



basketball
Page 28

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ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITIES AT SIGNIFICANT JUNCTURE

PM hopes to rejuvenate economy

Education, illegals seen as priorities

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Kuwait is a nation of "firm laws and uncompromising justice", where anyone convicted will be held accountable, the country's Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said on Monday, reports KUNA.

In an interview with editors-in-chief of local newspapers and media outlets, including KUNA's Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, the Premier cited His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's "explicit instructions" over efforts to fight corruption and protect public funds, a plan the Kuwaiti government is intent on bringing to fruition, he said.

It is incumbent upon the government to take His Highness the Amir's words to heart, Kuwait's new prime minister emphasized, saying that his previous position as foreign minister is unlike the responsibilities he now has to take over.

On the fight against corruption, His Highness said it entails "collective efforts" on the part of the government and citizens alike, calling on his fellow compatriots to report to concerned bodies any information they may have on corruption cases.

On forming a new government, the top minister said the process would take place in due course, pointing out that any political and parliamentary endeavor should be undertaken by those with the knowhow needed to navigate through hardship.

He said that, at times, lawmakers "defy logic," promising that as soon as a new government is formed, he would immediately start working with ministers and officials to achieve the country's development plans, saying his diplomatic experience would serve him well.

On the new government's priorities, he listed education and the status of Kuwait's illegal residents as matters that would ultimately take precedence, in addition to plans that aim to "rejuvenate" the national economy, adding that the country has "high hopes" in the face of harsh realities.

Kuwait is on the cusp of a significant juncture marked by the formation of a new government that will assume an "enormous amount of responsibilities," as he urged the ministers to be chosen to perform their duties competently.

On the relationship between the government and Parliament, the prime minister said it is largely a "political affair", clarifying that it should not come at the expense of public funds or the welfare of the state.

The prime minister went on to pin high hopes on the upcoming Gulf summit slated for next week in the Saudi capital Riyadh, saying the talks could help usher in a period of positive change.

Meanwhile, MP Muhammad Al-Dallal has submitted a proposal to the National Assembly regarding the Court of Cassation's ruling on the appointment of experts at the Experts Department in the Ministry of Justice.

Article One of the proposal states that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) should study court Decision No. 911 for the year 2019 in order to benefit from it in terms of the conditions and regulations which ensure equal opportunities and strengthen the rule of law.

Article Two mandates the CSC to enforce the rules stipulated in the decision on all public institutions in line with the principle of proper administration.

The bill also states that the CSC should submit a comprehensive report to the Council of Ministers including its opinion on the abovementioned court verdict, especially the provisions and appointment mechanism that guarantee equality; as well as the need to amend the appointment regulations to prevent the cancellation of appointment decisions in the future.

MP Dr Muhammad Al-Hewailan has presented a bill on granting allowance to Dar Al-Qura'an graduates to enroll in the College of Sharia at Kuwait University.

He pointed out that the Dar Al-Qura'an certificate is issued by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, adding the latter equalizes this certificate to the secondary stage certificate only in terms of the job.

He said Dar Al-Qura'an graduates whose certificates were issued two years ago or earlier are facing a problem in applying for admission to the university. He then suggested exempting these graduates from the two years condition, stressing the college is the only academic institution in Kuwait which grants bachelor's certificate in Islamic Sharia.

He added the ministries of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs, Education and Higher Education must take the necessary procedures to exempt these graduates from the condition of applying for admission to the college two years from the date of obtaining the certificate.

On the other hand, MP Dr Abdulkaareem Al-Kandari criticized the lack of attention given to Kuwaiti innovators and researchers such as Dr Meshari Al-Mutairi in spite of their achievements which reflect positively on Kuwait.

He asserted it is no longer surprising if these innovators and researchers are being neglected because some senior officials were appointed based on favoritism and "wasta" (influence); hence, they are not aware of the importance of Science and scientists.

Al-Seyassah adds:
Amid growing expectations for the new government formation to be announced ahead of the GCC Summit in Riyadh on Dec 10, sources revealed that highly confidential consultations aimed at finalizing the formation and away from all the media are ongoing.

What has been described by the sources to be "the Prime Minister's first dilemma" is the choosing of the first deputy prime minister, which could be the most prominent obstacle that may cause delay in the announcement of the new government, adding that consultations concerning the selection of ministers to fill the sovereign portfolios of the members of the ruling family have already been resolved.

Continued on Page 5

Opinion

Uprising lava breaches Tehran regime fences

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

EVENTS that some Arab-Islamic countries witnessed in the past two years have revealed the intelligence services are no longer the baton which oppressive regimes use on their people. In the same manner, hiding behind the religious authority, as currently prevalent in Iran, can no longer make people rely on slogans.

These slogans neither feed the hungry nor secure medicines for the sick; hence, real power lies in societies which gave up fear in front of a tyrannical force that does not know how to cover up its corruption, looting the wealth of the nation, and gaining control through the democratic election drama as the case in Iran, Lebanon or Iraq.

The current situation in some Arab countries and Iran entails the demolition of walls of fear as described by Tunisian poet Aboul-Qacem Echebbi in the 1930s: "If, one day, people desire to live, then fate will answer their call."

Here is fate responding to Iraqis as it did for the Sudanese and Algerians. Without a doubt, it will respond to the Lebanese who have overcome all the barriers of fear - whether in relation to civil war which the gang and militia leaders keep on mentioning or the financial and economic collapse; while the ruling juntas continue to plunder the country's wealth, sponsored by the force operating outside the legal framework of Lebanon and also conspire with Iran. This renegade force is the so-called 'Hezbollah.'

Indeed, the emergence of the popular uprising suggests it is aimed at bringing down corrupt people; but in essence, this uprising aims to topple the disguised occupation which appeared at a time of division when the Arabs abandoned their role to focus on side conflicts, allowing the enemy to infiltrate through the cracks with the help of weak souls.

When the nation decided to protect itself from outsiders, the enemy already changed into several forms - starting with being the 'Brotherhood,' and not ending with being 'DAESH' and the multicolored Hezbollah.

All this happened because the Arabs did not unite and revolt as one nation against their enemies - the Mullah regime in Iran and Israel, until the rulers of some countries that considered themselves democratic mastered the art of accumulating wealth rather than devoting themselves to developing their countries.

This approach led to the volcanic eruption of popular anger, starting in Tunisia a decade ago; and today in Lebanon and Iraq, whereas the grip of the uprising smeared with blood is knocking on the doors of the regime in Tehran, and the lava is flowing inside its fences.

In the first half of the 20th century, people stood up against the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the agents of colonialism who were appointed at night to keep them under occupation. Aboul-Qacem Echebbi perfectly depicted the situation of the people at the time as he said: "If, one day, people desire to live, then fate will answer their call. The night must disappear and the chain must break."

Continued on Page 5

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Phase 1 early concept of the National Desert Storm Memorial which passed a significant milestone with formal approval of a design concept by CSO Architects granted by the US Commission on Fine Arts.

'Rioters' killed in Iran protests

DUBAI, Dec 3, (Agencies): Iranian state television on Tuesday acknowledged security forces shot and killed what it described as "rioters" in multiple cities amid recent protests over the spike in government-set gasoline prices - the first time that authorities have offered any sort of accounting for the violence they used to put down the demonstrations.

Amnesty International believes the unrest and crackdown that followed, beginning in mid-November, killed at least 208 people. An Iranian judiciary official disputed the toll as "sheer lies," without offering any evidence to support his position.

Iran shut down internet access amid the unrest, blocking those inside the country from sharing their videos and information. It also limited the outside world's insight into the scale of the protests and the violence, though online videos have emerged purporting to show security forces shooting protesters.

The recent demonstrations over gasoline prices - while not drawing as many Iranians into the streets as the 2009 protests over the country's disputed presidential election - rapidly turned violent, faster than previous rallies.

That shows the widespread economic discontent gripping Iran since May 2018, when President Donald Trump imposed crushing sanctions after unilaterally withdrawing from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

The demonstrations came after months of attacks across the Mideast that the US blames on Tehran. Meanwhile, Iran has begun breaking the limits of the nuclear deal in hopes of pressuring Europe into finding a way for Tehran to sell its crude oil abroad despite American sanctions.

The state TV report alleged that some of those killed were "rioters" who have attacked sensitive or military centers with firearms or knives or have taken hostages in some areas." The report described others killed as passers-by, security forces and peaceful protesters, without assigning blame for their deaths.

In one case, the report said security forces confronted a separatist group armed with "semi-heavy weapons" in the city of Mahshahr in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan province.

The surrounding oil-rich province's Arab population long has complained of discrimination by Iran's central government and insurgent groups have attacked oil pipelines in the past there. Online videos purportedly from the area showed peaceful protests, as well as clashes between demonstrators and security forces.



A Syrian refugee says goodbye to a relative through a bus window that will take her home to Syria, in Beirut, Lebanon on Dec 3. Hundreds of Syrian refugees have headed home in the first batch to leave Lebanon since protests broke out more than a month ago. Lebanon is hosting some one million Syrian refugees who fled their country after war broke out eight years ago. (AP)

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah expressed his deepest sympathies on Tuesday over the lives lost when a bus overturned in Morocco's northern city of Taza.

His Highness the Amir extended his condolences in a cable he sent to Morocco's King Mohammed VI, saying he was distraught over the tragic loss of life caused by the transport mishap.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Moroccan King. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh revealed that the Russian citizen Marsha Lazareva has filed a case in demand for compensation worth \$126.9 million, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In response to a parliamentary question submitted by MP Abdullah Al-Kandari, Al-Saleh explained that Lazareva claims Kuwait violated the investment encouragement agreement signed between Kuwait and Russia.

The case she filed in demand for the compensation involves a number of government bodies in Kuwait including Public Prosecution, Kuwait Ports Authority and Public Institution for Social Security as well as several Kuwaiti public figures whose names were mentioned in her testimony.

Al-Saleh indicated that he is in

communication with the relevant bodies in this regard.

WASHINGTON: US lawmakers pressed the Trump administration on Monday to impose sanctions on Turkey over its purchase of a Russian missile defense system, saying the failure to do so sends a "terrible signal," and a key Senate committee set a vote on additional legislation to punish Ankara.

"The time for patience has long expired. It is time you applied the law," Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen and Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said in a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. "Failure to do so is sending a terrible signal to other countries that they can flout US laws without consequence," they said. (RTS)

BEIRUT: A suspected Syrian government airstrike on a market in a northwestern rebel-held town killed 13 civilians on Monday while Turkish artillery shells landed near a school in a Kurdish-held town, killing at least nine, including eight children, activists said.

The violence is part of rising tension in Syria's north, along the border with Turkey. Syrian government troops have renewed their push to reclaim the last opposition stronghold in Idlib province while Turkey, which sees Syrian Kurdish fighters as an existential threat, has been widening its military operations there to push them away from its borders. (AP)

Iraqi protesters surround shrine

BAGHDAD, Dec 3, (Agencies): Anti-government protesters surrounded a key shrine in the southern city of Najaf on Tuesday amid concerns of a new outbreak of violence there following a rare day of calm after weeks of bloodshed across Iraq.

President Barham Salih is meeting with Iraq's main political blocs as a 15-day constitutional deadline to name the next prime minister nears, two Iraqi officials said. Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Madi announced his resignation on Friday.

The Sairoon bloc, led by influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, addressed Salih in a letter and said they gave protesters the right to support a premier of their choice.

Tens of protesters were gathered around the Hakim shrine in the southern holy city of Najaf, a police official said. The demonstrators demanded that al-Sadr help them enter and symbolically take control of the shrine. Sadr commands Saraya Salam, a powerful militia group.

The protesters believe the shrine is a center for Iranian intelligence operations, the police official said.

Officials all requested anonymity in line with regulations.

Najaf has been one of the flashpoints in the protest movement, after demonstrators torched the Iranian Consulate there last week. The Hakim shrine has been the focus of recent violence. Three protesters were killed and 24 wounded on Saturday as security forces used live rounds to disperse them from the site. The southern city is the seat of the country's Shiite religious authority.

At least 400 people have died since the leaderless uprising shook Iraq on Oct 1, with thousands of Iraqis taking to the streets in Baghdad and the predominantly Shiite southern Iraq decrying corruption, poor services, lack of jobs and calling for an end to the political system that was imposed after the 2003 US invasion.

Security forces dispersed crowds with live fire, tear-gas and sound bombs last week in Nasiriyah and Najaf, leading to heavy casualties and drawing condemnation from Washington.

"The killing of protesters over our holiday weekend in Nasiriyah was shocking and abhorrent," said Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs David Schenker, speaking to reporters on Monday.

The Iraqi people are calling for genuine reform implemented by trustworthy leaders who will put Iraq's national interests first. Without that commitment to reform, it makes little difference who the prime minister is," he added.

President Barham Salih met with key political groups to come up with a compromise candidate for the premiership. The constitution requires Parliament's largest bloc to name a candidate for the premiership within 15 days. Then the prime minister-designate has 30 days to form a government.