

Ecology

Govt jobs

Kuwaiti-expat ratio essential

KUWAIT CITY, July 5: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has made it mandatory for all government authorities to abide by the new Kuwaiti-expatriate employment ratio, which is 90:10, reports Al-Anba daily.

CSC had amended several laws and decisions related to manpower ratio to create more job vacancies for Kuwaitis in the public sector.

Sources say it rejected the request of some government authorities, which have independent budgets, to exempt them from this ratio, stressing all public sector establishments have to follow the 90:10 employment ratio. These authorities include Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), Kuwait Airways Corporation (KPC), Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), Public Authority for Social Security (PASS), Kuwait University (KU) and Public Investment Authority (PIA). CSC's decision obliges them to follow the Kuwaitization policy and ensure that 90 percent of their staff is Kuwaiti, while the rest can be expatriates.

Also, every authority, ministry or government institution which sends its list of vacancies to CSC must employ the candidates hired by CSC.

Meanwhile, the Civil Service Commission has approved the proposal to amend the organizational structure of some government agencies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement after a meeting presided over by Interior Minister and acting CSC chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hamoud, the commission revealed the meeting deliberated on a recommendation to amend ministerial decision number 551/1999 concerning the central employment system. An agreement has been reached to oblige the government agencies to accept applicants endorsed by the commission, if the agencies demanded for the employment slots and in accordance with their actual manpower needs.

State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Ali Al-Rashed, Finance Minister Mustafa Al-Shamali and Minister of Education and Higher Education Ahmad Al-Mulaifi attended the meeting.

The meeting also looked into the demand of other government agencies with independent and joint budgets to be exempted from the employment replacement policy because they have vacancies for applicants registered at the CSC.

In another development, many senior officials in the Ministry of Interior have been paid in advance to cover their expenses in overseas treatment. A total of KD 38,000,000 was earmarked for the initiative that also covered their relatives who have yet to travel abroad for treatment, indicating the move violates the bylaws and directives of Civil Service Commission, reports Al-Shahid daily.

The daily quoting reliable sources added that CSC had forwarded letter number 3037 to the ministry on the need to comply with bylaws and decisions on overseas treatment, after a total of KD 38,505,000 was paid to the officers for fiscal year 2009/2010.

160 new lawyers to start 'work' in Nov

KUWAIT CITY, July 5, (KUNA): The Fatwa and Legislation Department approved appointment of 160 lawyers out of 700 who applied and the names will be published in a week's time, announced Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ali Al-Rashed on Tuesday.

The minister made the announcement in presence of head of the department, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Salman and deputy chairman Councilor Faisal Al-Sarawi. He said the new employees are to start work in November.

The minister appeased the rest of the applicants, who had resigned from posts in other state institutions in order to apply for a position in the department, saying the Higher Civil Service Council issued a directive indicating all those who resigned from state bodies and failed to secure an appointment with the department are to be allowed to return to their previous jobs without losing any of their benefits and allowances, within a period of three months.

News in Brief

Acting PM meets envoys: Acting Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Tuesday outgoing Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Taher Farhat on the occasion of his tenure ending in the country.

Sheikh Jaber thanked Ambassador Farhat for efforts exerted to strengthen relations with Kuwait, wishing him success.

Sheikh Jaber also received Polish Ambassador to Kuwait Janusz Szewdo, accompanied by the new military attaché, where he wished him success to boost military relations between both countries.

He also received Sudanese Ambassador to Kuwait Ibrahim Mirghani, where they discussed issues of mutual interest. Director of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Office Major General Saleh Meshari Al-Humeidhi attended the encounters. (KUNA)



A Blacktip Reef Shark spotted near Qaru Island, Kuwait.

Photo by Aris Vidalis Vidalis/KTCP

Blacktip Reef Shark spotted in Kuwait waters

127 fish species seen near Qaru Island

By Dareen Almojil and Nancy Papathanasopoulou

WRAPPING UP its work in August 2011 and sponsored by TOTAL Foundation and TOTAL Kuwait, the Kuwait Turtle Conservation Project (KTCP) was on islands Qaru and Umm Al-Maradim for three full years, monitoring sea turtle populations along with their nesting and hatching habitats in Kuwait. Both islands sport vibrant coral reef areas and Qaru especially boasts at least 127 species of fish, as well as crustaceans, molluscs and even some passing birds such as kestrels, cormorants, hoopoes, herons, terns and waders.

Big fish such as Queenfish (*Scomberoides commersonianus*) and Yellowtail Barracuda (*Sphyraena flavicauda*) as well as the impressive Teira Batfish (*Platax teira*) and multitudes of jacks, angelfish, parrotfish, gobies, blennies, snappers, rabbitfish, sweetlips, rubberlips, surgeonfish, trunkfish and butterflyfish form lively crowds in and around the corals of the island. Big predators such as sharks had nonetheless never been observed here for the longest of times. This reality changed during the KTCP mission of June 2011.

As researchers snorkeled close to the pier of the island, and for the first time ever, not only in Qaru but also in Kuwait, they spotted and photographed a Blacktip Reef Shark (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*) underwater. It measured around 1.5 meters, was initially briefly seen on the 18th of June in 1.5m of water depth vanishing in deeper waters almost as fast as it had appeared, then seen feeding for several minutes and photographed on the 19th of June. It was seen again on the 21st, feeding on Sind halfbeak needlefish (*Hyporhamphus sindensis*).

Common along Oman's coastline, especially in shallow inshore waters of coral reef areas and with a small home range area, which it inhabits for several years, the graceful Blacktip Reef Shark is very shy and avoids divers. Its distinctive traits are the prominent black tips to the fins and the creamy gray gradient around its first dorsal fin. Its maximum recorded length was 2 meters. A light lateral streak along its sides is another characteristic trait of this majestic fish. As it likes to feed on reef fishes and cephalopods, it is estimated that it may have been attracted by the large numbers of cuttlefish and needlefish in the Qaru island area.

Along the Arabian/Persian Gulf *C.melanopterus* has only been encountered close to the shores of Khor Fakkan and Abu Dhabi waters. Information on the species regional distribution, demography, status and ecology remains with little information if not null.

In Kuwait there is not a single conservational study aiming at the protection of sharks. A possible reason for this lack of information is their low economical value to the country. Ironically, studies have shown that the abundance of top predators has a direct effect on the

Kuwait sea turtles reveal some secrets

'Nada' tracked by satellite for a year

By Nancy Papathanasopoulou
Kuwait Turtle Conservation Project



A Green turtle attempting to nest in Qaru Island and blocked by construction material.

Photo by Simone Caprodossi/KTCP



KTCP volunteer Ali Athafez filming a satellite tagged nesting turtle.

Photo by Nancy Papathanasopoulou

abundance of other economically important fish, including groupers and emperors. Understanding and conserving these vital members of the ecosystem is of crucial need when seeking to ensure sustainability of local, economically important fish stocks.

In general, knowledge of elasmobranchs' spatial distribution in the Arabian Gulf is limited to records from the 1940s and 1980s. Reports indicated uncertain information due to identification difficulties among species of the *Carcharhinidae* family. The most recent contribution to the list of regional Shark species diversity was produced in 2010 by Moore et al. showing no records of *C.melanopterus*.

This June 2011 encounter in Qaru is

of great value not only because it confirms the presence of *C.melanopterus* in Kuwait, but also because it reflects possible signs of improvement in the health of the local coral reef ecosystem. Since sharks are top predators, they detect weak individuals or species and prey on them. They therefore ensure a healthy, strong gene pool in the fish population as well as stronger, more resistant species over time. This process is vital to ensure healthy control on biodiversity, high standard ecosystem health and life sustainability.

Sharks are close to being lost to our seas. The shark fin trade especially has inflicted a tremendous decline to certain populations, yet their conservation is crucial, not only because they have inhabited the earth 250 mil-

lion years before dinosaurs and the direct dependency of healthy fish stocks on them but also because they are the oldest animals known to have antibodies and are believed to be the hope for the production of a new generation of medicine in the future that might provide solution for inhabiting the growth of tumor cells.

Their ecological and economical importance is still such that we yet need to discover and understand.

Unfortunately, Shark encounters have been extremely rare in Kuwait since the 1980s, mostly due to over-fishing and habitat destruction. In the past, Kuwaiti people relied on their sea as their main source of food, employment and income. Back then, understanding and care were given in order to ensure not only sustainability

of the fishermen's income but also the future of their children's resources.

Today, however, with the introduction of the oil industry as the country's main source of income, the importance of sustainably managing marine resources is not a priority anymore. The current attitude is "fish it all before someone else does", when it should probably be "conserve sustainably and diversify Kuwait's economy, thus securing future generation food supply independently of the potential course of petrol".

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