



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Dive Team removed a half ton, three meters long buoy off the Kuwait Towers beach in cooperation with the Kuwait Municipality which provided equipment to carry out the operation.

GOVT EMPLOYEES USE GLOVES TO CHEAT TIMING SYSTEM?

EMBEZZLEMENT OF PUBLIC MONEY

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Many, if not most, employees working in the public sector do not respect their working hours, despite fingerprint machines at most ministries and public authorities. The employees have even come up with tricks to cheat this system. They have found a way of imitating their fingerprint on a material that another person can wear and sign in or sign out on behalf of his or her colleague. A few months ago, rumors said a machine was invented to make these finger covers with the fingerprint of an employee that can be used by another person. Now it seems this machine really exists, as employees are actually using these 'finger gloves'.

Muthee, an employee working at the Licenses Department of the Ministry of Commerce, knows of some colleagues using such gloves. "Colleagues told me that few employees are using a silicone finger cup or glove that has the fingerprint of their colleague to sign her or him in, and then he repeats the favor on another day for her," she told Kuwait Times.

"I personally haven't seen employees doing this, nor have I heard of anyone caught doing it. Maybe this is due to not having cameras installed at the place of the fingerprint machine. And as far as I know, if an employee is caught doing so, he will only receive a warning and sign a pledge of not repeating it. I assume if he repeats it, the sanctions will be strict," added Muthee.

Incidentally, the General Director of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Subaih went on a random two-hour field inspection at the Hawally Municipality building. The purpose of this inspection that included various departments was to check the attendance of employees and their performance.

He noted that legal action will be taken against employees who don't respect work tim-



ings. During this sudden visit, Subeih met people who were there with their paperwork to listen to their complaints. He also checked the names of supervisors who were not working to take sanctions against them.

According to attorney Khalid Al-Hajiri, such behavior may be considered a crime. "If any institution proves that an employee was repeatedly absent and was not doing his work, they may sue him for embezzlement of public money. Before, the institutions were not very strict regarding this issue, but many institutions have started to take action against errant employees," he explained.

"This is a kind of swindling that is very similar to the payment that Kuwaitis working in the private sector receive from the government as support to their salaries that are not high usually. Signing in with fake fingerprints is not only common in public institutions, but also in some private sector companies, especially in the oil sector. I know about 80 employees being sued for embezzlement of public money as they were not reporting to work but were receiving salaries from the government," he added.

Such employees may end up losing more. "I know some employees who committed this crime had to pay the whole amount of the salaries they received that reached KD 20,000 in some cases. The wrongdoer will never be let off in such cases - he either has to pay the whole amount or at least half of the amount," explained Hajiri.

A security guard at the Public Authority for Industry said fingerprint gloves have not been seen at his workplace. "I don't recall any such cases at our institution. It's almost impossible to do such a thing as our machines register both the fingerprint along with the photo of the employee. So if somebody tries to sign in with a fake fingerprint of another employee, he may be caught from the picture," he pointed out.

At the Ministry of Electricity and Water, employees leaving the place pass through the fingerprint machine which is observed by cameras registering the process. "We have never heard of an employee who signed in or out with a fake fingerprint on behalf of his or her colleague. If any such incident happens, it would be rare and can easily be discovered, as the cameras are recording and officials can review this recording at any time. I'm not sure what the penalties are, but definitely the employee will be sorry," said one of the seven security guards sitting opposite the fingerprint machines.

In some ministries, such machines are not installed yet, such as the Ministries Complex in Kuwait City. "We demanded installing fingerprint machines at our ministry, but they haven't been installed yet. We are still using cardpunch machines, which are both observed by a camera and a supervisor who is present near this machine watching the employees punching their timecards. So it's not possible that an employee will punch two cards at the same time," stressed Huda, an employee at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor located in the Ministries Complex.

STRICT CAMPAIGN TO TARGET TRAFFIC OFFENDERS

KUWAIT: An intensified crackdown on traffic offenders will be accompanied by a media awareness campaign warning of the dangers of not wearing a safety belt and using mobile phones while driving.

The ministry's media office stressed the importance of following traffic guidelines to the safety of drivers, adding that the intensified campaign against offenders will take the form of

checkpoints and speed cameras.

Statistics reveal a rise in road accidents, the ministry said, emphasizing that using mobile phones is at the forefront of their causes.

Not wearing safety belts has resulted in some of these accidents being more tragic than they should be, the ministry added.

As for traffic offences, the ministry has released 13,127 for the use of

mobiles and 65,663 for neglecting the use of safety belts over the past nine months.

On the media campaign, this will be conducted through all forms of media in the country, including newspapers, television, radio and the internet, the ministry said. Also, leaflets will be handed out, while lectures, workshops and debates will be hosted by experts on the aim. — KUNA



Nabila Al-Anjari

HORECA KUWAIT KICKS OFF

KUWAIT: Leaders Group announced that preparations are finalized to host the 2014 HORECA Kuwait; an exhibition for hospitality and catering organized in cooperation with Hospitality Services Company. The event kicks off tomorrow at the Badriya Ballroom in the Jumeirah Hotel and lasts through Jan 29.

Abdulaziz Al-Khalidi, the Undersecretary for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is scheduled to attend the inauguration ceremony of the event which receives strategic support from the ministry's Touristic Department.

"HORECA Kuwait saw increasing participation during the past two years from leading companies

in the catering and hospitality markets in Kuwait and around the world", said Nabila Al-Anjari, the General Manager of Leaders Group, in a statement yesterday. Al-Anjari also pointed out recent statistics which indicate that there is an average of 136 restaurants for every person in Kuwait. "Those numbers highlight the volume of investment in this vital sector," Al-Anjari said, adding that the exhibition offers an opportunity for investors to "discuss plans and strategies for expansion based on studied visions". More than 170 chefs are expected to take part in a cooking competition organized as part of the event, with a judging panel consisting of 8 international judges.

KUWAIT TO EMULATE CANADIAN MODEL IN DEALING WITH AUTO-ROAD ACCIDENTS

KUWAIT: Kuwait needs to adopt the Canadian approach to dealing with the ubiquity of hospital care for auto-accident patients, said Minister of Health Ali Al-Obaidi, while meeting here yesterday with a team of Canadian health providers.

The Canadian model, he said, was instrumental in reducing deaths as a result of road accidents from 50 percent in 1993 to 18 percent in 1998 to 9 percent in 2002, reaching to as low as 4 percent currently.

It is incumbent on the Ministry of Health to apply this model to reduce the enormous rate of fatalities on Kuwaiti roads and highways, he said, noting that cooperation with Canadian specialists would go far in achieving more manageable rates of fatalities.

On his part the ministry's Undersecretary for Technical Tasks Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said that ministry officials discussed with the visiting Canadian team the possibility of sending Kuwaiti physicians to Canadian hospitals to get expertise on treating patients of road accidents and on developing effective methods of treatment of patients in intensive care units (ICUs).

He further said the ministry of health also sought to learn from the



KUWAIT: Health Minister Ali Al-Obaidi pictured with a team of Canadian health providers yesterday.

Canadians the best ways to run outpatient clinics with the emphasis on reducing the frequency of their use by recurrent patients.

The visiting Canadian team of health providers conducted in their current visit to the country a number of lectures and seminars and workshops directed at local physicians, nursing staff, and medical technicians, said Dr Reda Jenna, head of

medical emergencies at Adan Hospital, adding that the Canadian team appraised the local health givers of the latest methods in dealing with emergency room care.

On its part, the Canadian team spoke favorably of the health care system in Kuwait while noting that it could progress easily through extensive training programs and boosting the spirit of team work. — KUNA

MINISTER URGES MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES TO BETTER SERVE THE PUBLIC

KUWAIT: To counter the public outcry against the laxity among the employees of the Kuwait Municipality, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Eissa Al-Kanderi issued a memo yesterday urging these employees to execute their duties with earnestness and dedication to the public's interests.

Al-Kanderi, who is also Minister of Communications, told Municipality employees in his memo that the public was disgruntled by their inadequate work and unfriendly attitude, stressing that all employees would be held accountable for poor conduct with the public.

He urged the employees not to be tethered to their desks but to take the initiative on their own to go out to an inspection site or a field tour and examine any violations in person, promising that those who carry out their work diligently would be rewarded and those who do not would be severely reprimanded.

He further asked the employees in the memo to have respect for public property and not to violate in that regard the articles of the constitution. — KUNA

SLOWDOWN IN GULF ECONOMIC GROWTH EXPECTED

DUBAI: This has been a decade of extremes for the Middle East and North Africa - extreme wealth for the Gulf but extreme instability for the Arab Spring nations and their neighbours. However, we think the drivers of economic performance will change for the second half of the decade.

The challenges will be pronounced as the Arab Spring states work through the enormous costs imposed by the 2011 revolutions. But with the support of allies overseas, and with more effective government in place, 2015 could be the year when the decline in fortunes slowly starts to reverse.

For Egypt, we are less convinced than many of a 2014 turnaround, despite aid flows, a security crackdown and early indicators of better economic performance: anti-regime protests, sporadic violence and a gaping divide in public opinion persist. However, 2015 offers hope. Both Egypt and Tunisia plan to have permanent elected parliaments, governments and presidents in place by the end of this year, paving the way for a normalisation of financial conditions, a resumption of economic activity and gradual recoveries. —The National

Heart shape pendant chain in 18k yellow gold, artistically designed with gold wire-mesh, studded with diamonds. Available at select Damas outlets.

KD 105

WWW.DAMASJEWELLERY.COM 00965 97866779
 FACEBOOK.COM/DAMASJEWELLERYARABIA
 DAMASJEWELLERY TWITTER.COM/DAMAS

damas