

Flexible hours to stay after Ramadan

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Council is meeting Wednesday to discuss what flexible working hours for the public sector will look like outside Ramadan, sources told Kuwait Times.

Talks of a flexible working system have been on the table since at least December 2022, when the council of ministers reportedly asked ministries to prepare studies looking at the feasibility of applying such a system. The government had justified the system by claiming it would address the traffic jams suffocating the country during rush hour.

The system went live for a trial period in Ramadan, with the Civil Service Commission deciding that the daily hours for government sector employees would come to a total of four and a half hours during the month. The commission provided a list of start and end times for government entities to choose from based on their nature of work: 9:45 am till 2:15 pm, 10:15 am till 2:45 pm and 10:45 am till 3:15 pm.

Despite initial enthusiasm for the system, it was met with public ire when implemented, with many people calling it "pointless". Traffic jams showed no signs of easing, meaning that the system didn't serve its intended purpose.

Officials seem to be looking to learn from the Ramadan experience. Sources told Kuwait Times that several senior officials with the interior ministry and the Civil Service Commission met earlier this week to determine what could be done to mitigate the cracks in the system revealed by the trial period.

The Civil Service Commission will make the new changes public after they're agreed upon, said sources.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: The crescent moon rises behind clouds during sunrise above Kuwait City, on April 17, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Reconnecting with oneself and reality through art

By Ghadeer Ghoulm

KUWAIT: In this era, digital devices occupy a huge part of people's lives. Overusing digital devices overwhelms humans' minds with an artificial reality that can have a serious impact on their mental wellness. To protect oneself from the negative impact of digital devices, many people believe art can be a source of cleansing one's mind, as it provides a chance to focus on one's connection to natural reality. To further understand the significance of art to escape digital devices' impact on individuals' mental health, Kuwait Times interviewed art teacher Abdulaziz Al-Shammar and art instructor Maha Al-Otaibi.

Shammar said art is necessary for people in this digital era because it can clear their head, as it fosters feelings of relaxation and creativity rather than putting their minds and skills under numbness of using digital devices and exposure to artificial realities. Otaibi concurred, saying the importance of art in people's lives is that it is not just a source of entertainment — it is a source of connecting to oneself and the real world.

Art gives individuals a chance of expressing themselves. For instance, outdoor art is an example of art that pushes individuals to go out in the open air and use their natural senses to connect with the nature around them and reflect what they see on the canvas, which enhances the quality of mindfulness. She said cleansing one's mind happens always when the mind is present in the moment, as this digital era creates an urge to know everything that is happening in faraway places, besides unreal worlds.

When the mind is not present in the moment or place it actually is in, the mind loses its real vision. Thus,



even if a person can see, they will not see the surrounding beauty and details. A person loses the moment while sinking in unreal moments inside the screen, because screens can take one everywhere except reality. Art, regardless of what kind of art one is working on, is considered one of the best ways to cleanse one's mind and keep it present with all the human senses, even if one's imagination is going somewhere else, and makes you feel your humanity.

Shammar shed light on arts' importance on students' performance at school. He said art lets their creativity flow and makes them imaginative, which can help students refocus their attention, build memory, enhance

problem-solving skills and boost productivity. This makes art as important as any other subject that students study at school.

Moreover, Otaibi compared between displaying artwork through screens and in real life. She said displaying artwork in actuality is much better than displaying it behind a screen. She loves to see the details of the artwork with her eyes and feel the real texture. At the same time, Otaibi said she does not deny the role that media platforms play in displaying art in an easy and quick way; however this cannot show the real beauty of the artwork as much as seeing it in reality does.



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Manarat Ghadeera holds iftar banquet

KUWAIT: The Manarat Ghadeera volunteer team held its first iftar banquet Monday for families in need. The initiative was meant to bring together volunteers and families and foster love between them. Sixty families, including 450 parents and children, attended the banquet. Volunteers distributed girgian bags to the children in a joyous atmosphere. — KUNA



Cybercrime warns of fake payment links

KUWAIT: The Cybercrime Combat Administration warned on Monday citizens and residents to be careful of dealing with fake bank links, in order to avoid being victimized by and swindling operations. The links are used by swindlers to steal people's banking information. The unit urged people to report the situation to the concerned authorities.

Acting Head of Supporting Services Ammar Al-Sarraf said: "A fake bank link is a page that is very similar to well-known payment pages, but it

does not end with the "kw" domain. The administration has provided a lot of awareness and guidance to the public as well as government and private institutions about dealing with fake commercial accounts through social media platforms."

He indicated that there is a specialized team to combat, calling on everyone to inform the Cybercrime Department via the WhatsApp service (97283939). He stressed that the department can provide a lot of technical assistance, including the recovery of "hacked accounts".

"I warn everyone against dealing with fake websites and ads on social networking sites whose owners promote the sale of products at unrealistic prices or through discounts, which makes them victims of fraud in the hope of quick profit," Saffar said.