

## LOCAL

# MoH asks CSC to create 2,140 job vacancies for expatriates

## Bid to cover manpower needs for 13 projects

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 27: The Ministry of Health has asked the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to create 2,140 job vacancies for non-Kuwaitis in order to cover manpower needs for 13 new projects and expansion works which will start soon, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.**

Sources disclosed the required functional degrees for non-Kuwaitis include 600 doctors who will be assigned at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital; 1,540 nursing jobs and 240 technicians. Sources said 1,540 job openings will be distributed to various facilities and new projects that are aimed at providing the best services to patients.

The daily obtained a copy of the report released by the ministry recently, indicating 13 construction projects will be launched soon including seven health centers, Amiri

and Jaber Al-Ahmad hospitals.

Meanwhile, in response to a parliamentary question submitted by MP Osama Al-Shahin, Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-Rasheedi revealed that there are about 1,000 non-Kuwaiti employees at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) who receive monthly salaries of KD 1,000, reports Annahar daily.

He explained that these expatriate employees work as lawyers, consultants, administrative employees and engineers. Besides salaries, they receive benefits in the form of plane tickets for their families, housing allowance, health insurance, private car and allowance for meeting educational expenses.

These expatriate employees are from countries such as Pakistan, Venezuela, Yemen, Oman, Turkey, Syria, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Palestine, Mexico, Lebanon, Jordan, Colombia, Britain, Bolivia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Australia, America, Algeria, Ecuador, South Africa and France. There are also 570 Indians, 102 Egyptians, 40

Canadians and 35 Filipinos. Most of their monthly salaries are around KD 1,000 and above.

Al-Rasheedi affirmed that all secretarial positions are occupied by Kuwaiti citizens, adding that KOC does not have any contracts for assistant positions.

He revealed that there are 33 expatriate employees including 12 executive secretaries at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and they receive salaries of around KD 1,000 per month.

In this regard, a source from the oil sector said Al-Rasheedi's response was not sufficient, as he did not mention the job scale of expatriate employees.

He clarified that they receive similar salaries to Kuwaiti employees as well as benefits, indicating that there are larger number of expatriate employees at KOC and KPC whose monthly salaries range from KD 700 to KD 1,000.

The source revealed that the sum of the salaries of expatriate employees at KOC and KPC is about KD 1,600,000 per month, which comes to about KD 20 million per year.

## Philippine legislators

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Many have relatives back home who depend on remittances to survive, and some say they are forced to choose between their own well-being and that of their children.

Luzviminda has worked in a hair salon in central Kuwait City since 2013 to support her five children, who live with her mother in the Philippines.

Despite being rattled by news of her compatriot's murder, the 40-year-old told AFP going home was not an option.

"I need the money," she said as she strolled through a park in the city.

"My eldest son started university this year to study business administration. It's expensive, and there's no way I would have been able to afford it if I had stayed in my country."

Demafelis' body was discovered in abandoned flat in Kuwait, bearing what officials said appeared to be

signs of torture.

A Lebanese-Syrian couple suspected of the young maid's murder were arrested last week in the Syrian capital Damascus, after an Interpol manhunt.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte responded to the murder by accusing Arab employers of raping and starving their Filipina workers, and announced a ban on the country's citizens heading to Kuwait for work.

Duterte also launched a repatriation plan under which some 1,700 workers have already returned home, according to the Philippines government.

Kuwait, whose image was dealt a serious blow, offered an amnesty to illegal workers wanting to fly back home.

But Human Rights Watch has warned the new Philippine ban would likely trigger a wave of unregulated labour migration, exposing thousands to an even greater risk of abuse.

Valued for their fluency in English, over two million Philippine citi-

zens are employed across the Gulf.

While the murder rocked the Philippine community in Kuwait, many say they want to remain in the country.

"I was truly afraid — but actually because I want to stay here to make sure my children graduate from school," said Luzviminda, who asked that her family name be withheld.

"But if the government asks me to leave, I will have no choice but to comply."

Like many others, her fate — and that of her children — now lies in the hands of diplomats, as the crisis between the two countries deepens.

Some plan to lobby the Philippines' Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to lift Duterte's ban, at least for skilled workers whose status in Kuwait is not tied to a single family under the "kafala" (sponsorship) system prevalent in the Middle East.

"There are a lot of opportunities for the Filipinos" in Kuwait, said Anna Bunda, who works with a recruitment agency.

"I hope that the government will hear us."

Gulf countries have long drawn harsh criticism for their treatment of labourers and maids.

Attorney Mohammed Al-Humaidi, director of the Kuwait Society for Human Rights, said his group regularly receives calls for help from Filipinas with abusive employers.

"While we have a deal with a legal bureau which represents workers and maids in court, the unfortunate reality is that many calls for help do not even reach us," he said.

The head of Kuwait's parliamentary Human Rights Committee, Adil Damkhi, says the judiciary does not discriminate when it comes to crimes in Kuwait.

"There have been several horrific incidents on both sides, but crimes committed by Kuwaitis are more prominent in the media than crimes committed by the maids," Damkhi said.

He called the Demafelis murder "a heinous crime".

"The suspects have been arrested and will be tried, just as any Kuwaiti who attack their workers will be punished," he said.

And while rights groups have criticised Gulf countries for failing to protect migrants, 56-year-old Rose, a housekeeper in Kuwait since 1997, said the benefits outweigh the risks.

"I worked for five families, the last of which was an American family. They treat me well," she told AFP.

"I cook what I want, and I exercise every morning on my own — and I help my family back home to cope with the burdens of life."

## MP weighs

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Al-Shaheen presented a bill on granting full amnesty to those who committed crimes related to the Parliament building storming case on Nov 16-17, 2011.

Article Two of the bill states that all conviction rulings in relation to the Parliament storming case shall be cancelled, whether the rulings are preliminary or final or issued by the Court of Cassation. Such rulings shall not be registered in the criminal case papers of the accused.

Article Three states that all convicted persons shall be released immediately upon ratification of the bill, whether they are imprisoned through a preliminary or final judgment or ruling of the Court of Cassation.

The bill also mandates all courts dealing with the aforementioned cases to issue a ruling to dismiss such cases.

## Al Seyassah attends:

As the Court of Cassation prepares to resume hearing on the storming of the National Assembly March 4; five lawmakers have taken a controversial step in submitting a draft bill to grant all convicts comprehensive amnesty, and requested the bill to be treated as a matter of urgency.

Signatories to the bill include MPs Dr Adel Al-Damkhi, Omar Al-Tabtabaei, Ali Al-Deqbasi, Al-Humaidi Al-Subai'e and Osama Al-Shaheen.

The bill requested comprehensive amnesty for crimes committed on Nov 16 and 17, 2011 in relation to the storming of National Assembly premises.

They want all verdicts (initial or final) issued against the suspects to be nullified—whether in their presence or in absentia, including the judgment of the Court of Cassation. They also want the case to be treated as if nothing ever happened in that regard, such that it will not be put in their criminal record.

The third article states that "All convicts should be released immediately after enactment of the bill, whether they are convicted through an interlocutory, final judgment or Court of Cassation. It should also cover those who are in protective detention or detained for investigation. The Public Prosecution Department should withhold all petitions and cases under investigation and cancel all procedures taken in that regard."

## UN calls

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reported eight people injured by rebel shelling on Tuesday. Damascus and Moscow say the campaign in eastern Ghouta is needed to halt such shelling.

Even before the latest bombardment of the besieged area began, there was growing international alarm over humanitarian conditions in the eastern Ghouta because of shortages of food, medicine and other essentials.

The multi-sided Syrian war has killed hundreds of thousands of people and driven half of the pre-war population of 23 million from their homes. Fighting has escalated on several fronts this year, with the collapse of Islamic State giving rise to conflict between other Syrian and foreign parties.

As Assad has pressed the offensive against eastern Ghouta, Turkey has launched an incursion against Kurdish fighters in the northwestern Afrin region. Tensions have also flared between Iran and Israel, alarmed by Tehran's influence in Syria. Syrian air defences shot down an Israeli F-16 earlier this month as it returned from a bombing raid on Iran-backed positions in Syria.

## Expel jihadists

The main rebel groups in Syria's

eastern Ghouta said Tuesday they would be willing to expel jihadist fighters from the enclave as soon as a UN ceasefire takes effect.

The main forces are Islamist groups — Jaish al-Islam, Faylaq al-Rahman and Ahrar al-Sham — who on Tuesday addressed a letter to the United Nations which was seen by AFP.

They declared their "complete commitment to deport" jihadist fighters from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a group made up mostly of fighters from al-Qaeda's ex-affiliate al-Nusra Front.

The letter said such an evacuation, which has been discussed previously but never yielded any result, would take 15 days and start when a UN truce takes effect.

The Security Council on Saturday voted a resolution calling for a 30-day humanitarian truce in Syria, mostly aimed at stopping one of the bloodiest episodes in the country's seven-year-old conflict.

The signatories said they wanted any evacuations to be conducted under the control and supervision of a UN-led coordination mechanism.

The Syrian government lost control of eastern Ghouta, which lies just east of the capital Damascus, in 2012, and have besieged it almost ever since.

The main rebel groups have so far rejected Russian-brokered offers to evacuate civilians of any fighters of their own.

## Iran touts

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The investigating team had "made its own judgement even before travelling to Iran and hearing what we had to say. It was clear how others had influenced the report," he said, without specifying who was to blame.

After vetoing the British resolution on Monday, the Security Council unanimously adopted a Russian-drafted measure that extended the sanctions regime against Yemen for one year, but made no mention of Iran.

"We will definitely continue our policies in the region in the way that serves our national interests," Araghchi said.

Iran supports the Houthi rebels who seized control of much of Yemen including the capital Sanaa in 2014, but denies direct military involvement.

Regional rival Saudi Arabia has been bombing Yemen almost daily since 2015 in an attempt to dislodge the rebels.

The United States threatened unilateral action against Iran on Monday after the Russian veto.

"If Russia is going to continue to cover for Iran then the US and our partners need to take action on our own. If we're not going to get action on the council then we have to take our own actions," US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley told reporters during a visit to Honduran capital Tegucigalpa.

Haley did not specify what kind of action could be taken.

The Russian veto was a defeat for the United States, which has been lobbying for months for Iran to be held accountable at the United Nations, while at the same time threatening to quit a 2015 deal among world powers to curb Iran's nuclear program if "disastrous flaws" are not fixed.

"Obviously this vote isn't going to make the decision on the nuclear deal. What I can say is it doesn't help," Haley said. "That just validated a lot of what we already thought which is Iran gets a pass for its dangerous and illegal behavior."

President Donald Trump warned European allies last month that they had to commit by mid-May to work with Washington to improve the pact. Britain drafted the failed UN resolution in consultation with the United States and France.

The initial draft text — to renew the annual mandate of a targeted sanctions regime related to Yemen — wanted to include a condemnation of Iran for violating an arms embargo on Houthi leaders and include a council commitment to take action over it.

In a bid to win Moscow's support, the draft that was vetoed had been weakened to simply "note with particular concern" the violation, which was reported to the council by UN experts monitoring sanctions. It received 11 votes in favor, two against — Russia and Bolivia — while China and Kazakhstan abstained.

Russia has questioned the findings of the UN experts report, which was submitted to the council in January.

A council resolution needs nine votes in favor and no vetoes by Russia, China, the United States, France or Britain to pass. Following the failed vote on the British draft, the council adopted a rival Russian draft that did not mention Iran and simply renewed the UN sanctions regime on Yemen for a year.

A senior Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged that the international community — and in particular, the Europeans — needed to do more to voice their concerns about Iran's behavior.

"We don't have any illusions with regard to Iran's policy towards Israel, Iran's role in the region ... and also what they do in terms of constructing ballistic missiles," the diplomat said. "What we're trying, and have to do ... is to actually make these points even clearer than in the past."

Meanwhile, volunteer doctors are offering free medical services for a week at a clinic in the Yemeni capital Sanaa to treat people impoverished by a war which has killed thousands and wrecked the economy.

The initiative, dubbed "Breeze of Hope," is the first by a group of nurses and doctors to conduct electrocardiograms, x-rays and other procedures that Sanaa residents cannot afford.

Yemen has been hit by three years of civil war between the internationally recognised government backed by a Saudi-led military coalition and the Iran-aligned Houthi movement which controls the capital.

Key infrastructure has been bombed by Saudi-led air strikes while imports have been constricted by a near-blockade aimed at cutting off weapons supplies to the Houthis.

Amid a dispute between the government and the Houthis over who should receive public sector salaries and as the local currency has shed much of its value, many employees — including some medical staff — have not received wages in over a year.

## NewsWatch

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named his son, **Prince Mohammed**, as heir to the throne in June, the kingdom has witnessed a string of reform, launched at breakneck speed and aimed at moving Saudi Arabia away from its economic dependence on oil. (AFP)

**BEIRUT:** Lebanese Prime Minister **Saad Hariri** said he has accepted an invitation Monday to visit **Saudi Arabia**, returning for the first time to the kingdom where he announced a shock resignation that he later rescinded.

The Nov 4 resignation and his prolonged stay in Saudi Arabia stirred tensions between **Riyadh** and Beirut, amid suspicions he had been placed under house arrest, until **France** intervened and he returned to **Lebanon** where the announcement was reversed. (AFP)

**PRAGUE:** A Czech court on Tuesday released prominent Syrian Kurdish leader **Saleh Muslim**, wanted by **Turkey** on terror charges, prompting outrage in **Ankara** which said the move showed "support for terrorism".

Turkey on Monday said it had formally asked for the extradition of one of the leading figureheads of the Syrian Kurds, who was detained by Czech police at the weekend at Ankara's request. (AFP)

**ANKARA:** Turkish President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** has come under criticism for telling a small girl dressed in a military uniform that she would be honored if she were "martyred" for **Turkey**.

Erdogan spotted the weeping and-saluting 6-year-old **Amine Tiras** while delivering a speech at his ruling party's congress in the city of **Kahramanmaraş** on Saturday, and had her brought on stage. (AP)

**CAIRO:** Fighting terrorism and terrorist organizations is a task that should be undertaken by all Arab states, the Arab League affirmed on Tuesday.

The affirmation was declared by Ambassador **Fadhel Jawad**, Assistant Secretary General for Legal Affairs, during the 23rd meeting of Arab terrorism experts. (KUNA)

**KANANGA:** Fourteen suspected militiamen and one soldier have been killed in a resurgence of violence in **DR Congo's** troubled **Kasai** region, a local leader said on Tuesday.

"Kamwina Nsapu militiamen arrived in the administrative centre of **Lombelu** (on Monday) and made a surprise attack on an army combat patrol," **Andre Kapiola**, **Lombelu** sector chief in **Kasai Central**, told AFP. (AFP)

**WASHINGTON:** The US Treasury Department has added two individuals and seven organizations in **Africa** and **Asia** connected to Islamic State to its sanctions list for global terrorism, it said on Tuesday.

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said on its website it had added **Abu Musab Al-Barnawi** of **Nigeria** and **Mahad Moalim** of **Somalia**, and seven groups from **Bangladesh**, **Egypt**, the **Philippines**, **Somalia**, **Nigeria** and **Tunisia** to its sanctions list. (RTRS)

**AMMAN:** Officials say **Jordan's** first underwater archaeological survey has detected the outlines of a stone barrier, believed to be part of the centuries-old Red Sea port of **Ayla**, near the modern city of **Aqaba**.

**Ehab Eid**, head of the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan, said Tuesday that the survey spotted an underwater barrier with an L-shape that is about 50 meters long and eight meters wide. (AP)

**DIWANIYAH:** Iraq's federal appeals court on Tuesday ordered the release of an Iraqi-American anti-corruption activist who had been sentenced to six years in jail on defamation charges.

**Bassem Khashan** had been sentenced to two jail terms of three years each earlier this month. (AFP)

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