



## Fatwa 'verbal nod' to KD 1,000 60s renewal cost

### Opinion

#### One Amir, not 50

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GIVEN that action speaks louder than words, the speech of His Highness the Amir addressing His Highness the Crown Prince, Speaker of the National Assembly, and His Highness the Prime Minister was clear and frank in terms of their need to work for advancing the country.

HIS Highness the Amir's words - "People want things to be in the interest of their country" - should be something that everyone should realize, especially those in the highest positions of responsibility, so that people will start believing that the difficult days are gone for good.

In the past years, people felt like there were 50 amirs in the National Assembly, that each one of them had his own group and followers, and that he alone was "the mover and shaker" or else an interpellation would be brandished to terrify the Cabinet and its leader.

The words of His Highness the Amir are clear in terms of assuming responsibilities today, in addition to His Highness our Crown Prince being the main pillar of leadership, assisted by Speaker of the National Assembly and His Highness the Prime Minister who must be at the level of great trust that their Highness the Amir has placed in them.

The picture will not be clearer than what it is in terms of what the National Assembly and the ministers must work on to restore Kuwait to its open nature and its prosperity, particularly its pioneering role when it was the "beacon of the Gulf" culturally and socially. The most prominent example is of it being the moderator of the Gulf and Arabs. Hence the great task falling on the shoulders of these three requires doubled efforts in seeking to get the country out of what can be called "parliamentary bullying" of the government.

There are many priorities that concern the people, the first of which is the fight against corruption, which has caused many harms both externally and internally, in addition to the articulated economic challenges that require transcendence of personal interests in order to stimulate investment both externally and internally, and to work seriously to diversify sources of income and not rely on oil, especially after every one discovered its dire consequences sparked by the negative repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed the weaknesses in this field.

On the other hand, His Highness the Crown Prince drew the general guidelines based on which the two authorities should work, as he said to His Highness the Amir that, "All of them follow the instructions of Your Highness that I have drawn for them, restricting them to the constitution and law, justice and equality to gradually purge all corruption in the country while preserving people's rights and with judicial and security principles".

According to this criterion, it has become the duty of the executive authority not to be afraid of being blamed for the truth, as it strives to achieve it.

Based on this fact, we do not exaggerate if we say that the two authorities - if they agree to cooperate under the directives of His Highness the Crown Prince, who is the first trustee of the country after His Highness the Amir - can achieve all the hopes that Kuwaitis aspire to, and they can accomplish what some see as impossible, provided that they have sincere intentions.

Also, the MPs and the Cabinet should rise above the arguments in order for Kuwait to return to being the pearl of the Gulf, or rather the jewel of the Arabs

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### Fee 'increase'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: In a new development that predicts a breakthrough in '60s file' the Fatwa and Legislation Department of the Council of Ministers is said to have confirmed the legality of the decision of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) to impose a 500 dinars fee to renew the work permits of non-graduate expatriates who are 60 years and above for approximately 1,000 dinars -- 500 dinars renewal fee and 500 dinars private health insurance, reports Al-Rai daily.

However, the Fatwa Department said the modalities on the insurance policy which is expected to be between 500 dinars and 550 dinars are being worked out.

Nonetheless, the sources indicated the Fatwa authority has responded orally to the inquiry that it received in this regard recently, pending an official decision to this effect, indicating that the opinion that the authority concluded was based on the fact that the work permit renewal fee is actually applied, and the new development in the PAM decision is increasing this fee to 500 dinars and not 'introducing it'.

The sources indicated that the Fatwa decision is expected to also include its opinion regarding the exclusion of some communities and groups from paying the work permit renewal fees, in an effort to prevent legal hurdles that may affect the decision.

Meanwhile, the sources added that there is an open discussion between insurance companies and Ministry of Commerce and Industry officials regarding the value of the private insurance policy, indicating there is a close agreement between local companies to issue the policy for between 500 and 550 dinars per year.

### Work on Nghi Son refinery 'kicks off'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: According to reliable sources, the Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Company (NSRP) in the Republic of Vietnam has already started implementing the recommendations of the study on a comprehensive transformation of the refinery, especially after overcoming the technical and operational problems of the refinery and fixing the technical defects, reports Al-Rai daily.

They highlighted their confidence that the refinery will return to work in an exemplary manner.

The sources revealed that the refinery company reduced the annual operating costs by approximately 25 percent, compared to the operating costs at the time of commercial operations.

They stressed that the refinery company assigned a financial advisory house to support it in its negotiations with banks and financiers regarding financial restructuring and debt scheduling.

The sources said, "The financing banks have given preliminary approval to schedule the refinery loan and extend the end of the loan term by two additional years so that the refinery company can get out of financial hardship and be able to pay its debts, with the participation of all partners, each according to his share of ownership, in order to provide the necessary liquidity and maintain the operation of the refinery at its full capacity".

### Day by Day

WE ask the current Minister of Interior and the next... What prevents the naturalization of children of a Kuwaiti mother from a non-Kuwaiti father, irrespective whether the man is living or dead?

Is it not enough that she gave birth to them, raised them up; fed and clothed them in the country of giving, the country of goodness? She and her children have known no other country but Kuwait. In their thoughts and mind there is no other homeland but Kuwait.

Naturalize these children just like all the civilized nations do. By God, the world looks at us with sarcasm.

... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## WORLD ALERT OVER VARIANT Kuwait bans arrivals from southern Africa countries



A sealed coffin containing the remains of a COVID-19 victim is stored in a refrigerated container in Johannesburg, Feb. 2, 2021. A new coronavirus variant has been detected in South Africa that scientists say is a concern because of its high number of mutations and rapid spread among young people in Gauteng, the country's most populous province. (AP)

### NewsWatch

**CAIRO:** Kuwait's Constitutional Court has rejected an appeal against a condition obligating expatriates working in the government to leave the country to get their end-of-service gratuity, says Gulf News, quoting a Kuwaiti newspaper.

Earlier this year, an official at the Civil Service Commission, Kuwait's employment agency, said that expatriates whose employment has been terminated must show a departure notification before they can obtain their end-of-service dues. At the time, the official explained that the measure aims at implementing a state plan for modifying the country's demographic makeup.

**DUBAI:** Police fired tear gas and birdshot while fighting protesters with batons on Friday in a central Iranian city that has seen days of demonstrations demanding government action over a drought, online videos show.

The social media videos and others from activists show police and protesters clashing in the dry bed of the Zayandehrud River in the city of Isfahan. The videos correspond to reporting by The Associated Press and satellite images of the area, as well as some semi-official Iranian news agency accounts of the unrest.

Videos from Human Rights Activists in Iran show demonstrators throwing stones at police, while others depict bloodied protesters, including one man who appeared to have wounds in his back from birdshot. (AP)

**RIYADH:** Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr. Nayef Al-Hajraf congratulated the leadership of the United Arab Emirates on the election of the UAE Maj.-Gen Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al Raisi as president of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) for a four-year term.

The election of Maj.-Gen. Al Raisi by the 89th session of the Interpol General Assembly earlier Thursday is a great achievement and source of pride for all citizens of the GCC member countries and the Arab world at large, Dr. Al-Hajraf said in a press release. (KUNA)

**RIYADH:** The Ministry of Interior of Saudi Arabia said Thursday that travelers from six countries would be allowed to enter the Kingdom directly as of Wednesday, Dec 1, 2021, without having to stay in a third country for 14 days.

These countries are Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam, the Saudi Press agency reported, citing a source in the Ministry.

Arrivals have to spend five days in institutional quarantine regardless of their immunization status outside the Kingdom, the source said, noting that exceptions issued for some categories of people are still applicable. (KUNA)

**BEIRUT:** A small group of protesters broke into a ministry building in Beirut early on Friday and removed a photo of the president from one of its main rooms, as the Lebanese pound hit a new low amid a worsening economic and political stalemate.

The protesters who entered the Ministry of Social Affairs said conditions in crisis-hit Lebanon have become unbearable as a result of the rapid economic collapse and ongoing crash of the pound, which reached 25,100 to the dollar. The previous record was 25,000. (AP)

**TUNIS:** Tunisia's Interior Ministry has said that a man who attempted to attack security officials in central Tunisia was a known extremist.

The 31-year-old man previously studied abroad and is on a list of Takfiris, an extremist group that views other Muslims or certain groups as apostates, according to a statement released late Friday on the ministry's Facebook page. (AP)

### UK reports cases ... 'No indication in US'

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (Agencies):** The Kuwaiti General Administration of Civil Aviation announced Saturday, the suspension of direct commercial flights with South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zambia and Malawi, with the exception of cargo planes.

The administration said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the institutional quarantine is applied to citizens coming from those aforementioned countries for a period of seven days, with a PCR examination performed upon arrival and on the sixth day of the quarantine.

She stated that it is forbidden for residents to enter the country if they are coming from those countries unless they reside outside those countries for at least 14 days.

She explained that this decision came based on the instructions of the Kuwaiti health authorities and in view of the situation and the repercussions of the spread of a new mutated strain of the Coronavirus.

The administration called on citizens to avoid travel at the present time, except in cases of necessity, especially to countries where the new mutated strain of the virus has appeared.

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The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Turkey decided Friday to bar arrivals from Southern African countries as a precaution against the new variant of coronavirus (COVID-19), B.I.1.529 or Omicron.

In Abu Dhabi, the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) and the National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority (NCEMA) suspended all arriving flights from South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The suspension takes effect as from Monday, according to a joint statement by both authorities.

The Bahraini Civil Aviation Affairs said it has blacklisted six countries, namely South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The authority updated the entry measures and advised those willing to travel to the Kingdom to visit the Health Ministry's website (healthaet.gov.bh).

In Amman, the Jordanian Ministry of Interior decided to bar non-Jordanian arrivals from seven countries.

Travelers from these countries need to spend a fortnight in a third country considered to be safer from the new variant, according to a press release from the ministry.

Saudi Ministry of Interior on Friday announced a temporary suspension of flights to and from seven African countries, namely South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Eswatini.

The move was taken due to the spread of the novel coronavirus, an official source at the ministry said in a statement.

Non-Saudi citizens coming from these countries are not allowed to enter the Kingdom of Saudi ARABIA either through direct or indirect flights provided that they spend 14 days in other countries allowed by Saudi authorities, it added.

The exempted categories, including Saudis, coming from the seven countries should subject to a 5-day constitutional quarantine regardless of the state of vaccination, it noted.

In Cairo, Spokesman of the Egyptian Prime Minister's Office announced travel restrictions on arrivals from seven countries.

### Restrictions

Arrivals in Cairo as a transit point en route to another destination have to undergo a quick PCR test, Ambassador Nader Saad said in a press release, noting that the new restrictions are a precaution against the Omicron Variant.

Similarly, the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation announced barring arrivals from the seven countries of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The ban includes travelers to the Kingdom of Morocco as a final or transit destination, the ministry said, noting that the preventive measure is meant to protect the gains made in the combat against Covid-19.

In Ankara, Turkish Minister of Health Fahrettin Koca announced a ban on travel from the five African countries of Botswana, Republic of South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, and

Zimbabwe as of Friday night.

Earlier Saturday, the World Health Organization (WHO) sounded the alarm about the emergence of the Omicron strain of coronavirus in Southern Africa, deeming it "a variant of concern."

Britain became the latest country Saturday to report cases of the new potentially more contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus as governments around the world sought to shore up their defenses by slapping restrictions on travel from nations in southern Africa.

Amid fears that the recently identified new variant has the potential to be more resistant to the protection offered by vaccines, there are growing concerns that the pandemic and associated lockdown restrictions will persist for far longer than hoped.

U.K. Health Secretary Sajid Javid confirmed that two people have tested positive with the omicron variant and that the cases are linked and related to travel from southern Africa. One is in the southeastern English town of Brentwood, while the other is in the central city of Nottingham. The government had earlier said one of the locations was Chelmsford, and it didn't give any reason for the change.

Javid said the two confirmed cases are self-isolating alongside their households while contact tracing and targeted testing takes place. He also added four more countries - Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia - onto the country's travel red list from Sunday. Six others - Botswana, Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland), Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe - were added Friday. That means anyone permitted to arrive from those destinations will have to quarantine.

"This is a real reminder that this pandemic is far from over," he said. "If we need to take further action, we will."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, along with his top advisers, will be holding a media briefing later Saturday.

### Advice

Many countries have slapped restrictions on various southern African countries over the past couple of days including Australia, Brazil, Canada, the European Union, Iran, Japan, Thailand and the United States, in response to warnings over the transmissibility of the new variant - against the advice of the World Health Organization.

Despite the banning of flights, there are mounting concerns that the variant has already been widely seeded around the world. In addition to the U.K., cases have been reported in travelers in Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong. Germany also said it suspected a positive case and Dutch authorities were testing whether 61 people who arrived on two flights from South Africa with COVID-19 have the omicron variant.

The planes arrived in the Netherlands from Johannesburg and Cape Town shortly after the Dutch government imposed a ban on flights from southern African nations. The 539 travelers who tested negative were allowed to return home or continue their journeys to other countries. Under government regulations, those who live in the Netherlands and are allowed to return home must self-isolate for at least five days.

Meanwhile, a German official said that there's a "very high probability" that the omicron variant has already arrived in the country.

Kai Klose, the health minister for Hesse state, which includes Frankfurt, said in a tweet that "several mutations typical of omicron" were found Friday night in a traveler returning from South Africa, who was isolated at home. Sequencing of the test had yet to be completed.

Italian authorities in the southern region of Campania were also investigating whether a person who recently returned home from southern Africa and who has tested positive for the virus was infected with the omicron variant.

The global health body has named the new variant omicron, labeling it a variant of concern because of its high number of mutations and some early evidence that it carries a higher degree of infection than other variants. That means people who contracted COVID-19 and recovered could be subject to catching it again. It could take weeks to know if current vaccines are less effective against it.

With so much uncertainty about the omicron variant and scientists unlikely to flesh out their findings for a few weeks, countries around the world have been taking a safety-first approach, in the knowledge that previous outbreaks of the pandemic have been partly fueled by lax border policies.

Nearly two years on since the start of the pandemic that has claimed more than 5 million lives around the world, countries are on high alert.

## PAM to hone skills of new graduates

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Deputy Director-General for National Manpower Affairs at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Abdullah Al-Mutaotah announced that the authority Wednesday held an introductory session on a distance training course for newly graduated job seekers, with the cooperation of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement, he said the session was held in the presence of 188 job seekers, as the course is scheduled to start this week.

Al-Mutaotah affirmed that the training course includes many skills that job seekers need which would support them professionally, and these courses will refine their skills and prepare them to work in the private sector.