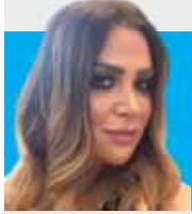


Local

My father is sick; will I reach home in time?



JUST KIDDIN', SERIOUSLY

By Sahar Moussa

Who doesn't have elderly parents that they think about all the time, constantly worrying about their health or how they are doing and what they need?

I am an expat living in Kuwait and due to a various of reasons hadn't been able to travel home to see my family for five years - until last week. I could not go to my home country, first because I was pregnant; then due to having a small baby and then due to the spread of COVID-19 that led to a total lock-down and closure of airports worldwide; then the difficult travel procedures and quarantine.

After such a long time not seeing my parents and family, I did not go on vacation, but on emergency leave because my father was critically ill and my presence was needed. I left my two-year-old son with my husband, took emergency leave and went to see my dad. I thanked God that the airports were open and I was able to travel back and forth easily. Maybe it was luck or fate, but I felt bad and could not stop thinking about all the people who weren't as lucky last year when their families got sick during the airport closure and could not see or bid farewell to their loved ones.

It is very hard when your loved ones are sick or in a critical condition and you are not able to do anything about it. By God's will, I was able to book the first flight and be with him, as I reached home in time. But what about domestic helpers or employees whose sponsors confiscate their passports and do not have the freedom to leave anytime they want? Even if their sponsors agree, will they reach home in time, since most of them come from faraway countries?

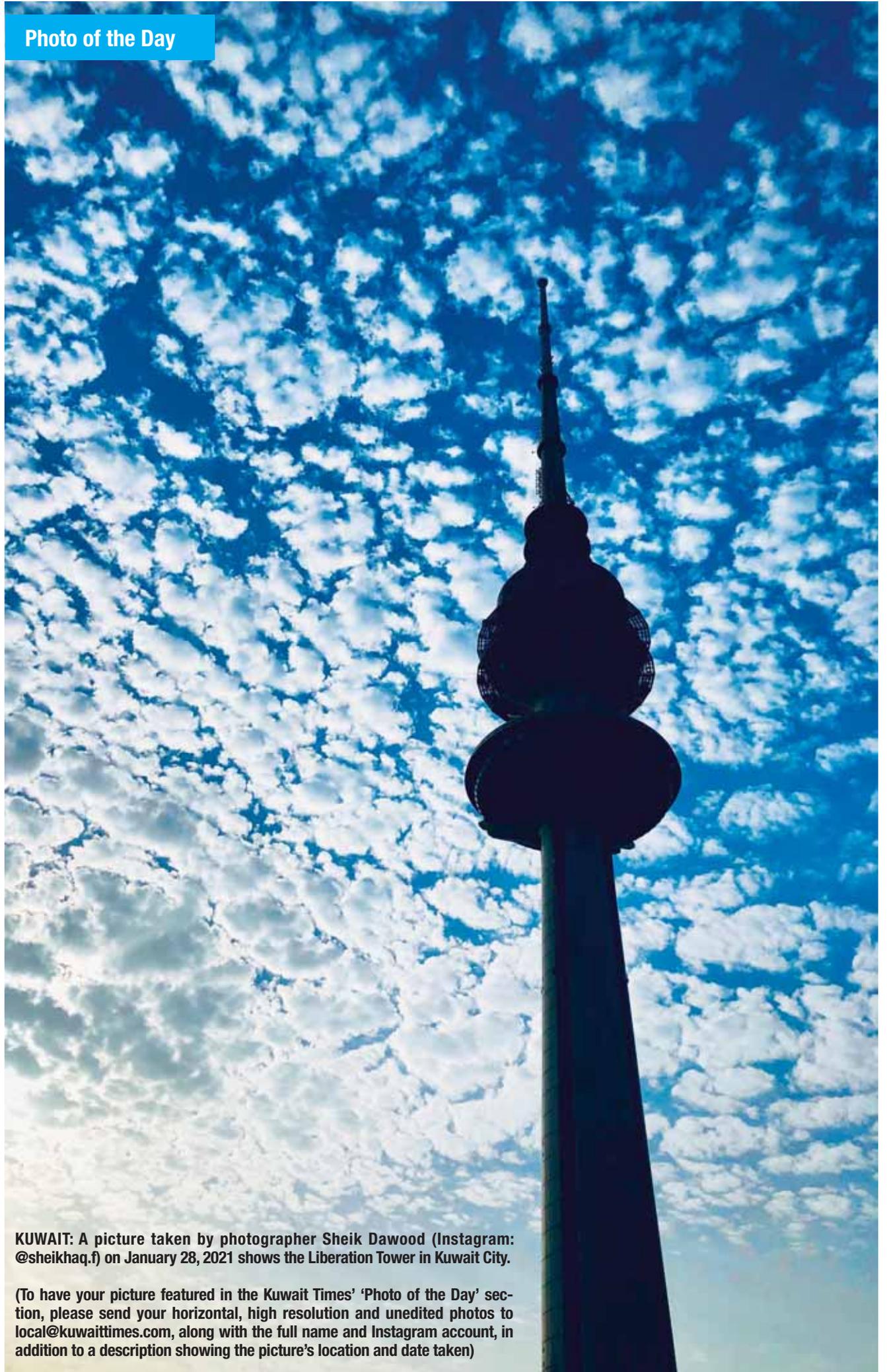
My father spent his childhood in Kuwait and went to school here, but later went back to Lebanon. He is in his late seventies and needs a lot of care, but due to the current situation, it was not easy to travel to see him frequently. This made me empathize with the elderly - how they must have felt regarding the decision issued lately banning expats aged 60 and above without university degrees from renewing their work permits and residencies.

The decision, affecting tens of thousands of expats who spent most of their lives in Kuwait, was harshly criticized by many MPs and local human rights bodies as "inhumane". They repeatedly called on the government to cancel it—and by the grace of God, the government's legal body, the fatwa and legislation department, announced the decision was illegal and scrapped it. But not before thousands of 60+ workers had left Kuwait for good. Now they will likely be separated from their families here with limited chance to return.

Nowadays, we are so busy trying to survive in this chaotic world - we go to work to provide basic necessities, put food on the table and pay our children's school fees - that sometimes we forget to check on our elders and parents who raised us, without realizing that any minute we could lose them. That's why we should stay in contact with them as much as possible. We should not postpone a phone call or visit, because the truth is, life is very tricky - it can steal your loved ones in the blink of an eye.

It is people's nature that during happiness and celebrations, they gather to rejoice, but what I have experienced lately is that also during pain, sickness and sorrow, people gather to console each other and share their experiences. This in my opinion is what makes us human, and if we lose this trait, we lose our humanity. During illness and death, humans are very weak, helpless and hopeless, and we are left with nothing but prayers. We must keep hoping and believing that God knows what is best for us.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A picture taken by photographer Sheik Dawood (Instagram: @sheikhaq.f) on January 28, 2021 shows the Liberation Tower in Kuwait City.

(To have your picture featured in the Kuwait Times' 'Photo of the Day' section, please send your horizontal, high resolution and unedited photos to local@kuwaittimes.com, along with the full name and Instagram account, in addition to a description showing the picture's location and date taken)