

REMEMBER WHEN

Photograph courtesy of The Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait and the work of Dr Yacoub Al-Hijji in the book *Old-Kuwait: Memories in Photographs* first published in 1996.



The People of Old Kuwait

The famous Kuwaiti dhow-builder Ahmad bin Salman was also one of the city notables. He is pictured here sitting in his dhow-building yard talking to his son and to one of his helpers.

The people of old Kuwait, both men and women, were characterized by their modesty, honesty and deep faith in God and His prophets. They spoke little and listened carefully to others. They avoided gossip and talked about ships, pearl markets and such far places as Calicut and Zanzibar. If a stranger visited them, he would be invited to join them for a meal. The peoples' natural good manners would prevent them from displaying

any curiosity about him. When he asked about their city, only the eldest and most knowledgeable of them would answer; the rest would quietly listen to him, ready to help him if he expressed a need.

In the afternoons, they would sit dignified in the shade of a house on a mat, talking to one another until the evening prayers were called. After performing their prayers in a nearby mosque, they visited friends in *diwaniya* and enjoyed a few cups of well-brewed coffee. They went home afterwards, had their dinner and slept peacefully. (From the book *'Old Kuwait: Memories in Photographs'*)

Courtesy of The Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'People fed up with open conflict and the 'secret' agreements'

"THERE are voices coming out from here and there that an unconstitutional solution has no place in the Constitution, and that there is no unconstitutional solution of suspending the constitution", columnist **Abdullah Ali Al-Qabandi** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"There are those who went further and said the suspension of the constitution in the past had resulted in the Manakh stock market crash, and the second time it happened was followed by the Iraqi invasion. That is the reason for the warning against the suspension of the constitution.

"I tell you that the Manakh stock market crisis was due to the suspension of the constitution. The crisis happened in 1983, and one of its knights at that time was a member of the National Assembly.

"The invasion took place during the calls for the resumption of the constitution during Monday Diwaniyah. The Saddam regime thought that the people were against the rule and had invaded Kuwait. Suppose that the constitution was not suspended, would the National Assembly have been able to deter Saddam from invading Kuwait?"

"We neither want to disrupt the constitution nor dislike it. However, a little humility, calmness and elevated discourse are needed in order to avoid causing people not to believe in the importance of the Constitution because of the MPs' actions. What is most important is not to give yourself more than what you deserve. Communication development has demolished the fortresses in which MPs hid whenever they committed disgraceful acts and violated their oaths.

"As for the executive authority, we ask them to nominate and appoint qualified people with deserving merits. This is due to the fact that the attitude of appeasing the MPs and buying their silence is not the way, because the task in hand is heavy, history is ruthless, and generations will not forgive those who wronged Kuwait.

"We are fed up with the open conflict and the under-the-table agreements. Today, the various means of communication expose whatever happens in the dark. Everything is now in the open and has a barcode."



Al-Qabandi

Also :

"Since the San Francisco Conference after World War II and the declaration of the United Nations in October 1945, the world has been mourning the wounds of war and destruction, while aspiring for peace to prevail and wisdom and reason to resolve international disputes through dialogue and to benefit from the harsh lessons of war that left millions of victims," columnist **Hind Al-Choumar** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"The bet was on the Elders of the World with all their positions. But now, after nearly eight decades of the establishment of the United Nations, all regions in the world are still boiling with those waving weapons of mass destruction. No spot on the ground is far from tension if we look in the East, West, North or South. If we look in any of these directions, we find the machines and tools of destructive wars. We find those who make decisions about destruction and the death of innocent people.

"Are these the indications of failure, aggression or lack of wisdom in assessing situations and making decisions? If wisdom and rational decisions do not prevail, the world will ignite once again and return to the atmosphere of devastation that it lived during the Second World War and the disastrous repercussions.

"If the world has not benefited from the United Nations for decades – from 1945 till date, then it is imperative for the wise to think of a new way to save human lives and spread world peace before those who tamper with it continue to wreak havoc."

"I really feel that someone is sitting behind the window of my country applauding enthusiastically, cheerfully and happily about what he has achieved in terms of breaking the bonds of love and respect among the people and how he sowed discord among all segments here," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"He is happy to raise the voices of hyperbole, treachery, underestimation and insult, ecstatic about the tyranny of the feeling of fear and anxiety that swirls around mothers and fathers, young and old, due to the barrage of worrying and frightening news about Kuwait, its present and future. He is ecstatic about the

conflicts, image of corruption and pessimism about the future and fate of the country.

"Our homeland is greater than these attempts to control hopes about the beginning of reform and conditions for the better, with the help of God.

"What is happening today is abnormal. I am almost certain this someone created invisible hands that work with a hateful heart and exhale blood. These hands are revived by tying the threads of disagreement, turning them into verbal wars in preparation for something harsher and more difficult.

"Corruption, crimes and news in Kuwait are the same as the daily occurrences in other countries ... But the difference is that certain professionals in and outside the country are blowing the fire to distribute sparks between families and loved ones, wishing for a fire that eats everything."

"With the worsening health crisis due to the spread of coronavirus that got more severe in Kuwait and the world in general, major countries have started to compete in obtaining vaccine shipments and to support scientific research for the production of vaccines developed for protection against the mutations," columnist **Dr Moudhi Al-Hamoud** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"This race has also taken another turn – introduction of policies to attract medical staff, including doctors and health personnel, to these countries.

"Finally, on April 15, Canada announced its new immigration package in six programs ... three of them were designated to attract doctors and workers in hospitals, front liners and health care home workers by granting them permanent residence in Canada and this is applicable for all nationalities.

"A year before that, America opened its doors to foreign doctors and health workers, while granting them permanent residency in order to increase its qualified human resources for combating this epidemic.

"Opportunities have been opened for many doctors in the world, while our need for doctors has not been met during this pandemic. It is difficult for us to grant our Bedouin doctors the Kuwaiti nationality granted to those who are less educated and do not render service for Kuwait."

— Compiled by Ahmad Al-Shazli

Salary not paid for 13 months?



Stray dogs – a common sight at the Salmi scrapyard. Photo by Bassam Abu Shanab

'Living on handouts'

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Days after a video clip showing an Egyptian school security guard – Mohammad Kamal Ja'afar – complaining that he did not receive his salary for more than five months went viral, another guard assigned at a kindergarten in Farwaniya made a similar complaint, disclosing that he has not been paid his salary for 13 months now, reports Al-Rai daily.

The guards are waiting for confirmation from their companies and the Education Ministry regarding the payment of their salaries in order to give their families a decent life, especially in light of the current health crisis which has affected all sectors with very few emerging unscathed from its economic consequences.

According to the kindergarten guard, he and his colleagues are enduring difficult conditions that no one could bear. He is making ends meet with the help of those residing near the kindergarten, the kindergarten director and some teachers.

Meanwhile, a reliable source from the company that hired the guard disclosed the company's contract with the ministry was terminated on July 31 last year. He affirmed all the guards are aware of the contract termination and that the unpaid salaries are for four months only – April, May, June and July. He said the ministry officially informed the guards about the contract termination, but they decided to stay in the kindergarten as they are surviving through the help of some teachers.

He affirmed their problem will be solved soon, indicating the Financial Department withheld the budget allocated for the salaries of guards for the above-mentioned months. He said the money will be transferred soon to the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) to start the disbursement process. He added: "We cannot disburse the amount directly, because their contracts are with a private company which has been experiencing management problems since the beginning of the corona virus crisis. We will transfer the amount to the authority minus the fines, if any; and then the authority will pay their salaries."

Asked why the guards are staying in the school despite the termination of the contract, the source revealed the company is facing legal problems and it has no shelter for the guards; so the ministry decided on humanitarian grounds to give the guards the choice to stay in the housing allocated for them inside the schools or to leave. Their salaries will be paid next week at the latest, he affirmed.

The source pointed out that some MPs have intervened, indicating a lawmaker met Minister of Education Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf who approved the salaries of 170 security guards.

'Lift ban on hiring expat teachers'

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Administrative Sector in the Ministry of Education (MoE) has asked the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to lift the ban on hiring expatriate teachers for the posts which were not filled in the last fiscal year, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources from the educational sector.

Sources revealed the ministry needs around 300 slots for expatriate teachers with various specializations, including teachers for special needs schools in the next academic year 2021/2022.

If the request is approved, the total number of slots for the next academic year will be 600.

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Stray dogs menace in scrapyard

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah Staff

A number of garage workers, repairing and selling auto parts in Al Salmi scrapyard have demanded that a solution be found to the problem of stray dogs in the area.

The workers said the cleaning companies should pay attention to removing scrap waste, and garbage which more often than not overflow with car tires and pieces of rickety cars and remain for a long time until they are removed.

Mohammad Al-Zaini, an official of an

auto parts workshop in Al-Salmi, said stray dogs have already become a menace in all streets of Al-Salmi Scrap area, which requires a solution, especially as it becomes frightening and the dogs can attack the workers any moment.

Muhammad Ali, a seller of used spare parts says neglect and slums are widespread in Al Salmi scrapyard, pointing out that the problem is not only in stray dogs, but in the lack of commitment by garbage companies to lift garbage on time, indicating some garages now throw their waste randomly on the ground because the garbage bins are overflowing.

No reports of fake PCR certificates

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Ministry of Health stressed during meetings with personnel from the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and airlines representatives that it had received no reports about falsification of results about testing arriving passengers at the Kuwait International Airport since August 2020, until date, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a responsible source.

The daily quoting the same sources said the DGCA in coordination with the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is studying the issue of increasing the number of health laboratories responsible for issuing PCR certificates in many countries and countries from where passengers arrive into the country, especially Turkey, the Gulf states and others.

The source stated the system for linking Medical Utility Network Accreditor (MUNA) abroad is done only after the approval by the Ministry of Health and under the supervision of the DGCA.