

DEPORTATION RUMORS KEEP EXPATS IN JITTERS

MOI OFFICIALS SEEK TO ALLAY FEARS

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: As the country ushered in New Year, the expats in Kuwait, who make up about 70 percent of the country's population, remained in jitters as rumors about new deportation rules gripped communities in the country. For the last one week, the local media has been springing surprises on a daily basis with reports about new regulations or proposals by the government to harass, penalize and eventually deport expats. To make matters worse, rumors are float across social media networks about the purported government moves to curtail the number of expat labor force in Kuwait by bringing about new drastic measures.

One of the rumors that has unnerved people is about the reported punishment of deportation for parking a vehicle in a slot that is earmarked for the handicapped. A KD10 was previously charged for this traffic offence. But now the violation will result in towing away the vehicle along with confiscation of documents including driving license.

Major Naser Buslaib, Head of the Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior explained that the ministry applies the same measure on citizens as well and the news was nothing but rumors. The Traffic law set deportation for expats for three serious offences, such as drunk driving, crossing red light and overspeeding. This rules were issued many years ago.

Parking in the place of a disabled is not one of these violations and was not added to it. So if the expat committed two serious traffic violations, he may be ready for deportation after the third one, he told the Kuwait Times.

Ineffective measure

Another scary news about deporting expats for barbecuing on seaside was published two days ago in the local press. According to an official in the Kuwait Municipality who sought to stay anonymous said this is still a proposal and was not applied yet. He thinks that such proposal is not effective and may even cause more problems.

The fine for barbecuing on beaches was increased from KD 5 up to KD 100. Yet people didn't stop this habit or refrain from barbecuing. This is due to the negligence of the municipality inspectors who are not doing their job properly. So what is the use of increasing the penalty if it is not executed properly, he asked. He even believe that this may cause more problems for inspectors who go to implement this rule. The erring person can even attack the officer in defiance if he thinks that he will be deported eventually, he said.

The official also narrated the story behind the proposal. The Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Subaih came with this proposal after receiving a complaint from a woman who sustained burns from the burning

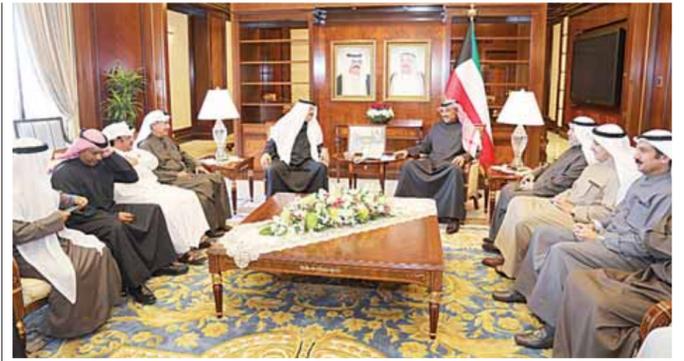
charcoal after she fell asleep on a beachside. She showed medical reports to Al-Subaih stating that she sustained charcoal burns due to barbecuing. After listening to her story, Al-Subaih decided to propose the rule. But I believe if the fines are imposed rigorously, nobody would dare to violate the rule, he said.

No mistreatment

Meanwhile, Director of Public Relations and Security Information Brig Adel Al-Hashash denied that expats were being mistreated in cases of deportation saying that nobody was being deported without a proper crime punishable under Kuwaiti law. He also denied any plan to deport expats on a selective basis during celebrations of New Year's eve.

There are orders to ensure security year round especially in areas frequented by families for entertainment, Hashash said in statements published by Al-Rai yesterday. He added that policemen are working on protecting the country and people against any violations.

Hashash said the Interior Ministry prepared an integrated plan to patrol different areas. Detectives will patrol all areas including farms, jakhours, cafes and restaurants. He asked citizens and expats to cooperate with the instructions of the police. The official said the government will apply the law on all without any discrimination during New Year celebrations.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the chiefs of Kuwaiti diplomatic missions abroad yesterday, in presence of Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Al-Roumi. During the meeting, they discussed the latest political developments on both regional and international arenas, planned diplomatic activities and ways and means of developing relations with sisterly and friendly countries. Senior ministry officials were also present in the meeting. —KUNA



NBK HOSTS NEW YEAR LUNCH FOR STAFF

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted a special lunch buffet for all staff on the occasion of the New Year in appreciation for their commitment, initiative and unremitting efforts in serving the bank as well as its

clients and shareholders. Lunch buffets were held in NBK main head offices. NBK Executive Management congratulated the employees on the occasion of the New Year and thanked them for their efforts and excellence.

An annual tradition, the end of year lunch buffets helps strengthen the NBK family and serve as a token of appreciation for the staff's professionalism, dedication and hard work.

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