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Opinion

When will the PM realize he is not up to the task?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE fourth government of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled drowned in an inch of water one day before it won the confidence of the MPs.

Some of the MPs welcomed the new government by demanding the formation of a fact-finding committee regarding what happened recently in the country, as the rain-drenched roads proved the failure of the previous three governments in terms of reforms, at least in terms of improving the infrastructure in a bid to allow the government to restore and modernize it in light of the longest curfew in Kuwait's history.

Respective of the case, the sinking of the country in the recent rain revealed what was hidden. It was the title of the book that no one needs to read anymore, given that its pages are full of evidence of the failure of the head of the Cabinet.

There is no doubt that His Highness the Prime Minister, who spent about six weeks looking for people to accept the ministerial appointment, realized early that he is popularly rejected. He also attempted to seek the assistance of the largest number of MPs to neutralize the bitter cups, especially after the scandal of the rain that flooded the country.

In the past two years, he would have re-read the words of the former minister of Public Works Jenan Boushahri in the parliament about the reason for her resignation.

The former minister had said, "Reform has become impossible. Companies have become stronger in the parliament".

She said she did not face in her grilling "the nation's MPs, but contractors and companies" to pay the price for standing with the truth, concluding by saying, "Indeed, I preserved the public money and honored my constitutional oath".

The Prime Minister should realize that the MPs whose support he has sought are against him, and not for him.

On the other hand, the ministers, other than the MPs who have accepted to enter this government, are well aware that they will not last long. If there are deals that were made to appease them, there is no doubt that the prices are very high, and are at the expense of Kuwait.

What happened is a natural outcome of the failure to manage the economic file, and a natural endorsement of the corrupt.

If the three governments presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister led to this disaster, how can a government, which is doomed to face many minefields planted by its head, improve Kuwait's credit rating, curb the wastage of the public money, fight corruption, or fix the social sabotage perpetrated by the MPs and ministers of the dark factions in the previous parliaments?

The time has come for His Highness the Prime Minister to be convinced that he is not up to the task of running a government that has many files that need to be dealt with quickly, as we see a parliamentary-governmental battlefield at the expense of the country and people. We are in need of competencies to rescue the country. They will not work with a prime minister who will cause the country to retreat and lag behind every country in the region.

Therefore, His Highness the Prime Minister should perhaps carefully read the words of Almighty Allah - "He will be taken by forelocks and feet..."

Kuwait is greater than all ambitions and people.

Indeed, it has become necessary to tell His Highness the Prime Minister to break even with himself, and not drag the country into new bitter experiences.

Enough is the suffering endured by the country during the terms of his three previous governments.

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Day by Day

THE message of Jenan Boushehri to MPs in the Abdullah Al-Salem Hall when she was Minister of Public Works was crystal clear and straight forward.

When the MPs interrogated her in the previous parliament, the former Minister said, "before you even talk about reforms, you have to cross the first hurdle - the army of corrupt people."

"It is not the ministry that runs the show; it is the forces of corruption. Every time you want to reform the ministry, you come face to face with 'the other side of midnight'."

She added, she was finally fully convinced it was useless pouring water over an empty vessels (the corrupt people) who have devastated this good land of giving.

This was the reason, why she did not hesitate to quit, rather than give in to the moods and whims of opportunists who prey on the wealth of the nation.

... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Tuesday to Haitham Al-Ghais on appointing him as the Secretary General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).



Al-Ghais

His Highness the 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)

KUWAIT CITY: In what appears to be a breakthrough in the file of those non-graduate expatriates who are 60 years Minister of Justice, Counselor Jamal Al-Jalawi, will meet with representatives of the concerned authorities to get their views to determine the government's optimal mechanism to issue work permits for these category of expatriates, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily has learned Al-Jalawi is expected to meet next Thursday members of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Board of Directors and members of 'Fatwa and Sharia' for the legal opinion.

It is noteworthy to mention former Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr. Abdullah Al-Salman had talked of 500 dinars to renew the residence permit in addition to the private health insurance.

The sources spoke of Al-Jalawi's seriousness to resolve this file, which has remained suspended for a long time.

The Kuwait Insurance Federation had submitted a proposal earlier to set the value of an annual insurance premium for one resident who is 60 years old and over at 500 dinars, including a set of health cover throughout the entire insurance year at a value of 10,000 dinars for all services covered by the insurance.

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait strongly denounced on Monday the Houthi militias for hijacking a UAE-flagged cargo ship while en route from Yemen to Saudi Arabia.

"This shameful criminal act proves once again the Houthi militias' persistence in violating the rules of the international law and posing a grave threat to international maritime navigation," the Ministry said in a statement.

It stressed the need of an urgent response from the international community, notably the UN Security Council, to prevent recurrence of such serious acts which jeopardize the world's peace and security, and the international shipping routes.

The hijacked vessel was carrying equipment from a decommissioned field hospital in Socotra island in the Arabian Sea to the Saudi port of Jizan. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: Two explosives-laden drones targeting an Iraqi military base housing U.S. troops in western Anbar province were destroyed on Tuesday, a coalition official said.

It was the second such attempted attack coinciding with the anniversary of the 2020 U.S. airstrike that killed a top Iranian general near the Baghdad airport. On Monday, two armed drones were shot down as they headed toward a facility housing U.S. advisors at Baghdad airport.

According to the official, the fixed-wing drones rigged with explosives were engaged and destroyed by defensive capabilities at the Ain al-Asad airbase.

An Iraqi military statement confirmed the attempted attack, saying the drones were shot down outside the parameters of the air base. The base houses troops with the U.S.-led international coalition fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq.

In Monday's attack, the drones were shot down by the C-RAM defense system that protects American installations in Iraq, and there were no reports of damage or injuries from the incident. (AP)

Oaths, panel set to look into 'murders'

1,482 new

MPs elect committee members

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Prime Minister and his Cabinet swore-in and took the constitutional oath at the start of National Assembly's ordinary session on Tuesday, to commence work within the Assembly according to Article 91 of the Constitution.

A number of Parliament members walked away from the session, in protest at government's constitutional oath procedures.

Article 91 of the Constitution states that before taking up his functions at the Assembly or at its committees, a member of the National Assembly shall, at a public meeting of the Assembly, take the constitutional oath.



His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister taking the constitutional oath.



Members of the Cabinet pose for a group photo before Monday's meeting.

Cabinet stiffens COVID rules

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet on Monday decided to ban all kinds of public gatherings in closed places as of next Sunday until February 28 as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

During its weekly meeting under His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Saif Palace, the Cabinet also decided to oblige all incoming passengers to obtain a negative PCR test 72 hours ahead of arrival in the country as of Tuesday.

The meeting assigned the concerned bodies to implement these decisions.

Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet of the outcomes of his visits to Bahrain and Qatar.

During the visits to the two countries he deliver two written letters from His Highness the Amir to Bahrain's King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa and Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on the deep-rooted relations between Kuwait and Bahrain, and Kuwait and Qatar, and their peoples as well as means of developing and promoting these ties.

The Cabinet listened to a presentation made by Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Ali Hussein Al-Mousa on the heavy rains witnessed in the country Monday and the consequences of the accumulation of large amounts of water in the main streets, highways and tunnels.

The minister also spoke about the emergency teams' great efforts aiming to ensure the safety of citizens and residents, and preserve public and private properties, Sheikh Ahmad Nasser said after the meeting.

The Cabinet was grateful for the continued sincere efforts made by the concerned

bodies to deal with heavy rains.

Furthermore, the Cabinet followed up on the developments of the global epidemiological situation of coronavirus and Minister of Health Dr. Khaled Suleiman briefed the ministers on the latest happenings on health situation in the country.

The Cabinet called for abiding by health requirements to bring coronavirus indicators under control. It also advised people to take a booster shot of the anti-coronavirus vaccine to avoid this current wave of the pandemic, the minister added.

Moreover, the government assigned Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, to accelerate taking a decision on the draft law amending some provisions of Law No. 8 of 1969 regarding preventive health precautions against communicable diseases.

In line with the article 98 of the Constitution, the Cabinet reviewed the program of the 16th legislative term for 2021/2022-2024/2025.

It reviewed the visual presentation by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water and Sustainable Energy, and Secretary-General of Supreme Council for Planning and Development on the program.

They said the government's work program confirms keenness to move forward to take all necessary measures to enhance economic growth, financial sustainability, social development and health care that enhance the prosperity of citizens through implementing reform programs and launching national strategies.

The Cabinet approved the program and tasked the Deputy Prime Minister with submitting it to the National Assembly.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet condemned and denounced in the strongest terms Houthi attempted attempts aiming to target Saudi Arabia's security through three drone attacks on its southern area.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4, (Agencies): Kuwait Municipality Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi on Tuesday issued a resolution banning the holding of gatherings in enclosed places effective Sunday in line with the Cabinet resolution in this respect.

The municipality affirmed in a statement that the holding of weddings in tents and hotels has been barred.

The banning is applied to gatherings at condolence halls at cemeteries, it said, reaffirming that the precautions against the coronavirus must be observed at commercial stores, reaffirming that people are prohibited from all forms of gatherings.

Kuwait on Tuesday said 1,482 more people tested positive for COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, taking the country's caseload to 420,796, health ministry data showed.

Some 201 more people recovered from the virus to up the number of those to have overcome the disease to 412,274, according to ministry spokesman Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, adding that the recovery to positive case ratio stands at 98 percent.

The death toll from the pandemic remained unchanged at 2,468, while 38 people are hospitalized with the virus, nine of whom need intensive care, he told KUNA.

Some 22,159 swab tests were conducted over the last day, out of a total of 6,047,491 so far, added the spokesman.

Plans

There are no plans to return to the pre-pandemic era despite the increase in the number of infections, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The government sources stressed so far there are no other decisions than the decisions that have already been taken, nonetheless, there is follow-up and recommendations will be submitted by the Corona Emergencies Committee of the Council of Ministers on a weekly basis on the prevailing situation calling the health situation in the country still stable.

The sources told the daily the concerned authorities will ensure strict application of the health protocols and vital places will be under the watchful eyes - especially closed places such as commercial complexes, cinemas, restaurants, means of transportation, mosques and hotels, saying emphasis will be on those who are not vaccinated, those not wearing face masks and monitoring gathering places.

The sources said the Council of Ministers has stressed on the necessity for the owners of facilities to ensure visitors respect the health rules and regulations.

Decisions

Regarding the fans' attendance of the matches, the sources confirmed that the decisions of the Council of Ministers today do not include them, as they are held in open places, unlike weddings and events.

The Ministry of Health has requested for direct contracting with the American company Pfizer to procure Corona vaccine for children - 200,000 doses at a cost of \$6 million (KD1.8 million) or \$30 per dose - to push for the vaccination of children who are five to 11 years old, reports Al-Anba daily.

Sources affirmed that the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved the ministry's request. The Directorate-General of Civil Aviation said instructions have been given to all airlines operating at the Kuwait International Airport not to allow passengers to board the plane without the PCR test certificate, as of today, Tuesday, Jan 4, 2022, reports Al-Rai daily.

The PCR certificate should have been taken not earlier than 72 hours prior to boarding the flight.

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