

Local

New prison



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Local newspapers recently published images showing the designs of the new central prison in Kuwait - apparently a 5-star hotel in terms of shape and space. Officials from the interior ministry said the new prison will be the best in the Middle East. I believe that modernization in terms of construction and space, whether by expanding prison cells and adding larger spaces for prisoners to perform sports, religious activities or work are desirable for two reasons.

First, the prison is supposed to be a place of rehabilitation and education to ensure that the criminal will not return to the criminal world again after their release. The second reason is that a prisoner is a human being who has rights that must be respected, and the idea of expanding and improving the place should commensurate with all requirements and needs of human rights.

But prison remains a spot where freedoms are curtailed for a crime that was committed against another human being and which harmed the society, so the issue of putting a person in prison as punishment is something that cannot be disputed. It is known that in Kuwait, the ministry of awqaf and Islamic affairs is active in involving the prisoners in Quran workshops by hosting religious scholars to give sermons and hold cultural competitions, in addition to computer courses. The fact that the prison holds computer courses is a good thing, so that the prisoner learns something after the end of the prison term.

Also, learning a craft in jail is important in restructuring the personality of the prisoner. There is an annual exhibition of prisoners' products made of wood, plastic and metal. I think all these matters are in the interest of the prisoners.

But the question remains about what sometimes get published in the news about the situation inside the prison.

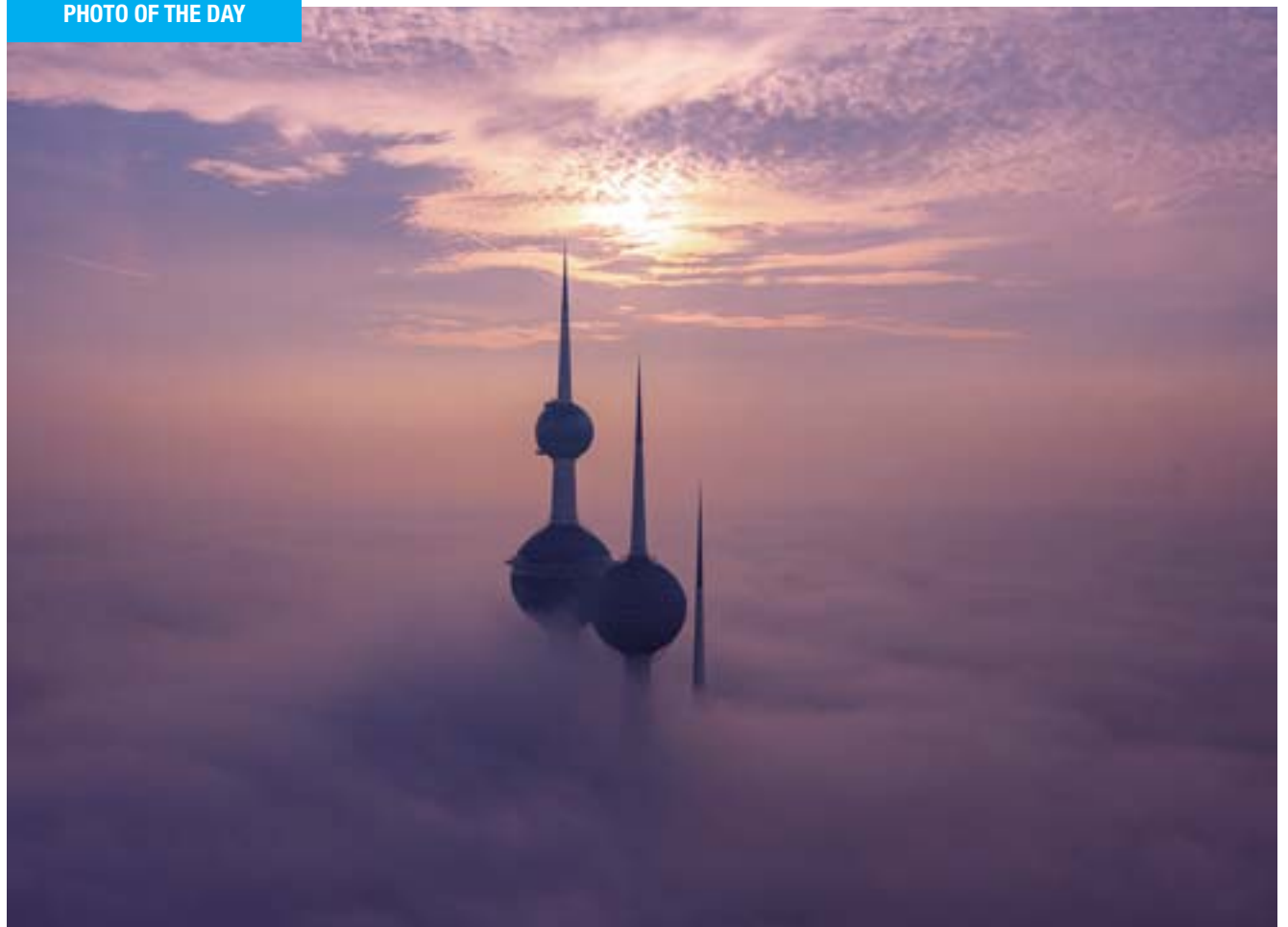
For example, the spread of drugs is worrying for the families of prisoners, especially those imprisoned for traffic or financial cases, especially young people in their twenties. Last year, local newspapers published important news about prison officials who found a secret hideout - a large underground hole in the central prison - containing large quantities of contraband. A large force was equipped as a first stage to evacuate the prison, and then dogs were used for six hours to discover the hideout.

The security force seized the largest amount of banned items, including over 1,056 mobile phones, narcotics, and four small drones suspected of being used to transport narcotics into and out of prison, and drilling tools. An extensive investigation was opened to find out how such a large quantity of contraband existed inside the prison. It was said that the value of seized items was estimated at KD 1.5 million.

I believe that prisons are a place of discipline and rehabilitation, not a place of harm. There are those who believe that prisoners should be allowed to own a cell phone, but how can the prison administration ensure that the phone will not be used wrongly - and lead to another crime. It is known that prisons in the world allow the use of a public telephone with specific conditions.

I think food quality, clothing and level of medical treatment must be at an appropriate level at the new prison and should be reviewed annually for a radical and integrated change. It is important that the interior ministry promotes the institution to be a global example with regards to the level of services provided to prisoners and respect for their needs, so that it would be easier for prisoners to integrate with their families and the community in the future. Prisoners - whether citizens or expatriates - have committed a punishable offense, but we must keep hope before them for a new start after their release.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



The beautiful and iconic Kuwait Towers surrounded by clouds. — Photo by Ramy Khair / KUNA

Death by delay



IN MY VIEW

By Nawara Fattahova

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Until when will the problem of waiting for luggage at Kuwait International Airport persist? Since last year, passengers arriving at Kuwait airport have to wait for long periods that sometimes reaches three hours during the busy summer travel season to collect their luggage. The airport has always been crowded, but passengers never waited for such a long time.

On complaining to the civil aviation, it said transferring luggage from the plane to the airport is the responsibility of a private company. But the private firm said that the customs department is the reason for the delay, as it has implemented a longer procedure for checking the luggage before it reaches the baggage carousel. On contacting the customs department, it said that the new inspection process is not delaying the arrival of luggage, as it's not manual. It explained that the luggage only passes through a machine on a belt, which does not cause any delay. The staff at the customs noted that other problems like a shortage of employees may be causing the delay.

Last year, the new Terminal 4 was launched and is currently handling all flights of Kuwait Airways except

the New York route. But transferring all these flights there didn't bring any relief to the old terminal. Even now, when it's not the high season yet, passengers are still suffering from delays to collect their luggage. After a recent flight, passengers had to wait for more than an hour for their luggage, although the plane was not completely full.

The fact is that everyone is pointing the blame at someone else but at the end of the day it's the passengers who suffer. We are all stuck waiting endlessly and I won't even discuss how bad it might be this coming summer. Something should be done and quick to set realistic time requirements for the delivery of luggage to traveling passengers. Inspections should be conducted and time limits set for all parties involved and they should be either required to meet these requirements or face fines.

The authorities in charge should do something to resolve this issue. This great inconvenience is spoiling the reputation of Kuwait's airport among tourists. For residents, it kills the happiness and satisfaction of the entire travel experience after returning to Kuwait. So please do something to fix this problem.