

# No confidence motion dropped as minister resigned

## Municipality to decorate main roads in all six 'governorates'

WhatsApp account opened to receive complaints, suggestions

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Acting Director of Public Relations at Kuwait Municipality Mohammed Al-Mutairi announced that the Municipality is preparing to decorate the country's main roads and fields in all six governorates with the national flag, reports Al-Jaridah daily.**

In a statement to the daily, Al-Mutairi indicated "the municipality in an annual habit plans to decorate Kuwait with flags after HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad raises the flag to mark the start of the national celebrations this month," noting the plans involve public cleaning teams to be stationed in places where the national celebrations will take place. On the other hand, Al-Mutairi revealed that the municipality has

opened a WhatsApp account to communicate with the public and receive complaints and suggestions related to the municipality's actions, in addition to a hotline and other social networking apps and websites. Al-Mutairi mentioned the process includes receiving complaints and suggestions from the public and referring them to the competent department in the municipality to take necessary measures in that regard, adding the step is considered one of the municipality's plans to quickly interact with the public in light of the

use of modern technology.

He stressed the need to inform the municipality on any monitoring operations that are specific to the Municipality of Kuwait and within its mandate; the most important of which are cleanliness and violations related to safety, auditing, follow-up of services and engineering control, calling on citizens and residents to comply in the event of sending a complaint by providing full information related to the name, type of complaint, and location in order to initiate a quick response.

### Don't worry,

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For many years now, several local and international institutions have been chipping in pieces of advice to impose certain taxes and enact laws in that regard. However, instead of working towards that, the lawmakers struggled to increase the rate of state's unproductive economy through citizen-centered laws that are not suitable for the current financial situation. It is one of the strangest things facing countries like Kuwait. It means absence of national responsibility among the concerned officials in legislation, or at least to realize the dangers involved in continuing with the wasteful spending.

We urge the Minister of Finance to continue raising the alarm without fearing the threats that come from the MPs. We also appeal the government to avoid slacking in defending her – at least not in form of striking behind-the-scenes deals with the lawmakers. This is because whenever those people find a loophole, they are capable of exploiting it for elections, just like fire that is never satisfied.

For this reason, the government should block the channels of public-fund exploitation and interest for electoral benefit. The lawmakers should be left to fund their electoral campaigns from

their personal purse rather than the public fund.

We have seen what the hold-and-handcuff-him principle did to the ministers. It paralyzed the country and weakened the executive authority, and the citizens continue to pay heavily for these adventures that increase financial burdens and budget deficit. This is what should not happen to Kuwait.

### WHO recommendations

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He said Kuwait was among the first few countries to obtain the laboratory test to diagnose coronavirus, pointing out it takes three or four hours to get the results. All precautionary procedures are taken to deal with those suspected of infection coming from certain destinations but this does not mean coronavirus exists in Kuwait, he clarified.

He reiterated the Health Ministry is keen on raising public awareness about the disease. He added the Ministry of Awqaf has been asked to allot some time during Friday sermons for warning citizens and expatriates about the danger of spreading rumors about the virus.

He revealed WHO's recommendations highlight the importance of continuous communication

and exchanging information due to the fact that the number of coronavirus cases in China is increasing.

MPs Saleh Ashour, Ali Al-Daqbasi, Muhammad Al-Dallal, Osama Al-Shaheen, Hamdan Al-Azmi, Abdullah Al-Rumo, Adel Al-Damkhi and others commented on the presentation of Al-Sabah saying it fully covered the topic. They expressed appreciation for the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Health, Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah and the accompanying team.

However, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei wonders why the minister denied the existence of coronavirus in the country; stressing that Kuwait has its own coronavirus – the widespread corruption.

### Also:

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in coordination with the Ministry of Health and other concerned authorities continues to be fully prepared to examine the passengers using the thermal cameras by medical staff from the Ministry of Health following the outbreak of coronavirus, reports Al-Qabas daily.

A reliable source told Al-Qabas a circular has been issued upon instructions of the Ministry of Health not to allow the citizens of two countries – **China and Hong Kong** – until further notice and that the same applies to those who may have transited via these two countries even if they hold a visa and valid residence.

### Al-Hashem, Ashour in heated debate

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4:** National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanim said the agenda for Tuesday's session included the no-confidence motion submitted by 10 MPs against former Minister of Social Affairs Ghadeer Aseeri.

However, Article 142 of the Assembly Decree stipulates dropping the motion in case the minister subjected to grilling re-signs; hence, there is no need to vote on the motion, the Speaker explained.

The session also witnessed the reading of the Amiri decrees on accepting Aseeri's resignation and appointing State Minister for Municipal Affairs Waleed Khalifa Al-Jassem as acting Minister of Social Affairs.

Meanwhile, Financial and Economic Affairs Committee MP Safa'a Al-Hashem and resigned committee member MP Saleh Ashour had a heated argument during the session.

Ashour said he apologized for not attending the last committee meeting because the timing overlapped with that of the fact-finding committee which usually holds extensive meetings.

While disclosing he was surprised when he found out he was marked absent, Ashour criticized Al-Hashem's statements as the latter implied his absence was deliberate. He then stressed the need to end such sarcasm among MPs.

Dr Bader Al-Mullah, another member of the committee, pointed out Al-Hashem cited Article 17 of the Assembly Decree when she asserted that a resigned committee member who sends a written apology for not attending the meeting entails regretting the resignation. He clarified this article refers to resignation from the Assembly, not a committee. He then corrected the mistake, saying the relevant article is number 45.

The Speaker responded, affirming that the resignations will be reviewed and the absent members will be marked excused.

Furthermore, the Assembly discussed the incoming letters including that of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who expressed gratitude to the MPs for congratulating him on the 14th anniversary of his reign.

### Report

In his letter, MP Dr Abdulkareem Al-Kandari stated the Assembly has yet to receive the report on the General Amnesty Bill although the grace period given to the Legislative Affairs Committee has ended.

In response, Al-Ghanim explained the Secretariat General of the Assembly received the report late so it was not included in the agenda for Tuesday's session. He added the report is subject to relevant procedures as per the Assembly Decree.

In his letter, MP Ali Al-Daqbasi requested the Assembly to discuss the report of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee on the Retirees' Loans Bill in this session. He said it seems the government is not serious in approving the bill concerning retirees. He threatened to grill Minister of Finance Mariam Al-Aqeel considering the bill is ready for deliberations but the minister is not cooperating in this regard.

Al-Aqeel responded, confirming the government is keen on ratifying important bills. She said her predecessor, Dr Naif Al-Hajraf, perused the report of the committee but she has yet to see it. She requested for coordination with the chairperson of the committee in order to review and comment on the report.

Al-Daqbasi interjected, pointing out that the minister is known for issuing contradictory statements; while reiterating she has not shown any sign of cooperation.

Addressing His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid, Al-Daqbasi asserted the minister of finance is a burden on the government's shoulders.

Commenting on the issue, MP Dr Adel Al-Damkhi said: "We should deal with institutions, not individuals. There should not be a problem just because of changing the minister. The commitment of a minister is part of the government's commitment. If the incumbent minister says she must review the report approved by the former minister, this is tantamount to dodging responsibility."

In addition, Al-Hashem revealed the minister told her during the previous meetings of the Priorities Committee that she wants to give more information related to some figures mentioned in the report. She intends to hold a meeting with Al-Aqeel soon to clarify the figures and reach an agreement.

### Cancellation

In his letter, MP Saleh Al-Ashour requested for cancellation of the two-week extension of the term of the fact-finding committee tasked to investigate the death of Ahmed Al-Dhefairy because the Public Prosecution withheld the case and there is no need for further investigation.

He stressed the need to approve his request to expedite discussions on the Retirees' Loans Bill as it is very important for a number of families.

He also requested for expediting deliberations on the proposal to prioritize the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis in the recruitment process.

In his letter, MP Osama Al-Shaheen called for prioritizing the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis in the recruitment process as this is an integral part of maintaining social stability. He argued there is no mechanism for ensuring that public institutions are committed to prioritizing the children of these women in the recruitment process as it usually depends on the policy adopted by the head of each institution or ministry.

In addition, Al-Shaheen urged the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Cabinet to activate articles two and eight of the Constitution.

Article Two states that "the religion of the State is Islam, and the Islamic Shari'a shall be a main source of legislation," while Article Eight stipulates that "the State safeguards the pillars of Society and ensures security, tranquility and equal opportunities for citizens."

He emphasized the need to obligate companies offering public subscription to be committed to the Islamic Sharia in line with the Constitution and the "fatwa" (edict) issued by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. He said a big number of citizens were deprived of the opportunity to participate in two public subscriptions – North Kuwait and Kuwait Stock Exchange – because

they violated the Islamic Sharia.

In her letter, MP Safa'a Al-Hashem also mentioned giving priority to the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis. She pointed out that former Minister of Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi announced 4,000 vacancies for the children of these women including teaching and technical jobs; so she was surprised when the ministry signed employment contracts with expatriates from Egypt and Tunisia while the children of Kuwaiti women are still waiting for jobs.

She cited the case of Medhat Wahbi, an Egyptian consultant at the Cabinet who was appointed in 1975; indicating he was an officer during the October 1973 War who holds all the plans of Al-Saif Palace and that he could be an intelligence officer. She claimed CSC Director Bader Al-Hamad is a big obstacle while the seventh floor of the CSC is full of expatriate consultants and all records are in Egypt.

MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei suggested allotting sessions for discussion of bills, considering the accumulation of bills deemed beneficial to citizens.

### Supports

MP Muhammad Al-Dallal supports the request of Al-Tabtabaei as 46 reports on various bills are ready for deliberations. He said some of the reports have been ready since the first year of this parliamentary term (three years ago), but they have not been discussed until now. He recommended discussing urgent and priority bills on Wednesdays.

MP Hamdan Al-Azmi urged ministers to adopt the open-door policy as per the statement of HH Prime Minister. He said HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah used to meet citizens every Sunday and Monday.

He also praised Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi and the Interior Ministry undersecretary for holding meetings with citizens regularly.

On the request to allocate one hour of the session for discussing the "deal of the century", Al-Azmi argued: "We need this time to discuss urgent issues concerning citizens rather than wasting time on the deal while President Donald Trump is not even aware of us."

MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain asserted the Assembly failed in making laws; adding the MPs are pushing for discussion of corona virus and global issues while ignoring the urgent issues. He said the Assembly has become a replica of Hyde Park. "What are we going to say to citizens in case they ask what we have accomplished so far? We will tell them that we discussed corona virus. Delaying the ratification of laws until the last leg of the parliamentary term often results in the passage of laws full of loopholes due to lack of time," he added.

The Assembly voted on extending the grace period given to the fact-finding committee to investigate the death of Al-Dhefairy until April 30, 2020.

Moreover, MP Osama Al-Shaheen requested for referral of the bill on establishing Umm Al-Haiman water and power plant, as well as the amendment of the Partnership Projects Law, to the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee which should submit its reports on these proposals within one month.

### Argued

However, Committee Chairperson MP Safa'a Al-Hashem argued one month is not enough so she demanded for three months. After the discussion, the committee suggested two months and the Assembly agreed.

In addition, the Assembly approved the request of MP Muhammad Haif to discuss the Retirees' Loans Bill on Feb 18, 2020. He unveiled his plan to grill the finance minister if the bill is not approved by then.

The Assembly also approved the request to extend the term of the fact-finding committee tasked to investigate the issue of appointing children of Kuwaiti women for three months.

Also, MP Safa'a Al-Hashem has forwarded questions to Minister of Public Works and State Minister of Housing Affairs Dr Rana Abdullah Al-Fares on the number of expatriate employees in the ministry and their job descriptions. She added the same questions were forwarded to other ministers and heads of public institutions.

She said these questions were also submitted to former minister Dr Jenan Bu Shehri who told Al-Hashem that the answer is secret and she should receive it from the Secretariat General of the Assembly. She later received the response which consisted of only two lines: "The ministry is progressing in the appointment of nationals and it has never dismissed any employee nominated by the CSC. The appointment of expatriates is suspended." She stressed these are mere lies as ministries often invent new ways to appoint expatriates under many titles.

MP Naif Al-Merdas revealed he submitted questions to the former State Minister for Municipal Affairs about the viral video showing a number of expatriates using a large State property in Kabd as a store. He received information that when these expatriates were interrogated, it turned out they are under the sponsorship of a senior official. He asked the incumbent minister about this. The latter told him that the issue has been referred to the fact-finding committee and he is now waiting for the results.

MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain revealed he submitted questions about the number of patients who recovered from sterility after undergoing treatment in Kuwait in 2017 to the then minister of health. He asked the Assembly Office include the most recent questions submitted by MPs to the agenda.

The Speaker said a decision in this regard should be taken through coordination between the office and the MPs.

MP Sa'adoun Hammad explained his question to the minister of health about sending Kuwaiti doctors on scholarship abroad to pursue rare fields of specialization only to be appointed in irrelevant places and positions upon returning to the country.

He said a number of doctors came back after completing advanced studies on cancer but were dismissed from Husain Makki Juma'a Center for cancer and sent to Adan Hospital instead. He added the minister's response was that the center decided to accept or dismiss the doctors according to their experience and after evaluating their performance. He wondered how did this happen, considering the doctors were dismissed even before assuming their posts to determine whether they are qualified or not.



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