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# MP calls for special session on jobs

'Thousands of positions could have gone to citizens'

## Newswatch

## KD 8-per-ticket decision frozen

By Ahmed Al-Naqeeb  
Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 18: MP Osama Al-Shahen has submitted a request to hold a special parliamentary session on the unemployment issue.**

Al-Shahen confirmed that 18 other MPs have also signed on to his request, which will be discussed in the ordinary session of the Parliament on Tuesday.

He said a number of citizens and labor unions showed interest in his request, so they

submitted their comments and recommendations which will be tackled during the session. He hopes the session will yield the desired results.

He explained the unemployment issue is an accumulation of several smaller issues such as the citizen to expatriate ratio, academic output not matching the manpower need of the job market and lack of job opportunities. He cited as an example a public institution which received more than 9,000 applications although the number of vacant positions was 110 only; while a governmental financial institution had 28 vacancies but it received 765

applications.

Expounding on the citizen to expatriate ratio, he said 825 pharmacists, 599 clerks and 25,000 nurses in the Ministry of Health are expatriates. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has 3,200 non-Kuwaiti Imams, Muezzins and lecturers; while the Ministry of Education employed 1,346 expatriate support staff. These thousands of positions should have been given to citizens, he asserted.

He then called on the government to be more active in addressing the issue, indicating there is a certain form of procrastination in terms of efforts to support the Kuwaiti public.

**BAGHDAD:** Clashes between the Iraqi army and Kurdish PKK militia killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded five of the militants on Sunday, the Iraqi military said in a statement.

The clashes took place in Sinjar in northwestern Iraq after the PKK fighters were denied passage through an army checkpoint, the statement said, adding that the militants drove a vehicle into one soldier and attacked the checkpoint.

The PKK did not immediately comment.

Security incidents pitting the Iraqi military against armed groups other than Islamic State are rare. (RTRS)

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey has announced a joint military operation with Iran against Kurdish militants.

Turkish Interior Minister **Suleyman Soyulu** says the operation against the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, began Monday on Turkey's eastern border.

The PKK has been waging an insurgency for more than three decades, and is considered a terror group by Turkey and its Western allies. Turkey regularly conducts airstrikes in northern Iraq against PKK camps and has cracked down on the group and alleged supporters since a peace process collapsed in 2015. (AP)

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq sentenced a Belgian man to death by hanging on Monday for being part of the Islamic State militant group, one of dozens of foreign nationals facing the death penalty in Iraq.

**Bilal al-Marchohi**, 23, was given the death penalty for belonging to and conducting operations on behalf of the group.

During an hour of proceedings at Iraq's Central Criminal Court, the judge read out portions of Marchohi's signed confession and showed a video and photographs that he said proved his membership in the group. (RTRS)

**FAO, Iraq:** In southern Iraq, where the Euphrates and Tigris rivers meet, the Fao peninsula was once known for its swaths of henna plants and palm trees. But the lush greenery of this Basra province district has now turned into a hardscrabble surface.

Walking past dead palm trees on land so dry it cracks, farmer **Abbas Abdul Hassan** said water shortages and ensuing use of salty water from the polluted Shatt al-Arab river for irrigation had eaten up areas that grew henna plants, whose ground leaves make the dark paste used as a dye.

"This land was packed with henna plants ... the salty water tide killed the henna and killed palm trees," he said. (RTRS)

**BAKU:** Oil producer group OPEC on Monday scrapped its planned meeting in April and will decide instead whether to extend output cuts in June, once the market has assessed the impact of US sanctions on Iran and the crisis in Venezuela.

A ministerial panel of OPEC and its allies recommended that they cancel the extraordinary meeting scheduled for April 17-18 and hold the next regular talks on June 25-26.

The energy minister of OPEC's de facto leader, **Saudi Arabia**, said the market was looking oversupplied until the end of the year but that April would be too early for any decision on output policy. (RTRS)

**BAGHOZ, Syria:** US-backed fighters said they had taken positions in Islamic State's last enclave in eastern Syria and air strikes pounded the tiny patch of land beside the Euphrates River early on Monday, a Reuters journalist said.

Smoke rose over the tiny enclave as warplanes and artillery bombarded it. Another witness said the jihadists had earlier mounted a counter attack.

"Several positions captured and an ammunition storage has been blown up," said **Mustafa Bali**, a spokesman for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militia, on Twitter late on Sunday. (RTRS)

**WASHINGTON:** US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff **Joseph Dunford** denied late Sunday a newspaper report that the US is "crafting plans" to keep about 1,000 troops in Syria.

In a statement, Dunford said, "a claim reported this evening by a major US newspaper that the US military is developing plans to keep nearly 1,000 US troops in Syria is factually incorrect.

"There has been no change to the plan announced in February and we continue to implement the President's direction to draw down US forces to a residual presence," he affirmed. (KUNA)

**JOHANNESBURG:** More than 1,000 people were feared dead in Mozambique four days after a cyclone slammed into the country, submerging entire villages and leaving bodies floating in the floodwaters, the nation's president said.

"It is a real disaster of great proportions," President **Filipe Nyusi** said. (AP)

**KUWAIT CITY, March 18:** Minister of Commerce and Industry **Khalid Al-Roudhan** has given instructions to freeze the decision issued by the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) according to which all airlines were asked to impose extra KD 8 charge on each ticket for airlines operating from Kuwait from April 1, 2019, reports Al-Anba daily.

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Reflections of Al-Shaab Gate during sunset. - Ahmad Alfaiakawi-KUNA

# Kuwait touts Pompeo visit as chance for deals

**KUWAIT CITY, March 18, (KUNA):** Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister **Khaled Al-Jarallah** said on Monday US Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo's** visit to Kuwait on Tuesday will be a "significant occasion and chance for signing several deals between both friendly countries in defense, security and customs cooperation".

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Jarallah welcomed Pompeo's visit as part of US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue between both countries, hoping that it would contribute to promoting strategic dialogue and developing its fields.

The senior Kuwaiti official said his country looks forward to successful talks to be held by the US secretary of state with Kuwaiti officials about several cooperation areas, mainly economic, investment and energy ones, as well as security and military cooperation, especially joint counterterrorism efforts.

Kuwaiti-US talks will also involve critical regional issues, chiefly Yemen and Syria, Al-Jarallah pointed out.

The US Department of State said on Friday Pompeo will travel to Kuwait, Lebanon and Israel from March 19-23, where in Kuwait he will lead the US delegation for the third US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue.

State Department Deputy Spokesperson **Robert Palladino** said in a statement that in Kuwait, Pompeo will lead the US delegation at the third US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, that will be on many areas of "growing US Kuwait bilateral cooperation, including defense, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, strengthening trade and investment ties, and education."

In Beirut, Pompeo will meet with Lebanese leaders to discuss "the political, security, economic, and humanitarian challenges facing Lebanon."

"The Secretary's visit will underscore US support for the Lebanese people and Lebanon's legitimate state institutions," it affirmed.

In Jerusalem, Pompeo will meet with Israeli officials "to engage on critical regional issues, including countering the Iranian regime's malign influence and reaffirming the United States' unwavering commitment to Israel's security."

While in Jerusalem, Pompeo will also participate in a meeting with "Israeli, Cypriot, and Greek leaders to discuss key energy and security issues facing the Eastern Mediterranean region," the statement noted.

## Iraq friendly to all states: PM

**BAGHDAD, March 18, (KUNA):** Iraq is friendly to all countries, and will not engage in any policy against anyone, Prime Minister **Adel Abdulmahdi** said Sunday.

"Iraq is a friend of all and a forum of brothers and friends from all countries and peoples of the world," a statement quoted Abdulmahdi as saying during a meeting here with Qatari Minister of Commerce and Industry **Ali Al-Kawari**.

He pointed out that his country will not return to the policies of destructive wars, stressing that Iraq's interest today was with its neighbors, and has a strong will to cooperate with Qatar and the exchange of interests in economic, trade and investment and strengthen ties of common relations to serve the two countries.

For his part, the Qatari minister stressed the existence of great opportunities for the two countries, and his country is determined to increase cooperation with Iraq and expand relations in the economic, trade, construction, investment and exchange visits between businessmen and investors.

## Northern zone to redress imbalances: Silk City chief

**KUWAIT CITY, March 18, (KUNA):** One of the main objectives of the New Kuwait Vision 2035 and its most important project of the northern economic zone was redressing the structural imbalances of the national economy, CEO of the Silk City and Boubyan Island Development Council **Faisal Al-Medlej** has stated.

The ambitious mega project would turn the northern area into a regional commercial hub benefiting from its distinctive geographical location near a large market of up to 200 million people and huge economies whose production exceeds \$1 trillion a year, Al-Medlej projected in a joint news conference following a government and parliamentary meeting on the issue on Sunday.

The political stability in Kuwait and its reputation as a state of institutions would attract investors to the multi-billion dollars project. "We have great chances to turn this zone into a safe gateway for regional trade that ensures the freedom of movement of people, goods and money," he clarified.

He stated that His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** had pushed for teaming up with China to implement this strategic project.

The northern economic zone comprises five islands: Boubyan, Failaka, Warba, Miskan and Awha, in addition to a considerable part of the Subiya area with a total area of nearly 1,700 sq km, he said.

For his part, Member of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development **Dr Fahad Al-Rashed** emphasized the importance of the project in creating new job opportunities and diversifying national economy.

Kuwait in the coming 15 years would need 400,000 to 600,000 jobs for the new entrants of the labor market, he said in the new conference.

He stressed that these jobs should be productive ones and with value added to the national economy.

He added that the plan would also help diversify Kuwaiti national economy and end dependence on oil revenues.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Parliament's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee **MP Salah Khorshid** noted that the meeting focused on exchanging viewpoints about the northern economic zone.

He, however, stated this mega project still requires more studies and deliberations.

The legislative authority is eager to find new sources for income other than oil and to see new strategic development projects provided that they were put forward in a transparent and clear way and they do not contradict the constitution.

Earlier, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense **Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah** said the northern economic zone bill does not violate Kuwait's constitution.

## Iran to sue on US sanctions

**LONDON, March 18, (RTRS):** Iranian President **Hassan Rouhani** said on Monday that the government would file a legal case in Iran against US officials who imposed sanctions on the country as a precursor to action in international courts.

Rouhani said in a speech broadcast live on state television that US sanctions had created difficulties including a weaker rial currency that has fed into higher inflation.

The United States reimposed sanctions on Tehran after US President **Donald Trump** chose last May to abandon Iran's 2015 nuclear accord, negotiated with five other world powers.

Rouhani said he had ordered the ministries of foreign affairs and justice "to file a legal case in Iranian courts against those in America who designed and imposed sanctions on Iran". "These sanctions are crime against humanity," he added.

US\$/KD 0.30350/60
Euro/KD 0.3440
Yen/KD 0.0027
British £/KD 0.4016
KSE +22.12 pts at closing Mar 18 See Page 21
Dow +9.50 pts at 21:00 Mar 18 See Page 23
Nasdaq +8.06 pts at 21:00 Mar 18
FTSE +70.91 pts at closing Mar 18
Nikkei +133.65 pts at closing Mar 18
Gold \$1,302.65 per oz (London)
NYMEX crude \$59.09 pb
Brent crude \$67.60 pb
3-month \$ LIBOR rate 2.62525%