

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:20	Asr	14:51
Sunrise ..	06:44	Maghrib ..	17:11
Zohr	11:57	Isha	18:32

Local

VACCINE BOOSTER REGISTRATION: https://cov19vaccine.moh.gov.kw/SPCMS/CVD_19_Vaccine_Booster_Registration.aspx

Paradise

Continued from Page 2

Publication of the findings in the journal *The Holocene* caps a year of tremendous progress by the UWA team, working under the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU), in shedding light on the lives of the ancient inhabitants of Arabia.

The existence of the funerary avenues suggests that complex social horizons existed 4,500 years ago across a huge swathe of the Arabian Peninsula. The finding adds to the steady progress by archaeologists working under the auspices of RCU in understanding the hidden story of the ancient kingdoms and earlier societies of north Arabia.

The UWA team's work is part of a wider effort that includes 13 archaeological and conservation project teams from around the world collaborating with Saudi experts in AIUla and neighbouring Khaybar counties in Saudi Arabia.

Amr AlMadani, CEO of RCU, said: "The more we learn about the ancient inhabitants of north-west Arabia, the more we are inspired by the way our mission reflects their mindset: they lived in harmony with nature, honoured their predecessors, and reached out to the wider world. The work done by our archaeological teams in 2021 demonstrates that Saudi Arabia is a home for top-flight science – and we look forward to hosting more research teams in 2022."

Dr. Rebecca Foote, Director of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Research for RCU, said: "Projects that have been conducting fieldwork in AIUla and Khaybar for over three years, such as the UWA team, have started publishing their results, and it is terrific to see how analyses of the data are elucidating so many aspects of life from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age in north-west Arabia. These articles are just the beginning of the many publications that will advance our knowledge of prehistoric to modern times and have significant implications for the wider region."

The new article is the UWA team's fourth publication in less than a year in a peer-reviewed scientific journal on research at AIUla and Khaybar:

■ In August in the journal *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* the team dated the pendant-shaped tombs of the Khaybar Oasis to the 3rd millennium BCE – the first published radiocarbon evidence dating the tombs. This was also the first article in a peer-reviewed journal regarding the Bronze Age in Khaybar. Archaeological exploration of the mysteries of Khaybar is still in its infancy.

■ In April the team wrote in the journal *Antiquity* that the monumental structures known as mustatils are much older than previously believed, dating as far back as 5,200 BCE, and appear to have had a ritual function.

■ In March the team reported in the *Journal of Field Archaeology* that they had discovered the remains of the oldest known domesticated dog in Arabia.

The UWA team's latest research, with Dr Matthew Dalton as lead author, used satellite imagery analysis, aerial photography, ground survey and excavation to locate and analyse funerary avenues over an area of at least 160,000 square km in north-west Arabia. They recorded more than 17,800 'pendant' tombs in their primary study areas of AIUla and Khaybar counties, of which around 11,000 formed part of funerary avenues.

Whether on basalt plains or mountain passes, the densest concentrations of funerary structures on these avenues are located near permanent water sources. The direction of the avenues suggests that many were used to travel between major oases, including those of Khaybar, AIUla and Tayma. Other avenues fade into the landscapes surrounding oases, suggesting they were used to move herds of domestic animals into nearby pastures during periods of rain.

Dr. Hugh Thomas, project director, said: "The research by the UWA team and our colleagues working across AIUla and Khaybar shows how important the archaeology of this region is for our understanding of the Neolithic and Bronze Age across the Middle East. Our findings demonstrate that these structures linked various populated oases, situated across a vast area, and that the funerary avenues were established around 4,500 years ago. They are especially dense around Khaybar, which is one of the densest visible funerary landscapes anywhere in the world."

The RCU has embarked on a 15-year masterplan, *The Journey Through Time*, to regenerate AIUla and parts of Khaybar as a leading global destination for cultural and natural heritage.

The archaeological research in AIUla and Khaybar counties by teams from Saudi Arabia and abroad is deepening and nuancing *The Journey Through Time* narrative of the region and providing a foundation for the Kingdoms Institute, a world-class centre for archaeological and conservation research with a focus on AIUla's 200,000 years of human history.

This flagship institution, now active as a research organisation, will open its doors to the public as a permanent physical presence at AIUla by 2030. Its most prominent buildings will be established at the red sandstone mountains opposite the archaeological site of Dadan, with design inspired by the Dadanite civilisation that prospered during the heyday of the incense trade in the 1st millennium BCE.

José Ignacio Gallego Revilla, RCU's Archaeology, Heritage Research and Conservation Executive Director, said: "There is much more to come in 2022 and the years ahead as we reveal the depth and breadth of the area's archaeological heritage, which for decades was underrepresented but which will finally have the showcase it deserves in the Kingdoms Institute."

About the Royal Commission for AIUla

The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) was established by royal decree in July 2017 to preserve and develop AIUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in north-west Saudi Arabia. RCU's long-term plan outlines a responsible, sustainable, and sensitive approach to urban and economic development, that preserves the area's natural and historic heritage, while establishing AIUla as a desirable location to live, work, and visit. This encompasses a broad range of initiatives across archaeology, tourism, culture, education, and the arts, reflecting a commitment to meeting the economic diversification, local community empowerment, and heritage preservation priorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 programme.

'Govt's work program vague, reform vision non-existent'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 13: The Kuwaiti Economic Society (KES) has stated the government's work program which is seen as vague and vision for reform non-existent is entering its third year with the emergence of a number of economic problems in the face of the spread of the Corona virus making it clear that there are no radical solutions or a change in the government's approach to dealing with issues and imbalances of the national economy. Rather, the government has gone in the shell until the cloud passes over before returning to his old habit, reports Al-Anba daily.

Since December 2020, KES has submitted four major initiatives to the government apparatus. The first is concerned with supporting the small and medium-sized enterprise sector through the establishment of a national fund that provides incentive grants to those registered in Chapter Five with the Public Institute for Social Security, known as the 'Revival Fund'.

Then it was followed by a paper on comprehensive reform priorities in the Kuwaiti economy prepared in cooperation with a group of economic experts and academics, in addition to the association presenting its recommendations regarding a draft law to support and ensure the financing of local banks for clients affected by the repercussions of the Corona crisis, in cooperation with a group of affected initiators, entrepreneurs, ministers and government officials.

This is in addition to the initiative to liberate industrial and commercial lands, which was adopted by a group of MPs in the National Assembly and more than five years ago, the Kuwait Economic Society had warned of the structural imbalances in the economy and the unsustainability of economic development model based on the leadership of the public sector.

In its statement, the association stressed that it focuses on the first stage of comprehensive reform is the existence of a serious political will that enhances the people's confidence in the government and then prepares society for any reform action in the future, as we have detailed in the "priorities for comprehensive reform in the Kuwaiti economy."

The sources added that reform must be based on one fundamental issue, which is the institutional reform so that the government can access other reforms, as the association stresses that any reform that starts from harming the citizen's pocket is an economically fallen reform before it falls popularly.

The financial waste in the budget must be controlled before imposing taxes, and fighting corruption and reducing the high costs associated with it as well are at the top of the priority list. It is also necessary to study the economic implications of any decision before making it.

The association added: "We were surprised, as everyone was surprised, by government measures

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind changing to wind with speeds of 12-42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.
By Night: Cold and partly

cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind changing to wind with speeds of 12-42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming over some areas.
Station Max Exp Min Rec

Kuwait City	21	15
Kuwait Airport	24	14
Abdaly	24	14
Jahra	24	14
Salmiyah	22	15
Ahmadi	21	15
Nuwaisib	23	13
Salmiyah	25	12

No radical changes on horizon: KES

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that are far from reality, which was evident from the government's inability to present a single project to extricate the country from the state of the clinical disease that afflicted it because of the inability to make a decision.

In its statement, the association added that it felt that the new government's work program for the 16th legislative term for the years from 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 was only a continuation of the previous course in government fluctuation.

It is clear that there is a state of indifference dominating the economic scene and its intervention in the corridors of politics into a state of unprecedented stagnation. Therefore, it is not surprising that public opinion pours out its anger on the government and parliament representatives due to the delay and indifference in implementing economic structural changes.

The sources pointed out that the government's recent work program had increased political character, as it carried a gelatinous character that was not devoid of balanced speech without a clear vision in achieving its goals, and this reflects the association's previous fear of devoid of a clear reform vision and the lack of a sincere will to solve problems. Repair is non-existent.

The sources added that the government's work program is a continuation of the constructive speech issued by the Council of Ministers, and it no longer matters to the citizen. These statements

are issued because they have no timetable and no actual vision, and they are just ink on paper that is submitted to the National Assembly and ends as soon as it is issued.

The most prominent thing that we witnessed in this disjointed program is the absence of a list of legislation required for its implementation, and it was sufficient to say that "any special legislation for each of its interlocutors is discussed with the relevant committees of the National Assembly and submitted after being approved by the program's follow-up committee."

The association stated that it is unfortunate that the name of Kuwait topped international newspapers with international financial scandals and crimes that negatively affect its financial position and reputation, as it led to some credit rating institutions announcing a review of their ratings for some banking and financial institutions in the region due to their association with black money.

Sources added, "Nevertheless, the government plan did not mention these issues except in general terms about fighting corruption, which we were tired of hearing, and the painful thing in all of this is that the rates of financial corruption are steadily increasing, and neither an economic crisis nor a health crisis has affected it, and the most painful thing is that we as a people have coexisted with corruption and our tone changed from non-compromise to denial of corruption."



Kuwaiti security forces heading to Saudi Arabia pose for a picture.

KUNA photo

Kuwaiti forces bound for S. Arabia

A Kuwaiti security force consisting of several sectors affiliated with the Ministry of Interior headed Thursday to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to participate in the activities of the joint Gulf exercise (Arab Gulf Security 3), which the Kingdom is hosting this month.

The General Administration of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior stated in a press statement that the

participation of the security force that left the country by land and air aims to raise the level of coordination and joint field cooperation between the participating brotherly countries and to enhance continuous work in order to develop police work and the capabilities of security elements in dealing with crises and emergencies in a team spirit. (KUNA)

Passenger traffic sees fall last year

Rush to book appointments

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 13: The General Administration of Civil Aviation stated that Kuwait International Airport witnessed a decrease in passenger traffic by 8%, an increase in aircraft movement by 5%, and an increase in air cargo traffic by 8% last year compared to 2020, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Deputy Director-General for Aviation Safety, Air Transport and Aviation Security, Duaij Al-Otaibi, said today, Wednesday, in a statement to KUNA that the total number of passengers last year amounted to 3,560,280 passengers, compared to 3,875,061 passengers in 2020.

He added that the incoming passenger movement amounted to 1,458,163 passengers in 2021, compared to 1,835,271 passengers in 2020, while the outbound passenger movement was to 2,102,117 passengers, compared to 2,039,790 passengers in 2020.

He stated that the total aircraft movement that operated to and from Kuwait International Airport in 2021 amounted to 48,257 flights, compared to 46,062 flights in 2020.

With regard to the volume of air freight at Kuwait International Airport, Al-Otaibi stated that the total in 2021 amounted to 208,721,162 kilograms compared to 2020, in which the total air freight amounted to 193,863,062 kilograms.

Incoming

He stated that the incoming freight movement in 2021 amounted to 168,900,684 kilograms, compared to 2020, in which the volume of incoming freight amounted to 16,677,268 kilograms, while the outgoing freight movement amounted to 39,820,478 kilograms compared to 2020, in which the volume of outgoing freight amounted to 27,090,794 kilograms.

Meanwhile, prior to the enforcement of the Cabinet's decision to reduce the rate of employees in state agencies to 50 percent and to activate electronic services, there was a significant increase in the frequency of appointments being booked to complete transactions especially after

government agencies stressed not to receive clients without prior appointments, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The "Mata" platform updated the new appointment booking mechanism by linking with the "Sahel" application. It divided the booking system according to the type of transaction, thereby facilitating the procedure to be implemented.

Some government service departments witnessed a great demand for appointments. The momentum increased in the departments of foreign equivalencies and certificates in higher education, citizen service centers in the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, the Kuwait Credit Bank branch in Granada area, The Public Authority for Civil Information and the Department of Attestations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Visiting

The time for visiting government departments ranged between two and 10 days ahead, and the time period increased to 20 days in the Residency Affairs Department in Hawally area.

A total of 40 government agencies are providing the appointment booking service through the Sahel app. Some authorities, including the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority, still provide the appointment booking service through their own automated system or hotline number.

The Ministry of Public Works, via the Public Relations Department, has allocated a system on the "Mata" platform to book appointments for journalists and media professionals who wish to visit the ministry.

Also, some government agencies such as the Public Authority for Youth and the Public Authority for Manpower will implement the smart fingerprint attendance system via the mobile phones of employees instead of paper statements and manual fingerprints.

In a press statement issued this week, employees of the Public Authority for Youth announced their rejection of the smart fingerprint attendance system via mobile devices.

They stressed that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has requested paper statements, indicating that the smart system only works on automated systems supported by only the iPhone device.

Other Voices

To err is human and loose cash tempting

By Ahmad alsarraf

It was, and perhaps still is, the habit of some government watchdogs in more than one Arab country to turn a blind eye to monitoring the financial actions of those who have a religious nature or activities, on the grounds that those in charge of them are far from suspicion and doubt.

Nevertheless, it has been proven, through several examples, that the matter may be the opposite, as we are all human that 'loose' money is tempting, especially where there is lack or weakness of financial control. It was therefore not strange to see ministerial under-secretaries in the endowments, heads and members of associations and religious organizations referred to the prosecution on charges of misappropriation of public funds.

Often, the bodies that have an international or regional character are the most distant from oversight, and this makes them more vulnerable to corruption.

It was reported in the Saudi 'Middle East', some time ago, that the Control and Anti-Corruption Authority in Saudi Arabia began investigating a number of criminal cases during the last period, the most prominent of which was the involvement of 3 employees of the Muslim World League in obtaining more than 5.7 million riyals in payments from the director of a company contracting with the League in exchange for their agreement to increase the amount of 27 million riyals on the value of a project.

A manager in a major contracting company was also arrested for obtaining two million riyals in payments from a commercial entity, in exchange for enabling the entity to obtain subcontracts with the company within its existing projects in the Grand Mosque of Makkah, and embezzling 50 million riyals from the same company with the participation of one of its accountants, and his share represents 25 million riyals, and suspending 3 bank employees for establishing commercial entities, and opening bank accounts to be used in depositing cash, in return for 400 riyals out of every 100,000 riyals deposited in those accounts.

The Anti-Corruption Authority also announced the suspension of a public notary for obtaining 2.6 million riyals from a businessman (suspended) in exchange for emptying 4 sukuk with a total area of more than 40,000 square meters in an irregular manner, and arresting 4 university employees, a citizen and a resident who had previously worked for it; for their involvement in establishing commercial entities, obtaining projects from the university in the amount of 10 million riyals, and signing incorrect work completion certificates.

The Authority also started its procedures against a number of citizens and residents for transgression on mosques and benefiting from its electric current service, and referring them to the competent authority to take the necessary action against the perpetrators.

An employee of the General Presidency of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in one of the regions, a businessman and a resident were also arrested, for receiving bribes, in return for signing incorrect certificates of completion of work.

We are not far from what is happening around us, especially since the oversight bodies in the Ministry of Awqaf, as it is rumored, have been reluctant for years to audit the accounts of charity institutions that have huge assets abroad and have multiple foreign projects about which little is known, and they also need oversight.

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Kuwait's govt set to achieve strategic goals

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 13, (KUNA): The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development affirmed that the country's government is proceeding at a steady pace to achieve the strategic objectives in working on the sustainability of public finances, restructuring the public sector, promoting economic growth in partnership with the private sector, and achieving social development without compromising the interests of citizens.

This came in a press statement issued by the secretariat on Wednesday, in response to what was published by a local newspaper regarding the current government's direction to amend the social contract within the work program of the current government.

Stated

The secretariat stated that the current government's work program "sustaining social security despite challenges" did not include any phrase referring to the term social contract amendment, but it was mentioned in the work program of the previous government within a general context to explain the initiative to motivate citizens to work in the private sector, as this initiative refers to a restructuring support wages in the same sector.

The secretariat affirmed the government's full commitment to the prosperity of citizens, while ensuring the restructuring, organization and targeting of services and subsidies provided by the state to citizens in order to sustain them.

It stated that the government is keen to move forward with taking all necessary measures to enhance and sustain economic and social development and to provide health, educational and housing care and other services in accordance with sustainable reform programs.

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