

Other Voices

# Reviving our economy ... is there rationality and prudence?

"THE real deficit in the first 9 months of the current state budget was more than 5 billion dinars, in addition to two billion financial commitments. For more than five years, I have been searching for logical reasons for the failure of successive governments in dealing with the economic file, and the only and ridiculous excuse was the strength of the state's general reserve, which was more than forty billion at the time," columnist Dr Anwar Al-Shrai'an wrote for Al-Shahed daily.

"The governments that do not have the courage to confront and determination for reform, and will to market their decisions, will not be able to introduce any reforms for several reasons, some of which seem related to the lack of seriousness in reforming its structure and drying up the sources of waste and corruption, and the most important is their unwillingness to confront public opinion or the National Assembly due to their inability to propose or defend a real reform program, but resorting to the easiest solution, which is withdrawing money from the reserves, which unfortunately is the worst economic solution."

"Kuwait is suffering from the economic malady known as the Dutch disease where large financial surpluses have led successive governments to move away from economic rationality. Unfortunately, the governments in the last decade were not economically rational, and this is confirmed by the figures as successive governments have pursued expansionary policies in their administrative structure."



Dr Al-Shrai'an

"The government enlarged in size and shrank in performance and flexibility, and those governments and National Assemblies made it easy to increase government spending in all directions and today the current year's budget is twice the government's budget 10 years ago, and the salaries of most employees also doubled, and the value of state contracts also doubled, and unfortunately, government services have fallen to low levels during that same period and problems in all areas have doubled and continue to double."

"The current state of the Kuwaiti economy is no longer the same as it was between 2010 and 2019, as the general reserve has been exhausted and there is no money left, and the government is facing a real liquidity crisis. Unfortunately some voices within the government apparatus can be heard loud and clear calling to liquidate the assets owned by some government institutions, and here we ask a simple question to the Kuwaiti economic decision-makers: 'What happens after liquidating the assets, which you know with certainty that in the best case will not be sufficient to cover the deficits during 2021?'"

"Is there a clear plan, or are we dealing with our difficult economic situation and the scarcity of government funds on monthly basis or on day to day basis? As for the future, we leave it for the time or someone who comes after us. But simply this approach is far from being prudent and rational."

Also:

"The 2020 National Assembly is more than one month old, and to this mo-

ment remains closed until further notice and it may be the end of two months before the new government is formed, and all this happens in the life of the parliament, which most people of Kuwait were optimistic about in terms of its performance, and that it has come to combat corruption and stop financial and administrative abuses," columnist Yousuf Hajji wrote for Annahar daily.

"The National Assembly of 2020 came with priorities during its electoral campaign that the people wish to amend the electoral system, cancel or amend the audiovisual law, amend the electoral structure and other popular laws, such as finding solutions to the issue of loans, resolving the bedouin issue which has stood still for decades, and modifying and improving the living conditions of the citizens."

"However the issue of the Speaker of Parliament came at the forefront of these priorities and made it the most important and the MPs could not get out of it until they questioned His Highness the Prime Minister after which the government submitted its resignation and the MPs put on hold the popular issues and priorities."

"The question that needs an answer is: 'What did the citizen benefit from that? All this has opened the door wide for different scenarios which have multiplied amid many expectations. One side sees that the government is awaiting the constitutional court's verdict because it has to rule on more than one appeal, and others see that the dissolution of the parliament may be an option especially if some MPs insist on grilling HH the Prime Minister who is expected to be given the charge to form the government again."

"In my humble opinion if the MPs are honest with their orientations and priorities, they will be able to pass any law because they have the majority without considering the issue of the Speaker of the National Assembly, and it must be overridden."

"Though I denounce what happened in the opening session, and the wrongdoer should be held accountable, but it should not be at the expense of citizens' issues and popular priorities and wasting the Assembly's life and time. Citizens are waiting for their aspirations to be fulfilled."

"For all of this, I call on the MPs to cooperate with the next government after its formation regardless of the names and people, because the formation of the government is an inherent right of its president and the legislative authority has nothing to do with this matter."

"The constitution forbids interference in powers, and the legislative authority must monitor the performance of the government after giving it sufficient time, and if it sees that there is defect or transgression, let them use their constitutional tools, legislate and implement citizens' priorities and achieve their ambitions. The citizens will be victims of arrogance and stubbornness not forgetting the consequences of the Speakership election session."

"In conclusion, I pray to God to protect Kuwait, its Amir and its people from all harm, and to remove this (Corona) epidemic from us and the entire world."

"Democracy is nothing but the product of a moral revolution at the level of social values, and a political revolution in the view of societies (Burhan Ghalayoun)," columnist Dr Nada Sulaiman Al-Mutawa wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"Is democracy relative? Or is it a comprehensive umbrella for many practices that found their way to our countries through the polls? Do we have to spread

the culture of democracy before practicing it?"

"Many questions were raised when the halls of our educational institutions hosted conferences and initiatives over the past years, which took their place under the umbrella of democracy."

"Many colleagues took the initiative to write in this regard, but their works remained in the drawers, along with many other marginalized scientific studies at the scientific and research centers. I mention, for example but not limited to them, the scientific papers that dealt with the spread of violence among young people, which were initiated by professors from the College of Education and others in the Department of Psychology."

"This violence, which spread to faculty members, work corridors and Parliament, has become verbal and physical violence in light of the dwindling efforts on promoting mental health."

"Physical violence among young people worsened and it has raised the alarm. Unfortunately, no one listened, so today, the scenario is repeated in the field of education. Despite the scientific papers published by researchers of higher education institutions on e-learning, we floundered in the decision-making process. We stood in confusion among ourselves and in front of the executive stage, yet we ignored the evaluation and measurement institutions that should have tested the educational experience in the time of corona, so studies remained in the drawers and they have yet to see the light."

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"Humans, by nature, do not like restrictions ... Nevertheless, measures imposed on citizens and expatriates due to the corona pandemic are restrictions that should not be tolerated, especially since the epidemic is not retreating to safe levels along with the detection of two cases of the new strain of coronavirus as two Kuwaiti women who came from the UK tested positive for the new strain," columnist Abdulrahman Awwad wrote for Al-Sabah daily.

"Today, the Ministry of Health is required to explain to the public the extent of the risk of the new strain arriving in the country from Britain and if it was transmitted to the two citizens in the plane that carried them. Results of tests they underwent before boarding the plane showed they were healthy, so how did the results of the tests they took later showed they are infected with the new strain?"

"Today, everyone must adhere to all the health regulations as they are necessary in the current stage such as covering the nose and mouth, constantly disinfecting hands, maintaining physical distancing, and protecting groups of people at risk like those with chronic diseases, elderly and those with weak immune system."

"We need to take into account the regulations for which the ministry called on everyone to follow as prevention is better than cure, in addition to the fact that negligence at this particular time may cause severe setback and disaster."

"Returning to the last period, the use of sanitizer spray in complexes and markets has declined significantly. Today, we rarely see a store that requires customers to wear face mask. This is a dangerous indicator that must be immediately remedied by enforcing the law and obligating everyone for the safety of all citizens and residents."

— Compiled by Ahmad Al-Shazli

Other Voices

## Time to wake up from slumber!

By Ahmad alsarraf

Egypt was once a great nation, playing a significant role in terms of scholars, thinkers, writers, journalists, judges, engineers, doctors, and even teachers of the primary stages of education. Egypt reached its zenith in the modern era from the beginning and until the middle of the twentieth century. But creativity disappeared and began to decline with two major events – the first is the coup of July 23, 1952, which enabled the military to seize control of the state, and the greatness gradually disappeared and the second the forces of religious extremism that surfaced later with the consent of the regime. This eroded the people's consciousness and the situation ended in Egypt becoming disgruntled, with a high birthrate and corruption seeping every way of life.



alsarraf

Two years after the departure of Nasser in 1970, Tawfiq al-Hakim, one of Egypt's greatest golden era personality published his book 'The Return of Consciousness', and it caused an uproar due to its severe criticism of Nasser's rule and policy.

Kuwait is not Egypt. Kuwait's circumstances or its size cannot be compared to Egypt. We are happy and satisfied with the ruling family. However with the rapid developments in the region and the world, Kuwait needs a kind of return to its previous beautiful consciousness. We remained, especially after liberation, hostages of what is happening in the region, and on the other hand prisoners of the desires of two religious political parties.

For reasons that are long to be narrated, many neighboring countries have abandoned over time all the complications and legacy of the past and 'over-night' became more open and tolerant and the former religious men who were once seen as oppressors began calling for openness and welcomed foreign visitors and tourists, with flowers, a smile on the face and a kind word.

Egypt, the incubator for Brotherhood, has also succeeded in getting rid of their ideology and their legacy, devoted to modernizing the state and catching up with other countries of the world away from extremism and corrupt fundamentalism and this required dissolving the party and closing its headquarters.

In our regional system, we alone were

once the most open, tolerant and creative, but continued our subservience to the forces of backwardness and allowed them to control our capabilities as if the world around us had not changed. How is it possible to understand all this fierce campaign because a hotel violated the instructions of the Ministry of Health and held a party on New Year's Eve, compared to the silence of the same forces over real crimes, known thefts and too many stories of corruption?"

We hope all good for this stage, so how do we accept that the MPs and politicians prioritize and continue to pay attention to trivial matters, which any police officer can handle while big issues are left for time to heal or solve, under the pretext of respect for God? Does fighting corruption and eliminating it do not include respect for God?"

How did we come to adopt and cling to the former extremism abandoned by the great neighbor to the extent that we have become the only country in the world in which the fortune and star of the Brotherhood party rise, while this has faded from the face of the world in other countries?"

Yes, we want awareness to return. We are tired of all this hyperbole. We want new Abdul Hussein and Nafisi. We want the continuation of the creativity of Saad Al-Faraj, the return of the tunes and melodies of Shadi Al-Khalij and the honor of Sami Muhammad's sculptures, the return of the Al-Sanousi TV group to Al-Shorouk, the emergence of better radio and television programs, and the release of the energies of Suad, Hayat and dozens of other creative women.

We want the melody to return, the theater to live, the radio to hear, and the television to watch. We want the citizen and resident to enjoy the creativity of the nation's youth. We want someone who fills the terrifying place in the stadium, compensates us for Al-Anbari, and returns us to the level of Al-Anbari in scorer. We want shackled books, novels and literary texts to break free from the drawers of a censor man who has left the ministry – a man who is ignorant of who Jalaluddin is.

We want a minister of culture who is known for his culture, and who knows what a person needs, not what the parties require. We want an education minister who knows how to teach and educate the young according to the best modern world systems and not according to Sayed Qutb's instructions.

Do we ask for the impossible? Finally, we wonder: Does the person who wants reform really choose a particular MP to be a minister?"

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Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah chairs the meeting with senior Mol officials. KUNA photo

### Top Mol officials meet, discuss security boost

Interior Minister Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah headed a meeting recently with the Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham and several senior officials to help improve security performance of different interior sectors and ways of evolving its work.

In a statement, the Ministry's General Administration for Security Relations and Media said that the minister affirmed the importance of strategic planning, and ways of rehabilitating the human component in order

to improve the ministry's performance, whether through technology or any other mean necessary.

The minister asked to improve old decisions and rules, and working on changing them in a way that coups with the evolution of technology in the world, it added.

Minister Al-Sabah stressed on the importance of facing any glitches or security breaches, "no tolerance towards anyone who neglects his duties when it comes to protecting Kuwait's security," he said. (KUNA)

# 2 officers among 7 acquitted in 'State Security Leaks' case

Kuwaiti duo absolved in drug-peddling

By Jaber Al-Hamoud  
Al-Seyassah Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20:** The Court of Appeals overturned the verdict issued by a lower court which sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen and his friend to four-year imprisonment with hard labor, and imposed a fine of KD 1,000 each as well as ordered the withdrawal of the citizen's driving licence. The appellate court acquitted them of the charges.



Al-Sayegh

The Public Prosecution charged the defendants for possessing hashish intended for consuming them but without authorization to do so. They were also found in possession

of two psychotropic substances – methamphetamine and amphetamine.

The two were stopped by the police for speeding, and the arresting officer conducted provisional search on the vehicle and found the narcotics.

Representing the defendants was Lawyer Muhammad Al-Sayegh who faulted the entire procedures taken by the arresting police, given that he conducted the stop and search without a probable cause.

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**Seven acquitted:** The Criminal Court recently acquitted seven defendants in the case of "State Security leaks" including two officers. At the same time, the court called upon the administrators and leaders of the State Security Agency to review the administrative and security system in the agency, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The court revealed that it has become clear to it that there are many aspects of the administrative system in this apparatus that are defective and faulty, and that the weaknesses in the security system of this apparatus has reached to such a point that leaks are made without being able to trace the perpetrators.

The Criminal Court clarified that the State Security apparatus is not like the rest of the security services, as it is

relied upon to maintain the security of the state both internally and externally. Those in charge of it must promote its administrative and security systems in a manner befitting the level of the state, either in terms of the system in force or of the human elements.

Returning to the reasons for the acquittal of the defendants, the court explained that the accusation relied upon the findings of the investigations and the statements of the investigating officer regarding the results of his investigations on the incident. However, they are not sufficient in the eyes of the law, given that they were based on secret sources and not backed with substantial evidence.

What the investigation officer stated in his statements that the decision to transfer one of the accused from his position to another was what made him carry hatred and anger towards his subordinates, and that the second defendant had the intention to harm his directors, is not reassuring, since what the investigation officer decided in the foregoing is only analysis that do not amount to the certainty of evidence on which it relies in indicting the accused. The court stressed that the moral in criminal trials is the conviction of the trial judge based on the evidence presented to him that the accused is guilty or innocent, and that rulings in the penal articles are neither established nor taken except on certainty and conviction.

### Duo nabbed in gold theft

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20:** A Lebanese couple, believed to be in their 30s, has been arrested and held at the Salihiya Police Station for allegedly attempting to steal 28 grams of gold believed to be worth 500 dinars, reports Al-Anba daily.

The arrest came after the Syrian goldsmith filed a complaint at the police station accusing the couple of stealing the gold necklace.

Meanwhile, the Jahra police have arrested three Indians for beating their compatriot and stealing 230 dinars from him when they were under the influence of alcohol due to personal disputes, reports Al-Rai daily.

### Employment Opportunity with the U.S. Mission in Kuwait

The U.S. Mission to Kuwait is seeking to attract the highest caliber and best qualified staff. Interested applicants should review the position vacancy thoroughly to ensure that their qualifications meet all the requirements.

Current job openings Closing date

- Procurement Agent** January 31, 2021
- Radio Technician (3 positions)** January 31, 2021
- Antenna Rigger** January 31, 2021

To Apply Applicants must log in to ERA from the main ERA site to apply for a vacancy.

Website: <https://kw.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

News in Brief

**55 without license:** The traffic campaigns that were organized under the supervision of the Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Sector, Major-General Jamal Al-Sayegh, from Jan 9 until Jan 15 of this month, resulted in the arrest of 55 people – 51 juveniles and four expatriates – who were caught driving without licence, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the juveniles have been referred to the Juvenile Prosecution while the Asians have been referred to the deportation center; this is in addition to the arrest of four other men who were caught for possessing drugs.

Moreover, the men in uniform have also issued 42,895 citations to motorists for committing various kinds of violations.

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**Smuggling bid foiled:** The Nuwaiseeb customs officers, in coordination and cooperation with the General Department for Drugs Control (GDDC), thwarted an attempt to smuggle 23 kilos of hashish, reports Al-Anba daily.

The security authorities have taken into custody an unidentified Kuwaiti who tried to smuggle the contraband into the country by hiding it into a spare tire from a neighboring country.

The Deputy Director General for Ports Affairs, Suleiman Al-Fahad, has praised the efforts of Nuwaiseeb customs men in particular and customs men in general for exerting efforts to prevent the entry of this 'poison' into the country.

The contraband and the suspect have been referred to the concerned authorities.