

# Bill seeks remittance tax on expats



Members of the Extinction Rebellion Red Rebel Brigade perform during a rally calling for action against climate change, in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Oct. 9. (AP)

MP taps pockets

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14:** MP Osama Al-Menawer has submitted a bill to impose tax on the remittances of expatriates.

The bill mandates banks and financial institutions processing the remittances of expatriates to collect tax on money transferred to other countries. The Ministry of Finance shall specify the tax amount, which will not be lower than five percent if the transferred amount exceeds 50 percent of the annual income of the expatriate worker. The annual income is calculated by including all the money deposited in the bank account of the expatriate worker within one year. The tax amount will be calculated by the end of every year and the collected tax will be added to the public treasury. Expatriates whose salaries are lower than KD350 per month are exempted from this provision.

In another development, Al-Menawer forwarded queries to Minister of State for Municipality and Housing Affairs and Urban Development Shaya Abdulrahman Al-Shaya about the decision issued by former Minister of State for Housing Affairs Rana Al-Fares in 2020 to terminate the contracts of expatriate consultants who are above 60 years old. He asked if it is true that one of the terminated consultants has been reapointed with a salary of KD3,000 even if he is already above 70 years old. He requested for copies of the decision on re-appointing expatriate consultants who were terminated and correspondences with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in this regard; as well as the names, qualifications, experience, salaries and allowances of expatriate consultants at the Ministry of State for Housing Affairs.

In addition, MP Fayez Al-Homhour submitted a proposal to amend Kuwaiti Army Law number 32/1967 by replacing Article Five with the following: Entry to Kuwait Army through conscription, volunteering or recruitment is exclusive to males; and subject to the relevant laws, decisions and decrees.

Furthermore, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim recently received in his office Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Arreaza. They discussed regional and international issues, and ways to strengthen relations between Kuwait and Venezuela.

Al-Ghanim also met Undersecretary-General of the United Nations (UN) and Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East Philippe Lazzarini and his accompanying delegation. They talked about the humanitarian conditions of Palestinian refugees; as well as ways to alleviate the suffering of these refugees and provide them jobs.

## 'Violent' expat manager axed

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14:** In response to a recent report published regarding an expatriate official in the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) who assaulted an employee in his department, KPC has decided to terminate the services of its only non-Kuwaiti contract manager, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to informed sources, KPC was forced to terminate the services of the manager after the news published by the daily went viral on social media and in some famous radio programs that quoted the daily. Attempts were made to cover up the incident despite its severity and repetition by the same manager who is known for his immoral behavior, and physical and verbal aggression towards the employees in his department, as well as his lack of respect and consideration for their dignity as human beings in the first place.

Many of the famous social media accounts following the incident and circulating it on social media thanked the Minister of Oil Dr. Muhammad Al-Fares for his quick response in taking deterrent action towards the official. Some other accounts conveyed a phrase that reflects the mockery of those who tried to cover up and reserve the matter for special interests with the official.

## Opinion

## Open the system, Minister of Commerce

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

DESPITE the delay of the Minister of Commerce Dr. Abdullah Al-Salman in referring the Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower Ahmed Al-Mousa to investigation for the issuance of his arbitrary decision to bar the renewal of work permits for expatriates who have reached sixty years of age, such a move came as a blessing.

However, this step is considered incomplete by most of the people of this country, as it has to be accompanied by the opening of the "system" to correct the series of major problems caused by unqualified officials through the issuance of decisions that violate the Constitution and the law, and even infringe upon the powers of the government and the National Assembly.

On the other hand, the Cabinet, through its army of legal advisers, should have realized from the start the negative impact this infamous decision would have on the country's reputation in the international spectrum, as well as the confusing effects of the plan to transform Kuwait into a global financial and commercial hub.

It is unfortunate that this did not happen because His Highness the Prime Minister and his esteemed Cabinet were preoccupied with other things, far from what the people of this country aspire to. Had it not been for the press, the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and some MPs highlighting the issue and raising their voices by referring this unjust and harmful decision in Kuwait to the Fatwa and Legislation Department, the violation would have continued until time decided otherwise.

Nevertheless, it may be useful to remind His Highness the Prime Minister of some figures and statistics in order to refresh the memory of the Cabinet. It today demands the reconsideration of all the decisions that caused the closure of the country, and not wait for letters from this or that individual, or the bureaucracy that brought calamities upon us over the past decades.

In the language of numbers, more than 80,000 of this segment live in 80,000 apartments owned by Kuwaitis. Add to this a similar number of cars, and equally high rate of consumption of food items and other services. The profits from all of these flow into the pockets of the citizens.

This segment of people have long experiences, and many of them own companies and trading activities. It is true that they are all under the names of Kuwaitis, but in the end they contribute to moving the national economy and benefitting the Kuwaitis.

Unfortunately, as soon as that stupid decision was issued in August last year, they began preparing themselves to move to neighboring countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and others. This meant losing a good percentage of the financial returns for the local market.

This loss was not realized at the time the decision was prepared, as it seemed to have an interest other than the one declared for its issuance, perhaps including the revitalization of the visa trade, which has become a target for all the weak of souls for illicit gain. The

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## US, Israel on 'Plan B' for Iran

WASHINGTON, Oct 14, (AP): The United States and Israel have said they are exploring a "Plan B" for dealing with Iran if the Islamic Republic does not return in good faith to negotiations to salvage the languishing landmark 2015 nuclear deal.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said discussions between their two countries have begun on "other options" should Iran reject an offer to come back into compliance with the agreement if the U.S. rejoins it.

They did not elaborate on what those options might be, but there are a wide range of non-diplomatic options that could be considered, ranging from stepped up sanctions to covert or military actions. A Biden administration priority has been to revive the deal and abandoning that goal would be a blow to its foreign policy objectives.

The remarks were a rare acknowledgment by the U.S. that it is looking at what to do in the event diplomacy with Iran fails. Israel has never been a party to the nuclear deal, which former President Donald Trump withdrew from in 2018, and its former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was a vocal opponent of the agreement negotiated by the Obama administration.

Blinken and Lapid made the remarks at a joint news conference at the State Department with the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates at which all three agreed to try to expand on the so-called "Abraham Accords," the Trump-era

agreements that normalized relations between Israel and the UAE and other Arab states.

Their comments came as Iran has hinted it's ready to return to indirect negotiations with the U.S. in Vienna but has not committed to a date. Iran has also continued to blow through limits on its nuclear activities that had been constrained by the deal.

Blinken reiterated that the window for Iran to return to the agreement is closing but again declined to give a date at which it would be too late. "Time is running short," he said. "We are prepared to turn to other options if Iran doesn't change course, and these consultations with our allies and partners are part of it."

"We will look at every option to deal with the challenge posed by Iran," Blinken said. "And we continue to believe that diplomacy is the most effective way to do that. But, it takes two to engage in diplomacy, and we have not seen from Iran a willingness to do that at this point."

Lapid was more blunt, raising anew Israel's warnings that it will act, with military force if necessary, to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

"There are moments when nations must use force to protect the world from evil," he said. "If a terror regime is going to acquire a nuclear weapon we must act. We must make clear that the civilized world won't allow it. If the Iranians don't believe the world is serious about stopping them, they will race to the bomb."



A Lebanese mother with her children hide behind a car from sniper fire outside a school, in the Christian neighborhood of Ain el-Remaneh, in Beirut, Lebanon, on Oct. 14. Armed clashes broke out in Beirut Thursday during the protest against the lead judge investigating last year's massive blast in the city's port, as tensions over the domestic probe boiled over. (AP)

Visas open ... if it's food

## Thousands leave voluntarily

**KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14:** The Deputy Director-General for Employment Affairs at the Public Authority for Manpower, Abdullah Al-Mutatah, said 59,000 expatriate workers have left the country voluntarily following the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, due to several reasons, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Mutatah said, in a television interview, "It is necessary to differentiate between the departing individuals and those who were unable to enter Kuwait," noting that "those who left voluntarily (59,000) are unlike those who were deported from the country with the help of the Ministry of Interior after placing in government shelters prior to their departure. They were the residence and labor law violators and those reported absconding by their respective sponsors.

He added, according to statistics, from Jan 1 to Sept 30, this year 666,000 renewal transactions were complete (online), 146,000 residence transfers, in addition to 28,000 work permit cancellations.

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with its interior counterpart, issued about 700 entry visas for stranded teachers and a number of them have already arrived in the country, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources said these teachers are required to undergo medical checkup before they start working. Sources clarified that based on the medical report from the Ministry of Health, the employment contracts of those whose medical test results indicate 'unfit' or 'infected with the C virus' will be terminated, they will be paid their dues and they will be asked to leave the country.

The labor departments of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) are entertaining business owners and will issue them commercial entry visas if they wish to recruit laborers from abroad following the approval given by the Supreme Ministerial Committee for Corona Emergencies in the Council of Ministers to grant work permits and commercial entry visas for all activities related to food security including producers, manufacturers and suppliers, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting reliable sources.

According to PAM sources business owners whose companies are registered with the authority can complete their transactions and will be granted permits after completion of procedures following which decisions will be issued to regulate recruitment mechanisms.

The sources said the labor departments are entrusted with issuing permits directly, without the need for the approval of the 'Corona Emergency Committee' -- a step that will facilitate business owners, especially since this service is currently not available through the authority's automated system.

The six activities approved by the Ministerial Committee are farm labor, restaurants, food supplies and bakeries, hunting and selling fish, livestock and poultry breeders, dairy producers, factories and food suppliers and their shopping centers, and water and beverage bottling companies.

The sources expect to add new activities soon, especially the factories, to fill the severe shortage of workers, which the market is currently suffering from.

## Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Kuwaiti Cabinet has instructed its Public Series Committee to urgently remove all obstacles impeding the execution of Sulaibikhat and Jahra coastline development projects.

The decision was taken Wednesday at a meeting chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

At the advent of meeting, head of Kuwait Municipality eng. Ahmad Al-Manfouhi briefed the cabinet about masterplans of the 38-kilometers-long Sulaibikhat coastline project and the 7.3 kilometers-long Jahra Corniche project, said Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohamad Al-Sabah in a statement following the Cabinet meeting. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of condolences to the family of Saif Marzouq Al-Shamlan over his demise.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed sincere sympathies with Al-Shamlan family, prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon his soul, and remembered his enriched presence and all his contributions to Kuwait in documenting its history for many decades.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. (KUNA)

**BRUSSELS:** A webinar hosted by the European Parliament in Brussels Thursday has described Kuwait as a "natural partner of the European Union, the upcoming visit of an European Parliament Delegation to Kuwait will strengthen bilateral relations".

The Chair of the European Parliament's delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula (DARP) Hannah Neuman, who hosted the webinar, praised the relations with Kuwait on both the parliamentary and diplomatic side.

This was demonstrated by the "recent successful" visit of the speaker of Kuwait's National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanim to the European Parliament, she noted. (KUNA)

**DOHA:** Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani discussed on Thursday with Saudi Arabia's Minister of State and Cabinet's Member Prince Turki bin Mohammed the bilateral ties between the two countries.

During the meeting, Prince Turki conveyed the greetings and appreciation of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, to the Amir of Qatar.

On his part, the Qatari Amir sent his greetings, appreciation and best wishes of permanent good health to the Saudi king and the Crown Prince. (KUNA)

**TEHRAN:** Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri, and the European Union envoy to reviving the Iran nuclear deal, Enrique Mora discussed in Tehran, Thursday, what Mora described "the unjust sanctions imposed on Iran", the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Both sides also discussed other bilateral issues and latest regional and international developments.

On his twitter account, Mora said, "as being the coordinator of a joint comprehensive plan of action, I will raise the urgent need to resume negotiations in Vienna. (KUNA)