

Kuwait airport set for full capacity

Opinion

'Rejoice not at the wedding where divorce is at the door'

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

IT is very unfortunate that MPs kept on missing opportunities one after another over the past months, and worked on paralyzing the state in order to pardon a few people who were implicated in cases related to freedom of speech.

It would have been better for them to have taken from the start the path set by the political leadership, which is to ask for pardon from the top leadership like others did after realizing that there is no other alternative way.

Nothing has changed today from yesterday in terms of substance, but rather in form. Instead of asking for pardon individually, they collectively appealed for pardon to His Highness the Amir.

Given that the 38 MPs announced their full cooperation with the state, or rather logical cooperation between the two authorities - the legislative and the executive, this is definitely not a favor from the MPs, some of whom may think that they achieved a great victory.

What happened during the last stage was not a democratic practice, but a departure from all norms and traditions, as the country is not a tool of blackmail for ministers and MPs. Each of them have been working on employing it for its own benefit, while the ordinary people are the ones paying the price to the point of losing confidence in the state.

First and foremost, we must be convinced that the state is not subject to the whims of people, and that the law is the rule that everyone must abide by. They cannot deviate from it if they do not like the ruling based on it.

This is the norm in all established civilized democracies where no tribe, sect, or party is greater than the state. The state's vision is what prevails in the end, even if there are some political courtesies that do not affect the essence.

All those who celebrate the amnesty today and think they have achieved their goal must look carefully at the negative consequences. They must have the courage to admit their mistake. The government must answer the questions raised by the people, especially regarding the benefit that will accrue to them from the amnesty.

Will this amnesty help in curbing the economic losses, and correcting the state's financial situation? Will it help in opening up the country after it was closed by political currents that used religion as a cover with a thick wall of their own whims, which religion has nothing to do with? Frankly, there are no indications of that being achieved.

Nonetheless, when the decision was issued to enlist women in the army, behold, the factions of darkness were mobilized against the women's enlistment into the military. Unfortunately, it seems through his statements that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali is about to surrender to them.

Take a look at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was more strict in this regard. It allowed the recruitment of women in the military, and even became more open in all fields compared to other Gulf states.

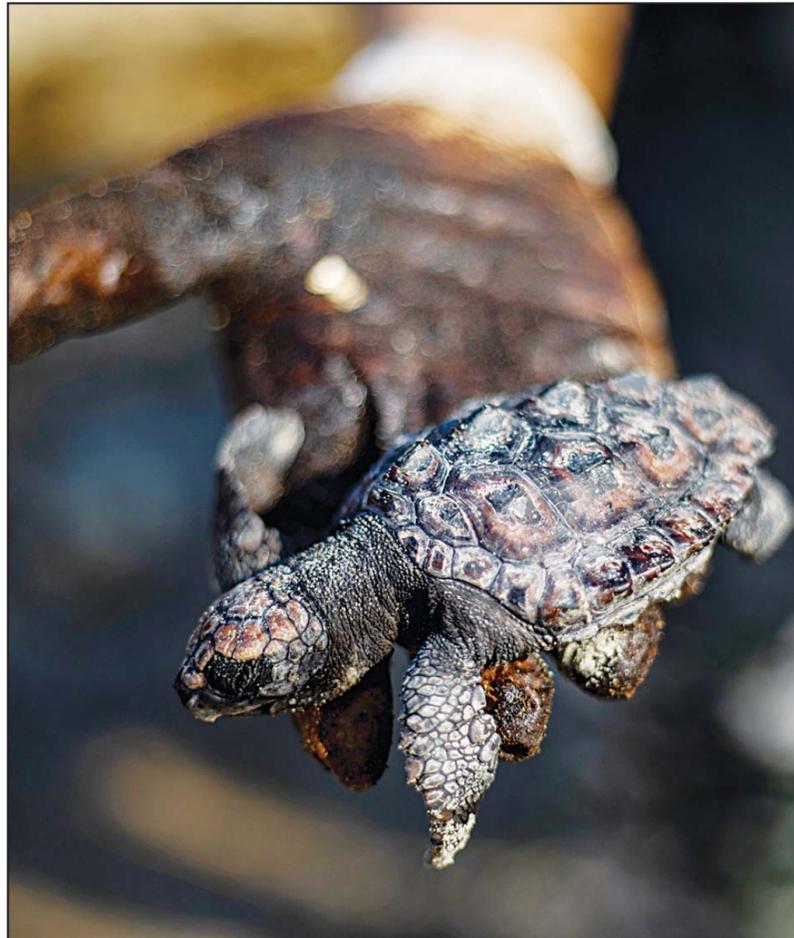
According to these data, the situation will not change much. In fact, those who are pardoned will undoubtedly return to their nature because they believe that they have achieved a victory over the state. This is what makes us highlight the popular Kuwaiti saying - Rejoice not at a wedding where divorce is at the door.

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In this Feb. 20, 2021 file photo, a woman holds a dead sea turtle covered in tar from an oil spill in the Mediterranean Sea in Gador nature reserve near Hadera, Israel.

'No leniency'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 21, (Agencies): Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is ready to operate Kuwait International Airport at full capacity, starting next Sunday, Director General Yousif Al-Fozan said.

Kuwait International Airport will gradually operate commercial flights for all aviation companies, in accordance with the Cabinet's decision, Al-Fozan told KUNA on Thursday.

The directorate succeeded in operating under the challenges and requirements of the coronavirus pandemic crisis, calling on aviation companies and passengers to abide by the COVID-19 safety restrictions needed to enter Kuwait.

The Cabinet announced Wednesday that Kuwait Airport will return to operate in full capacity, as part of its plan to return to normal life after the coronavirus impact.

Economy

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Travel and Tourism Federation, Muhammad Al-Mutairi, said the "opening the airport will allow airlines to operate more flights which will directly reflect on the national economy through the contribution of the aviation, tourism and travel sectors to the GDP, amidst the state's ambitious plans to develop the air transport market in Kuwait.

Al-Mutairi said, the decision will also see the reduction in ticket prices, as there will plenty seats available to meet the growing demand which will bring down the cost of travel to their moderate levels.

He stated travelers from Kuwait will once again see the tickets prices to some destinations dropping to less than 100 dinars, for both outbound and return trips."

Member of the Board of Directors of the Travel and Tourism Federation, Hussein Al-Sulaiti, said lifting travel restrictions will directly benefit the citizen mainly when it comes to bringing in domestic workers or when they travel abroad for annual vacations and expects the ticket price to drop by 50 percent.

Stressed

Kuwaiti authorities stressed Thursday that they won't be lenient with implementing preventive health measures in mosques as a Cabinet decision to end social distancing between worshippers will be effective as of tomorrow (Friday).

This came in a press statement made by Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Undersecretary Fareed Emadi, stating that to preserve the medical system and to maintain the country's health improvement, relevant health recommendations should be heeded, including getting vaccinated, wearing face-masks and bringing one's own prayer mat to the mosque.

However, the official congratulated worshippers on dropping social distancing measures and resuming religious gatherings at mosques, just as decided by the Cabinet on Wednesday.

He also indicated that Fatwa and Legislation Department affirmed necessity of getting vaccinated, based on health authorities' recommendations in order to protect worshippers at mosques.

'Paid too much'

Vaccine violations alleged

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 21: MP Saadoun Hammad has disclosed that major financial violations were found in the contracts signed by the Ministry of Health for importing vaccines against coronavirus.

Hammad said he has a copy of the contract with Moderna valued at \$80 million for the supply of two million doses of vaccine. He added the price of one dose, according to the contract, is \$40 without shipping fees. He pointed out the price in the website of Moderna is \$28.5 per dose, including shipping fees - the same price posted on the Financial Times website. He revealed the shipping fee is approximately \$5 per dose, but the price in the contract is \$45 per dose which is \$16.5 more than the price specified by Moderna company.

He went on to say that the total amount of violation in this contract is \$33 million. He called on the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to take the necessary measures to suspend this contract which includes two deliveries of the vaccine - one million doses each to be supplied to the ministry in the fourth quarter of 2021 and the second quarter of 2022.

Hammad stressed that he will call for the formation of a fact-finding committee to investigate the issue; adding that once the violations are proven true, all those involved will be referred to the Public Prosecution.

Meanwhile, the recent hours witnessed some disputes and exchange of accusations as some MPs blamed nine of their colleagues for not signing the statement calling on His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to grant amnesty to those convicted in

political cases.

On the other hand, one of the nine MPs - Marzouq Al-Khalifa - said they have been deliberately prevented from seeing the statement with the aim of isolating them. MPs Khalid Al-Otaibi, Fares Al-Otaibi and Muhammad Al-Mutairi affirmed that they fully support the amnesty and they have worked hard to push for it, but they did not sign the statement which was issued according to the directive of National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim whom they consider an obstacle to granting amnesty.

In another development, Deputy Amir and Crown Prince of Bahrain Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa received Speaker Al-Ghanim in Al-Refaa Palace. President of Bahraini House of Representatives Fawziya Abdullah Zainal attended the meeting; as well as Chairman of Rashed Equestrian and Horseracing Club Sheikh Essa bin Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and Sheikh Muhammad bin Salman Al-Hamad Al-Khalifa and Minister of Financial and National Economy Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa.

His Highness Deputy King and Crown Prince of Bahrain Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa highlighted the strong bond between the sisterly countries Kuwait and Bahrain, stressing the importance of continuing support for bilateral relations in the interest of the citizens in both countries.

Moreover, Al-Ghanim expressed gratitude to His Highness Deputy King and Crown Prince of Bahrain Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa for his keenness on strengthening ties between Kuwait and Bahrain.

He stressed that the political leadership in both countries are committed to strengthening relations in the interest of the people.

Day by Day

WHAT is correct cannot be disputed and the same can be said of the statement issued by the Amiri Diwan. Therefore, the desire for pardon and other issues which have been placed in their right perspective within the legal and constitutional framework must be respected by all. If the leadership had not taken into account the constitutionality of the issues, at least one person would have objected, in secret or in public. Issues of public interest if eaten hot will lose its taste and will be difficult to swallow, but when cooked on a slow fire and eaten at the right time is the much preferred method. ... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Call for GCC cooperation to boost health systems

MANAMA, Oct 21, (KUNA): Kuwait Health Minister Sheikh Dr. Basil Al-Sabah has stressed the importance of coordination between the GCC countries and enhancing the capabilities of health systems, especially to confront the COVID-19 challenges.

This came in a statement by the minister to KUNA Thursday, on the sidelines of his participation in the seventh meeting of the GCC Health Ministers Committee and the 84th meeting of the GCC Health Ministers Council, which started in Bahrain.

an ambitious space rocket project, as a step towards exploring space technology and proving their capabilities.

In a statement to KUNA, founder of Kuwait Space Rocket (KSR) project, Naser Ashknani, said Thursday, "our participation in this global event is to introduce the world to Kuwait's achievements."

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Thursday to Cindy Kiro, Governor-General of New Zealand, on the occasion of her inauguration as Governor-General and taking the constitutional oath.

Newswatch

DOHA: Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani received Thursday UN Foreign Secretary and Development Minister Elizabeth Truss.

Qatari news agency affirmed that during the meeting, the two sides touched on the situation in Afghanistan as well as the latest regional and global developments.

Minister Truss thanked Sheikh Tamim for Qatar's role in evacuating British nationals from Kabul and its efforts in enhancing the peace process in Afghanistan, the agency added. (KUNA)

NEW YORK: Members of UN Security Council called for immediate ceasefire in Yemen according to resolution (2565) of the year 2021, and for resolving differences through comprehensive dialogue while also rejecting the use of violence for political reasons.

In a statement Wednesday night, the council welcomed Saudi Arabia's announcement of March 22, which was supported by the Yemeni government, in which Riyadh offered a new peace initiative to end the war in Yemen, which would include a nationwide ceasefire under UN supervision and the reopening of air and sea ports.

The council stressed importance of putting a stop to escalation by all sides and denounced the recruitment of child-soldiers and sexual violence in the conflict. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Health said Kuwait's coronavirus caseload rose by 25 to 412,449 over the past 24 hours while the death toll from the viral disease surged to 2,460 after confirming one death case.

Another 41 patients were cured, raising the overall recoveries to 409,490, the ministry spokesperson Dr. Abdallah Al-Sanad in his daily statement on Thursday.

The number of Covid-19 patients who receive treatment at hospital wards dropped to 12, including six ICU occupants. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: Lebanon's political leaders held talks on Wednesday with US senior advisor for energy security Amos Hochstein, as part of efforts to rekindle talks over demarcating Beirut's southern maritime border, the presidency said.

President Michel Aoun received the US energy envoy to "follow up on the file of the demarcation of the southern Lebanese maritime border," state-run NNA news agency quoted a presidency statement as saying.

The US official also met with Prime Minister Najib Mikati and chief lawmaker Nabih Berri, with the latter saying that the talks represent a "new opportunity to resume negotiations" on matters such as importing Egyptian gas and electricity from Jordan. (KUNA)

ABU DHABI: The UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention said Thursday that 94 more

Coronavirus (Covid-19) cases and two deaths were recorded in the country over the last 24 hours.

The fresh infections have pushed this Gulf country's virus-triggered death toll and caseload to 2,129 and 739,018 respectively since the outbreak of the virus, according to a press release from the ministry.

Up to 140 patients were cured of the viral illness, taking the overall recoveries so far to 732,873, it added. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: The European Parliament, on Thursday, underlined the need to increase funding for the UNRWA in recognition of its essential role of contributing to regional stability and as a unique provider of vital services for millions of Palestinian refugees.

In a resolution on the General budget of the European Union for the fiscal year 2022, the European Parliament emphasizes that the proposed increase is to ensure the predictable funding to UNRWA, and the importance of education of children to tolerance, peace and mutual respect. (KUNA)

ISTANBUL: At least 15 people with links to an Israeli intelligence service have been arrested in Turkey, Anadolu News Agency said on Thursday.

They were detained as part of an investigation launched by the Istanbul public prosecutor's office, Abadolu said according to Turkish judicial sources.

The suspects were relaying information and passing documents to the Israeli spy agency, said the sources. (KUNA)

JEDDAH: The Saudi-led Arab coalition supporting legitimacy in Yemen has conducted a military operation against legitimate military targets in Sana'a in response to the threats, and dangers of imminent attacks that use ballistic missiles and bomb-laden drones to target civilians in the Kingdom, said the coalition spokesperson Thursday.

Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted the coalition spokesperson Brigadier General Turki Al-Malki as saying "The Coalition has exercised during past months utmost restraint in face of the gross humanitarian violations and deliberate, systematic, hostile, brutal attacks by the Iran-backed Houthi militia, in support of UN efforts and initiatives to reach a sustainable and comprehensive political resolution in Yemen." (KUNA)

ISTANBUL: A Turkish court has sent to jail six foreigners from Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine on charges of espionage and planned armed attacks on Chechen dissidents in Turkey, said Anadolu News Agency on Thursday.

The six foreigners were arrested in Antalya on October 8, by the order of Istanbul's public prosecutor on charges of "political and military espionage", the agency added. (KUNA)