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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Kuwait was never Thailand and it shall not be 'Tora Bora' either

"WE NO longer rejoice at the rise in oil prices, nor do we grieve for their decline, as we were in the past, our feelings have become dull, as if the matter does not concern us, for our government has hastened its departure and replaced us with a better one, it is still threatening us with a budget deficit, imposing high fees on services, and imposing a tax on sales because of this impotence," columnist and former MP **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Talal Al-Saeed

"It also refuses to buy the interests of people's debts, or to develop solutions for borrowers, and the 'those concerned' are silent, the silence of the graves in front of the retirees' demands for a portion of the institution's profits, as if it does not concern them.

"The housing projects are stalled, sports activities at their worst, Kuwaitis cannot find a job, the service bureau is complicating matters, and the expatriate has his job ready the moment he lands at the Kuwait International Airport.

"Entertainment is forbidden, and the doors are closed and, it is forbidden to rejoice. The Kuwait Opera remains closed until further notice, and the zoo, which is in very poor condition compared to other countries, is also closed due to 'Corona', unless it is demolished, just like the Entertainment City, for fear of the 'Kandahari' members of the National Assembly.

"By the way, one of the members says that we will not allow Kuwait to be Thailand, and it seems that he does not know the history of Kuwait well, because it was never Thailand, and we will not accept that to be Tora Bora either.

"As for those who think about traveling, the travel procedures for Kuwaitis only are so annoying that we stopped traveling, and at the same time gifts, grants, and soft loans are distributed to various parts of the earth, of which we are most in need of - to the Asians if the names are correct!

"The question now for the government is: 'Do we rejoice in the rise of oil price, or do we only give good tidings to the brothers, and finally, did the government hear a single citizen say God cherishes the government?'"

Also:

"After decades of following up on Kuwaiti affairs, I came to the conviction that we live a life like a circus. What is happening in Kuwait today is so shameful that shame itself has become ashamed to associate it with the events of this small country. It is well known that in every place and time there are people who carry a humble and simple thought, and since freedom of opinion is guaranteed to everyone, they have the right to express themselves as well. But imagine if the entire government acquiesced to the owners of this ideology at the expense of the educated, intellectuals and thinkers? He does not need to imagine because this is literally what is happening in Kuwait," columnist **Bashar Al-Baghli** wrote for **Al-Shahed** daily.

"For example, when the Minister of Defense takes the approval regarding women's inclusion in the army, we call it the violation of the constitution and all civil society institutions, what do we call that? The concerned minister was unable to take a decision before returning to the Fatwa Board. The important thing is that a fatwa was issued that a woman may not join the army without the approval of her guardian.

"Also, those who wish to participate must adhere to the Islamic veil. The strange thing is that such matters completely contradict the personal freedom of individuals stipulated in the Constitution (Article 30).

"Of course, the matter did not stop there, as the Christmas tree was removed from one of the famous complexes because it hurt the feelings of those who considered this tree sinful -- one of the seven major sins. As usual, the government did not care about the feelings of Kuwaiti Christians and the hate speech towards them, as long as this satisfies some.

"We also do not forget the removal of statues from public places and the closure of a private dance club, the latest of which is the prohibition of yoga with the same empty excuses. These matters shake our constants, as if those who repeat that acknowledge the fragility of its principles that are destroyed in the face of everything new.

"The countries that nurtured and embraced the awakening for decades paid a heavy price by creating 'closed' generations who are ideologically distorted to the extent that they were unable to coexist with everything that is new and modern, not to mention linking the reputation of these countries to extremism and terrorism.

"Therefore, they tried to change their policies to save what was left. But in Kuwait, we still ignore the extent of the destruction inflicted on our society by letting these people control our destiny and terrorize the community with their shouting in order to make Kuwait a life-extinguishing environment.

"The government must immediately stop this approach through which the militants compromise our constitutional liberties and gains in order to make some gains at the expense of killing an entire nation. After we were Kuwait today, we became Kuwaitistan, and I do not know the truth about what tomorrow will bring us, but if we continue to walk this dark path, we will become a global Talebani center, not financial and commercial as we want it to be, so wake up."



"Definitely, one of the optimistic news is the decrease in the number of new Coronavirus cases in the country, including the Omicron variant which, according to the

description of the World Health Organization, spreads rapidly," columnist **Abdulrahman Al-Awwad** wrote for **Al-Sabah** daily.

"We will definitely realize the impact of this rapid spread if we take a quick look at the number of daily cases announced by the Ministry of Health.

"Our optimism is based on the numbers and statements issued by the ministry, which has been leading efforts to deal with the pandemic par excellence. It deserves all the gratitude and appreciation.

"Our optimism must come with caution, so we could be open. At the same time, we should not exaggerate this openness, such that it allows other variables for the daily cases to reach record numbers.

"As we have seen over the course of a whole month, the numbers reached record levels, but - by the grace of God - the cases were less severe than the previous waves.

"Frankly, here in this corner, we would like to get a message that the next few days will witness an opening, especially now that the current wave of Omicron has begun to recede. Certainly, we have to be careful, so we raise the famous slogan: 'Cooperation without compromise.'"



"The series of losses that emerge from time to time puts the entire country on a hot plate. This necessitates serious and transparent accountability for anyone who causes huge and imaginary losses in many cases - reaching billions of dollars!" columnist **Dr Essa Al-Omairi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Losses are from the pocket of the ordinary Kuwaiti citizen who does not benefit or enjoy his capabilities that he sees as losses from here and there. At the same time, consideration should not be given in any way to those who have caused the losses and the lifting of immunity or protection. The rights of citizens are sacred. These rights must be granted no matter how long it takes.

"On the other hand, the popular demands in our assessment support us 100 percent in our bid to hold accountable all the former officials in charge of these files. They must be responsible for the losses they caused to the State. If their negligence is proven, they deserve punishment and accountability, far from any consideration.

"Our appeal to the Prime Minister, may God protect him, is to open any file suspected of losses and then refer the perpetrators to the highest judicial and security authority."



"Kuwait is still working on reconciliation and solidarity between the Arab countries and the elimination of any dispute between them, not because it is the richest or the strongest, but because it has good relations with all Arab countries as a whole, and it has opened embassies in these countries," columnist **Mubarak Al-Moashergi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"The reception of His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, may God protect him, by Arab foreign ministers who held their annual conference in Kuwait aims to move away from the estrangement, and to respect the freedom and independence of neighboring countries.

"The heart bleeds when we see waves of Arab immigrants to Western countries in an effort to make a living and work in the lowest and most difficult professions. Their countries are full of bounties and blessings, but they are dominated by foreign companies or Western countries, or controlled by certain groups and political parties with personal ambitions or these countries are preoccupied with internally funded wars.

"We are hoping for the success of this conference, that the Arab-Arab reconciliation between all Arab countries will take place, their weapons will be directed to the external enemy, national unity will be away from factionalism and sectarianism, rapprochement will take place between the Arab countries, the borders between them will be opened, and life will return to the League of Arab States to end differences.

"The Arab League is the house of Arabs and it removes every strife that occurs between them."



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— Compiled by Zaki Taleb

Indians top list of expats quitting the labor market

168,000 foreigners left in 9 months

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 8: The government data shows that about 168,000 expatriates have left the Kuwait labor market in the first 9 months of 2021 (between January and September), including about 60,400 male and female domestic workers, and 107,900 male and female migrant workers from the private and government sectors, reports **Al-Anba** daily.



The vehicle in which the two young Kuwaitis died.

Two Kuwaitis die in road mishap

The labor market data shows people of all nationalities have left the labor market which has shown a steep decrease in the number of these foreigners except for the number of Syrians whose numbers in the local labor market have increased.

The Indians topped the migrant workers leaving the labor market - 48,000 male and female workers left the labor market - and their numbers fell from 499,400 to 451,380, an overall decrease of about 10 percent; the Egyptians took the second place as their numbers fell by more than 5 percent from 482,000 to 456,600 during the first 9 months of 2021.

The Bangladeshis came in third place, their numbers declined by 6 percent from 171,400 at the beginning of the year to 161,140 on September 30, while the Nepalese stood fourth and their numbers fell from 47,470 to 40,100.

The Filipino community

recorded the fifth highest number of residents who left the labor market and now stand at 65,900 thousand from 70,650 from the beginning of the year until the end of September 2021; Pakistanis were in sixth place whose numbers declined from 73,550 to 70,380 thousand in the first 9 months of last year; the Iranians ranked seventh their numbers declined by 747 bringing (down from 21,000 to 20,300) followed by Jordanians whose figure stands at 25,190 from

25,650 at the end of September 2021.

In a related context, the number of domestic workers decreased by 9% by about 60,385 male and female workers, bringing their number to 608,230 male and female workers by the end of September 2021, compared to 668,615 thousand male and female workers at the beginning of the same year. In this category the Indians ranked first followed by the Sri Lankans, then the Filipinos, Bangladeshis and Nepalese.

The labor market witnessed an increase by citizens, as 17,511 male and female citizens entered the labor market during the first 9 months of 2021, increasing their numbers by 4.3% to 424,180, compared to 406,670 on the first of January 2021.

The Syrian community also witnessed an increase among foreign workers in Kuwait, as their numbers increased by 1.5%, to reach 63,279 on September 30, compared to 62,300 Syrians on January 1, 2021.

men. On the other hand, there was a collision between 7 cars on the Sixth Ring Road yesterday afternoon which resulted in the injury to two people and damage to the vehicles.

In another traffic accident the General Traffic Department are looking for an unknown person whose footage was posted in the social media showing him making stunts with his vehicle.

Two citizens died when a four-wheel drive vehicle overturned on Wafra Road yesterday evening. According to a statement issued by the General Fire Force on the accident firemen rushed to the site of the accident and found two men dead and another seriously injured.

Al-Anba quoting security sources said the injured was rushed to a hospital for treatment and the remains of the two men were handed over to Forensics

Two absolved in embezzling company cash

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 8: The High Court acquitted a government employee and a Kuwaiti citizen who were accused of usurping KD 193,000 and participating in a crime, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

According to the case file, the Public Prosecution accused one of the defendants, in his capacity as a public employee in the Budget Control Department of the Administrative Affairs Department in the Ministry of Interior, of embezzling, along with others, KD 193,000 belonging to his employer.

He had presented fake invoices and doctored other financial documents in a manner that enabled them to usurp the aforementioned amount.

Representing two of the defendants at the court were Lawyer Fahad Al-Hadiya and Lawyer Abdullah Matar, who insisted that the elements of participation in the crime of forgery and the appropriation of public money against the defendants were not available.

They said the accusations lacked substantial evidence, an aspect that always falls in favor of the accused.



Violations seen: The Ministry of Health said 1,646 violations were registered against some private medical centers and clinics and nutritional supplement stores during the past year for selling unregistered medicines and cosmetics. This is in addition to some materials whose validity had expired, reports **Al-Qabas**.

The daily quoting the ministry sources said the Drug Inspection Department in the Ministry of Health penalized private pharmacies for committing 1,256 violations, 104 private medical centers and clinics of, 125 violations were registered against food supplement stores, 81 violations against veterinary drug stores, 51 against medical companies and their warehouses, and 29 violations against perfume shops.

The sources added it was noticed that some practitioners in these clinics were not specialists and did not hold licenses issued by the Ministry of Health to practice the profession.

The sources stated the inspections are carried out in coordination with other government agencies to control violating clinics, and legal action has been taken against them.

Minister in hot water

BOT decision runs into opposition

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 8: Despite the widespread approval of the decision of the Minister of Finance Abdul Wahab Al-Rasheed to stop the renewal of state property contracts under the B.O.T. system and refer them to the Public-Private Partnership Authority, he is facing legal and parliamentary skepticism about the soundness of the procedure just a few days after the issuance of his decision, reports **Al-Rai** daily quoting legal sources.

They said, "Proceeding with the procedure without amending it in accordance with the requirements of the law will enable investors - owners of projects that will be referred to the partnership authority - to request for large compensation, which will constitute undue pressure on the State Treasury."

The sources went on to say, "The legal concerns in this regard are based on the fact that the projects of the contracted state property contracts (B.O.T.) are signed by Law No. 105/1980. Then their referral according to the Partnership Authority Law is subject to judicial challenge.

What reinforces these fears are that projects have been renewed according to this formula, which prompts state-owned commercial and service real estate investors to object to the transfer of their projects

from the Ministry of Finance to the Public-Private Partnership Authority in court and request reciprocity, unless their conditions are addressed in accordance with the law on which they are contracted".

There are also concerns about the extent of the authority of the higher partnership committee to issue such a decision before issuing a decree to form it.

In this regard, other sources reported that the committee does not need a new decree, given that its decree was issued based on the characteristics of its members and not their names.

On a related development, MP Saud Bouslaib submitted a parliamentary question to the Minister of Finance to ask about the contradictions between the Partnership Authority Law and State Property Law No. 105/80, and the way to resolve the entanglement between the two laws.

He requested for the legal opinion that was sent by the Ministry of Finance to the Partnership Authority before the meeting in which the change was approved in January 2022, the direct and indirect economic effects of the decision, and its impact on the existing legal centers, which were reviewed by the Higher Partnership Committee before the issuance of its last decision.

Kuwaiti dinar is strongest currency

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 8: The Kuwaiti dinar will not be affected by the ratings or inflation due to the strong backing offered by the future generation funds and general reserves, reports **Al-Nahar** daily quoting informed sources.

They explained that nearly one trillion dollars of reserves, assets and gold support the Kuwaiti dinar's continuation as the strongest currency in the world.

The stability and strength of the Kuwaiti dinar compared to other currencies is due to the integrated precautionary policies followed by the Central Bank, which does not

allow temporary factors such as the decline of the rating or the like to have an impact.

The sources indicated that there are a large number of factors that back and support the dinar to swing away from the usual economic events and influences.

They also described the Kuwaiti banking sector as the strongest in the Gulf region and the Middle East due to its huge financial allocations and cautious monetary policy that focuses on the stability and strength of the local currency, adding that the decline in credit ratings will have no effect.

News in Brief

Money firms in dilemma: Local banks recently refused to receive cash from money exchange companies, causing confusion among the latter in terms of depositing their accumulated cash, reports **Al-Rai** daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed local banks have been strict in processing the cash transactions of these companies, up to the point of referring a dispute in this regard to the supervisory authorities.

Sources said the money exchange companies were surprised when told they could not deposit cash to their accounts using the traditional method.

When these companies asked the concerned officials in the banks, they were informed that it is prohibited to receive cash from exchange companies as part of the anti-money laundering and financing terrorism regulations, sources added.



Call to cancel decision: The head of the Parliamentary Youth and Sports Committee, MP Dr. Abdullah Al-Tarjji, said the decision issued by the Minister of Municipality Rana Al-Faris to stop issuing investment licenses to clubs, federations and Olympic committees in the private and model housing areas temporarily for three months, contradicts the law issued by the National Assembly in this regard, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

He said in a press statement that Minister Al-Faris should cancel this decision otherwise she will bear the political responsibility according to Law No. 30 of 2014.

Al-Tarjji warned stopping the investment licenses may result in compensation claims from investors who have

signed contracts for projects with sports clubs.



Harmful food items: The concerned government agencies have started an open discussion on the types of foods that could be harmful to the health of citizens, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The government agencies reviewed items included in the ration card to determine the effect of these items on public health.

Meanwhile, sources revealed that the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition presented recommendations to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry; including the removal of some foodstuffs from the ration card as they were found to contain high calories and are therefore considered unhealthy.



Drug peddler nabbed: Personnel from the Criminal Investigations Department have arrested an Asian for trafficking in drugs, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The daily added, the suspect disguised as working for fast-food delivery worker and after receiving information, CID officers began investigations, identified him, set a trap and arrested him and during interrogations he admitted to delivering drugs, not fast food and CID men found in his possession sachets of shabu.

A security source told the daily the suspect was caught red-handed while he was on his way to deliver shabu to an unidentified drug addict in Farwaniya. He was then referred to the concerned authorities for further investigation and legal action.