

Local

# Roads repair process to start with highways in April

## Minister to approve 'special mixture' of asphalt to repair damaged roads

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Public Works and Minister of Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri will approve the use of a special mixture of bitumen and modified polymer manufactured by local factories on recommendations made by a previous committee and the recent investigation committee to be used in repairing roads in April, well-informed sources at the Ministry of Public Works said. The sources added that the process to repair roads damaged by heavy rain will start with highways, King Fahad Expressway and the Sixth Ring Road, adding that the minister had ordered the formation of a special committee to follow up the process. The sources said this part of the plan will be in conjunction with repairing internal roads in various governorates after taking all the needed measures with regards to contracts that are still under process or those within guarantee periods.

### Treatment abroad

Health Minister Dr Basel Al-Sabah said the total number of Kuwaitis receiving medical treatment abroad dropped in 2018 to 6,837 patients compared to 7,024 in 2017, 16,249 in 2016 and 16,819 in 2015. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry, he said the budget set for treatment overseas for the current fiscal year (April 2018-April 2019) is KD 308 million, including KD 120 million for the health offices in London and Washington and KD 40 million as health insurance for students abroad, which

requires an additional KD 200 million budget to cover overdue bills of various hospitals and medical centers abroad from 2016-2017.

### KD 8.9 million

The foreign ministry said revenues made from selling revenue stamps abroad during the fiscal year 2018-2019 were KD 8.9 million, including KD 6.6 million during the period of April-October 2018. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry about its commitment to the plans of automated connection between missions abroad and the finance ministry systems, the ministry stressed that the KD 1.39 million contract will be concluded during the fiscal year 2021-2022, adding that the project involves linking transactions made in 107 missions abroad with the ministry, improving employees' capability to handle over 3,500 documents daily in various missions worldwide, cutting losses resulting from delayed correspondence, achieving swift and fast dataflow, facilitating easy and immediate issue of audit reports and fast archiving.

### Planting trees

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi stressed the significance of regional and national parks and ecological tree perimeters. Responding to a proposal made by municipal council member Ahmed Hadyan about the project of planting trees in various desert areas in Kuwait, Manfouhi stressed that in collaboration with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish

Resources (PAAAFR), the municipality has been working on providing places to plant trees as recommended in previous structural plans. Manfouhi also said that the proposal made to build a roundabout and a traffic light between blocks number 5 and 6 in Kaifan was rejected by the Interior Ministry, because the U-turns on that street are enough to achieve easy traffic flows.

### Exempted employees

The Ministry of Education has set special regulations for employees exempted from punching in and out using biometric access control devices, on top of which is full commitment to official working hours, which will be documented at various centers. In this regard, educational sources explained that employees' bosses and those next in the chain of command will follow up employees' commitment. In other news, Kuwait's cultural office in Cairo said Kuwaiti students desiring to register in various Egyptian universities will have to submit endorsed study leaves from their workplaces, their original certificates and birth certificates, in addition to a recent endorsed passport copy.

### Social allowances

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) issued a directive to various government bodies urging updating Kuwaiti employees' marital status data every six months so that the data can be used in processing the employees' social allowances.



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Public Works and Minister of Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri attends a parliament session this past Wednesday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Kuwait sends security team to Cairo for murder probe

**KUWAIT:** A senior Kuwaiti official said on Friday a security team will be sent to Egypt to join investigations in the recent appalling murder of Kuwaiti Citizen Khaled Al-Reesh in Cairo. Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said in a press statement that the Foreign Ministry, through its embassy in Cairo, has been following up the circumstances of the regrettable incident since it took place on March 13. The embassy has already participated in initial investigations carried out by Egyptian authorities, he said, thanking Cairo for arresting the criminals immediately and giving a copy of the forensic report to the Kuwaiti embassy in Cairo. As part of efforts in this regard, the ministry on Friday morning summoned Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qoni to inform him that Kuwait, which appreciates the relevant efforts of Egyptian authorities, would dispatch a security team to join the probe of the dreadful murder. While voicing confidence in Egyptian judiciary, Kuwait calls for applying the maximum punishment to anyone involved in such an outrageous criminal act, Jarallah stressed. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qoni. —KUNA

## Nine fire stations battle Sulaibiya blaze

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Firemen battled a huge blaze that gutted a number of warehouses in Sulaibiya farming area yesterday. Firefighters from nine different fire stations helped extinguish the flames which spread over an area of 4,000 sq m, as the warehouses contained coal, clothes, liquid petroleum material and wood, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. No injuries were reported in the incident, while the warehouses were in violation of all prevention conditions, KFSD said, noting that all the necessary measures towards such violations will be taken.

Separately, firefighters put out flames which erupted in the ninth floor of a Hawally apartment building yesterday. Firemen rushed to the scene after receiving an emergency call at 1:15 pm, and they evacuated the building as soon as they arrived before battling the blaze. No injuries were reported, and an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.



## Call to remove Udayri camps for US drills

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MoI) Friday urged camps' owners in Udayri range, north of Kuwait, to eliminate them as the US army will carry out some drills. At 05:00 am today, the US army will begin exercises with live ammunition in the range, the ministry's security media department said in a press statement. The ministry appealed to all residents and citizens to hastily throw out their camps, it added. It also stressed the necessity of cooperation and caution for the safety of both residents and citizens, the statement noted. —KUNA

local spotlight

## Silk City under fire

By Muna Al-Fuzai



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The Silk City is supposed to be a development project that is needed by Kuwait, but it seems that this project will not be implemented soon, unfortunately. I believe that Kuwait needs such projects to have partnerships with major countries such as China. Last week, the finance committee of the National Assembly rejected the project and a number of MPs presented several reasons for their reservations.

Some of the MPs said the document that was submitted to the committee was not enough. It was seen as a mere vision and does not constitute an integrated development project. Some said it is not right for members of the planning committee to have a connection or interest in the project. I can't confirm or deny this statement, however, but I think every project should have expert members, otherwise they will not advocate it. Some MPs had concerns and fears that this project will facilitate the entry of liquor in Kuwait, which they see as contrary to the constitution, sharia and traditions of the society.

The important thing is that the phrase "no" has been repeated by many MPs for various reasons, which made some citizens wonder about this attack and not giving sponsors more time for reviewing the remarks before this media campaign against the project and stirring public opinion, who do not know what is going on in the corridors of politics.

As a citizen, a voter and a journalist, I wonder whether the project is intended as a personal attack against the main parties in the project - the first of which is First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the technical team members. I trust that they have decent ethics, experience and integrity, so I wonder why this strong media attack.

The economic initiative will revive transit trade because of the geographical nature of Kuwait's participation in the Silk Road project that reflects the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to turn Kuwait into a financial, commercial and international center. Compatibility between Kuwait's 2035 vision and the initiative of China to revive the Silk Road and establish a vital commercial area serving the world's countries by land and sea will contribute to the prosperity of the world economy.

If there is a big "no" towards a single project such as Silk City, which can still be discussed and its gaps addressed, what about other "dangerous" and serious grievances in the society? For example, stealing public funds is forbidden by law and socially unacceptable. Don't we need all these "noes" and a strong attack from the deputies of the National Assembly over the infringement of even one inch of land of the country or millions of Kuwaiti dinars looted from the people and the country?

I am surprised by the fact that the situation remains as if accepting the mistake is something that we must deal with. I wonder how we accept the deterioration of our educational situation, the health and administrative decline, the daily difficulties we suffer due to the broken streets, the imbalance in the population structure and wasta. A youth currently studying at university does not know how to build himself after graduating and what will his future be after 20 or 30 years.

People in Kuwait are talking and complaining about the situation, but it does not seem anyone is listening. What can we do? What we call for is a legitimate demand. I believe that Kuwait needs investments in huge projects. Kuwait and China were the first countries in the world to sign a cooperation and partnership agreement in the Chinese project.

I hope to give this project a new opportunity away from media statements that distorted the project and hurt its members, whose expertise cannot be questioned. I agree with the absolute right of all deputies to say "no" to the Silk City project. It is their legitimate right. This is their role, and we cannot argue with that. But in return we have the right to ask a question about not saying "no" to other problems.