



'Fatwa working on 60s decision'

PAM head said referred for investigation

Opinion

Debate over eggs and chickens will waste us

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

HISTORICAL accounts narrate a story about the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine). In the fifth century AD, the people of that empire were preoccupied with a debate over what came first - chicken or egg. This distraction led them to fail in realizing the danger posed by their enemies who had besieged their city.

Their enemies went on to occupy the city, while the Byzantines were busy with their debate until it became an example in history, such that people began referring to any sterile debate as "Byzantine".

This incident reminds me of the bitter reality that Kuwait is experiencing. At a time when countries rushed to eliminate the economic risks sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic by taking advantage of the opportunity to strengthen their sovereign assets and recover what their country had lost during the pandemic either by borrowing to buy assets and strengthening the sovereign money or stimulating the private sector, Kuwait was preoccupied with the debate between the government and the National Assembly over minor matters.

This led some opportunists to grasp the moment and capitalize on the pandemic through tenders and bids that exceed their actual cost by a large extent, and charged public money with a new deficit.

The government did not try to stop these violations. It instead resorted to complicating the situation by imposing impractical solutions in the matter of stimulating the private sector, as if the government was fueling the fire.

It is true that the executive authority is trying as much as possible to hold people responsible for their electoral choices, but by doing so, it is shooting its own foot. In the end, the government and the people are the ones who will pay the price, not the MPs.

This is due to the fact that the MPs are like a saw with firm conviction that the tribal or sectarian prestige, or their act of buying votes was what brought them into the parliament due to which they must benefit from that. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise when the accounts of a large segment of them swelled overnight.

The voters' bets on the MPs are due to the lack of a clear plan of action by the executive authority to deal with national issues. People believe in every new slogan launched from anywhere but they ask for only two basic things.

First, revitalize the economic cycle, and reclassify Kuwait's sovereign wealth to its glorious days. Also, hold accountable those who missed the many opportunities in the past two years, instead of the past three decades, and maintain a minimum standard of decent living.

Second, strengthen the sovereign wealth by limiting its management and supervision to the political leadership. This means that the Kuwait Investment Authority, the Future Generations Fund and other related bodies directly fall under the political leadership that appoints trustees with experienced economic and financial expertise, and deter any form of intercession (wasta) from any party.

People aspire for the revival of the past social and cultural openness in Kuwait as well as to being an Arab beacon, not only to the Gulf region like it was in the second half of the twentieth century, and whose institutions are still living on the legacy of that success.

On the other hand, the parliamentary outputs related to tribal, sectarian and political currents were the reason for cuffing the country with a series of backward laws, as if they wanted people to work for its afterlife. There is an honorable hadith - "Work for your life as if you live forever and work for your hereafter as if you die tomorrow."

Working for the hereafter does not mean not striving to improve the conditions of the state and people. These factions aim to mold people according to their goals in order to dominate society more. They hence worked to close Kuwait in this manner, which led to the economic and financial ruin that we are enduring today.

Kuwaitis view their political leadership as their final refuge. They are not asking more than to stop such Byzantine debates between a government that lost its chicken and an assembly that assumes its egg is a stone.

Nonetheless, this goes without mentioning that the last remedy is cauterization in order to turn the page of a government and a national assembly that brought nothing but ruin to this country.

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Bid to address disarmament challenges

Kuwait affirms position on multilateral action

NEW YORK, Oct 12, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has affirmed its firm position on multilateral action as the best way to address the disarmament and non-proliferation challenges and to enhance international cooperation in this regard, under the umbrella of the United Nations.

This came during Kuwait's speech delivered by Minister Plenipotentiary Tariq Mohammad Al-Bannai before the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

Al-Bannai welcomed any progress made in the field of disarmament, expressing concern about any failure to comply with the agreed commitments and the deliberate and continuous disregard of the international community's repeated appeals for the univer-

salization of multiple treaties and agreements.

He pointed out that Kuwait will chair the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East at the end of next November.

Moreover, he pointed out that achieving the desired goal will be one of the most important confidence-building measures in the region.

Al-Bannai stressed that this may contribute to improving and strengthening relations between countries, establishing security and stability regionally and globally, as well as facilitating and encouraging cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and its uses for peaceful purposes.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 12: The Council of Ministers has approved the opinion of the Fatwa and Legislation Department and termed 'illegal' the decision issued by the Public Authority for Manpower not to renew the work permits of expatriates who are 60 years and above and hold only higher secondary school certificates or below, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Fatwa department had earlier said the decision to ban the renewal of work permits for

this category was issued without jurisdiction and based on a decision that was earlier canceled.

The sources confirmed that a decision will be reached during a meeting between the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Abdullah Al-Salman and the Board of Directors of Fatwa and Legislation Department of the Council of Ministers, which will then ask PAM to implement the decision.

In response to a question about the fees that will be charged to the renewal of work permits for the 60-year-olds and above the sources said, the 'current fees' will apply, because the decision not to renew the work permits for this category of expatriates or force them to pay 2,000 dinars in addition to health insurance has been treated as if 'it was not issued'.

Against the background of the decision that was

invalidated by the Fatwa and Legislation Department last week, Al-Qabas learned that the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Abdullah Al-Salman, issued a decision based on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers to refer the Director of the Public Authority for Manpower Ahmed Al-Mousa for investigation, due to his issuing an "illegal" decision not to renew work permits for expatriates who have reached the age of 60 who hold a high school diploma or less.

Informed sources indicated to Al-Qabas that the investigation committee, consisting of advisors in fatwa and legislation, will initiate the investigation with the director of manpower and is authorized to summon any employee or consultant who contributed to issuing the "nullified" decision, which caused grave economic and humanitarian consequences.



Zahra, 6, plays next to a wall marked by bullet holes at a village in Wardak province, Afghanistan, Oct. 11. (AP)

EU pledges 1 bln euro package

'Afghanistan faces make or break moment'

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 12, (AP): Warning that Afghanistan is facing "a make-or-break moment," the United Nations chief on Monday urged the world to prevent the country's economy from collapsing.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also appealed to the Taliban to stop breaking its promises to allow women to work and girls to have access to all levels of education.

Eighty percent of Afghanistan's economy is informal, with women playing an overwhelming role, and "without them there is no way the Afghan economy and society will recover," he said.

He said the U.N. is urgently appealing to countries to inject cash into the Afghan economy, which before the Taliban takeover in August was dependent on international aid that accounted for 75% of state spending. The country is grappling with a liquidity crisis as assets remain frozen in the U.S. and other countries, and disbursements from international organizations have been put on hold.

"Right now, with assets frozen and development aid paused, the economy is breaking down," Guterres told reporters at U.N. headquarters in New York. "Banks are closing and essential services, such as health care, have been suspended in many places."

The U.N. chief said that injecting liquidity to prevent Afghanistan's economic collapse is a separate issue from recognition of the Taliban, lifting sanctions, unfreezing frozen assets or restoring international aid.

Guterres said cash can be injected into the Afghan economy "without violating international laws or compromising principles." He said this can be done through U.N. agencies and a trust fund operated by the U.N. Development Program as well as non-governmental organizations operating in the country. He added that the World Bank can also create a trust fund.

Leaders of the world's 20 largest economies - the G-20 - are holding an extraordinary meeting to discuss the complex issues related to Afghanistan on Tuesday. On the issue of "the injection of liquidity in the Afghan economy," Guterres said, "I think the international community is moving too slow."

The Taliban overran most of Afghanistan as U.S. and NATO forces were in the final stages of their cha-

otic withdrawal from the country after 20 years. They entered the capital, Kabul, on Aug. 15 without any resistance from the Afghan army or the country's president, Ashraf Ghani, who fled.

During the meeting, the European Union announced a support package worth 1 billion euros (\$1.15 billion), which includes 300 million euros (\$346 million) that had been committed earlier. It will be targeted at the Afghan population only and neighboring countries, which have been the first to provide immediate aid.

The EU remains careful not to legitimize the Taliban interim government.

"But the Afghan people should not pay the price of the Taliban's actions," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. "This is why the Afghan support package is for the Afghan people and the country's neighbors who have been the first in providing them with help."

The White House said the U.S. "remains committed to working closely with the international community and using diplomatic, humanitarian, and economic means to address the situation in Afghanistan and support the Afghan people."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a video address to the online summit that the international community should keep the channels of dialogue with the Taliban open in order to "patiently and gradually steer" it toward establishing a more inclusive administration.

He repeated that Turkey, which already hosts more than 3.6 million Syrians, can't be burdened with an influx of migrants from Afghanistan, warning that European nations would also be affected by a new wave of migrants.

"It is inevitable that European countries will also be affected by the migration pressure that Turkey will be exposed to on its southern and eastern borders," he said.

Erdogan proposed the creation of a working group on Afghanistan within the G-20 and said Turkey was willing to head such a grouping. Draghi said the proposal was interesting - Italy has long complained it has been left on its own to deal with Europe's migration problems - but said the rest of the G-20 would have to agree.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Prime Minister **Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah** called Tuesday Iraqi Parliament speaker **Mohammad Al-Halbousi** and conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** and His Highness Deputy Amir and Crown Prince **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** on successful parliamentary elections.

His Highness the Prime Minister wished success for the new MPs to serve their nation in order to achieve progress and prosperity. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's daily coronavirus cases rose by 37 to 412,158 with no new deaths reported as the total remains unchanged at 2,455, the health ministry said on Tuesday.

Another 41 people were cured of the virus, raising the total of those to have overcome the disease to 409,087, according to ministry spokesperson **Dr. Abdallah Al-Sanad** in a statement.

The number of people hospitalized with the virus at COVID-19 wards is 28, with nine of them at intensive care units, he added, revealing that another 616 are receiving regular treatment. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: In what appears to be a new move the Ministry of Finance is looking for solutions to the depleting revenues and liquidity in the general reserve, reports Al-Rai daily quoting informed sources.

The Finance Ministry is said to have told the concerned government agencies to determine the size of their expected revenue growth through fees.

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's interior ministry said on Tuesday that joint military drills among Gulf Arab states are key to deal with security challenges facing the region.

Such exercises also provide a platform for the exchange of military knowhow, Interior Ministry Undersecretary **Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Sabah** was cited as saying in a statement, ahead of pan-Gulf military

Day by Day

WHEN the government tells the people that it tried to pass the laws for the country to benefit financially and economically, and that the National Assembly which 'you elected' rejected everything, what will be the people's reaction?

It looks funny and sad at the same time. People's representatives change every four years, but the executive authority remains at the helm of affairs. Every law that serves country and its citizens remains forever, so the people will hold the government accountable and those responsible for the situation.

... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

drills in Saudi Arabia.

He expressed his satisfaction over the level of military cooperation between Gulf Cooperation Council member states, saying more frequent joint drills would lead to even greater military coordination. (KUNA)

KATHMANDU: At least 28 people died on Tuesday in western Nepal after the bus they were on skidded off a mountain road and fell hundreds of meters (yards) into a gorge, authorities said.

The accident in the remote and rugged Mugu district also left at least 15 injured, local administrator **Rom Bahadur Mahat** said. (AP)

BAGHDAD: Leader of Iraq's Sadrist Movement **Muqtada Al-Sadr** said on Monday that it's time for Iraq to live in peace with neither militias nor occupation.

In a televised speech broadcast by Iraq's official satellite channel after the victory of his movement in yesterday's parliamentary election, Al-Sadr said "from now on, weapon must be confined to the hands of the state, and it is forbidden outside this scope". (KUNA)