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Kuwaiti clubs kicked out of AFC Cup semifinals



Passengers flagging a public bus to escape from a rainfall that Kuwait experienced Saturday evening.

'Beware of bad weather'

The Interior Ministry and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) have warned all citizens and residents, particularly car drivers, to stay vigilant and cautious at all-time due to current bad weather condition and low visibility in some of areas in the country.

Car drivers must be highly attentive to every distraction in the

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SINGAPORE, Oct 17, (Agencies): Malaysian champions Johor Darul Ta'zim will take on Tajikistan outfit Istiklol in the final of the AFC Cup after their semifinal opponents were kicked out of the competition following Kuwait's FIFA ban.

Defending champions Al-Qadsia, who beat JDT 3-1 in the first leg last month, and Al-Kuwait, who thumped Istiklol 4-0, were due to play the second legs away next week but FIFA banned the country on Friday for government interference in the local football association.

"Following the decision by FIFA to suspend the Kuwait Football Association and its members from all football activities, Kuwait SC and Qadsia SC are no longer eligible to compete in the AFC Cup semifinals," the Asian Football Confederation said in a short statement on Saturday.

The AFC did not mention what would happen to Kuwait, who are currently second in Group G of their joint 2018

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MOSCOW DEFENDING INTERESTS, NOT ASSAD

Syria army advances near Aleppo with Russia cover

200 people demonstrate in Moscow

BEIRUT, Oct 17, (Agencies): Syrian regime forces edged forward in the northern province of Aleppo on Saturday with air cover from Russian warplanes, but faced fierce resistance from rebel forces in the country's centre.

Since Moscow began its air campaign in support of its Damascus ally on Sept 30, the army and its allies have launched four ground offensives against rebel forces in

northern and central Syria.

Syrian troops have gone on the attack in Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Latakia provinces taking advantage of Russian air strikes against al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front and other rebel groups.

Three senior Nusra members, one of them a US-designated "global terrorist", were killed in an air strike in Aleppo province on Thursday, a monitoring group said.

Regime forces control the western part of Aleppo city — Syria's pre-war economic hub — but much of the surrounding province is

held by rebel groups — al-Qaeda and others in the west and IS in the east.

Troops seized at least five villages and several strategic hilltops on Saturday, bringing them to the edges of Al-Hader, 25 kms (15 miles) south of Aleppo city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

"Taking this village would allow the regime to secure a supply line for the army between Aleppo and the central province of Hama, and would put the rebel's own supply route in their line of fire,"

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Opinion

Elections for the 'sake' of Egypt

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

EGYPT has been reaping another fruit of the roadmap laid down by President Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi to ensure that the country recovers from the Brotherhood ailment that gripped her. This is the reason parliamentary elections are "for the sake of the country all Egyptians dream of", according to el-Sisi who won the trust of 97 percent of Egyptians. The people of Egypt believe in his ability to lead them to the Promised Land amid severe storms and hurricanes sweeping through the majority of Arab nations.

The soldier has worked hard to consolidate security and restore confidence of the international community in his country. He prioritizes security; hence he has managed to achieve a lot in that aspect and supported his achievement with development through enterprising projects such as the second Suez Canal, the new capital, and several other steps to improve services and to assist the stability enjoyed in Egypt at the present.

It is natural to see some people in every country exploiting elections for personal benefits. There are many of such people in history—the era of monarchy or regimes of Abdul-Nasser and Al-Sadat, where intelligent organs tailored the parliament according to the wishes of the president, as observed in the regime of Abdul-Nasser.

However, today's elections are based on information gathered prior to voting by Egyptians in the Diaspora or during the electioneering campaign, and the poll is purely based on patriotism devoid of sectarian interests that determined the outcome of Jan 25, 2011 elections. At that point, the Muslim Brotherhood Movement exploited the political vacuum to snatch governance but the furious reaction from citizens put a stop to what could have driven Egypt toward anarchy, civil war or even division.

These are the facts which made the Egyptian citizen much sturdy in confronting the forgery and political scam of the Brotherhood, and now that the fraud is useless, the group is no longer supported in a country that suffered from its terrorist activities for eight decades.

It is true that parliamentary elections are conducted under certain security lapses but the current security situation is much better than before, if we compare 2011 and 2012 in particular. The recent events taking place in Egypt are no different from those that happened in many countries enjoying strong security and stability such as Britain where the Irish republican army tried to destabilize its internal security, or Basque in Spain or even Japan, which suffered extremists attack and still declined to surrender.

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Bid to reshape battlefield

Iraq forces push north

BAGHDAD, Oct 17, (AFP): Iraqi forces pressed Saturday their biggest offensive in months to resume their long-stalled northward advance and disrupt jihadist lines, security officers said.

After recapturing parts of Baiji and the huge nearby refinery complex from the Islamic State group, security and allied paramilitary forces thrust further northward up the main highway leading to Mosul.

They reached the town of Zawiyah and vowed to push on to Sharqat, the northernmost town in Salaheddin province before the border with Nineveh province, of which Mosul is the capital.

"Iraqi forces are besieging the villages of Msahaq and

Zawiyah," about 25 kms (16 miles) north of Baiji, a senior officer in Salaheddin operations command said.

Reclaiming control of that stretch of road and the villages along it would contribute to isolating IS strongholds east of the Tigris, such as Hawijah, from the self-proclaimed caliphate's heartland on the other side of the river.

"Retaking Zawiyah would divide the battlefield; DAESH will be in an awkward position," retired general and security analyst Abdel Karim Khalaf said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "Their transport towards Tikrit and Ramadi will be complicated, the secondary itineraries are long and difficult," he said.

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Waterfront in Salmiya reflects its lights on the Arabian Gulf at night. (KUNA — Ghazy Qaffaf)

Islamic State claims responsibility

Saudi Shiites defiant after 5 killed in shooting

RIYADH, Oct 17, (Agencies): Saudi Shiites vowed Saturday to continue commemorating Ashura, one of their faith's holiest occasions, despite a purported Islamic State group gunman killing five people at one of their gatherings.

The attack in Eastern Province was the latest in a series of bombings and shootings linked to the Sunni extremist group in Saudi Arabia over the past year.

A suspect with an automatic weapon opened fire at a Shiite meeting hall in Qatif city Friday evening, killing five people and wounding nine more, an interior ministry spokesman said.

Police intervened and shot him dead, the spokesman said without identifying him. A group calling itself Islamic State-Bahrain Province said one of its "soldiers", Shughra al-Dosari, "attacked a Shiite infidel temple with an automatic weapon."

It warned that "infidels will not be safe in the peninsula of Mohammed," the Muslim prophet.

IS considers Shiites to be heretics. Most previous attacks in Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia have targeted the minority Shiites, who often complain of marginalisation.

A video purportedly of the attack posted on YouTube showed terrified people, including many children, running frantically for cover as gun shots could be heard.

Witness Ali al-Bahrani said the gunman fired at random at the faithful, who had been listening to a sermon.

Ashura, which peaks late next week, marks the killing of Imam Hussein, Mohammed's grandson, by the army of Caliph Yazid in 680 AD. It lies at the heart of Islam's divide into Shiite and Sunni sects.

Jaafar al-Abbad, the uncle of Buthaina al-Abbad, 22, the only woman killed, said she died a "martyr for the sake of her beliefs".

"She was about to graduate from university as a doctor. Now she is a martyr, and this is even better," he said.

"People are pouring in to congratulate her parents," said Abbad.

He echoed other Shiites in saying that such attacks "will not deter us from continuing to observe our rituals".

Romain Caillet, a French expert on jihadists, said the attack poses a double challenge for Saudi authorities.

First, they should avoid the risk of "pushing some of their (Sunni) citizens into radicalisation" by allowing Shiites to practise their beliefs.

"The other challenge is security, as authorities should deploy more.. means to protect their population." He said this was the first attack by this branch of IS in the Arabian Peninsula, and said the use of the name was in keeping with the group's aim of redrawing borders.

Centuries ago, "Bahrain" referred to a large part of modern Saudi Arabia's east, as well as the neighbouring kingdom with that name, he said.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Gulf Oil Company is said to have terminated the services of 70 Kuwaitis working on contracts signed between the company and contractors.

According to sources, the decision was issued to terminate the citizens after production was suspended in Maqsouma area. They noted the 70 employees are only the first batch, as another batch of nearly 100 Kuwaitis will follow soon.

The same sources expected several MPs will protest against the decision in the coming days, particularly during the interpellation of Oil Minister Dr AH Al-Omeir which is due in two weeks, as announced by MP Khalil Al-Saleh.

The sources indicated the CEO of Gulf Oil Company opted to terminate the citizens

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'N-deal opening for ME diplomacy'

Iran rejects criticism of missile test

TEHRAN, Oct 17, (AFP): Iran said on Saturday that its recent test launch of a long-range missile does not violate UN Security Council resolutions as claimed by the United States and France.

"Our missile tests have nothing to do with Resolution 2231, which only mentions missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told a news conference.

Speaking in Tehran alongside his

German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier, he added: "None of the Islamic Republic of Iran's missiles have been designed for nuclear capabilities."

Iran announced Sunday it had successfully tested a new domestically produced long-range missile without specifying its exact range.

Defence Minister Hossein Dehghan said the new missile "can be guided and controlled until hitting the target."

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To protect yourself from Breast Cancer. Avoid gaining weight. Includes a pink ribbon graphic.