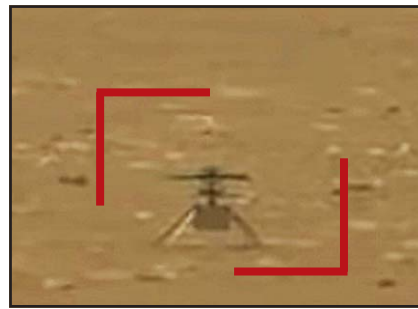


Free flight on Mars

— Details Page 2 —



NBK reports KD 84.3mn net profit for Q1

— Details Page 8 —

Ramadan Timings

Iftar .....Wednesday..... 18:18
Imsak.....Thursday..... 03:41

Day by Day

CORRUPTION is not limited to accepting bribe or embezzling state money, but it is most dangerous when someone does not understand the responsibilities of the position he/she occupies and the height of stupidity when dealing with someone.

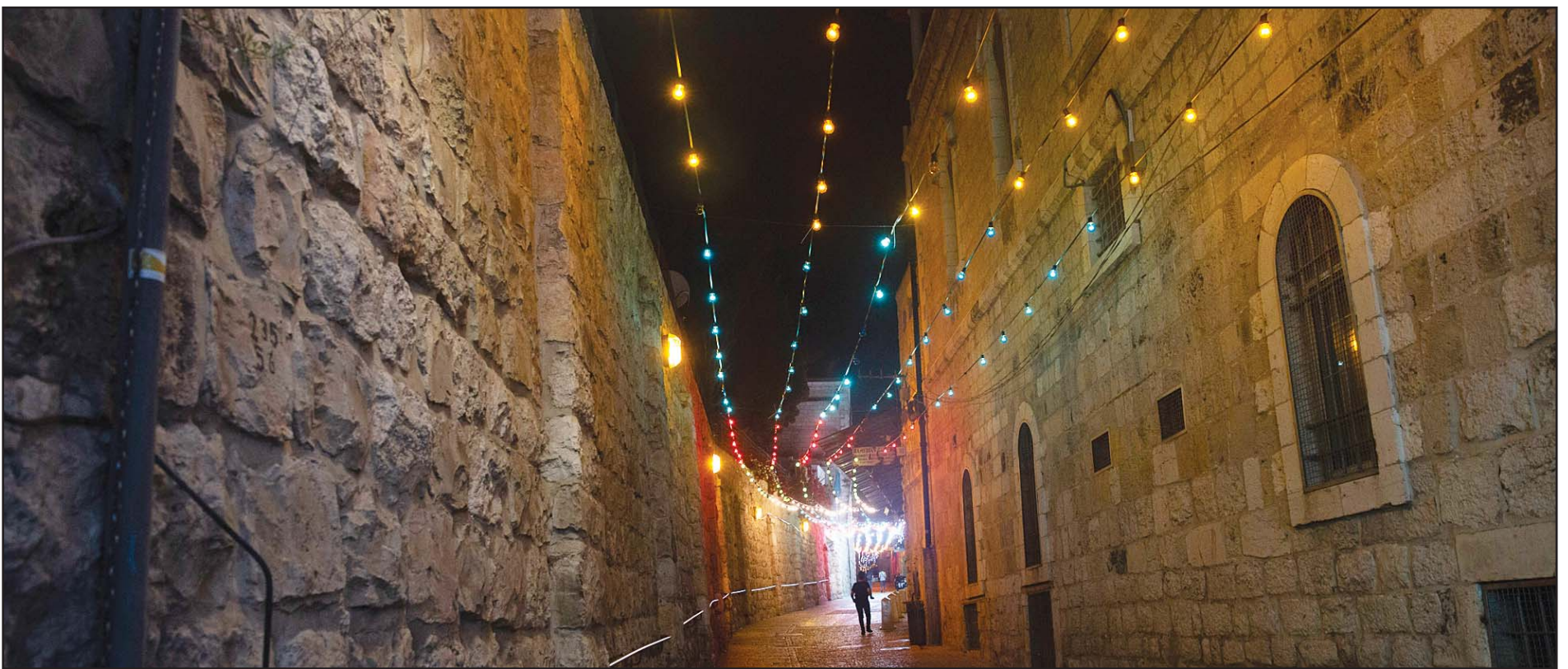
The biggest corruption is hiring unqualified men in sensitive positions. Yes, this is disturbing and harmful.

In several countries, the concerned official is responsible for work which is entrusted to him/her and failure to do the job satisfactorily is subject to punishment.

In many cases when the official finds he/she is incapable of assuming the responsibilities of their duties, they resign. They resign because they don't want to cause harm to the state and don't want to get punished.

... Yet, tomorrow is just another day.

Zahed Matar



Colorful lights are strung above the Via Dolorosa in the Old City of Jerusalem, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, April 19. (AP)

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwaiti Cabinet held its meeting on Monday at Seif Palace, under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The Cabinet studied recommendations by the ministerial committee of coronavirus emergency and took some relevant measures.

The Cabinet decided to extend the partial curfew until the end of the holy month of Ramadan in the country as of Thursday, April 22, with unchanged curfew hours from 7:00 p.m. until 5:00 am.

However, the decision may be re-assessed as the COVID-19 pandemic situation is regularly reviewed, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah said, adding that the Cabinet tasked concerned bodies with implementing the provisions of this decision.

The ministers were briefed on the economic affairs committee on the second report of Kuwait's higher energy commission, and they lauded efforts made by the concerned bodies to provide clean and renewable energy to achieve sustainable development, in line with Kuwait Vision 2035. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Ministry of Health has announced recording 1,510 new coronavirus infections and eight related deaths in the past 24 hours.

The new figures take the total cases in the country up to 258,497 and deaths to 1,456 respectively, noted the ministry's spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad in statements to KUNA on Monday.

He pointed out that some 1,231 more people had been cured of the virus over the past day, raising the total of those who have overcome the disease to 241,696. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Health is conducting epidemiological investigations on the number of coronavirus cases recorded daily, taking into consideration that the number of new cases continues to increase although the number of infections due to gatherings and social events has decreased since the beginning of Ramadan compared to the previous months, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources.

Sources told the daily that the most common reason behind the spread of coronavirus is the organization of events, because healthy people interact with those who are infected in social gatherings.

Sources said the epidemiological investigation teams are facing difficulties in determining factors leading to the spread of the virus as people are not honest in disclosing the places they went to before feeling the Covid-19 symptoms.

Russia claims 200 militant kills

Base ... gone

MOSCOW, April 20, (AP) The Russian military has claimed that its airstrike killed about 200 militants in eastern Syria.

Rear Adm. Alexander Karpov, the head of the Russian military's Reconciliation Center in Syria, said Russian warplanes hit two militant hideouts northeast of Palmyra.

Karpov said in a statement carried by Russian news agencies that the air raid killed some 200 militants and destroyed 24 vehicles and about 500 kilograms (over 1,100 pounds) of ammunition and explosives. He said the militants' base had served as a staging ground for terror attacks across Syria.

Russia has waged a military campaign in Syria since 2015, helping President Bashar Assad's government retake control over most of the country after a devastating 10-year conflict.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported the airstrikes, saying they preceded a sweep by Russian troops and the Syrian Fifth Corps in search of Islamic State militant cells in the Homs desert. The Observatory said 26 IS militants were killed.

CBK 'regulates' delays on loans

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently announced the conditions and regulations for postponing the collection of payments for consumer and installment loans from eligible citizens for a period of six months, reports Al Anba daily.

In its circular to the banks, investment companies and financing institutions, the Central Bank clarified that the conditions and regulations are applicable to eligible Kuwaitis, indicating the client must submit a document expressing his desire to postpone payment of the loan to the creditor within a month from the date the law on postponing the collection of payments for loans takes effect.

The National Assembly and the government agreed on issuing a law on postponing the collection of payment for loans due to the negative economic repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic. This step is aimed at easing the financial burdens of citizens.

Egypt takes out 3 in killing of Christians

CAIRO, April 20, (AP) Egypt police killed three suspected militants allegedly involved in the slaying of a Coptic Christian man kidnapped more than five months ago in a restive part of Sinai Peninsula, the Interior Ministry said Monday.

Security forces exchanged fire with Islamic State group militants while chasing them in the Abtal area of North Sinai province, the ministry said in a statement. Three of the militants were killed and police were chasing three others. The statement did not say when they fighting took place.

The ministry, which oversees the police, said an explosives belt detonated during the shootout. It was unclear whether the bomber was one of the three militants the ministry said were killed. No casualties were reported among the security forces.

The details provided by the ministry could not be independently verified and media access to northern Sinai is heavily restricted.

The ministry said the dead militants were involved in the killing of Nabil Habashi, a 62-year-old Coptic Christian from the town of Bir al-Abd. Habashi had built the sole church in the area.

Militants kidnapped Habashi, a jewelry dealer, in November from Bir al-Abd, and demanded a ransom of 2 million Egyptian pounds (\$127,550 million), said a church official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief media.

The local IS affiliate in Sinai Peninsula released a 13-minute video showing Habashi kneeling, with three men dressed in black standing behind him. One of the men appears to shoot Habashi in the back of his head.

The video also showed militants apparently shooting dead two Bedouins captured by the group for allegedly cooperating with security forces in Sinai. The Bedouins said they were from the nomadic Arab Trabin tribe and were captured in a militant attack in central Sinai in February. They were part of the so-called Sinai Tribes Union, which provides intelligence to the military and police forces.

The Bedouins, with their local knowledge, accompany forces on patrols and raids searching for weapons caches. They also man checkpoints. Scores of Bedouins have been killed in the past couple of years.

It was not clear when Habashi and the two Bedouins were killed. Egypt is battling an Islamic State-led insurgency in Sinai Peninsula that intensified after the military overthrew an elected Islamist president in 2013. The military had intervened after mass protests against the president's divisive, one-year rule. The insurgents have carried out scores of attacks, mainly targeting the security forces and minority Christians.

The pace of IS attacks in Sinai's main theater and elsewhere has slowed to a trickle since February 2018, when the military launched a massive operation in the region that also encompassed parts of the Nile Delta and deserts along the country's western border with Libya.

Call of penalties on contracting companies

MPs stand for expat salaries

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: A number of MPs have responded positively to an Egyptian working as security guard in a school after he appeared in a video clip complaining that he did not receive his salary for the past five months.

MPs Mehalhal Al-Mudaf and Osama Al-Shaheen called on the Ministry of Education to pay the salaries of security guards in schools and impose penalties on contracting companies which violated the provisions of the relevant contracts.

The Ministry of Education has announced that it already transferred the salaries to the contracting companies until March 2021.

The Egyptian security guard was later seen in a picture with MP Salah Zeib Al-Mutairi in the latter's vehicle while they were leaving the Ministry of Interior. Al-Mutairi personally followed up the ministry's investigation into the complaint of the security guard after uploading the video clip.

MP Muhammad Al-Sayer said he communicated with Undersecretary of the ministry Lieutenant General Esam Al-Nahham who informed him that the security guard was summoned in order to obtain details about his problem with the company, which signed a pledge to pay the delayed salaries.

MP Hamad Al-Matar disclosed the undersecretary confirmed that the investigation was in favor of the security guard and it was done in the presence of the representatives of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), indicating the authority will investigate the concerned company.

In another development, MP Muhammad Hadi Al-Hewaila forwarded queries to Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Khalifa Hamada about the procedures taken by the ministry and Sec-

retariat General for Planning and Development to address the comments of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) regarding the budgets and final accounts of ministries, subsidiaries and independent institutions for fiscal 2019 /2020. The lawmaker asked why the violations have yet to be corrected despite the fact that they have been repeated for many years.

MP Badr Al-Humaidi asked Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Muhammad about the subsidiaries and institutions under the Cabinet, which were established as per the relevant laws and decrees in the last five years.

He wants to know the advantages of establishing such entities, salaries, privileges and annual reward granted to senior officials in these entities.

He asked why the government is not committed to the economic document's stipulation on the need to limit the establishment of new institutions, especially if similar institutions are already existing. He wants to know the policy adopted by the government to solve this problem.

MP Muhammad Al-Sayer forwarded queries to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Nazaha Enhancement Abdullah Al Rumi on the steps taken to strengthen the security of online systems and applications that the ministry is using. He wants to know the decisions and procedures in protecting data and applications from hackers.

On the other hand, MPs Hassan Jawhar, Mehalhal Al-Mudaf, Abdullah Al-Mudaf, Muhammad Al-Sayer and Musaed Al-Ardi submitted a proposal on urging citizens to hand over their heritage collectibles and traditional pieces. They also proposed the establishment of a special Institution to receive the collections and show them to the public by allocating a museum or hall for this purpose.

'Killer' exits US envoy

MOSCOW, April 20, (AP) The US ambassador to Russia said Tuesday he will head home for consultations — a move that comes after the Kremlin prodded him to take a break as Washington and Moscow traded sanctions.

The Kremlin emphasized that it couldn't order Ambassador John Sullivan to leave for consultations and could only "recommend" that he do so amid the current tensions.

Sullivan said in a statement that he is returning to the United States this week to discuss US-Russian ties with members of President Joe Biden's administration. He emphasized that he would come back to Moscow within weeks.

"I believe it is important for me to speak directly with my new colleagues in the Biden administration in Washington about the current state of bilateral relations between the United States and Russia," Sullivan said in a statement issued by the embassy. "Also, I have not seen my family in well over a year, and that is another important reason for me to return home for a visit."

Sullivan's departure comes after Russia on Friday stopped short of asking Sullivan to leave the country but said it "suggested" that he follow the example of the Russian ambassador to the US, who was recalled from Washington last month after President Joe Biden described Russian President Vladimir Putin as a "killer." Russia has set no time frame for Ambassador Anatoly Antonov's

return to Washington. Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said the ambassadors' departures reflect current tensions in the relationship between the United States and Russia.

"The relations now have hit the bottom," Peskov said. "There are certain consequences of the unfriendly measures taken against our country and the retaliatory measures taken by us."

On Thursday, the Biden administration announced sanctions on Russia for interfering in the 2020 US presidential election and for involvement in the SolarWind hack of federal agencies — activities Moscow has denied. The US ordered 10 Russian diplomats expelled, targeted dozens of companies and people and imposed new curbs on Russia's ability to borrow money.

Russia denounced the US move as "absolutely unfriendly and unprovoked" and retaliated by ordering 10 US diplomats to leave, blacklisting eight current and former US officials and tightening requirements for the US Embassy operations.

While ordering the sanctions, Biden also called for de-escalating tensions and held the door open for cooperation with Russia in certain areas.

Biden emphasized that he told Putin that he chose not to impose tougher sanctions for now and proposed to meet in a third country in the summer. Russia said it was studying the offer.