

LOCAL

Amir urges

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out mega investment ventures in oil and natural gas, and tapping the Chinese expertise in the peaceful use of nuclear and renewable energy.

His Highness the Amir concluded by emphasizing that today's critical circumstances and conditions require more insistence on realizing progress and the aspired results.

Belt and Road Initiative

A major forum over China's ties with the Arab region and Beijing's "Belt and Road Initiative" embody the vibrant relationship both sides share, Kuwaiti Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said on Tuesday.

The Chinese government's "Belt and Road Initiative", a development strategy proposed by Beijing to focus on connectivity and cooperation with Eurasian nations, has been a launch pad for closer bilateral ties, he told KUNA on the sidelines of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF).

"Lack of geographical proximity notwithstanding," the Kuwaiti foreign minister, who heads his country's delegation to the CASCF's ministerial-level talks, urged the need to establish a platform for dialogue as a constant form of engagement.

Meanwhile, he spoke of Chinese President Xi Jinping's earnest desire to reach out to Arab states and his concern over some of the most pressing issues facing that region.

"As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, we need to engage China in constructive dialogue over these issues," the Kuwaiti foreign minister said, citing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular.

He also underlined China's contributions towards efforts to rebuild a number of Arab nations that have been torn apart by war, with Beijing allocating a sum of USD 100 million in aid for Syria and Yemen, among other countries.

Joint marketing

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) signed on Tuesday a cooperation agreement with China's Shandong Refining and Chemical Group to market Kuwaiti crude oil.

The agreement was signed by KPC's CEO and Deputy Chairman of the Board Nizar Al-Adani and Shandong's Chairman of Board of Directors Li Xiangping.

The deal, which was inked on the sidelines of His Highness the Amir's visit to China, aims to expand joint investment platform in oil and logistic industries, Al-Adani told KUNA.

Shandong, named after a coastal province in East China, is one of the leading oil industry bases in the country and known for hosting a large number of private and state-owned oil refineries, he noted.

Last April, KPC hosted a visiting high-level delegation of representatives from a number of oil refinery companies in the province, Al-Adani recalled. The delegation was acquainted with the Kuwaiti expertise in petroleum manufactures, he added.

The visit had a positive impact on boosting cooperation between KPC and Chinese oil companies, resulting in inking a mutual agreement to export the first Kuwaiti crude oil batch to Shandong Group at the end of July, said Al-Adani.

For his part, Li expressed joy at signing the deal with KPC, and forecasted huge economic outcomes as a result, for both sides and countries.

He affirmed to KUNA the Group's willingness to continued cooperation with KPC in various fields, particularly crude oil, reiterating full cooperation with Kuwait in all areas to attain mutual profitable outcomes.

China will provide Arab states with \$20 billion in loans for economic development, President Xi Jinping told top Arab officials Tuesday, as Beijing seeks to build its influence in the Middle East and Africa.

The money will be earmarked for "projects that will produce good employment opportunities and positive social impact in Arab States that have reconstruction needs," said Xi, without providing further details.

It is part of a special Chinese programme for "economic reconstruction" and "industrial revitalisation," Xi told participants at a China-Arab States forum in Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

Beijing is also prepared to provide another one billion yuan to countries in the region to "build capacity for stability maintenance," Xi said, using a term commonly associated with policing and surveillance.

Since taking office, Xi has overseen a concerted effort to expand Chinese influence in the Middle East and Africa, including the construction of the country's first military base in Arab League state Djibouti.

China has already provided vast sums to Arab countries, with Djibouti alone owing some \$1.3 billion, according to estimates from the US-based China Africa Research Initiative.

The financial largesse has raised concerns both at home and abroad over the vulnerability of poor nations to such massive debt.

Last year Sri Lanka was forced to hand over majority control of its Hambantota port to China after being unable to repay its loans.

At the heart of Xi's vision is the "Belt and Road" initiative, a \$1-trillion infrastructure programme billed as a modern revival of the ancient Silk Road that once carried fabrics, spices and a wealth of other goods between Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

The Arab states' position at the centre of the ancient trade route makes them "natural partners" in China's new undertaking, he said, adding he expected the summit would end with an agreement on cooperation on the initiative.

"Chinese and Arab peoples, though far apart in distance, are as close as family," he said, describing a romanticised history of trade along the Silk Road.



HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Chinese President Xi Jinping pose with participants of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing.

Prosecution preparing warrants to arrest convicted 'stormers'

'Only one convict has surrendered'

KUWAIT CITY, July 10: Public Prosecution has started preparing warrants for arresting those who are convicted in the case of storming of the National Assembly building via Interpol in order to execute the verdict issued by the Court of Cassation, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting informed sources.

They revealed that only one defendant — Rashed Al-Enzi — surrendered himself at Faiha Police Station.

Meanwhile, security sources stressed that Ministry of Interior has formed a special team to arrest the convicted individuals.

They said investigations reveal that only three of these individuals are in Kuwait while the rest are overseas.

In this regard, Al-Anba daily report-

ed that the Head of Kuwait Lawyers Society Muhammad Talal Al-Sayer said the society is studying the verdicts of Cassation in the case of storming of the National Assembly building, since the verdicts varied from refraining from punishment, imprisonment to acquittal.

He affirmed that the study being conducted by the society includes an explanation of the verdicts and a search of the mechanism for dealing with the verdicts as well as working on finding positive solutions to get out of the crisis.

Al-Sayer indicated the incident of storming the National Assembly building was part of the political movement against corruption which ended with the resignation of the then Prime Minister.

He stressed that he believes in the good intention of the patriot youth and their sincere desire for bringing about reform.

Al-Sayer said the society upholds the parliamentary opinions of a number of former and current MPs that call for the issuance of a public amnesty

law that is in line with articles 66 and 75 of the Kuwaiti Constitution.

He affirmed that Kuwait Lawyers Society supports the initiative of private amnesty law, calling upon civil society and human rights organizations to support the initiative that aims at national unity and social reconciliation.

Furthermore, Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) has issued a statement concerning the verdict in the lawsuit of storming of National Assembly building, revealing that it was hoping all the defendants in the case would be acquitted but that it is happy that many among them have been acquitted.

It revealed that the verdicts are painful, especially considering the lack of criminal intention of the defendants.

ICM affirmed its support for those convicted, stressing that the incident was part of the popular movement targeting the spread of corruption and use of public funds for achieving political gains.

It insisted that this situation can be rectified through a public amnesty.

In addition, the Popular Labor Movement issued a statement, explain-

ing that the storming of the National Assembly building was in response to popular demands for confronting corruption, which led youth and reform-seeking MPs to rush to the streets and head to the National Assembly in a peaceful manner. They were expressing their desire for the eradication of corruption particularly over the scandal of multi-million dinar bank deposits.

The movement said the irony in the situation is that patriot youth have been sentenced to imprisonment and are forced to leave their country while the corrupt are free under the eyes of the authorities.

It highlighted the differences between the verdicts which started with acquittal of all the defendants by the Court of First Instance, stressing that this verdict represented an accurate image of justice. However, it was followed by a contradicting verdict issued by Court of Appeals which sentenced the defendants to up to nine-year imprisonment, followed by the final verdict issued by the Court of Cassation.

MPs mull

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Furthermore, Chairman of the parliamentary Replacement and Job Crisis Committee MP Saleh Ashour clarified that this committee is temporary as per the internal regulations. But considering it is carrying out important work, the committee will continue its work in the next parliamentary term. He added he is strongly considering a proposal to make the committee permanent.

He said this will not be an easy task as there are numerous terms and conditions for forming a permanent parliamentary committee, while taking into account that the committee was formed in the latter part of the legislative term.

However, the MP is determined to make it a permanent committee, disclosing he will seek consultation on the matter. He added, "I will not abandon the committee until every Kuwaiti finds a job immediately after graduation."

Kuwait 60

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industries that rely on innovation to maintain competitive advantage," says WIPO Director General Francis Gurry. "It heralds the arrival of multipolar innovation."

A group of middle- and lower-income economies perform significantly better on innovation than their level of development would predict. Twenty economies comprise these "innovation achievers" in 2018, three more than in 2017. Sub-Saharan Africa boasts six innovation achievers, including Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa, while five economies hail from Eastern Europe.

Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam continue to move up the rankings, steering closer to regional powerhouses like China, Japan, Singapore and Republic of Korea.

"Over time, a number of emerging economies stand out for being real movers and shakers in the innovation landscape," says Soumitra Dutta, Former Dean and Professor of Management at Cornell University. "Aside from China, which is already in the top 25, the middle-income economy closest to this top group is Malaysia. Other interesting cases are India, Iran, Mexico, Thailand and Vietnam, which consistently climb in the rankings."

Missile aimed

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Sanaa, have fired dozens of missiles into the kingdom in recent months, part of a three-year-old conflict widely seen as a proxy battle between regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran. Most of the missiles have been intercepted by the Saudi military.

A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates intervened in Yemen's war in 2015 to unseat the Houthis and restore the internationally-recognised government in exile.

The Western-backed coalition has made no major gains in an offensive launched a month ago to wrest control of Yemen's Hodeidah port from the Houthis, leaving it without the decisive increase in leverage it had sought against the group in UN-sponsored peace efforts.

More than 800 children as young as 11 years of age were recruited to Yemen's devastating conflict in 2017 alone, the United Nations said on Tuesday.

The latest report of the UN secretary general on children and armed conflict verified 842 boys had been recruited by various parties in Yemen, where years of war have left thousands dead and pushed the country to the brink of famine.

Seventy-six children have been documented as used in active combat.

The rest were recruited to "guard checkpoints and government buildings, for patrolling, fetching water and bringing food and equipment to military positions," according to a statement released by the UN humanitarian affairs agency (OCHA).

The UN also verified the killing and maiming of 1,316 children last year alone, 51 percent of them in air strikes.

The Yemeni government, backed by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and their regional allies, is battling northern rebels, known as the Houthis, for control of the impoverished country.

The Saudi-led alliance is the only party directly involved in the conflict that is known to conduct air strikes in Yemen.

In 2014, the Houthis drove the government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi out of the capital into southern Yemen, prompting the intervention of Saudi Arabia and its allies the following year.

The Yemen conflict has killed nearly 10,000 people since 2015, 2,200 of them children.

Both the government alliance and rebels stand accused of neglecting to protect civilians.

Yemen's military "Security Belt" force — UAE-backed troops fighting in the southern part of the country — was blacklisted by the UN last month.

Rebels kill

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Idlib province, the last major rebel stronghold, is included in a "de-escalation" agreement negotiated by Russia and Iran, which support the government, and Turkey, which backs the opposition and has deployed a dozen observation points in the province.

Similar agreements elsewhere in the country have collapsed in the face of government offensives, and the

government is expected to advance on Idlib province once it has secured other areas.

In another incident, a suicide car bombing on Tuesday killed 14 newly reconciled fighters from pro-government and rebel ranks in an attack on a south Syrian village claimed by the Islamic State group.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the explosion hit Zaizon, a village in the western countryside of Daraa province which rebels agreed in recent days to hand over to regime control.

At least "14 regime and opposition fighters who recently reconciled were killed in a suicide car bomb attack targeting a military position in Zaizon," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman, giving an updated toll.

IS claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement posted on the Telegram messaging app, saying the car driven by a suicide bomber had been packed with explosives.

Zaizon lies near a sliver of southern territory controlled by Jaish Khaled bin Walid, a jihadist faction that has pledged allegiance to IS, which is not bound by the deal between the rebels and the government.

President Bashar al-Assad is poised to snuff out the Syrian rebellion in the place it first began more than seven years ago, as rebels enter talks with his Russian allies on withdrawing from Daraa city or accepting a return of state authority.

Government forces backed by Russia have seized most of Daraa province in the campaign that got underway last month and on Monday encircled rebel-held parts of Daraa city and seized the entire Jordanian frontier that was once in opposition hands.

Assad, whose control was once reduced to a fraction of Syria, now holds the largest chunk of the country with crucial help from his Russian and Iranian allies.

Daraa was the scene of the first anti-Assad protests that spiralled into a war now estimated to have killed half a million people. The conflict has driven over 11 million people from their homes, with some 5.6 million Syrian refugees in neighbouring states alone and many more in Europe.

Rebels in Daraa are due to hold talks with Russian officers on Tuesday, a spokesman for the rebels, Abu Shaimeh, said. The talks were due to take place in the town of Busra al-Sham.

Some are seeking evacuation to opposition-held areas of the north while others are negotiating to remain as a local security force, he said.

"Today there is a session with the Russians over the forced displacement," he said in a text message, referring to the expected evacuation of a yet-to-determined number of rebels to opposition areas of the northwest at the border with Turkey.

A pro-Syrian government newspaper, al-Watan, said "the coming hours will be decisive on the level of ending

elaborating.

The Iranian oil ministry said last week that it exported 2.2 million barrels per day of crude oil in June. The figure is not significantly lower than exports of 2.4 million bpd in April and in May.

European powers still support the 2015 deal, under which Tehran agreed to limit its nuclear development in exchange for international sanctions relief. They say they will do more to encourage their businesses to remain engaged with Iran, though a number of firms have already said they plan to pull out.

Foreign ministers from the five remaining signatory countries to the nuclear deal — Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia — offered a package of economic measures to Iran on Friday but Tehran said they did not go far enough.

"We think the Europeans will act in a way to meet the Iranian demands, but we should wait and see," Jahangiri said.

The pressure on Iran came as Washington had launched an "economic war with China and even its allies", he said, referring to trade tensions between the United States and many of its main trading partners.

Jahangiri also accused Washington of trying to use the economic pressure to provoke street protests in Iran.

A wave of anti-government demonstrations against economic hardship and alleged corruption engulfed cities across the country in late December and early January.

The US ambassador to Germany urged Berlin on Tuesday to stop Iran withdrawing large sums of cash from bank accounts in Germany to offset the effect of new US sanctions imposed after Washington withdrew from a 2015 nuclear deal.

Richard Grenell, a longtime critic of the accord, told the mass-circulation daily Bild that the US government was extremely concerned about Tehran's plans to transfer hundreds of millions of euros in cash to Iran.

"We encourage the highest levels of the German government to intervene and stop the plan," Grenell said.

Iran curbed its nuclear activity under the deal and won relief from international sanctions. The other signatories including US allies Germany, France and Britain have reaffirmed the deal, seeing it as crucial to preventing a Iranian nuclear weapon. Trump denounced it as badly flawed in Iran's favour.

Newswatch

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national World War I memorial, which is to be built on Pennsylvania Avenue. Fayetteville native **Joseph Weishaar's** winning design has evolved considerably since its selection in January 2016.

WASHINGTON: Mobile fitness app Polar has suspended its location tracking feature after security researchers found it had revealed sensitive data on military and intelligence personnel from 69 countries.

The revelation on the application from Finnish-based app Polar Flow comes months after another health app, Strava, was found to have showed potentially sensitive information about US and allied forces around the world.

Security researchers in **The Netherlands** said Sunday they were able to find data on some 6,000 individuals including military personnel from dozens of countries and employees of the FBI and National Security Agency. (AFP)

DUBAI: An Iranian woman who removed her obligatory Islamic headscarf out of protest in December says she has been sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Shapark Shajarizadeh posted on her personal website that she had been jailed for "opposing the compulsory hijab" and "waving a white flag of peace in the street."

There was no immediate comment from Iranian officials. (AP)

GAZA CITY: A boat carrying wounded Palestinians left from a Gaza port on Tuesday in a bid to challenge **Israel's** blockade of the Hamas-run enclave.

Hundreds of people gathered to see off the boat carrying nine passengers, including four people said to have been wounded by Israeli soldiers along with students.

The passengers "with specific needs are prevented from travelling, receiving care and finishing their studies," said organiser **Raed Abu Dair**. (AFP)

ANKARA: President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** Tuesday promoted **Turkey's** army commander to overall armed forces chief in a radical military shake-up after the outgoing top general was given the post of defence minister.

Turkey's new government announced late on Monday the appointment of former chief of staff General **Hulusi Akar** as defence minister, a rare transition from military ranks to the political realm. (AFP)

TUNIS: Tunisia paid tribute on Monday to six members of its security forces killed the day before along the border with **Algeria** in the country's bloodiest jihadist attack in more than two years.

The attack comes as Tunisia prepares for what it hopes will be a surge in tourism after a spate of jihadist attacks in 2015 sent visitor numbers plunging. (AFP)

KANO, Nigeria: Twenty-one people are missing, feared dead, after their boat capsized in northern Nigeria, emergency services and rescue workers said on Tuesday.

The vessel, carrying 30 traders and their wares, overturned in high winds on a river in the **Isa** district of northwestern **Sokoto** state during a heavy downpour on Saturday. (AFP)