

LOCAL

Kuwait 'cracks down' on proliferation of mosques

Ministry toughens conditions

MANAMA, Aug 13: Kuwait has issued a list of new criteria to help rein in rogue mosques which abuse the system, reports Gulf News.

Under the new measures announced by Islamic Affairs Minister Fahad Al-Afasi, the mosque must have an area of at least 1,000 square metres, effectively ruling out converting small praying places into mosques where Friday prayers can be performed.

The mosque must accommodate at least 500 male and female worshippers and needs to have a parking area for a minimum of 50 cars, the minister said.

Under the new rules, the ministry receives an application to have a Friday prayer mosque that is supported by at least 100 people and then conducts a field study to assess the need for it before it announces its decision.

By toughening conditions, the ministry hopes to put an end to the abuse of the system by certain individuals who do not abide by the rules and build mosques within the vicinity of one another, dividing worshippers and causing road traffic congestion in areas near the mosques.

According to Kuwaiti reports, the state spends annually tens of millions of dinars to fix mosques that are built by private donors, but do not meet the standards set by the ministry.

Some of the mosques do not have

names while others have names that are different from which under they were officially registered, Kuwaiti daily Al Rai reported.

In one instance of confusion, four mosques have the same name.

Kuwait has around 1,500 mosques, including some of the oldest in the region. Almost two thirds of the mosques are used for the Friday sermons and prayers.

Official figures show that the mosques can collectively accommodate more than 2,700,000 people. The Grand Mosque, spanning over 45,000 square metres, is the largest with more than 100,000 worshippers.

The average cost of building a mosque is KD 300,000.

of progress and development. The reality of the series of bitter experiences that the Arab countries have gone through should make them transform the description of King Abdullah II of this group, 'seceders', into a legal base to be adopted by all Arab governments.

After all is said and done, Jordan has a special status and the Arab group supports it in its war on terrorism. As King Abdullah II said, "This support will strengthen Jordan in facing such incidents and make its people more enthusiastic in cleaning the country and region; as well as protecting religion from seceders while keeping in mind the objective to break the thorn of terrorism and defeat it despite the sacrifices."

MP offers

endangers every member of the society.

He urged the concerned government authorities to take legal measures in order to block these sites and applications, especially since several laws have been enacted in this regard. He

cited Article Four, Paragraph Four of Anti-Cyber Crime Law No. 63/2015 which stipulates maximum two years imprisonment as well as fine of KD 2,000 minimum and KD 5,000 maximum or one of these penalties for whoever creates a website, publishes, produces, prepares, sends or archives information or data with the intention of using, spreading or displaying to others online or on social media.

He asked: What steps did the Public Authority for Communication take to warn the public or raise awareness on the danger of such sites and applications? What procedures did the minister take to monitor these sites and applications? How many decisions were issued to block these sites and applications since the establishment of the authority till date? What penalties have been imposed on owners of these sites and applications? Was anyone of them referred to the judiciary?

The lawmaker also forwarded the same questions to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah, adding that the minister should provide relevant data covering the last five years including the nationalities of offenders.

Kuwait denies

Continued from Page 1

United States — which reached new intensity over the detention of an American pastor — has hammered the lira and also raised questions over the future partnership between Washington and Ankara.

As the lira plunged another seven percent in value, investors fretted over potential economic contagion from Turkey, particularly to European banks.

The Turkish lira had tumbled some 16 percent against the dollar on Friday as US President Donald Trump said he had doubled tariffs on steel and aluminium from Turkey.

"We are together in NATO and then you seek to stab your strategic partner in the back. Can such a thing be accepted?" Erdogan said at a conference in the capital Ankara.

After Erdogan's speech, the lira was trading back at 6.9 to the dollar, a loss of over seven percent on the day, recovering from even sharper losses in earlier Asian trade where it struck a record low of 7.2362 to the greenback.

In its first statement since what was dubbed "Black Friday" in Turkey, the central bank said it was ready to take "all necessary measures" to ensure financial stability, promising to provide banks with "all the liquidity" they need.

The bank also revised reserve requirement ratios for banks, in a move also aimed at staving off any liquidity issues.

But to the dismay of markets, the statement gave no clear promise of rate hikes, which is what most economists and analysts say is needed to ease the crisis.

Erdogan indicated he was in no mood to offer concessions to the United States in one of the worst spats between the two NATO allies in years.

Erdogan said Turkey was facing an "economic siege", slamming the currency movements as an "attack against our country".

The Turkish leader has been sanguine over the punitive measures announced by the US, saying that while Turkey's relationship with Washington is at stake it will look for other partners.

Analysts say that while Washington's sanctions against Ankara sparked the immediate crisis, Turkey's economy has been risking trouble for a while due to high inflation and the weak lira.

The central bank has over the last few weeks defied calls from markets for rate hikes to combat these prob-

lems, raising fears of interference from Erdogan who has repeatedly called for low interest rates.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel weighed into the crisis, calling for an independent Turkish central bank.

"Nobody ... has an interest in the economic destabilisation of Turkey but of course everything must be done so that, for example, an independent central bank can operate," she said in Berlin.

Erdogan had on Saturday described interest rates as a "tool of exploitation", in remarks that further unnerved markets.

"Investors need to see serious economic measures and not political ones to prevent things getting completely out of control," said Hussein Sayed, chief market strategist at FXTM, saying this had to include an emergency rate hike.

But Erdogan advised Turks not to worry.

"It is not at all like we sank and we are finished. The dynamics of the Turkish economy are solid, strong and sound and will continue to be so."

Erdogan also blasted what he called "economic terror" on social media, vowing that the judiciary had taken necessary measures to punish so-called speculators.

The interior ministry launched an investigation into 346 social media accounts on grounds of "provocative sharings", the state-run Anadolu news agency reported.

American pastor Andrew Brunson has been held since October 2016 on terror and espionage charges and, if convicted, could face a jail term of 35 years. Trump has described his detention as a "total disgrace" and urged Erdogan to free him immediately.

A delegation led by Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal failed to secure a deal last Wednesday in talks in Washington on a number of issues including Brunson.

Erdogan on Sunday confirmed media reports that Washington gave Onal's delegation a deadline of 6:00 pm last Wednesday for the release of Brunson "otherwise the sanctions will begin".

Agathe Demarais, lead Turkey analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit, told AFP that "with an overheated and indebted economy, Turkey will require credibly orthodox economic policies, fiscal discipline and central bank independence to reverse the current situation."

"A normalisation of relations with the US could also reduce the amount of legwork that the central bank will have to do to control the economic situation, but this is unlikely to happen at the moment," she said.

Turkey's situation is among the

most precarious among emerging markets because so much of its growth was fueled with debt in foreign currencies. That makes the currency drop so much more painful as it will increase the cost of servicing debt for Turkish companies and banks and could lead to bankruptcies.

So far, the impact on developed economies has been relatively contained. Stocks have fallen modestly in the US and Europe since last week, but analysts do not see a big risk of financial turmoil. A few European banks have business there that could lead to losses, but that is not expected to pose a systemic danger to the region.

Among the most important things investors are watching out for is whether Turkey, in an effort to stymie the outflow of capital from the country, puts limits on money flows.

Berat Albayrak, Turkey's finance chief — and Erdogan's son-in-law — said Sunday that the government had no plans to seize foreign currency deposits or convert deposits to the Turkish lira. He said it had readied an "action plan," without elaborating.

The country's economic trouble has been heightened by a dispute with the US that has centered on the continued detention of an American pastor who is on trial for espionage and terror-related charges. The US has responded by slapping financial sanctions on two ministers and later doubled steel and aluminum tariffs on Turkey.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Monday that the United States would not achieve aims by exerting pressure and imposing sanctions on Turkey.

Addressing a conference in Ankara gathering Turkish ambassadors, he called on Washington to "remain loyal to ties based on traditional friendship and NATO alliance" with Turkey.

Meanwhile, Turkey moved to take legal action against hundreds of social media accounts it accused of provoking the lira's plunge.

The Interior Ministry said it initiated legal investigations against 346 social media accounts "which posted content provoking the dollar exchange rate."

It did not provide information on the accounts but said they aimed to "manipulate the dollar rate and form negative perceptions" concerning the Turkish economy.

The Istanbul Public Prosecutor's office announced it had begun investigating "those who had taken actions which threatened economic stability." The Capital Markets Board of Turkey issued a similar warning to those who spread "lies, false or misleading information, news or analysis."

You were

Continued from Page 1

In addition, when President Anwar Sadat gave the group a chance to become a peaceful political component, it exploited the chance by establishing its cells within the ranks of the army and this resulted in the assassination of Sadat.

When the group spread to a number of Arab countries, including the GCC nations, its number one goal was to recruit and indoctrinate the next generations into believing their ideologies through the curricula. This is what the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia warned about when it worked on trimming their nails. The late Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud gave a correct description of this group in his interview with Al-Seyassah in 2002 when he said, "The Brotherhood is the source of all evil."

The black history of this group has one result — no hope for the nation to get rid of its problems except by working hard to root out all seceders, because entertaining any of their branches or those borne out of their wombs means continuation of the cycle of violence and hindrance



albander
hotel & resort

SUMMER PROMOTION







30%

discount on Rooms
during Weekdays
(Saturday to Wednesday)

20%

discount on Rooms
during Weekends
(Thursday & Friday)

Room Rates inclusive of Breakfast
Offer valid from 1st July 2018 until 17th August 2018
*Terms and conditions apply

For more information please contact us on
Telephone: +973 17701201, Ext: 351
Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com

f albanderhotelandresort

Syria depot

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Syrian government officials vowed Monday to ensure the safe return of refugees and urged Western countries to encourage the process by lifting sanctions.

Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said the refugees' return is a top priority for Damascus, adding that "the Syrian government will facilitate their return by all means." He added that the country would welcome any foreign assistance, provided it comes with no preconditions.

Public Administration Minister Hussein Makhoul said authorities are working to rebuild hospitals, schools and other infrastructure to help accommodate refugees.

President Bashar Assad's forces, with Russian air support, have won a series of victories in recent months against opposition fighters, who are now mainly confined to the northern Idlib province. The fighting is over in much of the country, but many of the more than 5 million refugees fear mandatory conscription or reprisal from government forces if they return. Others have nowhere to go after their homes and businesses were destroyed.

Speaking to international reporters in Damascus, Makhoul claimed that the government has restored more than 5,000 schools and 250 hospitals, and that about 3.5 million internally displaced people have regained their homes in Syria.

"The return of refugees is a necessary condition for the country's rebuilding and development," he said.

Makhoul called on Western countries to lift an economic embargo imposed early in the seven-year conflict that was aimed at pressuring Assad to step down, noting that it would help restore the Syrian economy and encourage the refugees' return.

His statement echoed calls by Russian officials, who urged the US and its Western allies to provide humanitarian assistance to Syria and help rebuild its economy.

The Russian military in Syria set up a mechanism to help settle issues related to the refugees' return. Moscow, which has provided crucial military support to Assad, is eager to show that the situation in Syria is normalizing now that the government has recaptured most opposition strongholds.

The United Nations refugee agency says it is premature to promote returns to Syria as it is still dangerous, but that refugees who want to return should be supported.

Speaking to reporters on a trip to Syria organized by the Russian Defense Ministry, Maj Ruslan Nigmatulin said that Russian military officers are working with Syrian authorities to help settle organizational, medical and other problems faced by refugees.

Nigmatulin, who is in charge of one of the five checkpoints set up on the border with Lebanon to facilitate refugees' return, said that about 5,000 Syrians have come back to the country since the checkpoints opened on Aug 1. He said those who lack IDs and other documents are quickly issued new ones by Syrian officials stationed at the checkpoints.

Dozens of Syrian refugees left Lebanon by bus on Monday in the latest of a wave of returns to their war-torn country, Lebanese authorities said.

An AFP photographer in the southern town of Shebaa saw women and children wait to board buses, while men loaded belongings on the back of a large pick-up truck.

Lebanon's General Security agency "secured the voluntary return of 137 displaced Syrians from the areas of Shebaa and central Bekaa through the Masnaa border crossing towards Syria," it said in a statement.

Lebanon hosts around 1.5 million Syrians who fled the civil war across the border, many of them in the Bekaa Valley in the east of the country.

Newswatch

Continued from Page 1

was killed and six were wounded in a bomb blast in a nearby town during a music festival. (AFP)

SAADA, Yemen: Thousands of mourners on Monday buried dozens of children killed in a Saudi-led coalition air strike on a bus in northern Yemen, one of the deadliest attacks on civilians in the three-year-old war.

At least 40 children were killed in Thursday's raid which hit the bus as it drove through a market of **Dahyan**, a town in **Saada**, the armed Houthi group which controls the province said. (RTRS)

RIYADH: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remains steadfast in its conviction that violence in war-torn Yemen needs to cease immediately, its secretary general **Dr Abdullah Al-Zayani** said on Monday.

The GCC is eager to assist the victims of the war in Yemen through a political roadmap the bloc had drawn up to help the country emerge from crisis, Al-Zayani said during high-level talks in the Saudi capital over political solutions to the three-year conflict.

He excoriated the armed Houthi movement for plunging Yemen into anarchy, leaving its people vulnerable and in dire need of foreign aid, citing recent UN-backed Yemen peace talks held in various locations, including **Kuwait**, in recent years. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Six suspected Islamist militants were killed in an Egyptian police raid on their hideout in a suburb west of Cairo, the interior ministry said Monday.

The alleged jihadists died in a shootout after opening fire on security forces in the 6 October district, it said in a statement.

The ministry said it had received information that the suspects were planning attacks on vital installations, Christian places of worship and security personnel.

Security forces found three automatic rifles, other weapons, ammunition and jihadist propaganda at the scene, the ministry said. (AFP)

TUNIS: Tunisia's President **Beji Caid Essebsi** on Monday announced plans to submit a draft bill to parliament equalising inheritance rights between men and women.

"I propose to make equal inheritance a law", he said in a televised speech on Tunisia's Women's Day.

The text of the bill will be presented to lawmakers after the end of the parliamentary recess in October, he said.

The proposal to equalise inheritance is among the most hotly debated of a raft of proposed social reforms, guided by a commission the president set up a year ago.

The commission suggested inheritance should by default be shared equally among male and female heirs. (AFP)

KAVIK RIVER CAMP: Alaska's North Slope was hit Sunday by the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in the region, the state's seismologist said.

At 6:58 am Sunday, the magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck an area 42 miles (67 kms) east of Kavik River Camp and 343 miles (551 kms) northeast of Fairbanks, the state's second-biggest city. The US Geological Survey says the earthquake had a depth of about 6 miles (9.9 kms). (AP)