justice minister for a meeting on Sunday to represent the government in the issue. Kandari filed to grill the prime minister several weeks ago and the government insisted that it violated the constitution and demanded that it should be reviewed by the legal committee. Also, MP Khalil Al-Saleh called on the government yesterday to implement recommendations made by the Assembly and its committees, claiming that most of the recommendations are normally ignored. Saleh also called on the government to cancel making exceptions to appoint expatriates who do not fulfill conditions in government jobs.

Fire breaks out at Kuwait University college building

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen put out a blaze at a Kuwait University college campus in Khaldiya yesterday, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS) said. No injuries were reported as the building was immediately evacuated after the fire alarm started. Firemen from the Shuhada and Shuwaikh fire stations battled the blaze, which started in a building containing stored material. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.

Kuwait University later released a statement in which it confirmed that the fire broke out at the Faculty of Science (31 kh) building in Khaldiya. Authorities evacuated the building before the fire was controlled by KFS and the university in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, KU said in a statement. Efforts are under way to resume work at the building, the university said, noting that administration is waiting for a KFS report on the fire causes.



KUWAIT: Smoke billows from the Kuwait University college campus in Khaldiya yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Zubaidi fishing season starts today

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Head of Kuwait Fishermen's Union Thamer Al-Suwayan said the zubaidi

(silver pomfret) fishing season will start today after a 45-day pause in Kuwait territorial waters. Suwayan wondered about the reason for the fishing ban in Kuwait as zubaidi is brought to Kuwait through outlets during the ban period. He demanded solutions to this chronic issue, either by lifting the ban or banning imports from neighboring countries during the ban period, because its sale encourages neighboring countries' fishermen to fish zubaidi during the ban period and sell it to Kuwait as

imported fish. "When we monitor the market during the ban period, we see tons of fresh zubaidi being brought to the market, which confirms that some neighboring countries are not complying with treaty signed with Kuwait since 2004 and earlier," Suwayan said. He called upon concerned authorities and decision makers to reconsider the ban, especially since it does not serve fish stocks and does not increase them amid violations by some neighboring countries.

Kuwait turns municipal building into museum

KUWAIT: The current Municipal Council building will be turned into a museum under the umbrella of the National Council of Culture, Arts and Letters, said Chairman Osama Al-Otaibi yesterday. After relocating to a new one, the old building would be preserved due to its historic significance, Otaibi told a press conference. In this vein, it is worth mentioning that the current building had housed the first National Assembly session in Kuwait's modern history, back in 1963 and continued to be so until 1992. However, the Council had approved a number of proposals during the last term, including one that allows holding festivities and fairs, as well as other related commercial activities at Safat Square, in addition to allocating a 30,000m permanent location for the Public Authority For Food and Nutrition at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, he pointed out. Meanwhile, Council Secretary General Bader Al-Rifaei told the press conference that the new and modern municipal building is 95 percent finished and would be located in Qibla, Kuwait City, on a 77,600m area. —KUNA



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