

LOCAL

MPs reject minutes of inaugural session tied to Speaker election

Grilling motion submitted against prime minister

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 5: In an unprecedented turn of events, the National Assembly on Tuesday witnessed the MPs' rejection of the minutes of the inaugural session which included the election of the speaker.

A heated argument between majority of the MPs and Deputy Speaker Ahmed Al-Shuhoumi, who chaired the session, ensued after each side expressed their views on the proposal of several lawmakers to form a

parliamentary fact-finding committee to investigate the untoward incidents during the opening session and refer those involved to the Public Prosecution.

Al-Shuhoumi asked the lawmakers to justify the proposal in line with the Constitution and the Assembly Decree. He cited Article 114 of the Constitution, stating that the Assembly forms committees and instructs them to carry out tasks included in its duties such as monitoring the performance of the government and making laws. He argued the formation of a committee to investigate the MPs and parliamentary employees is not part of the powers granted to the Assembly.

MP Hesham Al-Saleh pointed out it is unacceptable that the political tools given to the Assembly are used against the latter through the investigation of MPs. He said the proper procedure is to submit a complaint signed by the MPs to the prosecution; hence, the issue is referred to the judicial authority.

MP Khalid Ayed Al-Anzi agreed with Al-Saleh, disclosing that he prepared a complaint which will be referred to the prosecution while calling on his colleagues to sign the document.

Power

On the other hand, some MPs argued the Assembly has the power to form a committee to investigate the abovementioned incidents and refer those involved to the prosecution.

MP Badr Al-Dahoum condemned the incidents during the opening session and inquired about the criteria in giving out invitation cards to the public. He asked Minister of Justice Nawaf Al Yaseen about his opinion on the issue, apparently referring to the minister's statement that those convicted of storming the Assembly building deserve punishment. He pointed out those who attacked and insulted the MPs and then celebrated and danced in the Office of the Assembly speaker have been identified. He added that the Assembly Office cannot conduct an investigation as it is one of the parties involved in the incidents.

MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari said Article 114 of the Constitution and Articles 39 and 76 of the Assembly Decree state that the Assembly Office is obligated to approve whatever the MPs have agreed upon. He clarified that since the MPs and the Assembly Office have opposing views on the issue, the democratic way of determining the final decision is through voting.

Al-Shuhoumi tried to disregard this item by rejecting Al-Kandari's proposal and move to the next item, but MPs Muhammad Barrak Al-Mutair and Badr Al-Dahoum interrupted him. He then adjourned the session until Wednesday.

Shortly after Tuesday's session, MPs Thamer Al-Suwait, Badr Al-Dahoum and Khalid Al-Otaibi submitted a grilling motion against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. The motion consists of three points: first is ignoring the parliamentary election results when the premier formed the government, second item is violating the Constitution which obligates the government to present its program especially since it was formed one month ago, and third is domination of the government over the formation of parliamentary committees and electing the Assembly officials. A total of 33 MPs signed the motion.

Resigned

Observer MP Osama Al-Shaheen and MP Fayez Al-Jomhour resigned from the committee that the Assembly Office formed to investigate the incidents in the inaugural session. Al-Shaheen disclosed that he took this decision as a way of supporting his colleagues who think the legislature should form this committee, not the Assembly Office.

Meanwhile, Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mesha'al Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the success of efforts towards reconciliation that ended the Gulf dispute. He praised the efforts exerted by His Highness the Amir to push for reconciliation in the past few days, while recalling the efforts of HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in this regard.

He also confirmed receiving the grilling motion against HH the Prime Minister, affirming that the latter has been informed about the motion which will be included in the agenda of the upcoming session.



Marzouq Al-Ghanim



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

Top and above: Lawmakers during Tuesday's National Assembly session.

Maintenance plan implemented

Ministry's sector working towards completion of schools equipment

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 5: The Educational Facilities and Planning Sector at the Ministry of Education continues working towards the completion of equipment in schools and to fulfill the requirements for their work, especially since there have been talks on the gradual return of students to their schools in the event that a certain percentage of the population is vaccinated against corona, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In this context, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Facilities and Planning Eng Yassin Al-Yaseen affirmed that the concerned departments in the sector continue to implement the maintenance plan for the schools, in addition to equipping them. He said the sector is taking advantage of the suspension of classes to carry out maintenance works

in the schools.

He added that according to the plan, the maintenance of all schools will be completed by the end of February and these works are done as per the contracts which the ministry signed with the competent companies.

He stressed that the sector's work in terms of the maintenance of schools is in line with the plan which was laid down in coordination with other sectors to ensure the smooth flow of work and to provide the appropriate educational environment and necessary educational facilities in case the concerned authorities issue a decision on the resumption of classes. He said this coordination guarantees that the ministry and all other concerned entities are ready for any possibilities.

Line links Zour sub-station in Kuwait

Iraq agrees to import 500MW power from GCC Interconnection Authority

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 5: The Middle East Economic Digest (MEED) magazine reported that Iraq had agreed to import 500 MW of electricity from the Gulf Cooperation Council's Interconnection Authority, which allocated the required funding for the 300-km power transmission line linking the Zour sub-station in Kuwait with the Iraqi borders, reports Al-Anba daily.

Quoting sources associated with the project, the magazine revealed that the process of completing the electrical interconnection among the GCC countries may take some time. In January 2020, Iraq signed a memorandum of understanding to import 500 megawatts of electricity from the GCC countries. However, reports stated at the time that the authority would finance the construction cost of two 400 kilovolts lines of 300 km long between Kuwait and Iraq.

Meanwhile, other informed sources explained to MEED magazine that there is no surety whether the GCC countries will finance the linkage project among the GCC countries.

Last July, the US State Department

issued a statement saying that the GCC countries, Iraq and the United States "renewed their full support for the GCC Power Interconnection Authority project to link electricity networks in Iraq and the GCC countries."

The sources said, "The United States is committed to facilitating this project and providing support when needed. The project will provide the electricity that Iraq desperately needs and enhance the economic development of the country, especially in the southern provinces".

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for the "rapid and complete" implementation of the pledges made by the international community in 2018 as part of the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq.

It should be noted that Iraq previously concluded a similar agreement for electrical connection with Jordan. The initial phase of the project covers the installation of a high-pressure power line between the city of Al-Qaim, in western Iraq, and the Risha area, in eastern Jordan, at a cost of \$ 140 million.

Remove all violations in Jahra Nat'l Park: Municipal Council

By Abdel Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 5: A number of Municipal Council members affirmed that the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) responded to the council's request to remove the violations and infringements on the site of Jahra National Park and sent a letter to the Kuwait Municipality stressing on the need to speed up the removal process.

The Council also called for holding accountable those responsible for the infringements and those reluctant to implement the project, hoping the authority will receive the site as soon as possible to prevent others from exploiting the area for which it is not intended.

In the context, a member of the Municipal Council, Eng Maha Al-Baghli, said in a press statement the Municipality opened the file of the Jahra National Park, which is tainted by many violations, pointing out that she and the members Eng Abdul Salam Al-Randi, Ahmad Hadian Al-Anzi and Dr. Hassan Kamal, last Thursday visited the park site accompanied by the PAAAFR President Sheikh Muhammad Al-Youssef, the Governor of Jahra, Nasser Al-Hajraf, and the Director of Jahra Security,

Major-General Salem Al-Ahaimer. Al-Baghli pointed out during the visit the dignitaries detected many violations and unlawful exploitation of the park site for cultivation and sale of products for the benefit of unknown parties, while the Municipal Council has issued a decision to allocate the site, which is about two million square meters, to PAAAFR in 2009, to establish a national park.

Municipal Council member Ahmed Hadian said he is looking forward to move to the completion of this project dedicated to serve the people of Jahra so that they can benefit from it and not use the area for special purposes far from its objectives for which it was established.

He added, the area has been exploited by vested interests as bachelors' quarters unlawfully, despite the decision taken by the responsible authorities to be a public park.

For his part, Municipal Council member Dr Hassan Kamal said that the Jahra National Park in the middle of the residential city of Jahra is the largest green spot in the governorate and has not been exploited since the state's acquisition of buildings and properties there, pointing out that the park is adjacent to the Red Palace and has components of historical, heritage and entertainment importance.



Shrimps at the Sharq Fish Market.

Photo by Bassam Abu Shanab

Shrimp fishing season extended to Feb 1

By Abdel Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah Staff

The head of the Kuwaiti Fishermen's Union, Zaher Al-Soyyan, has appreciated and praised the understanding of the Director-General of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yousef, and the Deputy Director-General of the Fisheries Sector, Marzouq Al-Hebi, for accepting the request of the Fishermen's Union

to extend the shrimp fishing season to Feb 1, similar to the neighboring countries.

Al-Soyyan said in a statement on Monday that this decision is based on a demand by the union, and praised it because it is in public interest and will give the Kuwaiti consumer an opportunity to enjoy the local shrimp throughout January, just like their 'neighbors' do.

Al-Soyyan expects a breakthrough soon for the deserving

demands of the fishermen and support for the local product, pointing out that good is coming, God willing, and that there are promises to further fulfill all demands.

He went on to say all demands of fishermen are currently being studied by the concerned authorities.

He expressed his thanks and appreciation to the PAAAFR director-general and deputy director for the Fisheries Sector.

Huge budget for operation of new airport discussed

Violating nurseries to face legal action: MoSA

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 5: The Ministry of Social Affairs has completed updating the data of 261 nurseries upon requests of their owners but the ministry stressed legal action will be taken against the violators of the ministry's decisions.

This comes in the face of the ministry's relentless pursuit of automating private nurseries, a reliable source told the daily.

The sources said: "The total number of private nurseries has reached 554 in all governorates," and added, "the work is underway to update the data into the nurseries program after the completion of the field survey, according to the current data."

With regard to opening nurseries to receive children after their closure due to the repercussions of the "coronavirus", the sources said "the Ministry

of Social Affairs does not object to this step, provided that the health authorities approve the requirements and precautionary measures they see fit in order to avoid children getting infected with the epidemic."

On the other hand, the sources stated that there are nurseries that violate the decisions of the ministry, which will be singled out after the completion of the modernization and field survey, in preparation for taking the necessary measures against them.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Committee for the New Kuwait International Airport, whose members are representatives of the concerned entities, discussed in its recent meeting the allocation of a huge budget for the operation of the new airport for a period of 10 years upon its completion, reports Al-Rai daily quoting official sources from the Ministry of Public Works.

Sources disclosed that the three stages of the airport project will be com-

pleted in early 2025 in accordance with the plan. However, they refused to reveal the size of the budget for the project, affirming that the necessary procedures were followed in allotting the agreed amount though the coordinated efforts of the Finance Ministry and the Major Projects Sector in the Ministry of Public Works.

Sources said the discussion revolved around the issue of the operating period that was set at 10 years with the aim of qualifying national manpower to manage and operate the new airport once the contract with the first operator ends.

On the other hand, the Central Agency for Public Tenders has extended the deadline for the submission of offers for the third stage of the project - construction, completion, furnishing and maintenance of aircraft stands, corridors and service halls for the new passenger building - until the end of this month.

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