

MPs say oil sector disregarding promises, giving vague answers

PM urged to pressure ministers to address sports sector

By Ahmed Al-Naqeeb
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KUWAIT CITY, July 29: A number of MPs turned their gaze towards the Ministry of Oil after finding out that parliamentary recommendations and promises are being disregarded while queries are being returned with superficial answers, according to parliamentary sources.

Such is the case with MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei who asked HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak to hold responsible all those proven to have neglected their duties in the oil sector.

Al-Tabtabaei made the statement in a press conference Sunday at the

National Assembly Media Center. He asserted the oil sector is suffering from what he described as "corruption in management." He also stressed the need to address this issue immediately, considering the oil sector is vital for the well-being of the country.

He disclosed that he submitted several parliamentary queries in the past, but unfortunately, he received vague answers or simply "beating around the bush." He cited a question regarding the employment of a lawyer without any capability test and the response was: "It was based on the borrowed employment system, not standard employment."

He pointed out the concerned department did not comply with the regulation that the position in question must be occupied by a qualified and capable individual who must vacate the post once the 'borrowing period' ends. "Regrettably, some people are managing this sector as if it is their own prop-

erty," asserted the MP while revealing that he submitted another query about the chief operating officer position at Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) and the person appointed to the post.

In another development, MP Abdullah Fahad called on HH the Prime Minister to pressure his ministers to address legal issues in the sports sector.

He pointed out the ministers, on numerous occasions, promised to address the issues and lift the suspension on Kuwait's participation in international sports events, and have claimed that the laws of Kuwait is in accordance with the Olympic charter and international sports organizations "but none of this has been realized."

The MP stressed the importance of quickly implementing the contents of the letter sent by the International Olympic Committee; because the longer this issue remains unresolved, the more opportunities for Kuwaiti athletes are wasted.

Kuwait central

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resolution to it without the help and experience of Kuwait. The fact is that two years ago, His Highness and his government hosted 100 days of talks on Yemen and those talks, while they didn't produce peace then, are the defining narrative for the peace that we hope to bring to Yemen in the course of the next month".

Hamad Bin

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for eight years under the pretext that "the road to Al-Quds passes through Karbala at a time it was engrossed with the United States in the 'Contragate' known to everybody.

It was Iran that propelled protests at the Holy Mosque in Makkah while its cells carried out three bombings in the 1980s in the Holy Land, where Allah Almighty prohibits blood spilling. Iran's spies formed sectarian cells in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and prompted the so-called Saudi Hezbollah to bomb Al-Khobar Towers.

Talking about Bahrain is a long story. A former minister of foreign affairs should be privy to incidents in the past 20 years concerning terrorist cells, bombings and assassination attempts which preceded undermining the Bahraini internal security. It was an attempt to invade this Arab nation whose independence and sovereignty Iran does not recognize till date.

Dear former prime minister, "I will remind you if you have forgotten" about what the Iranian spies did in Kuwait starting from the 1983 explosions up to the attempted assassination

of HH the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, hijacking of civilian airplanes, spy cells managed by the Iranian Embassy, what is known as 'Abdally Cell' and weapon storages found in the homes of suspects.

This is the list of some terrorist activities perpetrated by the Mullah regime against GCC countries. We do not have to remind you of Iran's actions in Lebanon where it engaged in killings over the years due to the interference of the Revolutionary Guard. It is the same story in Yemen where its agents, the Houthis, have been perpetrating one of the most brutal crimes against humanity — starving millions of Yemenis. How about Iraq, the beautiful country that the Revolutionary Guard has transformed into an 18th century nation? Iran has starved its people, disconnected electricity and diverted water tributaries. Your Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, you are aware of all the hidden cruelties

perpetrated by sectarian gangsters working for Iran.

Your Excellency, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem, you might have forgotten that the GCC countries have the freedom to take decisions and sovereignty. When the United States and Israel changed their policies, it does not mean our countries are their tails. Countries have the freedom to take decisions, emanating from historical facts that cannot be erased by a stroke of a pen or a handshake. Therefore, the leaders of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman will not seek help for their people from the paper tiger Iran or stand at the doorsteps of Khameini, Rouhani and Sulaimani to kiss their hands and hand over their countries on a platter of weakness.

Your Excellency, the Minister, it is wise and logical to enjoy your wealth and leave everybody to God; because a novice druggist cannot fix the devastation perpetrated by a terrorist.

PAM 'codifies'

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of PAM states that the workplaces for women include hotels, pharmacies, medical laboratories, health care sector, law offices, recreational parks, nurseries for infants and handicapped, aviation companies and institutions, theaters, cinema, television, satellite and radio stations, commercial establishments operating in airports and ports, oil sector and petrochemical industry, companies that have contract with the government for providing 24-hour services such as child, handicapped and elderly care.

The decision also specifies places where women are allowed to work until 12 midnight as follows: banks, restaurants, public welfare associations, recreational parks, law offices, cooperatives, educational institutions, beauty salons for women, tourism offices and airline agents, commercial complexes, and markets except during Ramadan.

PAM has made it mandatory for institutions that need to employ women at night to provide them with security and means of transportation to and from the workplace.

At the same time, PAM has identified 15 industrial activities where the employment of women is prohibited irrespective of their age.

These activities include dye industries, asbestos, chlorine and soda industry, asphalt industry, quarries and factories, slaughterhouses, manufacture and trade of pesticides, furnaces for melting and casting metals, explosives and related works, operating and maintenance of electric motors, manufacture of liquid electric batteries and repairing them, manufacture of organic fertilizers or storage facilities, sandblasting industry and any industry that emits silica dust, heavy work requiring effort such as works related to construction, firefighting and hazardous manual work related to maintenance and drilling of wells of all kinds, and all works that require the circulation or use of lead, benzol, arsenic, phosphorus or any of the substances listed under the category 'occupational diseases'.

On the other hand, PAM prohibits employers from hiring men in establishments which provide services for women, including the display and sale of women's special clothing, beauty salons and sale of their products, and women's health institutions.

PAM stressed that married working women with a baby has the right to have two hours break for breastfeeding as per the regulations, such as submission of a letter in this regard to the employer along with the birth certificate of the baby.

The employer has the right to arrange the breastfeeding times in accordance with the nature of work, and the breastfeeding right is cancelled after two years from the date the baby was born.

The decision also grants a Muslim woman, whose husband died, fully paid leave for four months and 10 days from the date of death (waiting period leave).

The marriage contract and death certificate must be submitted, and the woman should not work for others during the leave period.

Riyadh reassures

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Salman appears to have reined in MBS' "politically reckless approach" because of Jerusalem's importance to Muslims.

"So MBS won't oppose Kushner's 'deal', but neither will he, any longer, do much to encourage its one-sided political simplicities," said

Patrick, lead contributor and editor of "Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation".

Kushner and fellow negotiator Jason Greenblatt have not presented a comprehensive proposal but rather disjointed elements, which one diplomat said "crossed too many red lines".

Instead, they heavily focused on the idea of setting up an economic zone in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula with the adjacent Gaza Strip possibly coming under the control of Cairo, which Arab diplomats described as unacceptable.

In Qatar, Kushner asked Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to pressure the Islamist group Hamas to cede control of Gaza in return for development aid, the diplomats said.

One diplomat briefed on the meeting said Sheikh Tamim just nodded silently.

It was unclear if that signalled an agreement or whether Qatar was offered anything in return.

"The problem is there is no cohesive plan presented to all countries," said the senior Arab diplomat in Riyadh. "Nobody sees what everyone else is being offered."

Kushner, a 37-year-old real estate developer with little experience of international diplomacy or political negotiation, visited Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Israel in June. He did not meet Abbas, who has refused to see Trump's team after the US embassy was moved to Jerusalem.

In an interview at the end of his trip, Kushner said Washington would announce its Middle East peace plan soon, and press on with or without Abbas.

Yet there has been little to suggest any significant progress towards ending the decades-old conflict, which Trump has said would be "the ultimate deal".

"There is no new push. Nothing Kushner presented is acceptable to any of the Arab countries," the Arab diplomat said. "He thinks he is 'I Dream of Genie' with a magic wand to make a new solution to the problem."

A White House official told reporters last week that Trump's envoys were working on the most detailed set of proposals to date for the long-awaited peace proposal, which would include what the administration is calling a robust economic plan, though there is thus far no release date.

Minister fired

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The demonstrations — during which 14 people have been killed in clashes — erupted in the neglected southern province of Basra, home to Iraq's only sea port, before spreading north including to Baghdad.

On Sunday, protesters held sit-ins outside the governor's headquarters in Basra and Samawa, in neighbouring Muthana province, AFP correspondents said.

Power shortages are chronic in Iraq, a country devastated by conflicts including the war against the Islamic State group which held a third of the country before Abadi declared victory over the jihadists in December.

Hours-long electricity cuts are a source of deep discontent among Iraqis, especially during the scorching summer months when demand for air conditioning surges as temperatures soar past 50 degrees Celsius (120 Fahrenheit).

Since the ouster of dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003, Iraq has allocated some \$40 billion (35 billion euros) in state funds to rebuild its power network and meet the needs of a 38-million-strong population, official figures show.

But much of that has been syphoned off by politicians and businessmen in a country listed by Transparency International as the world's 12th-most corrupt.

A government official told AFP on Sunday that Abadi had also ordered investigations launched into fake contracts.

Fahdawi commended the premier's call for investigations and called on ministry staff to cooperate with the probes, one of his advisers said.

Political analyst Hisham al-Hashemi did not expect Fahdawi's sacking to appease the protest movement. For that to happen, he said, "the managers of all ministries should be put on trial".

Since 2003, more than 5,000 so-called "phantom contracts" have been signed in the public sector, according to Iraq's parliament. During the same period, \$228 billion has gone up in smoke due to shell companies, it says.

A lawyer, Tareq al-Maamuri, recently lodged a complaint against Fahdawi and his ministry for failing to provide electricity.

He also demanded prosecutions over alleged "embezzlement of public funds".

Since Saddam's toppling in 2003, successive electricity ministers have been sacked over corruption or forced to quit in the face of angry protests.

One of them fled abroad after he was accused of embezzling \$500 million.

In 2010, one of Fahdawi's predecessors, Karim Wahid, resigned after a wave of protests across central and southern Iraq against draconian power rationing.

Power shortages have forced Iraqis to buy electricity from private entrepreneurs who run generators visible on street corners across the country.

Despite the shortages, electricity consumption has risen since 2003 as Iraqis make more use of household electronic equipment including computers and mobile phones.

Iraq — the second-largest oil producer within the OPEC cartel — sits on some of the world's largest crude reserves, with the oil sector accounting for 89 percent of the state budget.

Officials say the expensive war against IS and a slump in world crude prices have emptied state coffers of the funds desperately needed to rebuild infrastructure.

They also blame Iraqis who they say are not paying their utility bills.

Newswatch

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back down if the United States imposes sanctions in a diplomatic dispute involving an arrested American pastor.

Speaking privately to journalists late Saturday, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan broke his silence on the crisis: "They cannot make Turkey back down with sanctions." (AP)

GAZA CITY: Israel's navy intercepted a ship carrying activists en route to Gaza in the latest attempt to break a blockade on the coastal territory ruled by the Islamic militant group Hamas, the military said Sunday.

It said the passengers were notified they were "violating the legal naval blockade" and that humanitarian aid can be delivered to Gaza in other ways. It said the incident passed "without exceptional events" and that the ship is being taken to an Israeli port. (AP)

JERUSALEM: An Israeli Arab lawmaker resigned on Saturday and branded the parliament "racist" after it passed a controversial new law which declares Israel the nation state of the Jewish people.

The new legislation speaks of Israel as the historic homeland of the Jews and says they have a "unique" right to self-determination there. It also revokes the longstanding status of Arabic as an official language alongside Hebrew. (AFP)

CAIRO: Egypt's president expressed his displeasure over recent online postings urging him to step down because of how he is handling the country's troubled economy, saying he is "upset" over the posts.

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi said in angry, televised remarks on Saturday that the postings were inappropriate and that he has been working hard to pluck Egypt out of its economic crisis. (AP)

RIYADH: A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia said Sunday it had destroyed sites used by Houthi rebels in neighbouring Yemen to launch missiles at the kingdom.

The coalition announced in a statement the "destruction over the past 24 hours of ballistic missile (launch) sites run by the Houthi militias in Saada", a northern Yemeni province bordering Saudi Arabia and controlled by the Houthis. (AFP)

SANAA: The United Nations on Sunday said air raids struck Yemen's Red Sea province of Hodeida for three days, damaging a water plant and placing civilians at "extreme risk".

"On July 26, 27 and 28, air strikes occurred near a reproductive health centre and public laboratory in Hodeida and hit and damaged a sanitation facility in Zabid and a water station, which supplies the majority of the water to Hodeida City," the office of the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen said in a statement.

"These air strikes are putting innocent civilians at extreme risk," the statement said. (AFP)



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