

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:58	Asr	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:22	Maghrib ..	16:50
Zohr	11:36	Isha	18:11

Local

VACCINE REGISTRATION WEBSITE: https://cov19vaccine.moh.gov.kw/SPCMS/CVD_19_Vaccine_Registration.aspx

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Mild with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind with speeds of 12-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Rather cold with light

to moderate freshening over coastal areas north westerly wind with speeds of 12-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	27	19
Kuwait Airport	27	18

Abdaly	29	13
Jahra	30	17
Salmiyah	25	20
Ahmadi	25	20
Nuwaisib	27	17
Wafra	29	17
Salmiyah	28	11
Jal Aliyah	26	13

Teams prepared for mid-year school exams

'MoE printing press not Kuwaitized to prevent leakage of tests'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: All of the educational zones of the Ministry of Education (MoE) have started forming work teams in their confidential printing presses in preparation for the mid-school year exams. Each printing press will have 15 to 20 male and female employees in each educational zone, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to an educational source, there are six printing presses, including the central printing press of the Ministry of Education, where two Kuwaitis and two expatriates are members.

He rejected the rumors that the printing press is undergoing Kuwaitization in order to preserve the confidentiality of the tests.

The source indicated that the idea of Kuwaitization of the printing press was suggested in the previous years, but was not implemented despite the ministry's confidence in all its working cadres entrusted with the future of its children.

Readiness

He affirmed the readiness of the intermediate level exams in various areas where their models were prepared by the technical guidance department in the academic fields.

The source explained that they will be launched from January 26, 2022 to February 10, 2022. The secondary level exam forms were delivered to the main printing press of the ministry with questions that took into account the individual differences of students, and did not deviate from the framework of the course that they studied in the two-group system.

The transportation of the secondary school exam papers will be using the ministry's vehicles during the middle of the year, unlike last year when the experience was exceptional through the use of Ministry of Defense's vehicles.

The source denied any shortage in the number of graders, stressing that the mechanism will be carried out in accordance with the health requirements in force during the testing period, the most important of which is the application of spacing between the graders in line with the distances specified by the Ministry of Health.

Regarding the confidentiality of the tests and their preservation from leakage, the source revealed that there are surveillance cameras placed throughout the undisclosed presses to monitor and follow up everything that is going

on, in addition to fortifying the mechanism and preserving its privacy by preventing anyone from entering the presses except for its employees, minister of Education, undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and the assistant undersecretary for Public Education Affairs.

He affirmed that the members of the press have signed written pledges to preserve the confidentiality of the tests, adding that in the event of their leakage, they would bear full criminal responsibility.

Venues

The source went on to explain that the workers at the printing presses are prevented from entering with their smartphones or any electronic devices. The head of the printing press is held responsible for distributing tasks and roles to the rest of the members, in order to ensure the privacy of the tests and the provision of security and safety measures for the workers in a safe and healthy environment.

It is worth mentioning that near the gates of the venues of the mid-year exams, some electronic stores have been active in promoting their goods to attract thousands of male and female students.

Regarding this, an educational source said technical devices are developing at an amazing pace, and the Ministry of Education should double its effort related to inspection of students during the exam period in order to reduce this unhealthy phenomenon.

He stressed the need to issue deterrent laws to prevent the spread of these devices, especially since there are many advertising magazines that display without fear their products and various advanced means, including tiny earbuds, visa cards, and watches.

The source insisted that this phenomenon necessitates cooperation from various government agencies, especially the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

He said, "The secondary examination boxes will be transferred from the central control to the educational zones in the ministry's vehicles, unlike last year. The transfer process will be carried out with security support on a daily basis to provide the necessary privacy and save the exams from leakage. The dates of their transfer and distribution to secondary schools will be like the previous years, as envelopes will be opened at 8:00am in all exam committees."



Director-General of Kuwait Customs Counselor Jamal Al-Jalawi with a delegation from the US Department of Energy.

Bid to combat smuggling of radiological material

Director-General of Kuwait General Administration of Customs, Jamal Al-Jalawi, discussed Thursday, with the American delegation from the department of energy ways to boost joint collaboration in developing abilities of customs in detecting and intercepting the smuggling of radiological materials.

The administration stated in press release that the meeting discussed ways to improve procedures and issue laws neces-

sary to curb such smuggling by involving related government agencies and coordinating with them.

The statement also mentioned the training of large numbers of inspectors and security and safety officers on necessary techniques and procedures.

The meeting concluded with transferring the property of radiological material detection gates, installed in Doha port and Al-Abdali

center to the customs administration.

According to the statement, the American delegation conducted visits to Doha port and Al-Abdali center to check on importing and installing the detection gates, as well as a visit to Kuwait's International Airport where they met with Head of Air Customs and discussed modern technology to further combat the smuggling of radiological materials. (KUNA)

'Replace faulty manhole covers'

Safety lanes validity reviewed

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: In confirmation to what was published on November 18 regarding the controversies related to converting the shoulder of the road into a fast lane, the concerned authorities have issued a decision to re-evaluate the validity of safety lanes on the roads, especially after the accident caused by a manhole on the safety lane, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The decision stipulated assigning the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transportation (PART) Eng. Rajaa Al-Moumin to take necessary steps for inspecting all safety lanes on Fahaheel Expressway (Road 30), and necessary measures to quickly replace the covers of manholes that do not meet the technical specifications of all roads where the left shoulder has been converted into fast lane.

The decision called on the director general of the authority to prepare a technical study on the safety lanes that were converted into fast lanes for all roads throughout the country and consider their infrastructure and the possibility of using them, and to determine the safety lanes on the roads that must be suspended and converted back into safety lanes.

A quick look at the decision issued on November 22 indicates that the process of converting the shoulder of the road

into a safety lane in the past was carried out without a careful technical study to determine the status of each of them and whether it would allow converting it into a fast lane or not.

According to sources, the work order that was canceled was related to the site of the accident. It explicitly stipulated that the manhole covers would be blown out and that they should be changed to avoid any damage. The decision to cancel the work order at a later time came due to the difficulty of replacing the covers because of the deterioration of the structure of most of the manholes on the road, as they were made of bricks during the 1980s.

They questioned the reason for the stipulation that the manholes are made of bricks, although it is obvious that they are made of strong concrete, stressing that, "The manholes in question were built of concrete (reinforced concrete). The manholes that are built of bricks threaten a high risk of a catastrophe in the long term unless they are changed as soon as possible because they cannot bear heavy weights".

The sources also questioned the responsibility of the project contractor, who finished his work in 2018, and the receiving committee, especially since the project is assumed to still be under warranty.

'Not business-friendly'

Kuwait 2nd among Gulf for middle-pay families

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: According to the British "Oxford Economics Institution for Economic Studies, Kuwait has been ranked second in the Gulf after Saudi Arabia in terms of the number of middle-income families, reports Al-Rai daily.

It affirmed that the number of middle-class families is an important local market potential.

Informed sources revealed that the reform of the business sector is a fundamental pillar of the foreign direct investment strategy in the Gulf countries, adding that much of the focus in the Gulf countries and the Middle East has been on improving the business environment and reducing the regulatory burden.

Kuwait ranked last in the Gulf region in implementing policies capable of improving the business environment and facilitating the implementation of business activities.

In its report titled "The Middle East and North Africa: UAE and Qatar - the Most Attractive for Foreign Direct Investments", the institution stated that the potential for the export market in most parts of the Middle East depends on development of the leadership positions in the emerging digital and advanced technology sectors.

It explained that the oil and gas sector will continue to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as evidenced by the rise of FDI in the UAE in 2020. However, the region needs to attract investment across broader sectors. The goal of special economic zones and public investment is to generate a positive cycle of economic diversification and increase direct foreign investment.

Kuwait lags behind its neighbors, despite the urgent need for a credible economic plan. There has been a decline in foreign direct investment in Kuwait such that it has been placed in last position within the Gulf region in terms of attractiveness of foreign direct investment.

The Gulf economies will continue to invest in improving their infrastructure, as they have ambitious development plans for economic diversification and have available financial resources to do so.

Public-private partnership (PPP) projects can help support infrastructural investments across the region. Tighter spending budgets and widening infrastructure investment gaps are creating conditions for PPP mechanisms across the region.

Dubai and Kuwait are likely to be prominent markets at present in the region, with public-private partnership programs for roads and other infrastructure, but there is scope for other countries to also benefit from the public-private partnership.

However, Kuwait ranked last among the Gulf economies and tenth in the Middle East and North Africa in terms of infrastructure quality.

One of the main drivers of foreign direct investment is access to a relatively cheap and well-educated workforce for integration into global supply chains.

This is not usually seen as a competitive advantage for the Middle East, although the workforce in the Gulf is relatively well educated, average wages are fairly high, and the focus on enhancing the attractiveness of FDI is on quality infrastructure and improving business systems.

In this context, the labor force in Kuwait is the least educated in the Gulf and among the least educated in the region in terms of average years of education.

On the other hand, the Gulf countries generally spend between 4-10 percent of GDP on infrastructure, which is comparable to spending by some Asian economies. As a result, the quality of infrastructure in the GCC ranks relatively high.

'Be brave to overcome threats to democracy'

Best system: Speaker Al-Ghanim

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim has stressed the need for everyone to be courageous enough in order to overcome challenges in practicing democracy.

In his speech at the 143rd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Madrid, Spain; Al-Ghanim clarified that highlighting the shortcomings while adopting democracy is not aimed at damaging the latter. He pointed out such a move is rather aimed at protecting democracy from distortion, deterioration and disappointment.

He underscored a statement in the explanatory memo of the assembly about the risks of partiality leading to division and the spread of wrong information on social media.

He said talking about challenges in practicing democracy has nothing to do with procedures and refutations; as it is about the social, economic and cultural effects of democracy. "In other words, we have to overcome challenges to the essence and philosophy of democracy rather than its form, shape and structure," he explained.

Al-Ghanim said subjective criticism is a wrong way of practicing democracy and it should not be compared to criticizing an adored icon. He asserted that the deviation of any regime in adopting a democratic form is the real danger and the first obstacle to developing democracy and addressing shortcomings.

"We should not be afraid of pointing out any erroneous practice of democracy. We must be fully aware that democracy is a method, not a goal; and it is a practice, not a mere slogan. We should not become slaves

of a political or legal figure with a democratic name. The entire world has agreed that democracy is the best compared to other systems adopted by mankind throughout the ages. Democracy must not be absolute, so it should be corrected whenever the need arises," he added.

He then expressed his gratitude to the organizers of the assembly for choosing this vital topic.

In addition, the speaker attended the meeting of the Arab Geopolitical Parliamentary Group on the sidelines of the IPU assembly; which started on Nov 26 and will end on Nov 30.

During the meeting, Al-Ghanim affirmed that Kuwait is keen on unifying positions on the issues concerning Arabs and Muslims, which will be presented to the IPU. He also highlighted the active role of Kuwait in the meetings of Arab, Islamic and Asian geopolitical parliamentary groups.

He disclosed that the agenda of the abovementioned meeting included the need to fill up vacancies in some committees at the Arab Geopolitical Parliamentary Group.

He said MP Hamad Al-Matar was elected member of the permanent committee for sustainable development.

He added the proposal of the Indonesian Parliament regarding the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinians was discussed at the meeting as a prelude to deliberations in the IPU assembly. He confirmed that an agreement has been reached to support the proposal.

He went on to say that Turkey submitted an equally important proposal - to combat terrorism and foil attempts to offend the Islamic Sharia on social media.

He clarified both proposals are vital, but only one can be ratified during the assembly; so the suggestion at the meeting was to merge the two proposals or postpone any one of them until the next assembly which will be held in Bali, Indonesia. He added the decision in this regard will be finalized in the coordinative meeting of the Asian Geopolitical Parliamentary Group.

Biometrics to keep track of staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Ministry of Higher Education (MoE) has activated additional fingerprint devices on the ground floor of the Ministry's headquarters building to keep track of employees' entry, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to the circular issued by the Ministry, the employee must mark the attendance in the morning through the fingerprint device twice "once on the ground floor and then on the floor where the employee works."

It is worth noting that, based on what the union workers in the ministry announced on its account on Twitter that this step came

after the union's demands to provide additional fingerprint devices for employees on the ground floor to avoid any delay in proof of attendance. The union thanked the ministry's officials for their response to the request.

Note that the proof of departure is recorded through the fingerprint devices installed on the floor where the employee works.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has ruled out the idea of using military vehicles to transport test papers for the first period exams - a step it took at the end of the previous academic year, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Bitcoin currency devices seized

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) has confiscated technical devices believed to be used in mining the digital currency 'Bitcoin'; without revealing the identity of the owners of these devices or their numbers, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed KGAC commissioned experts from the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) to verify the nature of the devices, indicating these experts confirmed that Bitcoin mining is one of the functions of the confiscated devices.

Sources said the concerned officials opened an extensive legal discussion

on ways to deal with the devices; while it is known that the mining process consumes a large amount of energy, making Kuwait a target for such operations due to the cheap price of electricity here.

However, the problem lies in the absence of a mechanism to criminalize or prevent the import of these devices, especially since the process has been proven to be very difficult due to the remarkable technological advancements and the increasing number of miners. They have resorted to more than one method of mining, which increased the complexities of filing charges against the owners of these devices or releasing information about the devices, sources added.

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