

## Local

# New traffic amendment allows Kuwaitis to work as driving trainers

## Opportunity for retired and unemployed citizens, ministry official says

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** A new amendment to the traffic law 81/1976 was recently issued by ministry decree no. 1067/2020 and published in the Kuwait Al-Youm official gazette. The amendment included new changes related to driving schools and instructors.

The amendment allows Kuwaitis to become driving trainers after obtaining a license and fulfilling certain conditions. "One of the conditions is that they should work full-time for this job. This addition to the law was made for retired or unemployed Kuwaitis to benefit from this opportunity," Brig Gen Tawheed Al-Kandari, Director General of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior, told Kuwait Times.

This condition was not mentioned for non-Kuwait trainers, as they are already employees of driving schools and their work permits and residen-

cies are tied to their companies. "So if a driving instructor is caught by police providing training, and his residency is on a different institution other than the driving school, he will be sanctioned," Kandari said.

Kuwaiti trainers also have to undergo annual medical checkups. "Non-Kuwaiti trainers working at driving schools have to undergo medical tests every two years or during their license renewal, so it's not mentioned in this amendment. The medical checkup is essential, as trainers may pose a danger to trainees in case of emergencies such as hypoglycemia or others," stressed Kandari. The direc-

tor general of the traffic department is authorized to withdraw the training license in case of violation of any of the conditions. "There should be serious reasons for withdrawing the license, such as ophthalmological problems, committing accidents repeatedly, and so on," he explained.



**'Temporary' permit to train family members**



The amendment also allows issuing a temporary driving training permit to Kuwaitis who wish to train a family member. "This temporary permit is not limited to a certain timeframe, but to one person of the family. So the trainer can't train other members with this permit. Also, the trainer should meet the condi-

tions for training, such as having a vehicle with two steering wheels if they want to drive on roads. But if they are only training in a yard, then it's OK. The trainer should also have a valid driving license issued at least five years earlier," concluded Kandari.



**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah is seen during the tour. — KUNA photos

## Foreign Minister visits Consular Affairs Department

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, accompanied by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador

Khaled Al-Jarallah, visited yesterday the Consular Affairs Department. During the visit, Sheikh Ahmad said that the consular department represents the direct link between the foreign ministry and citizens, praising its cadres' efforts, especially during the last period in light of the outbreak of COVID-19. Furthermore, he praised all the facilities provided by the department, calling on those in charge to take the initiative to develop work, especially with regard to digital transformation and the use of modern technologies. — KUNA

## Embassy in Rome celebrates Kuwaiti officers' graduation

**ROME:** Kuwait's embassy in Rome hosted yesterday a ceremony to celebrate the graduation of four Kuwaiti officers from the Italian Marine Academy to join the Kuwaiti Army. During the ceremony attended by Kuwait Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah, the four officers swore an oath of loyalty and redemption before the military attache in Italy Brigadier General Engineer Muhammad Al-Fadhli, who read an Amiri Decree and appointed them to the rank of lieutenant in the Kuwaiti naval force, the embassy said in a statement.

The Ambassador congratulated the officers on their success in acquiring their knowledge from one of the oldest naval academies in the world, praising them for being a good example for Kuwaiti youth in dedication and ambition, wishing them the best in their military and professional career.

He stressed the importance of scholarships at prestigious universities and institutes such as the Livorno Academy, for their contribution to refining scientific and practical skills. The four officers successfully completed a four-year specialized course in marine military science at the Italian Naval



**ROME:** A Kuwaiti Army officer is decorated during a ceremony at Kuwait's embassy in Italy. — KUNA

Academy in Livorno, with other colleagues from Italy, Europe and a number of countries around the world. The Academy was established in 1881, and was rebuilt upon the end of World War II after being completely destroyed. — KUNA

## Record German deaths, US cases...

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Germany, which dealt with its first wave relatively smoothly, closed non-essential shops and schools yesterday as its daily death toll soared to 952. The country has struggled to contain a surge in recent months and has joined calls for the European Union's health regulator to approve the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine "before Christmas".

China is also looking to stock up on the Pfizer vaccine with one company agreeing to buy 100 million doses subject to local approval - the country is mixing its vaccination strategy between locally developed drugs and imported ones. Britain's government said yesterday it had delivered the first jabs to 137,000 people, but high infection numbers still forced London to join large parts of England under tough restrictions yesterday.

Pubs, bars, restaurants and other hospitality sites will close, as will theatres and other entertainment venues. "The hospitality business needs this week, and it's devastating. It is devastatingly awful," said Lesley Lewis, owner of The French House, a London pub. "But if this is what it takes to save lives, that's what we have to do." Denmark, France, Turkey and the Netherlands have all tightened their coronavirus restrictions and Spain's prime minister expressed alarm at rising infection numbers there.

Hopes for an end to the pandemic have been boosted by positive assessments of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. The US Food and Drug

Administration on Tuesday issued an upbeat briefing about Moderna ahead of a meeting of experts on whether to grant it emergency approval. The United States has already started using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and on Tuesday the FDA also approved the country's first rapid at-home test for COVID-19.

The United States remains the hardest-hit nation, setting a record for new daily infections on Tuesday with more than 248,000 cases. The Washington National Cathedral rang its bells 300 times Tuesday in memory of the more than 300,000 people who have lost their lives to coronavirus.

In California, officials ordered 5,000 extra body bags as Los Angeles was left with fewer than 100 available intensive care beds for a county of 10 million people. "I don't want... to scare folks," said Governor Gavin Newsom. "But this is a deadly disease, and we need to be mindful of where we are." President-elect Joe Biden has said he will be vaccinated in public.

Worldwide, more than 73.4 million infections and over 1.6 million deaths have been recorded so far. But with wealthy nations reserving more than half of next year's potential doses, there are fears the poorer parts of the world will be left behind. Even if the drug makers all produce effective, safe vaccines and meet their maximum global manufacturing targets, a study published yesterday by Johns Hopkins University warned that "at least a fifth of the world's population would not have access" until 2022. Indonesian President Joko Widodo said yesterday he would be the first person in the country to be vaccinated for COVID-19, and said the jabs would be free for everyone. — AFP

## Al-Sadu, couscous listed as intangible...

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Across the region, couscous - also known as seksu, kusksi and kseksu - is as elementary as rice or noodles are to Asian cuisine, the staple without which no meal is complete. Arabic dictionaries have documented "kuskusi" since the 19th century, though it is known to be far older. The regional pride in couscous found full expression in the countries' joint nomination for the "knowledge, knowhow and practices pertaining to the production and consumption of couscous".

"Women and men, young and old, sedentary and nomadic, from rural or urban communities or from

immigrant backgrounds all identify with this element," it gushed. "The ethos of couscous is the expression of community life."

Couscous is prepared from wheat or barley, and sometimes from maize, millet or sorghum, which is ground into semolina. This is rolled into pellets which are sieved and later soaked and repeatedly steamed. "Women, in particular, play a fundamental role in the preparation and consumption of the dish, and in practicing and preserving the related symbolic value systems," said the paper.

The girls learn not only the techniques, but also "the songs, gestures, characteristic oral expressions and ritual organization" that go along with the process. Algerian chef Rabah Ourrad said about making his couscous dishes: "I didn't learn this in a cooking school. It's decades of observing the mother, the sisters and all North African women who are experts in this." — Agencies

## Baghdad booze attacks: Turf war...

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"They're targeting us," Andre told AFP, as his brother stacked new bottles of whisky on restored shelves. He blamed security forces for negligence, saying a police patrol that had been deployed nearby left its post for hours, which gave the attackers a window of opportunity. "Why doesn't the government arrest them?" Andre asked angrily, saying he had even provided authorities with the license plate number of the attacking vehicle from their CCTV footage. The attackers had "time to place the explosives, take pictures before and after and publish them on Facebook", he said. "You really can't pursue these guys?"

Another business owner, speaking on condition of anonymity in fear of reprisal attacks, said it was an attempt to crush the shrinking community of Iraqi secularists. "We are all that's left of a liberal lifestyle. There are attempts to kill this ancient side of Baghdad - if they win, Baghdad will have lost its liberal side," he said.

In recent weeks, an array of Islamist groups have ramped up their rhetoric against Baghdad's liquor stores and other establishments that they insist are violating religious edicts against drinking and other trades considered sinful. One such group, "Rubu Allah" or "God's gang," claimed responsibility for raiding a massage parlor in the heart of Baghdad and physically assaulting the women inside. Another group calling itself "Ahl al-Qura" or "The Village People", said it had bombed an underground nightclub.

Despite being formed earlier this year, these groups are already well-known for claiming rocket

attacks on the US embassy in Baghdad, attacking a TV station broadcasting cheerful music during a religious holiday and setting the offices of a Kurdish party alight. While the groups claim to have no formal political link, those protesting or storming establishment have carried the flag of the Hashed al-Shaabi, a state-sponsored network of armed groups, many of which have close ties to Iran.

Others say it's money, not morality, that is behind the recent spate of attacks on liquor stores. For years, their owners have paid protection fees to armed Islamist groups to guarantee they can keep selling. "The top dogs of these groups don't get involved in the extortion but smaller figures are individually extracting protection money," said a senior member of one such group. He even accused state security forces of being involved, asking for thousands of dollars a month to protect a shop.

Some Christian and Yazidi shop-owners pointed to new competition from Muslim businessmen seeking a stake in the spirits market without legal licenses. Those newer establishments, the minority store-owners pointed out to AFP, had not been targeted by bomb attacks. Iraqi federal police and even army troops have deployed in force along the main streets hosting the liquor stores, including the riverside road of Abu Nuwas.

Their presence is meant to reassure shop-owners, but they have also been shutting stores, nightclubs and massage parlors that don't have operating licenses. At least 91 unlicensed alcohol shops and nightclubs have been shut in the last two months, a statement by Iraq's intelligence agencies said. Businessmen in the neighborhood fear the wave of attacks could take Baghdad back to bloodier days, when multiple roadside bombs would rock the capital each day. "I live in a state of constant fear," said Saad Mohammad, who operates a grocery store near several liquor shops. "Every minute, I think that there will be an explosion that will destroy everything." — AFP



**MOSCOW:** A man wearing a facemask walks in front of light sculptures of polar bears set up for the upcoming New Year and Christmas holidays yesterday. Russia confirmed 26,509 new COVID-19 cases yesterday. — AFP