



Foreign Minister faces confidence vote



Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Al-Nasser replies to interpellation motion by MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri.

Irregularities at issue

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 8: A total of 10 MPs signed the no-confidence motion against Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Muhammad after the National Assembly discussed the grilling motion that MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri filed against the minister during its ordinary session Tuesday.

Assembly Speaker Al-Ghanim confirmed receiving the no-confidence motion. Voting on the motion has been scheduled for Feb 16, 2022. The MPs who signed the motion include Khalid Al-Otaibi, Hamdan Al-Azmi, Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Fares Al-Otaibi, Saleh Zeib Al-Mutairi, Marzouq Al-Khalifa, Ahmed Mutei Al-Azmi, Muhannad Al-Sayer, Muhammad Al-Mutair and Al-Saifi Mubarak Al-Saifi.

During the discussion of the grilling motion, Minister of Justice and State Minister for Nazaha (Integrity) Enhancement Jamal Al-Jalawi affirmed that the government has agreed to talk about the motion even if it is not in line with the Constitution and Assembly Decree.

Al-Muwaizri and Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Muhammad were given one and a half hour each to present the motion and reply to the grilling points respectively.

According to Al-Muwaizri, the report of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) unveiled the administrative and financial violations in Sheikh Nasser Al-Muhammad's ministry. He pointed out that all ministries were found to have committed violations, but those committed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot be compared to that of other ministries.

He criticized the government's announcement of support for Sheikh Nasser Al-Muhammad, indicating the minister may have gained the trust of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the beginning, but what happened later is another issue. He cited the report of SAB that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not cooperate with the auditing team. He said this means the ministry is afraid that the truth will be revealed.

Impose

He accused the ministry of wasting public funds when it did not impose the specified fines on contractors who delayed the completion of buildings for diplomatic delegations. He went on to say that SAB asked for the hospitality budget, but the ministry did not submit the related vouchers under the pretext that there are too many vouchers. He disclosed the ministry rented hotels at a total of KD 500,000 even if it owns several buildings.

He also denounced the frequent travels of Sheikh Nasser Al-Muhammad, which cost a lot without any benefit. He said the ministry paid KD 12,000 to a company in South Korea, but the company did not provide any services; while KD 2.6 million was paid to a contractor for furnishing the Kuwaiti Embassy in Seoul, South Korea but the contractor did not carry out the job and he was not questioned. He revealed that a total of GBP 888,000 was transferred to the Kuwaiti ambassador in London as part of special expenditures according to a confidential document. He added a Japanese employee at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Tokyo, Japan refused to sign vouchers because they are illegal and she was punished when she decided to call the Public Prosecution in Kuwait about the issue.

On the ministry's failure to take care of Kuwaiti citizens abroad, Al-Muwaizri cited the disappearance of a Kuwaiti businessman in Romania in 2015 and the ministry did not take the necessary action to search for the businessman. He said a Kuwaiti family was forced to undergo quarantine in Australia without taking into consideration their right to privacy as the facility has open rooms and common toilets. When the ministry did not respond to the complaint of the Kuwaiti family, they asked for help from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates which called the Australian authorities to allocate a flat for the family throughout their quarantine period.

He also accused the ministry of violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Kuwait signed in 1996. He added the concerned committee at the United Nations (UN) recommended the amendment of Kuwait's Law No. 37/2014 on the establishment of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority and Cyber Crimes Law No. 63/2015 but nothing has been done in this regard.

Responding to Al-Muwaizri, Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Muhammad confirmed he is willing to clarify the points even if the grilling motion contravenes the Constitution and Assembly Decree. He argued that the motion does not specify incidents supported by evidence, yet he considers this an opportunity to explain gray areas.

He pointed out the lack of proof for the alleged wastage and squandering of public funds. If such allegations are true, the queries should have been forwarded to the concerned minister rather than filing a grilling motion. If Al-Muwaizri has evidence, he could refer the issue to the legal authorities; otherwise, he will be considered an accomplice as per the law on establishing Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha). The founders of the Constitution and those who created the Assembly Decree knew that it is improper to hurl accusations in a surprising manner, so they specified a period of eight days to inform the concerned minister about the grilling points for the latter to have enough time to prepare his response, the minister asserted.

Continued on Page 5

Opinion

Does anyone still read Sheikh Rashid Al Maktoum's wisdom?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

DURING the honeymoon period of the Muslim Brotherhood Group and the Free Officers Movement, the spiritual guide of the group Hassan Al-Hudaybi asked Jamal Abdul Nasser in 1954, weeks before the so-called Mansheya Incident, to issue a law imposing Egyptian women to wear veil.

Abdul Nasser replied, "You have two girls who study at the university, and you were unable to make them wear a veil. So how do you ask me to veil ten million Egyptian women?"

This question was the beginning of the tense relationship between the two sides.

Abdul Nasser did not make a concession of this kind to a group that was seeking, through its interference in laws, to impose its policy on society and the people. It is the denunciation of the Muslim Brotherhood Group and the Islamic currents throughout their history, as they try to seize control of the government by putting pressure on the constitutional institutions in the state.

This happened in Kuwait in 1995 when MPs of Islamist movements imposed the law to ban coeducation. This cost the state, and still does, hundreds of millions of dinars, even though such a ban is against the Kuwaiti culture, customs and traditions.

Therefore, we see today that this ban, or rather separation, is in classes and halls only, as male and female students meet in the corridors and courtyards of universities. Later, laws and decisions were issued that limited the freedoms of individuals.

One of the backwardness imposed by these groups was to ban alcohol. This led to a high rate of drug smuggling and cases of addiction both in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It has even spread this scourge among teenagers.

There are experiences in the world about the negative impact of banning alcohol-based drinks on the economy and society. This includes the Volstead Act of 1920, which was approved by the US Congress. Alcohol was banned and those who dealt with it were punished. For a period of 13 years, the American states lived at the mercy of the alcohol mafia, and that cost them hundreds of deaths in gang wars. Eventually, the government realized in 1933 that the alcohol ban law was propagated by liquor merchants, and some MPs and sympathetic clerics. The congress rescinded it.

In the Islamic world, only four countries out of a total of 57 prohibit alcoholic drinks. They are Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In terms of drug abuse, these four countries have a higher rate compared to the remaining 53 countries that allow alcohol.

In Afghanistan, about 15 percent of Afghans are addicts. About 4.4 million Iranians, which is equivalent to five percent of the population, use drugs. According to Saudi statistics, there are more than two hundred thousand drug users. In Kuwait, the number of addicts is about 40 thousand, according to official statistics.

In the Islamic countries that allow alcoholic drinks, 99 percent of its residents do not drink. They are the most keen to uphold the teachings of Islam and avoid the harmful effects of the alcohol. This has led to a decrease in the number of drug addicts.

This is an open country with millions of expatriates who cannot be forced to change their customs and traditions.

There is no doubt that all this is causing harm to the country, which prompted these laws and decisions imposed on the executive authority to close Kuwait.

If the ban on an innocent activity such as yoga was imposed by one MP on the government, then it was basically acquiescent to this kind of pressure. Therefore the situation will not change as long as we do not have a decision-making government.

On this occasion, I remember a statement made by the late ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum in the 1970s. When he was asked, "How do you allow alcohol in Dubai when we are an Islamic country?", he replied, "We have built mosques, and our religious awareness is active. So whoever wants to go to the mosque, it is open to him. And whoever wants a drink, it is available to him".

Is there someone today who can read the wisdom of Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum?

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Health announced on Tuesday 3,989 COVID-19 infections, 5,022 recoveries, and two deaths in the last 24 hours.

The Ministry's official spokesman **Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad** said the tallies for infections and recoveries hit respectively 587,102 and 532,926.

Deaths went up to 2,513, said the spokesman, revealing that there were 91 patients in ICU, 514 in COVID-19 wards, and 51,663 active cases.

He indicated that swabs hit 7,170,908 with 28,840 new tests carried out in the last 24 hours. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's banking regulator said on Tuesday that local banks could proceed with semi-annual dividend payouts if their financial conditions allow it, describing the move as aiming to keep the national economy afloat.

Banks wishing to resume semi-annual dividends payouts should inform Kuwait central bank before starting the procedure, its chief **Dr. Mohammad Al-Hashel** said in a statement.

The measure, in line with international standards, has been given the green light due to the national banking sector's "resilience", he highlighted, saying it would spark a positive ripple effect across the country's economy. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: A UN-led virtual seminar in Kuwait on Tuesday pinpointed innovation as the "path" to a sustainable society, citing the use of such methods in today's digital as the catalyst for an economic and environmental transformation.

The seminar held by the UN Development Programme, in conjunction with the United Arab Emirates' embassy and the Kuwait-based Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, espoused the "adoption of new technologies that increase the efficiency of production," saying such methods should be incorporated into "all aspects of life."

On the environmental front, the seminar explained how the use of innovation, despite its "mixed track record" there, can lead to tangible change, including lowering pollution levels and promoting greater sustainability. (KUNA)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have reiterated the importance of further strengthening and diversifying bilateral cooperation in various areas of mutual interest during the visit of Saudi Minister for Interior **Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud** in federal capital Islamabad on Monday.

According to state owned Radio Pakistan, the visiting Saudi Minister called on President of Pakistan, **Dr. Arif Alvi** in Islamabad.

President Alvi said that both brotherly countries enjoy an excellent relationship which needs to be further cemented for the mutual benefit of the two countries. (KUNA)

PAM begins renewal ... 36

By Faris Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah Staff and Agencies

Millions in reward for DAESH snitch

WASHINGTON, Feb 8, (KUNA): The US Department of State's Rewards for Justice (RFJ) program announced Monday that it is offering a reward of up to USD 10 million each for information leading to the identification or location of ISIS-K leader Sanaullah Ghafari, also known as Shahab al-Muhajir.

"And for information leading to the arrest or conviction in any country of those responsible for the August 26, 2021, terrorist attack at the Kabul airport," reads the State Department statement.

According to the statement, Sanaullah Ghafari was appointed by the ISIS core to lead ISIS-K in June 2020. Ghafari is responsible for approving all ISIS-K operations throughout Afghanistan and arranging funding to conduct operations.

On November 22, 2021, the Department of State designated Ghafari as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, as amended.

On August 26, 2021, terrorists launched a suicide bombing against the airport as the United States and other governments conducted a large-scale evacuation of their citizens and vulnerable Afghans from the country.

At least 185 people were killed in the attack, including 13 US service members supporting evacuation operations. More than 150 people, including 18 US service members, were wounded. ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the attack.



A woman holds a picture of her granddaughter, who was killed in the deadly 2020 Beirut port explosion, as others burn tires to block a road during a demonstration outside the Justice Palace in support of the judge investigating the blast after he was forced to suspend his work, in Beirut, Lebanon, Monday, Feb. 7. (AP)

No 'vax' requirement for performing Umrah

JEDDAH, Feb 8, (Agencies): The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has announced that travelers arriving in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for performing Umrah (minor pilgrimage) are no longer required to show a proof of vaccination against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

In a press statement on Monday, the ministry said that those seeking to perform Umrah, regardless of their vaccination status, have to submit, upon arrival, only a negative PCR or rapid antigens test of a sample taken within 48 hours of the date of departure to the Kingdom.

It stated that the decision will go into effect starting at 1:00 am, Wednesday, February 9.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: The Council of Ministers listened to an explanation given by Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Acting Minister of Health on the latest health situation in the country, which has begun to witness a noticeable decrease in the number of infections and an increase in recovery cases, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In this regard, the Council of Ministers has called on citizens and residents to continue taking precaution measures and the need to adhere to health protocols, in order to limit the spread of the epidemic.

KFH posts KD 243.4m net for 2021

— Details Page 8 —

Al-Fulajj to the Youth:
Prepare Yourself for a Future Dominated by AI and Data Analytics
See page No. 9