

Local

Kuwaitis return from Lebanon in embassy-arranged chartered flights

Kuwait's Embassy urges citizens to pause Beirut travels

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The first group of Kuwaiti citizens fleeing the accelerated public protests in Lebanon arrived in Kuwait yesterday afternoon after Kuwait's Embassy in Beirut urged all Kuwaitis to contact it in emergency cases to arrange their airborne evacuation if needed.

In this regard, Dean of Arab Diplomats and Kuwait's Ambassador to Lebanon Abdul Aal Al-Qenaie said that as soon as the situations started developing in Beirut, he received direct instructions from Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to exert all possible efforts in order to ensure the safety of Kuwaiti citizens in Lebanon and secure their safe return as soon as possible.

Qenaie added that a special crisis management cell was immediately formed to work 24/7 at the embassy quarters and Rafiq Al-Hariri international Airport to arrange their flights out. "Evacuated citizens were instructed to gather at the embassy and then escorted by Lebanese military and security forces to the

airport," he explained, noting that Kuwait Airways had chartered additional flights to evacuate citizens in Lebanon.

The Kuwaiti Embassy in Lebanon had called on citizens who are determined to go to Lebanon to wait because of the demonstrations and conflicts there. Citizens in Lebanon must take utmost care and stay away from demonstration areas, the embassy said in a press statement on Friday, urging them to follow security guidelines and contact the embassy on the number 00961071171441, in case of emergency assistance.

Most of Lebanon's cities and regions witnessed protests, particularly in Aakkar and Tripoli. Lebanon's National News Agency and television footage confirmed that the protesters barricaded major roads with burning tires. Roads were blocked at the south and in the cities of Sidon, Tyre, Nabatieh, Bint Jbeil, Marjayoun and Hasbaya. Protests have halted most public and private institutions, warning schools and universities to close and banks to shut down. Demonstrators condemned the government measures, especially with regard to new taxes and fees.



BEIRUT: Lebanese protesters rally in downtown Beirut yesterday as hundreds continued to gather for a third day of demonstrations against tax increases and official corruption. — AFP

Kuwaitis in private sector rising steadily

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The number of Kuwaitis working in the private sector increased to 73,810 so far this year, with an increase of 3,142 employees compared to 2018, according to official statistics. Public Authority for Manpower statistics show that the number of Kuwaitis employed by private companies is on a gradual rise, as it had reached 70,668 in

2018, 69,508 in 2017 and 66,714 in 2016.

Meanwhile, the authority explained that the decision on allocating certain ratios of private sector job opportunities for citizens had effectively contributed in increasing those numbers over the past three years. The authority added that great efforts were being exerted to guide new graduates to various job opportunities in private companies, through exhibitions and specialized workshops designed to change citizens' attitudes towards working for the private sector.

In other news, a number of lawmakers are currently trying to talk MP Riyadh Al-Adasani out of grilling Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah before the next parliamentary term commences,

and to postpone his motion until after the inaugural session on October 29, sources said. MP Adasani had declared intentions to grill both the interior and the finance ministers before he found out that MP Mohammed Hayef had already filed a grilling motion against Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, which means that it would likely be discussed on the inaugural session. In case Adasani files his motion as well, both motions against Hajraf would be merged and discussed together, which might make them lose significance, the sources speculated. Further, the sources noted that Adasani is currently considering postponing his motion if the minister remains in office, though he had expressed fears that a limited reshuffle would be done to exclude Hajraf

from the cabinet afterwards.

Separately, MP Bader Al-Mulla urged Minister of Electricity and Water and Minister of Oil Khaled Al-Fadhel to investigate the losses of the Vietnam refinery, and warned of what he described as 'consequences worse than those of the Dow Chemical case.' Mulla explained that, according to a technical report from the oil sector and State Audit Bureau reports, the gas enhancement plant costs KD 444 million despite its unprofitability. "Grilling minister Khaled Al-Fadhel is inevitable," he stressed. Further, Mulla said that he has no problem in taking over the oil ministry portfolio himself. "I have previously said I am not keen on a ministerial position, but I am now in order to reform the oil sector," he stressed.

local spotlight

Lebanon, Kuwaitis' home away from home

By Muna Al-Fuzal



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When I was a little girl, they taught me that my country Kuwait and Lebanon are similar in many ways, especially when my family and I used to spend our summer vacations there, until the long and bloody civil war appeared and took away many beautiful things with it. Lebanon has been subject to injustice and difficult conditions for many years, yet it managed to unite and defy the circumstances. But, new protests swept Lebanon last weekend.

Thousands of Lebanese people demonstrated in a number of cities against taxes the government announced it would impose next year. Demonstrators gathered in downtown Beirut demanding the downfall of the government. The protests focused on criticism of the government's management of the economy and the way it seeks to increase national income in the 2020 budget. Protesters burned tires and blocked roads around the country, and security forces used tear gas to disperse them.

On Friday evening, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri gave his cabinet partners 72 hours to come up with a way out of the economic crisis in Lebanon. So, after long hours of angry protests, there was a cautious calm and anticipation waiting for what would be the appropriate solution from the government to fix the situation.

It has been said that the government's pursuit of new taxes was not the only reason that fueled public anger, but the cost of living also had provoked the anger of the public. After two days of tension, life has returned to normal on most roads in downtown Beirut.

Now, I think that the problem is not with the occurrence of demonstrations, but the dilemma here is that the confidence of the Arab citizen in the government's performance is often nonexistent or low, which is not surprising because citizens judge things by what they see and deal with on a daily basis. For example, when there is an increase in prices of goods, it is usually not felt by high-income people or government officials, but the first victim is the citizen and expatriate because they bear the burden of increasing prices. So it is natural that the Lebanese people would demand their government to intervene and find a solution.

Kuwaiti-Lebanese relations are not just official ties between friendly countries, but are old, historical ones. Many Kuwaitis have real estate in Lebanon and consider Lebanon their second home. Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development is active in supporting the Lebanese economy and its development projects. This reflects the depth of relationship between the two countries.

Lebanon today is in a state of calm and anticipation of a government response that satisfies the public, because I believe that the continuation of demonstrations will not be in favor of any group. The Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Lebanon called on citizens who are intending to go to Lebanon to wait because of the demonstrations there, calling on those who are there to be careful and stay away from the gathering areas and of course. This warning is normal under the current circumstances. I believe that everyone is hoping for a good end.

Mubarak Hospital concludes workshop on urology

By Abdullatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Urology Department at Mubarak Hospital concluded a four-day urology workshop under the supervision of its head of urology unit Dr Adel Al-Hunayan, in the presence of professor Ahmad Al-Shal of Mansourah Kidney Transplant International Center.

The workshop included several lectures on the recent techniques for benign prostate tumor removal using laser laparoscopy, while seven surgeries were done over three days, and all patients made full recovery one day after the procedure.

Urologists from various urology surgery units in health ministry and military hospitals participated in the workshop, which is considered one of the activities that directly contribute to the continued educational training of doctors in various micro surgeries.

Dr Hunayan expressed appreciation for the major role of the health ministry by inviting specialized experts, supervising workshops and making available tools necessary to perform such surgeries while making this service available in various health ministry hospitals.



Statistics show that Mubarak Al-Kabeer outpatient clinics received nearly 6,808 patients in morning and 2,492 evenings shifts. Mubarak Hospital has 13 weekly clinics in the mornings and five in the evenings, and

waiting time was reduced to one week at the most. Meanwhile, 900 scheduled surgeries were made last year, apart from emergency procedures which are made on a daily basis.

Kuwait Food Bank quenches workers' thirst

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Food Bank, in coordination with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, launched yesterday a project aimed at quenching the thirst of laborers working under direct sun exposure.

Director of Kuwait Food Bank Salem Al-Hamar said that the project involved trucks transporting cold water to workers in various congregation points in the country. He indicated that the project was benefiting

a wide sector of workers in need of quenching their thirst, adding that the people of Kuwait were welcomed to donate money or help in providing supplies to the food bank to continue its mission. —KUNA



22 kg marijuana found with passenger

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Airport customs officers arrested a passenger who tried to smuggle 22 kilograms of marijuana into the country. This comes on the heels of another attempt to smuggle 300 kg of the banned substance by boat, which was recently prevented by customs. Kuwait Customs Department Director Jamal Al-Jalawi gave instructions to send the suspect, an African national, to concerned authorities.

Ministry acts against lawbreakers

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry said yesterday its department of combating money laundering and funding of terrorism took action against companies that breached Law 106/2013, in September. The ministry said in a press release that the 56 measures included warning notifications to 17 real-estate companies, four jewelry companies, two money exchange agencies and one dealing in insurance. Moreover, 19 real-estate companies, four jewelry ones, five money exchange companies and four insurance ones were compelled to comply with the relevant laws. The division completed certain measures before other units at the ministry issued permits to 112 applicants for launching enterprise, including 80 property companies, one exchange agency, 26 jewelry companies and five insurance ones. — KUNA