

Local

Kuwait Air Force holds show at Ali Al-Salem Air Base in Salmi

‘Great opportunity to encourage young men to join the army’



KUWAIT: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammed Al-Khudhur is seen in a group picture taken during the event. — Defense Ministry photos



A helicopter featured in an airshow held as part of the event.

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Air Force held a static show event at the Ali Al-Salem Air Base in Salmi yesterday. The show was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Service Department, Kuwait National Guard, Ministry of Health and some international armed forces. It was held under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. On display were various old and new vehicles of the Kuwait armed forces, including tanks, mobile operations rooms, special forces vehicle and others. Visitors also enjoyed getting onboard some aircraft and helicopters.

Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammed Al-Khudhur said the open day of the Kuwait armed forces comes as part of the upcoming national celebrations, in which the armed forces always participate. “This is a great opportunity for the public to witness various equipment of the Kuwait armed forces to encourage young men to join the army. The participation of various authorities reflects the cooperation between them and the public,” he said.

The event included two air shows including F/A 18 slow pass, parachute jumping and an Apache show. This was followed by the K9 team (dog) show and the explosive detonation team show. The Kuwaiti Army military band also performed during the event. Children were able to enjoy entertainment activities at the event free of charge such as camel riding and slides. In addition, some competitions were held and visitors received souvenirs.



Kuwait Air Force aircraft displayed at the event.



The Kuwaiti Army military band performs during the event.

News in brief

Embassy monitors citizen's death

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Embassy in Jordan is closely following up on the recent death of a Kuwaiti national in Amman, Ambassador Azeed Al-Daihani said yesterday. “The embassy is in close contact with Jordanian security authorities,” the ambassador said in a statement, adding that the embassy was informed that a Kuwaiti national was found dead in an under-construction building in Amman. He quoted Jordanian Minister of Interior Samir Al-Mobaideen as confirming that the incident was under investigations. The Kuwaiti diplomat spoke highly of Jordanian security efforts to find the details of the incident, according to the statement. — KUNA

Online commercial licenses

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced it will start today providing online licenses for new companies, stores and commercial projects. The process will allow small and medium enterprises to receive their licenses within a shorter time period and will also reduce the number of clients in the ministry's centers, said the ministry in a statement yesterday. It added that the online request form only requires the leasing contract and leasing receipt without any other documents. The new license is equipped with a barcode that provides the ministry's inspectors with the company's information and is connected directly to the ministry's database, the statement said. — KUNA

Early pregnancy unit

KUWAIT: Head of Adan Hospital's Obstetrics and Gynecology Department Dr Abeer Al-Thaydi said the hospital will soon launch an early pregnancy assessment unit to take care of possible illnesses during the early months of pregnancy, detect possible complications and their effect on patients and hospitalize patients before discharging them to help them resume their regular routines. Speaking in a press statement she made on the sidelines of a lecture at Adan Hospital delivered by pregnancy consultant Dr Janye Terry from St Mary Hospital in the UK, Thaydi said new clinics are being currently equipped with early pregnancy assessment units in outpatient departments to work in the morning and afternoon hours. Thaydi also announced that as part of MoH's visiting doctors program, Egyptian hysteroscopy professor Osama Shawki will visit Adan Hospital this week. — By Meshal Al-Enezi

‘Masked men’ video

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said policemen identified the person responsible for a video clip that went viral online and showed several individuals wearing masks on a street. The man confessed to filming the clip and publishing it, saying it was an advertisement for a TV program to be broadcast on a local TV channel. The department said that an undertaking was taken from him not to film and broadcast without obtaining approval from security authorities. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Kuwait reaffirms support for UN envoy's Libya mission

NEW YORK: Kuwait reiterated yesterday its support for Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Ghassan Salame to facilitate the Libyan political process through the UN Plan of Action. The position was expressed in a speech at a UN Security Council meeting about Libya, delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi.

Otaibi urged all Libyan parties to take action for a peaceful political settlement by engaging in technical, legislative, political and security conditions for transparent and peaceful elections, eventually leading up to a united and stable Libya. Last year, the Libyan people faced a set of serious challenges that posed a threat to their country's security and stability; primarily hostilities and military clashes, he regretted. The so-called Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for bombings of several vital institutions such as Libyan High National Electoral Commission (HNEC), Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), he added.

The UN plan of action aims at establishing public order based on security forces and police to replace armed groups in addition to developing mechanisms linked to UNSMIL, he said. In this context, the Kuwaiti diplomat hoped all parties in Tripoli would reply positively to the plan in question. For the first time in seven years, the first police station in Tripoli capital was established to enhance Libyan security services under the supervision of the Libyan government, Otaibi said.

Otaibi hoped that a national Libyan conference due in the coming few weeks would lead to pushing the Libyan political process forward, ending inter-Libyan divisions and stalemate, and armed militias. He renewed his appeal to the House of Representatives and the Supreme Council of the State to finalize limited changes to a Libyan political agreement purposed to reform the executive authority, along with a constitutional referendum law.



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a UN Security Council meeting on Libya. — KUNA

Peace in Darfur

Meanwhile, Kuwait renewed its support for Sudan to move towards peace and sustainability in the Darfur region. This came in the speech of Kuwait at the Security Council meeting on the 1591 Committee on Sudan delivered by Otaibi. Otaibi expressed his satisfaction at the continuous decline in the number of displaced persons in Darfur for years, hoping that Member States would do their utmost to support Sudan to provide conditions conducive to the return and stability of displaced people and the provision of basic services to them. “We are gathering for the progress achieved in stabilizing all areas of Darfur, except for hostilities in the vicinity of Marrah mountains and it is imperative that the Council review the sanctions regime pursuant to resolution 2400, which is gradually lifted in line with developments on the ground and strengthens the authority of the government to exercise its sovereignty throughout its territory,” Otaibi said.

Otaibi reiterated appreciation of Sudanese authority's efforts in collecting weapons and renewing the cease-fire, pointing out that the achievement of security in Darfur has pushed most armed factions out of Sudan. “The priority of a political solution remains our goal and despite the lack of significant political progress during the reporting period, the Government of the Sudan remains the only party involved in all negotiations on Darfur,” he said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality announced issuing warning notices to 956 violating camps and removing 841 that had been pitched without licenses, in addition to 114 that were used for commercial purposes. — By Meshal Al-Enezi

local spotlight

Cybercrimes law



By Muna Al-Fuzal

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

The 2016 cybercrime law includes severe penalties for those who violate its provisions or try to breach the privacy and confidentiality of its terms. The implementation of the law sparked a wave of rage from activists on social media, who saw it as narrowing the freedom of opinion, especially since we are witnessing a technological revolution in the world, which means that there is enough space to express opinions without restrictions or criminalization.

Since then, people have been divided in maintaining a consistent position towards this law, with differences between supporters and opponents according to their points of view and experience. Some said the law will preserve the privacy and security of Internet users, whether on social networks or websites that are heavily exposed to intrusions, especially websites of government agencies that have confidential files. It also targets those who insult others.

One of the provisions of the cyber law is that a person who threatens to kill a person, harm the dignity of a person or damage their honor can be punished by up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of KD 5,000 to KD 20,000 or either of the two penalties. Opponents of this law are mostly young people and activists who find social networking sites a means to express their personal views on issues of internal or external societies.

Statistics of the public prosecution published by Al-Qabas daily in June 2017 stated that despite the adoption of the Information Technology Act, the number of harassers has increased, as 90 percent of the complaints handled and investigated from the beginning of 2017 till the end of May were concerned with libel charges. The law considers cyberspace a “public place and therefore offensive speech is considered a crime”.

In Jan 2018, the government issued a field study conducted by the department of statistics and research at the ministry of justice, which noted an increase in cybercrime in the Kuwaiti society. It indicated that about 75 percent of citizens and residents use the Internet daily, but 32 percent of them are unaware of the penalties resulting from these crimes.

The study also revealed that cybercrime jumped from 20 percent to 170 percent during 2014 to 2016. The study stressed that crimes committed against children on the Internet call for the adoption of proactive measures of the child protection law by the state with competent authorities, and applying this law to educational and technical aspects that contribute to preventing this phenomenon. The findings indicate that the number of cybercrime cases increased year to year. As to the average number of cases recorded during the period 2016-2010, three cases were filed every three days. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, there were six cases per day. This is a big jump, I believe.

We are now in 2019. I trust that we have the right to see things more clearly. I personally have been against any law restricting the freedom of expression, but I do not agree with the slander and abuse of others. I think some of the clauses of the law need to be reviewed. For example, the study confirmed that the department of juvenile welfare recently dealt with 30 female students accused of posting an abusive poster on Twitter against their school principal. Another unusual case involved a man who took pictures of a married woman and posted them on Twitter.

Recently, everyone was surprised by the news of a Kuwaiti female professor who fled to the United States because she posted a sarcastic joke on her birthday on her Twitter account. She used a method that is used by foreigners and meant to ridicule the situation and not the Creator, but she was accused of insulting Allah and was referred to the public prosecution, so she left the country for good.

I think she found no way but to leave her country and live abroad. Many others have also fled or left the country due to verdicts that were issued because of this law. The question remains - why to keep a law if its negative outcomes are huge and reflect badly on the country's reputation more than its positives and which has turned into an oppressive nightmare for intellectuals and educated Kuwaitis?

Salih Ashour is a member of the National Assembly representing the first constituency. He recently said the cybercrime law is bad as its application had led to the exodus of Kuwaiti politicians, pilots, doctors, engineers and young people, and it is time to abolish this law because Kuwait is a country of freedom of expressing opinions and intellectual pluralism. This courageous statement by a strong and committed MP means that there is real harm not only to these figures, but on the reputation of the country. It is also repulsive to citizens because they may express personal convictions without experience or understanding, especially young people.

One of the results of the study was the demand of community awareness sessions on e-crimes. I think the issuance of fines for those who speak badly and use abusive words is acceptable, but the harsh prison sentences make me wonder about the future of a person who is imprisoned with murderers and drug dealers for many years for a word they wrote. I hope MP Ashour can convince more MPs of his position and that the media adopt this issue and demand a review of the law. It's about time.