



Cabinet submits 22/23 budget proposal

Deficit forecast down 74.2%

Opinion

Lebanon ties 'subject-matter as required thereby'

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PERHAPS the Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Bouhabib have forgotten that flatteries no longer have a place in the Gulf relations with Lebanon.

Therefore, if they view the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nasser as a Kuwaiti or Gulf concession, they are mistaken.

The measures taken can only be reversed after rebuilding trust, and not making Beirut a platform for attacking the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

All Lebanese officials must realize that the policy of "disassociation" required by the Gulf system is in the interest of their country. Successive Beirut governments have adhered to it in their ministerial statements since 2017. To be frank, they unfortunately were not up to their pledges as a result of their submission to an Iranian power that controls its decision.

Consequently, its negligence in curbing Hassan Nasrallah and his "gang" was a reason for the start of harsh measures, especially after the persistence of this evil gang to attack the Gulf countries, the vulgar language with which Nasrallah addresses the brotherly countries, and the blatant terrorist acts of the so-called Hezbollah in Yemeni affairs, in addition to his constant endeavor to flood the Gulf countries with drugs.

There is no doubt that the visit of the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nasser to Beirut stems from the Gulf's concern for the Lebanese people, who gain nothing from the practices of Hezbollah.

This is a last rescue attempt.

Either the Lebanese will abide by the commitments they make, and gag the little devil that lurks in the basements of the southern suburbs of Beirut, or they will burn rescue boats behind them and submit to his threats. They will strip their country from its surroundings and turn it into an Iranian instrument of terrorism against the Arab countries, and then they will discover that political deviations, ostentatious statements, and cryptic pledges never work.

It is natural for this slanderer - small and arrogant Hassan Nasrallah - to be stubborn. He does not realize that he brought all this harm to his country because of his aggressiveness, and that he is not different from ISIS, which paradoxically only appears when Iran suffers a setback, as it is currently happening.

Is it a coincidence that there is harmony between whoops the owl of the southern suburbs and the terrorist operations of ISIS, or is the Iranian engine in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon the same?

I imagine that waiting for the Lebanese answer to the Kuwaiti-Gulf-Arab message that Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nasser carried to Beirut will be like a mirage, for the decision is not in the hands of the Lebanese government, but rather with that person who is obsessed with yelling, insults, killing and bloodshed by dragging his country into the furnace of destruction in the service of his Iranian masters.

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nasser, in all the statements he made from Beirut, was frank when he said, "There is never any tendency to interfere in Lebanon's affairs. The matter is only about implementing what was agreed upon in advance."

Therefore, it is official that Lebanon is facing a major test today. Either it succeeds or it fails, and then, as Lebanese politicians repeat on occasion and without occasion, "subject-matter as required thereby".

"Do I need to increase the volume?"

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Work permits granted for expats aged 60 and above on KD 250 fee

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 24, (Agencies): Minister of Justice and Minister of State for "Nazaha" Boosting Affairs Jamal Al-Jalawi announced on Monday the decision to allow issuance of work permits for expatriates aged 60 and above, who hold a high school certificate or a lower educational qualification.

Al-Jalawi, also Board Chairman of the Public Authority for Labor Force, said in a statement this permit would be issued for a KD 250 fee (USD 826).

The concerned workers must have full health insurance from one of the insurance companies, listed in Boursa Kuwait.

The decision is also applicable on other segments such as husbands of Kuwaiti women, children of Kuwaiti female citizens, wives of Kuwaitis and Palestinians who hold residency documents.

It is effective for a year and will be revised within this period according to the labor market conditions.

The cost of health insurance for expatriates for all ages, including those who are 60 years and above has been set at 130 dinars for one year by the Health Insurance Hospitals Company "Daman", reports Al-Rai daily quoting reliable sources.

The sources indicated that the health services that will be provided by 'Daman' will cover all health services provided in the government sector, but free of charge, meaning that any health service provided to the expatriate will be without any additional money than the specified fee.

The sources considered that the proximity of the health insurance hospitals entering the actual service may open discussion about the possibility of not obligating the 'sixty years old expatriates' to private health insurance, and only health insurance if it is able to cover all requirements, and in a manner that does not affect the government health system in any way.

The sources confirmed that there is consensus among the members of the Manpower Board of Directors to resolve the '60s' as soon as possible, perhaps during today's meeting, noting that there is consensus among the members that the prescribed fee should be 250 dinars instead of 500, which is the fee that was approved during the era of the former minister, Dr. Abdullah Al-Salman, and estimated the cost of the initial health insurance policy at about 500 dinars.



This satellite image provided by Planet Labs PBC shows the aftermath of an attack claimed by Yemen's Houthi rebels on an Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. fuel depot in the Mussafah neighborhood of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Saturday, Jan. 22, 2022. (AP)

Kuwait decries ballistic missile attacks on Saudi Arabia, UAE

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 24, (Agencies): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry Monday emphatically denounced the cowardly terrorist attacks launched by Houthi militias by firing drones and ballistic missiles against civilians and civilian targets in Saudi Arabia and UAE.

In a statement, the ministry said Houthi militias' continued targeting of civilians and civilian areas, and their insistence on defying the international community, breaching international humanitarian law and deliberately destabilizing regional security and stability, underline the serious behavior of these militias.

Therefore, it maintained, the international community, especially the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), needs to take urgent action to put an end to this aggressive behavior in order to maintain international security and stability.

It emphasized that the State of Kuwait fully stands side by side with Saudi Arabia and UAE, and absolutely backs all steps they are taking to maintain their security and stability.

The United Arab Emirates and the U.S. military intercepted two ballistic missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels over the skies of Abu Dhabi early Monday, authorities said, the second attack in a week that targeted the Emirati capital.

The missile fire further escalates tensions across the Arabian Gulf, which previously had seen a series of assaults near - but never indisputably on - Emirati soil. It comes during Yemen's yearslong war and the collapse of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers. American troops at Al-Dhafra Air Base in the capital took shelter in bunkers during the attack and fired back with their own Patriot missiles.

The attacks threaten the business-friendly, tourism-

focused efforts of the Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula also home to Dubai. For years, the country has marketed itself as a safe corner of an otherwise-dangerous neighborhood.

Videos on social media showed the sky over Abu Dhabi light up before dawn Monday, with what appeared to be interceptor missiles racing into the clouds to target the incoming fire. Two explosions later thundered through the city. The videos corresponded to known features of Abu Dhabi.

The state-run WAM news agency said that missile fragments fell harmlessly over Abu Dhabi.

The Emirates is "ready to deal with any threats and ... it takes all necessary measures to protect the state from all attacks," WAM quoted the UAE Defense Ministry as saying.

A U.S. military official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations, acknowledged the assistance of American Patriot missile batteries prevented the Houthi missiles from striking targets in Abu Dhabi. Videos on social media suggested outgoing interceptor fire came from the base.

The missile fire disrupted traffic into Abu Dhabi International Airport, home to the long-haul carrier Etihad, for about an hour after the attack.

Houthi military spokesman Yehia Sarei claimed the attack in a televised statement, saying the rebels targeted several sites in the UAE with both Zulfijr ballistic missiles and drones, including Al-Dhafra Air Base. He warned the UAE would continue to be a target "as long as attacks on the Yemeni people continue."

"We warn foreign companies and investors to leave the Emirates!" Sarei shouted from a podium. "This has become an unsafe country!"

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 24: The Kuwait Ministry of Finance Monday released the State of Kuwait's draft budget bill for the coming fiscal year, which starts April 1, 2022 and ends on March 31, 2023. The budget forecasts KD 18.8 billion in revenue (+72.2% vs current year's budget), plans KD 21.9 billion in expenditure (-4.8% vs current budget), and projects a deficit of KD 3.1 billion (-74.2% vs the budgeted deficit for the current year ending on March 31st of KD 12.1 billion).

The Minister of Finance, and Minister of State for Economics Affairs and Investments H.E. Abdulwahab M. Al-Rasheed said, "Next year's budget projects higher revenue levels, however we were keen to maintain our cap on expenditure at KD 22 billion while maintaining

healthy capital expenditure that is in line with previous years."

22/23 Budget highlights

■ Revenue:
○ Total projected revenue: KD 18.8 billion, representing an increase of 72.2% compared to the current year's budget.

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○ Non-oil revenue: KD 2.1 billion, representing an increase of 15.3% compared to the current year's budget.

Expenditure:

○ Budgeted expenditure: KD 21.9 billion representing a decrease of 4.8% compared to the current year's budget.

Expenditure breakdown:

○ Salaries and Subsidies: 74.5% of total expenditure
○ Capital Expenditure: 13.2% of total expenditure
○ Other Expenses comprise 12.3%

Projected Fiscal Balance:

○ KD 3.1 billion fiscal deficit, projecting a decrease of 74.2% compared to the forecasted deficit in the current year's budget.

○ Break-even point: An average price per barrel of USD 75 for the financial year.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's defense ministry and the US Department of Defense assembled via video link on Monday for a fresh round of talks aiming to push bilateral ties to greater levels.

The Kuwaiti side, headed by Major General Fahad Al-Turajji, engaged their American counterparts, led by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East Dana Stroul, in discussions over matters of mutual concern, said a defense ministry statement.

Bilateral ties, which date back decades, have come a long way in recent years, both sides agreed. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters deployed inside a prison in northeast Syria on Monday, closing in on the facility's last wing controlled by militants for days, the force and a war monitor said. The raid follows the surrender of hundreds of Islamic State fighters and aims to end one of the most brazen attacks by the group in years.

Forces took over buildings near the prison's northern wing, said Farhad Shami, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. That's where dozens of IS militants have been holed up since Thursday.

Shami said SDF forces advanced after about 300 IS militants surrendered early Monday.

Over a dozen Kurdish fighters and more than 100 militants have been killed in clashes since the assault began, according to the Kurdish-led force. The number of fugitives remain unclear. (AP)

RIYADH: GCC ministries of communication and transportation have approved a timetable to begin a 12 month process to piece together the Gulf Railway Authority during the committee's meeting on Sunday.

A statement by the General Secretariat mentioned that this move comes in implementation of a resolution to establish the authority issued by the GCC leaders in their 42nd summit in Riyadh last December.

Adding, the Sunday's meeting was also attended by Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics Saleh Al-Jasser and the GCC General Secretariat Dr. Naif Al-Hajraf. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: The head of Future Movement and former prime minister Saad Al-Hariri declared on Monday suspending his activities in the political arena and abstaining from nomination for the parliamentary elections due in May.

Al-Hariri, speaking at a news conference, called on other members of his family to follow his example and abstain from nomination for the polls - apparently advising his brother Bahaa, eyed as possible successor to him at the political level.

2 Army officers face prosecution for graft

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 24, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has referred two Kuwait Army officers, a colonel and lieutenant colonel, to the public prosecution on charges of misappropriation with public funds.

Nazaha said in a statement that its corruption and investigation division had received a notification from the deputy prime minister and minister of defense regarding the working out of the contract by the ministry to purchase Eurofighters aircraft.

It noted that auditing of the case revealed that huge sums of money had been appropriated - much higher than the total value that had been agreed upon in the basic deal.

Funds had been spent without advance permits from the concerned authorities at the ministries of defense and finance, it noted.

Cases surge to 5,176

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 24, (KUNA): Kuwait on Monday said 5,176 more people tested positive for COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, taking the country's caseload to 502,630, according to health ministry data.

Some 4,337 more people recovered from the virus to up the number of those to have overcome the disease to 454,799, according to ministry spokesman Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, adding that the recovery to positive case ratio stands at 90.5 percent.

One fatality linked to the virus upped the country's death toll from the pandemic to 2,487, while 397 people are hospitalized with the virus, 65 of whom need intensive care,

he told KUNA. Some 28,910 swab tests were conducted over the last day, out of a total of 6,689,318 so far, added the spokesman.

Kuwait is going through an unprecedented wave of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19), stated Minister of Health Dr. Khaled Al-Saeed, adding that with the medical staff's efforts and the support of the community, it will pass.

After the inauguration of Al-Sabahiya Western Health Center, Dr. Al-Saeed said in a statement Monday that this turn of events requires joining efforts with workers in hospitals, noting that vaccines against the novel coronavirus are available.

Day by Day

YOUR Excellency, the Minister of Interior! Everyone is fully aware that you are not satisfied with the unjust practices of the State Security Apparatus, especially since members of this apparatus continue to pursue those who oppose their unjust practices.

Honorable Minister please clean the apparatus of all its ills since a committee was formed to develop its work, not to tarnish its image.

We know there are people who think they are above the law and no hand can reach the person who is at the helm of affairs of this apparatus.

Spare no efforts to overhaul the entire apparatus which has become the 'Talk of the Town'.

... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Al-Bahar:
We Are Proud of Our Achievements in the Journey Towards Digitization and Sustainability
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