

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:15	Asr	14:38
Sunrise ..	06:40	Maghrib ..	16:56
Zohr	11:48	Isha	18:19

Local

VACCINE BOOSTER REGISTRATION: https://cov19vaccine.moh.gov.kw/SPCMS/CVD_19_Vaccine_Booster_Registration.aspx

Doctors added to medical committees

PADA speeds up review process, cuts waiting time for appointments

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 25: The Director of the Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs (PADA) Hanadi Al-Mubeilesh announced the addition of new doctors to the medical committees to speed up the review process and reduce the waiting period for new appointments. She revealed that 1,595 files were opened for newly-registered disabled people during the current year, bringing the number of registered cases of persons with disabilities to 57,407 cases, reports Al-Rai daily.

During her recent interview on Kuwait TV, Al-Mubeilesh responded to complaints about the delay in the appointments of the medical committees. She said, "Appointments are made according to the appointments of the medical committees. We always increase the number of doctors in the committees in order

to reduce the waiting period, but the other aspect, which is the renewal of certificates, is done automatically, as has been the case for the past two years.

Automated renewal reduces the number of clients, and thus appointments become limited to people with a new disability, and not to the file for renewing certificates, which is done automatically, and without visiting the authority, except in the case of renewing a request for a new report, or entering a different committee, which needs an appointment. Soon, the service of requesting the opening of a new file will be added on the Sahel platform."

Al-Mubeilesh explained that the authority currently provides five services on the Sahel platform such as booking appointments. Within two months, the rest of the author-

ity's services will be completed to introduce about eight new services.

Regarding the demands to open centers in all governorates in order to facilitate the review process, Al-Mubeilesh revealed that, "Next week, a new branch will be opened in the Deaf and Dumb Club in Grenada area.

As for disability certificates, they can be extracted automatically through the authority's website in pdf format, in addition to the identity and the person in charge of care, without the need to visit the authority to receive it."

Al-Mubeilesh touched on the protocols with other parties, noting that a protocol was signed with the Kuwait Credit Bank in 2018 and with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare recently.

She explained that the protocol included a

clear work plan for linking for a period of three years in providing data so that the person with disabilities does not need to visit the authority.

Instead he can go directly to the housing care department to inquire about his data. He therefore has the right to priority housing care according to article 34 of the disability law.

Article 10 of the executive regulations separates the priority of housing care - severe by five years and moderate by three years.

This protocol provides data as the authority has the right to identify the data of the persons who deserved this exchange according to the specific controls in the institution.

Regarding the electronic orientation within the authority, Al-Mubeilesh said,

"After the qualitative shift at the beginning of 2017, more than 18 government agencies were linked through protocols. This moves us from paper-based transactions to mechanization".

She highlighted the authority's coordination with the most influential authorities, including Public Authority for Housing Welfare, Public Institution for Social Security, and Public Authority for Civil Information, through exchanged data, so that people with disabilities have to go to the Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs to obtain it.

Al-Mubeilesh added that it also regulates the process of document circulation between the authority's departments so that the person's data can be viewed and updated in terms of the status of the disability file, appointment, marriage and others.

Weather

By Night: Cold with light to moderate freshening over coastal areas north westerly wind with speed of 12-40 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	21	14
Kuwait Airport	19	13

Abdaly	18	08
Jahra	20	12
Salmiyah	23	15
Ahmadi	21	15
Nuwaisib	20	14
Salmy	17	08
Jal Aliyah	17	09

Municipality to hike fees

Multiple services targeted

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 25: In confirmation to the report titled "Liquidity depletion creates fees and doubles others" published by the daily, Kuwait Municipality has

completed a regulation to increase the fees for a number of services, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to the proposed new regulation, the fees

for renewing applications for opening canteens and kiosks inside government agencies' sites will be increased from KD 20 to KD 300, which is an increase of 1,400 percent. The fees for issuance will be raised from KD 50 to KD 200.

The fees for issuing requests for merging and separating plots will be increased from KD 10 to KD 40 for each plot resulting from merging and separating. A fee of KD 80 has been introduced for renewing and amending these requests, for each plot resulting from merging and separating.

Fees of KD 100 have been introduced for the issuance of requests to add an area of state property for investment and commercial plots, and KD 200 for renewal and modification.

As for applications for valuation (acquisition), the fees will be increased from KD 10 to KD 40 for issuance, and KD 80 for renewal, even though the renewal service was without fees in the past.

The regulation proposed the introduction of a fee of KD 100 to amend the requests for the allocation of sites, and a new fee of KD 160 to renew and amend the regulatory approval for surface parking lots.

The proposed regulation did not exempt government projects from increasing fees, as the regulatory approval fee for temporary offices and materials for government projects was doubled to KD 200 instead of KD 100, and the fees for the same service for private housing were fixed at KD 25.

The regulation also introduced a fee for issuing the approval of organizational schemes for a project (dividing/organizing), which is KD 50, and KD 100 for modification.

Regarding the approval of the road network plan for a division or organization project that includes the road network and its sections, suitable natural and proposed land, and infrastructure services, the regulation has introduced a fee of KD 100 for issuing the accreditation, and KD 200 for amending the accreditation.

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Railroad: The head of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART), Dr. Hussein Al-Khayyat, said the route of project that has been assigned to the authority by the Council of Ministers will be from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Shaddiyah area in Kuwait, covering a distance of approximately 115 kilometers, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Khayyat added that a team was formed to receive the project, and a plan has been drawn that will be implemented over 4 and a half years; most part of which will be to remove obstacles hampering the project, preparing a consultancy study and designs, and then offering the project to contracting companies to be completed in two and a half years.

He continued saying, "A company will be assigned to carry out the operation and maintenance of the project." Al-Khayyat confirmed that the cost has been determined, which will be approximately 300 million dinars, and the project will be entrusted to a company from the private sector.

Reconnaissance Research interview with Daniel Benaim, conducted by A. Al-Anjeri

DANIEL BENAIM is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs in the Near East Bureau at the U.S. Department of State. He is a former Middle East policy advisor to President Biden, he has worked at the White House, State Department, and Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He is a lifetime member and former International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.



Founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri (below) conducting the virtual interview with Daniel Benaim.



1. How important are human rights and freedoms of expression to the US administration in our region?

President Biden and Secretary Blinken have committed to elevating the role of human rights in our foreign policy, especially with our partners that we care deeply about, such as Kuwait. We clearly seek to support and strengthen the role of democratic institutions, and to show the importance of active civil political participation. We support enabling citizens to contribute to the civil life of their countries in order to achieve prosperity and security. We have seen areas of remarkable progress in the region and areas where significant work still lies ahead.

2. How can the United States apply these principles?

I want to underscore that we discuss human rights with our partners against the backdrop of incredibly close, deep, and wide-ranging partnerships that span from traditional security cooperation to COVID and climate change to higher education. Our partnerships in the Gulf are enduringly important to the United States, including in Kuwait, where Secretary Blinken made his first visit to the region in July 2021.

In my own travels to the region as a U.S. official, I have had the chance to meet with many civilians and influencers in civil society and people who have traveled to the United States as part of our exchange programs. In every society in this region, there are remarkably talented people working to solve the problems they have identified in their communities. We are proud to support efforts by both governments and private citizens to find the best solutions.

In Kuwait, in addition to every society in this region, we find individuals who are remarkably talented in evaluating and diagnosing problems and helping us in suggesting appropriate solutions to them, and we find them keen to solve the problems of their societies. We are proud to support these people and open more channels of communication with them, as their participation in improving their countries is an important role that should not be left solely to governments only, people are an essential partner in determining the shape and mechanism of their future as well.

3. Are there any examples on the US administration's role in Kuwait in promoting freedoms?

Supporting freedom of expression worldwide is a key priority for the United States. We have made direct efforts to release imprisoned or displaced political dissidents and continue to advocate that fundamental freedoms should not be a crime in the first place. It is one of the basic freedoms that help people to have a role in the civil life of their country in order to achieve prosperity and security for them, and everything that

affects the basic freedoms of citizens will be our priority. Our efforts have included supporting those advocating for the rights of women, girls, and all people, and we have pressed for the release and lifting of restrictions on women's rights activists.

4. What are the obstacles that the United States faces in the region that hinder its vision of further reforms?

The United States makes common cause with a wide range of partners with different political systems, as we always have. Our commitment to democratic norms and human rights begins at home - where it is a source of national pride and strength - and it remains a vital part of our engagement in the world.

The United States will speak up for our values, and we also work to build closer, stronger relationships with our partners - and where possible to align our bilateral relationships with our values and interests. That work can be incremental and challenging. As governments and citizens in this region work to move their societies and institutions forward, our hope is that our engagement creates opportunities for progress, cooperation, and positive change.

5. Are there shifting dynamics in US foreign policy?

Regional dynamics are ever-changing, but it is equally important to look at what is not changing; the United States remains a close strategic partner to Kuwait and to the GCC. We have enjoyed strong strategic, diplomatic, economic, and people-to-people ties for many decades and look forward to continuing to strengthen them.

As threats and conditions have changed in the region, we have always adapted together as partners. An excellent recent example is the Gulf states' close coordination on Afghanistan and their indispensable support in facilitating the transit of U.S. citizens, Embassy Kabul personnel, Afghans, and other evacuees from Afghanistan. The Gulf states' have

been at the forefront of our efforts to evacuate people from Afghanistan to safety. We are deepening our cooperation not only on counterterrorism, defense, and oil but also on clean energy, climate change, and COVID.

The United States has enduring strategic interests that will keep us engaged in this region for decades to come, including ensuring the freedom of maritime navigation and the flow of energy into the global economy; counterterrorism; preventing the spread of nuclear weapons; helping our partners to defend themselves; and encouraging positive changes across the region to help societies prepare for the immense challenges that lay ahead, challenges which often will not respect national or even regional boundaries.

6. Is the file of the Gulf States' normalizing with Israel still a priority?

The United States and the GCC countries have an unprecedented opportunity to work together to heal old rifts within the region and create new accords. We've seen concrete examples of progress already like the end of the Gulf rift earlier this year, improved relations between the GCC and Turkey, in addition to normalized relations between Israel and several Arab countries under the Abraham Accords.

We respect each country's sovereignty and expect them to make decisions based on their own interests. The United States views the Abraham Accords as an important step forward and something we hope to build upon further shared successes. The United States will continue to search for any other opportunities to expand cooperation between the countries of the region and Israel and to close this file, which must be closed.

7. Will attention shift from the Gulf to the Indo-Pacific and China?

Regarding efforts by China to expand its cooperation in the region, as the Secretary has said time and time again, our relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be.

We recognize that our allies and partners have complex relationships with China, which will not always align with our own. Our focus has been on closing the gaps in areas like technology and infrastructure, which we have seen China exploit to exert coercive pressure. We will rely on innovation and competition in these areas.

We are in close coordination with Kuwait on many of the issues I have highlighted. The United States, Kuwait, and other Gulf countries continue to consult closely on Iran and a return to the JCPOA. Most recently, senior U.S. officials and members of the GCC convened a working group on Iran at the GCC's headquarters on November 17 and issued a Joint Statement on their shared views on this issue.

Similarly, the United States and Kuwait are partners in efforts to combat the climate crisis - for example, we both joined the Global Methane Pledge.

We will continue to deepen our partnership on the issues we've worked on together for many years. And we will broaden our partnership to new fields of endeavor because we want to be active together wherever we can deliver greater security, prosperity, and well-being for people in Kuwait, the United States, and around the world.



The Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah reviews the equipment of the Sixth Automated Liberation Brigade.

Defense minister lauds armed forces

Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah affirmed, on Friday, that Kuwaiti security could only be achieved by its devoted people who always strive to maintain the highest levels of readiness.

This came during the minister's visit to the Sixth Automated Liberation Brigade in the northern region, where he was received by the Assistant Commander of the Ground Forces, Brigadier General Abdullah Al-Jaba'a, and Commander of the sixth Automated Liberation Brigade, Brigadier General Talal Faleh, and a number of brigade officers.

A statement by the Ministry of Defense, quoted Sheikh Hamad Al-Sabah as saying that Kuwait Army is the bulwark in the face of any attempts to prejudice the country's security and territorial integrity.

The visit started with a brief review on the most important duties of the Sixth Automated Liberation Brigade and an explanation of its tasks.

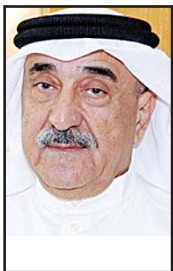
The Defense Minister's tour of the brigade included the Fifth Infantry Battalion, the pistol shooting range, the 85th Supply Battalion, and the carpentry and maintenance workshop, during which presentations of armored vehicles, command vehicles, and infantry weapons were presented.

He called on the personnel of the Ground Force to continue learning, work and training to keep pace with the modernization and development plan, to increase the level of the armed forces, and to restore the Kuwaiti army to its previous era of excellence, excellence and competition. (KUNA)

PAAAFR chief visits veterinary quarry

'1st line of defense against diseases'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 25, (KUNA): Director General of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Sheikh Muhammad Yousef Al-Sabah said on Saturday that the border veterinary quarry in Abdali is a first line of defense to prevent the entry of any diseases that affect animals and affect livestock, causing economic losses or threatening the human health.



Sheikh Muhammad

Sheikh Muhammad Yousef added to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) during a tour that he toured the quarry to see the progress of work and the procedures that allow the entry of imported livestock, that no type of animal is allowed to enter the country without obtaining an import permit and official permits from the Animal Health Department, and it is not allowed to enter it before quarantine and a thorough examination of the veterinary quarries.

He stated that the veterinary quarantine organizes the movement of animals and animal materials within the country or between different countries to reduce the transmission of diseases and prevent diseases that may be bacterial, viral or parasitic that leads to the deterioration of animal production and increase in livestock mortality.

He stressed that the authority abides by the instructions and recommendations of the World Organization for Animal Health, which states that importing from some countries affected by various animal diseases is prohibited and does not lift the ban until after full assurance of the safety of these countries from epidemics through the recommendations of the organization.

He stated that the quarry has procedures to take when a consignment is received by matching the documents received with the consignment, indicating the need for the health certificate to conform to the requirements of the State of Kuwait while making sure that the country from which the import was made is free of diseases, according to the Bulletin of the Animal Health Organization.

He said that the consignment is quarantined in the event that there are pathological symptoms that are observed by the quarry doctor, and the duration of the quarantine will be according to laboratory results and health status until the appearance of the result of the examination and making sure that it is free of diseases, praising the efforts of the quarry staff and the important and influential work they do in achieving safety and food security country and develop work to achieve the best results.

Meanwhile, PAAAFR said on Friday that its relevant teams recently launched intensive inspection campaigns in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior to control and arrest the sellers of subsidized fodder, which resulted in the confiscation of about 800 bags of such fodder and the arrest of its sellers.

Spokesman for the Agriculture Authority, Talal Al-Daihani, said in a press statement that the campaigns, which came based on the directives and presence of the Director General of the Authority, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, aimed to preserve the state's funds and capabilities from waste and address the greed of traders, as well as ensuring that the fodder reaches its eligible citizens from breeders at cheap prices, from the preservation and development of livestock.

Al-Daihani stated that the campaigns, which included a number of websites, came in order to cleanse the market of illegal sales, stressing that they will continue on a regular basis.

FM, investment authority chief meet

Preparations for business forum discussed

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 25, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah held a meeting on Thursday with Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Mishal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at the authority headquarters.

The ministry said in a statement that the two sides discussed preparations for holding an investment

forum for diplomatic missions, themed "general view of the Kuwaiti economy," due on January 16 - under sponsorship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Dr. Ahmad and Sheikh Dr. Mishal discussed agenda of the forthcoming gathering.

Meanwhile, the Civil Service Commission has approved the appointment of approximately 600 workers and cleaners, at the request of the Ministry of Education, reports

Al-Anba daily quoting an official educational source.

The source explained that after conducting the interviews, the list of those who fulfilled the conditions and were selected was submitted to the CSC.

The source added next week the selected workers will be called to complete the appointment procedures and distribute them among various schools.

Their monthly salary will be 190 dinars each.