

Letters to Badrya

Dear Ms Darwish,

With regard to the letter you published in the Kuwait Times (page 1 on Thursday 28th January), I have to say that I was quite frankly amazed by your deductions and quite honestly your analysis is unworthy of a good journalist such as yourself. The objective of your letter appears to be that you are demanding that private schools provide a free education for your children. You seem to be confused about the distinction between education provided by the state and education that is private and which is available for people to choose to send their children to if they so wish and if they wish to pay for it.

Firstly you mentioned oil prices plunging to \$20 a barrel. Yes, you are correct, but that hasn't brought down salaries (either of politicians or journalists or of teachers), that hasn't brought down the price of food, cars, rents, and so on and so forth, so what is the formula that connects oil prices uniquely with school fees? How much did one pay for a car in 1989 and how much does that car cost today?

Perhaps you are unaware or omitted to mention that the average annual salary of a British secondary teacher 25 years ago was £14,800 and that in 2007 the salary was £35,700 and that was 2007 not 2015. That is the salary of one teacher in the United Kingdom, not a British teacher who has to be attracted to come to Kuwait. Salaries in Britain go up with inflation EVERY SINGLE YEAR which means the salary scales of teachers in Kuwait must be raised annually in tandem.

Secondly, you mention the good old days, before the invasion when you paid 2000 KD for tuition fees for your son. A quarter of a century ago? Did I read something incorrectly? You're a journalist and have access to resources. Please do check the price of everything before the invasion.

You mentioned that you sent your children to a school in England for free. As in Kuwait, the United Kingdom has state education and private education. I presume you sent your children to a state school? If you had decided to send your children to a private school in Britain then, you would, today, find yourself paying fees in the range of £15,000 to £35,000 a year. I am astonished that you are even making the comparison. We have state schools / government schools in Kuwait. Any Kuwaiti can send their children to a state school. For free! If the standard of the state schools does not meet the standards required by the Kuwaiti population, I have to say that that is not the fault of the private schools. The private schools are here to provide an education (in some cases a wonderful education) to people who WISH to or CHOOSE to send their children there. These schools do not have the support of the state. They provide a service that is paid for and what a parent pays in tuition fees goes towards paying the salaries of excellent teachers, the accommodation of the teachers, buildings, equipment, materials, non-teaching staff and so on.

Yes, the schools in Britain teach in English as Britain is an English speaking country but that doesn't mean they can be equated to private schools in Kuwait. You managed to educate your child in Britain for free because you sent him to a government school. In Britain, if one does not have the means to pay for a private school, then one sends one's child to a state school. If a parent here does not have the means to pay for a private school, government schools are also available for them, in Arabic of course as Kuwait is an Arabic speaking country.

You suggest reducing schools fees rather than raising them. Which of course would mean reducing teacher's salaries? Please also campaign to reduce the cost of transport, accommodation, food, travel, medical expenses, as well as the salaries of journalists. And all the expensive cars that are so popular here.

You suggest easing the granting of licenses for schools as a solution, which might not be a bad idea but, every school, if it is to provide teaching, must employ teachers and teachers must be paid salaries, and given accommodation and so on. Unless of course you are suggesting that teachers' salaries are held down to the levels of 1988 or 1989? Whether you have 10 private schools or a 1,000, they will still have to charge fees in accordance with the cost of living. Fees do not go down just because you have more schools. The economies of scale do not apply here.

My dear Ms Darwish, you should be campaigning to the government and the National Assembly to improve the level of state education in Kuwait and not campaigning to destroy the very schools which provide the best education in the country. The reason people choose to send their children to a reputable school such as ours is because they know they are paying for the best education available in this country and that with this education the doors are opened to the best universities around the world. Universities which, incidentally, charge very high fees.

Dr Ziad Sayid Rajab
Director
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13 TENDERS PENDING FOR EDUCATION MINISTRY

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A report issued by the Ministry of Education (MoE) showed that the ministry has 13 project tenders pending with the Central Tenders Committee (CTC), including those of kindergarten meals and student dormitories with a total value of KD 22 million. The report added that other tenders involved replacing, operating and maintaining swimming pools, as well as supplying meals at various training centers in all educational zones and the private education department in the period of March till May 11, 2016. The tenders also include replacing and repairing elevators and spare parts in schools and various MoE departments, repairing and maintaining Oracle software database systems, renewing software licenses, technical back-up, hiring various vehicles and drivers, hiring cleaners, supplying, installing and maintaining devices in kindergartens and primary schools and upgrading art gallery tools and equipment. The report also added that six more tenders had been recently offered for bidding with a total value of KD 571,000 for photocopying, photocopier maintenance, spare parts and toners and printer maintenance.

KUWAIT TO SET UP COMPANY TO RUN REFINERY COMPLEX

KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Petroleum Company (KNPC) said yesterday it will set up a new company to run its planned Al-Zour refinery and petrochemical complex which, when built, will be the biggest in the Middle East.

The new company, KBRC, will also manage a planned permanent liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal, said KNPC Chief Executive Mohammed Al-Mutairi, according to comments on state news agency KUNA. He said that setting up KBRC would allow the independent management of the projects under one structure.

Mutairi told Reuters in October that commissioning of the 615,000 barrel per day refinery was expected to start in November 2019. Contracts to build the 3 billion cubic feet per day LNG import terminal were expected to be awarded early this year.

Meanwhile, Mutairi further stated that KNPC's capital budget reached around KD 12 billion for the fiscal year 2016-17, while its operational budget



for the same period is estimated to be around KD 889,385 million, adding that the company is implementing multi-billion plans and strategic projects exceeding KD 11 billion.

On a different front, Mutairi said KNPC has completed around 42 percent of environment-friendly petro project and expenses reached around

KD 1.15 billion by the end of 2015, expecting expenditure on the project to reach KD 1.07 billion by the end of 2016. Mutairi also noted that KNPC is planning to establish 100 new oil stations to provide future adequate number of oil stations due to expanded overall developments in the country. — Agencies

SCHOOLS AUTHORIZED TO SUSPEND CLASSES IN CASE OF EXTREME COLD

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Following his instructions to cancel morning assemblies at schools to avoid the extreme cold, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa authorized school directors to suspend classes in case of extreme cold.

Hawally shelters

Hawally Governor Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah yesterday

presided a meeting with senior officials at his office to discuss updating Hawally's existing shelters and building new ones as needed according to population density in cases of emergency. Officials in attendance were Major General Abdullah Al-Ali, Director of the General Department of Civil Defense, Mansour Al-Thafeiri Hawally educational zone's director, Dr Adel Al-Khatrash, Hawally health zone's director, Dr Ahmed Al-Husseini, Mubarak Hospital's manag-

er and Muhannad Al-Khayyat, Hawally roads maintenance's manager.

Bedoon's ID

The court of appeals yesterday mandated the Central Apparatus For Illegal Residents' Affairs to issue a civil ID to a bedoon (stateless) woman. Meanwhile, the court yesterday released a suspect who had been accused of embezzling KD 313,000 from a company he used to work for.



KUWAIT: Major General Abdelfattah Al-Ali gives instructions during a crackdown carried out in Hawally Governorate yesterday.



Firefighters tackle a blaze reported yesterday.

89 PEOPLE ARRESTED IN HAWALLY CRACKDOWN

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Eighty nine people were arrested during an unscheduled police crackdown carried out in Hawally Governorate yesterday. The detainees include 13 persons arrested for violation of residency law, three people wanted to serve court sentences, 33 for failure to compete visa procedures, 27 for carrying out transactions in violation of the law, two wanted on civil cases, three absconders, and 18 persons who were not carrying IDs. A total of 387 people were inspected during the campaign, which was led by Major General Abdelfattah Al-Ali, the Interior Ministry Assistant's Undersecretary for General Security Affairs.

No injuries in fires

Farwaniya and Sabhan fire centers responded to a fire in three homes in Kheitan. Firemen found out that the fire started on the roof of one house, then the flames spread to two others. One shack made from galvanized iron collapsed as a result. Firefighters managed to prevent the flames from spreading further, and no injuries were reported. In another incident, Hawally and Salmiya firemen put out a fire in a Hawally building. The fire started in the kitchen of a 9th floor apartment. The fire was put out quickly and no injuries were reported. Separately, a fire was reported in a Reqqa apartment, prompting Mangaf firemen to respond and extinguish the blaze. No injuries were reported.

Motorist injured

A two-car collision left one of them turned upside down, and injuring one driver. Mangaf firemen helped the driver out of his vehicle, then handed him over to paramedics who rushed him to Adan hospital.

Infant suffocates to death

An infant died and his parents were admitted in the intensive care unit (ICU) in a critical condition after suffocating on smoke from burning charcoal left in a closed room yesterday. The couple had left the coal burning for heating. A day before, two workers died while a third was hospitalized in a critical condition when they suffocated inside a closed-door room at a Wafra farm.

Crackdown at camps

Ahmadi municipality's emergency team carried out a campaign at Jalah camps resulting in confiscating 50 ATVs, revoking four camp licenses and removing an illegal shack.

Impersonator caught

An Iraqi man was sent to the criminal detectives department on charges of posing as a policeman. His phone, which contained photos of him in uniform, was confiscated. The man said during questioning that the uniform in the pictures belonged to a friend, adding that he did not use it to commit crimes.

KUWAIT DIVE TEAM COMPLETES ASHERIJ COAST CLEAN-UP

KUWAIT: The Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team has completed a campaign to remove 25 tons of harmful waste from the Asherij Coast. The 'Clean Shores Kuwait' project was undertaken by Kuwait Dive Team in cooperation with the Kuwait Municipality, the Environmental Public Authority, the Council of Ministers, and the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Kuwait Dive Team President Waleed Al-Fadhel reported that the campaign was undertaken to remove plastic materials, ropes, tires, neglected fishing nets, sunken vessels, and ships run aground from Asherij Coast. During two days of work, the Team lifted more than 25 tons of waste harmful to the marine environment. The heaviest objects were removed with bulldozers provided by the Kuwait Municipality. Fadhel believes that the majority of the waste originated on merchant ships in the Gulf coming into Doha Port, blown onto the Coast by northern winds. Industrial plants, construction sites, abandoned ships, heavy rains, and sewage added to the waste. In response, the Kuwait Dive Team called for tighter sanctions on polluters and violators of environmental regulations. Fadhel expressed his hope for a Standing Committee for the Development and Monitoring of the Environment in Kuwait Bay and the John, given the area's importance for marine and coastal life.



Legalese

HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN KUWAIT

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Many of us come up with new innovative ideas that could be, might be, the next best business idea. It is not easy to take those first steps though. Starting a business is always a bittersweet experience. For me personally, it was mixed emotions because it was long hours of work at the start but it turned out to be my biggest achievement.

Commercial laws in Kuwait have taken a major leap over the past two years and will continue to change now that we are going through some difficult economic reform. I have received plenty of questions inquiring on how to start a business in Kuwait and thought I would answer the basic questions on here.

Registering an app

Question: I would like to start my own business, my business idea is actually an app. I want to register in Kuwait commercially but I am not sure if I start a business online or from home?

Fajer: Unfortunately under Kuwaiti commercial law for you to obtain a commercial license/ permit, you must have a physical commercial location. Other countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council do not have such requirements. Commercial locations are in specified areas only and that does not include residential areas so you cannot start a business from your home.

Question: How do you know which areas are commercial?

Fajer: Well, when you register to obtain a permit (after having provided all the required documents and met all the required qualifications), the Ministry of Commerce will send a representative to check your location, representatives from the Ministry of Health will be sent to check health and safety for kitchens and restaurants, the Fire Department will check health and safety from their side as well. With that said, some commercial areas can be for specific businesses as well, so maybe only a restaurant can open in that location or only a bookstore and so forth.

Fortunately though there is plenty of platforms in Kuwait that support small startups or businesses and can be legally used for you to pursue your business endeavors and test out your business idea before taking major steps of starting a business. These can be markets, applications by big companies, community centers, exhibitions and so on.

As for online businesses or applications, you will still need a physical place, a lot of successful local applications in Kuwait have physical spaces for legalities that they don't really use, as most of their work is based online.

Getting a license

Question: How long does the process of obtaining a permit take?

Fajer: As I mentioned above many different entities are involved in order for you to obtain a permit, therefore it can take from a month to a few months. The issue is not with the process itself as much as it is with the fact that the procedures are not clear. In my opinion any procedure provided by the government should be written clearly and easily accessible to the layman. My advice is to do your research whether personally or through a lawyer and find out what the requirements are for your business and then submit your papers.

Online payments

Question: Can I legally receive online payments if I do not have a registered company?

Fajer: No. Local companies that provide online payment platforms will not provide their services to non-registered companies.

Ownership

Question: Is it true that I have to be from Kuwait to obtain a commercial license? Or have a Kuwaiti partner that owns a majority of the shares?

Fajer: Previously a Kuwaiti citizen had to own 51 percent of the shares of the company but with the new reform laws there are some exceptions to that rule. With that said, I don't think the new laws are of any significance to those that want to set up small businesses without getting into the details. So, yes you will need to have a Kuwaiti or Kuwaiti partners that own the majority of the shares.

Legalities

Question: What should we keep in mind from a legal perspective before starting a business?

Fajer: Each business has its different needs, but I shall answer this question generally.

1) They type of company you want to establish should be the first thing you consider. There are multiple options under Kuwaiti law and each type has its own responsibilities and consequences depending on the partnership that you would like to create.

2) When you submit your papers to obtain a permit, you will need to also register your company's trademark including the logo. So I advise that you finalize those issues internally before submitting your documents.

3) A general partnership agreement can be found at the Ministry of Commerce, also the general draft for the articles of association of the company (should your company need one). I advise you to read and review them carefully even if they are general and are commonly used in Kuwait. Internal policies are also things that you should consider.

There are other elements that you will need to carefully plan out but that are not legal matters that I will not get into, like your mission, vision and so on. It will require a lot of planning and commitment but hopefully you will find a pot of gold at the end of a very long road.

For any legal questions or queries, email ask@fajertelawyer.com.