

Local

# 843 companies with 5,911 registered workers suspended

## Public Authority for Manpower cracks down on fake companies



KUWAIT: Public Authority for Manpower inspectors are seen during the campaign. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



The empty office of a fake company busted during the crackdown.



An inspector leaves a note at a closed company's office, informing its owner to report to authorities within three days.

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) raided fake companies on Sunday evening in the Capital, Hawally and Farwaniya governorates. The inspectors divided into three groups and were accompanied by reporters from various media outlets. The raids resulted in suspending the commercial licenses of 843 companies with 5,911 employees registered with them - 181 companies in the Capital governorate with 1,081 employees; 314 companies in Hawally with 2,144 employees; and 348 companies in Farwaniya with 2,686 employees.

The raids focused mainly on empty offices of fake companies, in addition to other violations. The employees registered with these fake companies are working somewhere else or are unemployed (marginal laborers). The owners of these companies are committing human trafficking, as they only founded a company to sell visas to expats without practicing any commercial activity.

### Regular inspections

This was not the first raid by PAM on fake companies, but the inspections will now be regular and more frequent. "Previous inspections on certain malls proved

that all or the majority of the companies there were not practicing any business. The offices were vacant and were very small, and some had few pieces of furniture as a camouflage," Ahmad Al-Musa, Acting Director General of PAM, said after the raids.

PAM will be cooperating with other public bodies. "We are now cooperating with the Ministry of

Commerce and the Public Authority for Civil Information to verify civil registrations and commercial licenses. We will check the total number of employees registered on each license. The offices that were inspected today are temporarily suspended with code 72. After their representation

### Eliminating trafficking

Abdullah Al-Mutoutah, Deputy Director for Manpower Protection, said that these raids will eliminate human trafficking. "These raids aim to ensure that employers respect the rules of the labor law. We will release details to clarify the violations. The violators will then be transferred to the investigation department. We will do our duty, and then the judge will decide the penalty for the crime committed," he said during a raid in Hawally. Salem Al-Jadi, head of the raiding team in Hawally governorate, explained that the inspectors during this raid posted warning stickers on empty offices, giving owners three days to clarify their status by visiting the PAM headquarters and submitting documents of their businesses. "We placed the warning sticker even on some offices with furniture or decor, since nobody was working inside the office or the shop. We also took photos of the e-number of the office. We send it to the central directorate, and they check it to see whether there is a license registered on it or not. The most significant evidence that nobody is working in the office is the pile of classified ad papers under the door of the office," Jadi told Kuwait Times. The public can also participate in reporting any violation of the labor law by contacting PAM at pr@manpower.gov.kw, 25359232 or WhatsApp: 69009600

## Inactive firms founded only to sell visas to expats

tives come here, they will be transferred to the investigation department with code 71. If they are guilty, the law will be strictly applied on them," he added. Inspectors from the labor inspection department will conduct follow-up visits. "They will go on morning and evening inspections. The raids will be regular - monthly or weekly depending on the violations observed by the inspectors on previous visits. Some malls are on the blacklist, and no commercial licenses will be issued as they already have numerous and repeated violations," Musa explained.

According to him, by the end of this year, the system

## Why don't Arabs read?



By Jeri Al-Jeri

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There was an actual war on reading that poisoned our ancestors' love for books. After the spread of Islam, it became well-known that the Muslim nation was a nation of reading. Europeans, during the Dark Age, were fascinated by how much time and effort the Muslim people and governments poured into anything book-related - from libraries and educational centers to paper factories; and polyglot scholars translating every readable material - even the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt. Sadly, all this became history. Both Eastern and Western historians found that the Muslim world was victimized by losing its romance with the art of reading and writing. This tragedy wasn't the making of a devilish, cerebral outsider - actually, the bane spawned within.

Prof Yasir Qadhi said during a lecture that the last few Turkish sultans of the Ottoman Empire that ruled the modern-day Arabian Gulf, Egypt, Syria and all its neighbors, had a special understanding of Islam that was unfortunate. The empire initiated a law calling to execute any Muslim citizen who read, obtained, bought or sold or even asked for any sheet of printed paper. Being the juggernaut it was, the Ottoman Empire crushed the Arab's quest for knowledge due to its extremism.

This might answer why our Muslim versions of Edison and Einstein were mostly figures who had their sparks during the various caliphates or Islamic dynasties. Some historical resources mention chemists and physicians in the first 100 years of the 500 years-plus era of the Ottoman Empire. But why did a Muslim government fight knowledge so viciously, even though Islam as a faith teaches that Allah is worshiped via the seeking of knowledge?

Every Muslim sultan had his team of muftis - scholars of Islamic rulings - who had the sole purpose of making the Islamic states move in accordance to Islamic rules and regulations as much as possible. When Gutenberg perfected a new method of printing that was a logistical and educational dream, everyone in Europe became a reader or an inspired writer. Fearing that the masses will be led astray, and out of exaggerated respect to the Arabic language that is considered holy, the "fatwa" team of the Turkish Sultan Bayazeed pressed his highness to take a firm stand against this kind of novelty and not fall under the saying: "Whoever has his book as his sheikh will make plenty of mistakes." In their logic, the spread of any ideologically cancerous book might cause massive blasphemy among the Muslims.

In the pre-Gutenberg era, the European world and the Islamic world were like China and the US in their technological and educational race - however, after the crippling of our mind's growth by the misdemeanor of our own Muslim brothers for years, the West sprung ahead in unprecedented leaps. Needless to say, even before the first month of the Ottoman Empire's demise, the entire Middle East was invaded by advanced European nations who were light years ahead. But all these elements have faded away and the trauma is evaporating, to leave us in this perfect timing for an Arabian renaissance!

## No water cuts today

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Electricity and Water's (MEW) Assistant Undersecretary for Water Operation and Maintenance Khalifa Mohammed Al-Fraji denied social media warnings that water supplies will be disconnected today. Fraji explained that the plan circulated on social media only involves one of the new projects in Mutlaa (northern region) to connect new lines to the grid, adding that no disconnection for water supplies will be involved in any part of the country.

### No exemptions

The Ministry of Interior's (Moi) relations and security media department's manager Brig Adel Ahmed Al-Hashash stressed that the penalty of impounding vehicles parked in no-parking zones or on pavements and for using mobile phones while driving and not wearing seatbelts will remain active. He said the law has been officially activated. "We will study the pros and cons of activating the law in the coming days to avoid its negative effects," he explained, strongly denying that the law exempts any category of motorists.

Hashash noted that the campaign had started on Sunday and would remain in force, subjecting violators to two months of vehicle impoundment and withdrawal of license plates for the first offence. He added that if the violation is repeated, violators will be sent to the traffic court for relevant penalties. In addition, Hashash explained that standard fines for the violation are KD 15 plus KD 10 as towing charges and KD 1 per day as impoundment charges.

Hashash denied that traffic police were abusing their powers and the law over dealing with universities, government bodies or local markets, as each facility had enough parking spaces. "Some drivers just won't walk a few

more steps for no more than two minutes," he concluded.

### Recruitment offices

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry Urged domestic helper recruitment offices to announce the recruitment fares for workers they provide. "Otherwise, we will make you do so," the ministry warned, urging the offices to provide a price list within 14 days at the commercial control department in Siddiq to avoid legal action.

### Cleaning contracts

Well-informed municipality sources said current cleaning contracts are due to expire on Nov 24 and that the municipality will extend them for a maximum of 12 months and a further six months. The sources said the total number of cleaning contracts in effect are 17, and a special committee to qualify applying companies will subject all of them for studies to find any shortcomings and avoid them in future contracts. The sources added that the new cities of Sabah Al-Ahmad, West Hadiya, Jaber Al-Ahmed, New Khairan, New Abu Halifa, New Mesayel, East Sulaibikhat and New Naseem will be added to the new contracts.

### Bachelors

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department announced that Farwaniya inspection teams recently toured block 10 in Khaitan to examine dilapidated buildings. Farwaniya Municipality Manager Saeed Al-Azmi stressed that the tours were made on direct instructions from Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri in a bid to resolve the problems the block's residents have been facing. Azmi said the team discussed residents' grievances, with some of them noting that the block has 600 buildings and most of them are derelict, cannot be expanded, lack enough parking spaces and many of them are rented to "bachelors". Azmi added that a full report will be submitted to Jabri about the block and promised legal actions would be taken to evict bachelors from the block.

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