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markets

CONSTITUTIONAL COURT DENIES BY-POLL RESULT APPEAL

Top leadership keen on cooperation



Photo feature by Mustafa Al-Bader. (KUNA) The beautiful interior of the Badria Al-Jee'an Mosque, commonly referred to as the Golden Mosque. Some mosques in Kuwait are built to mirror Ottoman architecture with designs showing the beauty of such an architecture. — See Page 2

Bahrain drafts \$30 billion plan

DUBAI, Nov 24, (AP): The island kingdom of Bahrain announced plans Wednesday for over \$30 billion in spending to spur investment and build up infrastructure over the next several years, promising to create five brand-new cities on man-made islands.

The project signals the government's efforts to drive growth after the economic pain of the pandemic even as its fiscal picture remains shaky, with the country's public debt rising 133% of its gross domestic product last year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

The statement did not offer details as to how the country would fund the massive undertaking, which involves 22 projects, including artificial islands that would boost the kingdom's landmass by over 60%, a new causeway to Saudi Arabia to stimulate regional trade and a 100-kilometer (62-mile) metro system connecting all the country's cities.

"Bahrain is emerging from the pandemic with a bold ambition that looks beyond economic recovery to a more prosperous future," said Finance Minister Sheikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa.



HH the Amir during his meeting with the Speaker of Parliament and HH the Prime Minister. Also in attendance during the meeting was HH the Crown Prince. KUNA photo

Speaker leads delegation to Spain

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanim said Wednesday, the Kuwaiti leadership was keen on the executive and legislative authorities' cooperation to address important national issues of concern.

In a press release after meeting with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker Al-Ghanim said that the Parliament will be willing to cooperate with the government for the benefit and interest of Kuwait.

Their Highnesses tasked us with an important duty relating to the future of Kuwait and its people and the two authorities are willing to tackle issues such as corruption, economic development, and other topics of great significance.

According to Article 56 of the Constitution, His Highness the Amir assigned His Highness the Crown Prince to some of his constitutional rights and therefore, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad chose Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Prime Minister and tasked him with forming the cabinet, indicated Al-Ghanim.

He affirmed that the Crown Prince called on the National Assembly to cooperate with the new cabinet to achieve the dreams and aspiration of the Kuwaiti people.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir received at Dar Al-Yamama, Wednesday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanim and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

During the gathering, His Highness the Amir spoke to the three top officials, saying that they held a huge responsibility in their hands and expressed his confidence that they were up to the task ahead. His Highness called on the three top officials to refer to him in times of need when addressing matters concerning Kuwait, affirming that they were on a mission to achieve the aspirations and dreams of the Kuwaiti people.

He called on them to follow the law and constitution to serve the people of Kuwait. His Highness the Amir reiterated his confidence in the officials, wishing them the best in serving the country and its people.

Diligence

On his part, His Highness the Crown Prince replied to His Highness the Amir, affirming that he, the Speaker Al-Ghanim, Prime Minister Sabah Al-Khaled, and other officials would carry on their duties with due diligence.

A parliamentary delegation, headed by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim, travelled to Madrid, Spain to attend the 143rd conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) from Nov 25-30, 2021.

The theme of the conference is: "Challenges that democracy is facing, combating divisions and constructing societies." Al-Ghanim will deliver a speech at the conference and hold official talks with Spanish Parliament Speaker Meritxell Batet.

The Kuwaiti delegation will participate in the coordinative meetings of Arab, Islamic and Asian parliamentary groups to consolidate their positions on issues included in the agenda. The delegation will also attend the meetings of permanent committees at IPU to discuss sustainable development, commerce, democracy, human rights, international security and United Nations affairs.

Deputy Speaker Ahmed Al-Shuboumi, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Mubarak Al-Harees and Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel José Moro Aguilar sent off Al-Ghanim and the delegation, consisting of Secretary of IPU MP Hamad Al-Matar, Treasurer MP Salman Al-Azmi, member MP Osama Al-Shaheen and Secretary General of the Assembly Adel Al-Lhogani.

On the other hand, MP Khalid Al-Anzi submitted a proposal for citizens covered by the fifth article of the Social Security Law to extend the service period upon reaching 50 years old like those covered by the third article. He said this category will then be entitled to pension once they turn 50 years old; that is, after extending their service period.

MP Muhammad Al-Hewaila submitted a proposal to establish an industrial zone for the youths to put up small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The Constitutional Court issued a verdict, Wednesday, denying the appeal on the results of the National Assembly by-election held in the fifth constituency on May 21st.

The court withheld announcing the verdict during its session on November 10th.

On May 23, 2021, the committee supervising the fifth constituency by-election announced that candidate Obaid Al-Mutairi had won the seat by receiving 43,810 votes.

Opinion

Will a new government end the 'helter skelter' situation?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

AFTER wrapping up the issue of amnesty, which signaled the return of fugitives who had fled abroad, the time has come for revealing the truth.

Indeed, this amnesty is tainted with many question marks. How can those who have set themselves up as defenders of the homeland, its vitality, and the fight against corruption accept being equal to criminals who wanted to destroy Kuwait, and who brought weapons from abroad for this purpose? Was this the auspicious return sought by those who were considered as heroes by their supporters?

The doors would have opened for them for a well-deserved honorable return, if they had followed the same path as those who preceded them who returned honorable and honored to their country and their families.

The commotion lasted for over two years and pushed electoral interests to surplus the national interests. The only winners in all this were the Speaker of the National Assembly and MP Obaid Al-Wasmi. Others were just pawns on a chess board moved by the fingers of players behind the scenes, who knew how to invest events for their interests.

Hence, there were no heroes in reality except for those who knew how to eat the best flesh, and enjoy the championship extras, while those who churned the milk benefited from its butter.

Irrespective of the truth, the fact that the country was disrupted for two years remains the most important. Who will pay the price that Kuwait has incurred? After all the political fires, there are talks about an expanded opposition front. Was the return to reason and seek to get Kuwait out of the vicious circle in which it revolves?

Everyone today is subject to the truth test, especially after His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was tasked once again to form a new Cabinet.

In his new task, he has to understand the essence of the problem in the country, and work towards solving it with the greatest seriousness and ingenuity, by setting a realistic program of work, and not cutting and pasting from the programs of previous governments.

He needs to choose capable and competent ministers with the courage to work sincerely, if he wants to compensate for what happened in the previous lean years that affected all aspects of public affairs.

As for the National Assembly, after fulfilling its basic demand that it argued for over the past two years, it is now faced with a great responsibility, which is its sincere commitment to pass the laws that have piled up in its drawers.

Therefore, it must start working from the start to give confidence to the new government; otherwise, the issue is nothing more than procrastination on the part of both legislative and executive authorities, waiting for any subject in dispute to complete the remaining chapters of the play of inability to complete.

First, the penalties must be intensified for anyone who tries to commit violations that brought about this abnormal situation in the country.

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Hezb warned

Rift with Gulf may worsen

BEIRUT, Nov 24, (AP): Lebanon's interior minister said Tuesday that every delay in resolving the diplomatic crisis with Gulf nations threatens to affect the lives of more Lebanese already reeling from a massive economic crisis.

Bassam Mawlawi said resolving the crisis begins with the resignation of the Cabinet minister whose comments sparked the ire of Saudi Arabia, calling it long overdue.

Saudi Arabia, a traditional ally of Lebanon, withdrew its ambassador and asked the Lebanese envoy to leave last month following televised comments by George Kordahi, Lebanon's information minister. Kordahi said the war in Yemen is futile and called it an aggression by the Saudi-led coalition.

Yemen's war began with the 2014 takeover of Sanaa by the Houthi rebels, who control much of the country's north. The Saudi-led coalition entered the war the following year determined to restore the internationally recognized government and oust the rebels.

Kordahi recorded the comments weeks before he was named minister and has refused to apologize or step down despite appeals from many, including the prime minister. Lebanese officials have said his remarks do not represent official government views.

"This is taking a long time. It should not take more than a month to be resolved," Mawlawi told The Associated Press. "He should have resigned before. He should have resigned immediately. ... Every delay causes more grave damage to the Lebanese, whether those in Lebanon or in the Gulf."

Also:

CANBERRA: Australia on Wednesday said it intends to add far-right extremist group The Base and the entirety of the Lebanese group Hezbollah to its list of outlawed terrorist organizations as national security services grapple with a surge in neo-Nazi cells and other ideologically motivated extremists.

The Base, a neo-Nazi white supremacist group formed in the United States in 2018, would become only the second far-right group to be designated a terrorist organization in Australia after the British-based Sonnenkrieg Division was listed in August. Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews said.

Other Voices

Money 'Scrooge' accumulated will eventually go to the crooks

By Ali Ahmed Al-Baghli
Former Minister of Oil

IN ONE word, the miser now is our last 'wise' government, but it was tightfisted towards the people.

I and all others who have been observing the general conditions are sure that what has not been discovered in terms of theft or looting is many times more than what has been discovered so far.

The oversight side represented by the State Audit Bureau, Civil Service Commission, Integrity Commission and others do their work like a turtle.

Millions of public funds are being spent on certain organizations and institutions. The rational woman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, tells them: "Ask and your requests will be granted."

There are bodies and institutions established by laws and by virtue of international treaties to which Kuwait has acceded. Therefore, they must abide by the contents of these agreements. However, the accession appears to be based on a category; that is, according to the rationale behind the dealings of these entities.

What I mean here, and I could testify to that, are Al-Rasheed's dealings with the National Bureau of Human Rights, which was established through a law approved by the National Assembly and HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- may God grant rest to his soul. A budget of less than one million dinars has been allocated for a bureau that needs dozens of employees, communication devices, headquarters and others. The aforementioned amount is not even enough for the salaries of members!

I laughed sadly when the newspapers published reports on the KD2 million embezzled by an employee in the General Fire Department for a period of two years; and increased his salary from KD2,000 to KD42,000 -- equivalent to half a million dinars annually.

I would not have spoken had it not been for one of his colleagues who discovered that the thief who stole KD2 million issued himself a salary certificate for KD42,000 although his salary does not exceed KD2,000!

A firefighting employee stole KD2 million and a shop was opened for him in Mubarakiya to sell 'masjids' to cover up the stolen money which he took from the budget of the Firefighting General Department without anyone discovering it for two years!

Every day, we see grants and gifts handed out to friendly countries and those that stood against us when we erased the tomb of Saddam from the map. These grants are given by the Philosophy Fund or Kuwait Development Fund.

We see senior officials with a smile on their gloomy faces as they sign agreements for philosophical grants to foreign countries to reconstruct their old cities; while their country, Kuwait, groans about the destruction of its infrastructure and slow construction under the pretext of the deficit that the rational budget is suffering these days.

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Day by Day

SOME Diwanias did not open their doors, similar to our government that wants to adhere to its slogan to be the last to 'normalize' (...).

During the total ban, everyone was complaining and criticizing the Minister of Health, but when things returned to normal, some hesitated, others refused and there are those who seem to be content with keeping the locks on.

Everyone knows that the hustle and bustle in the Diwanias bring no results. It is a place for everyone to just sit, talk and invent stories.

... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Ministry of Health (MoH) on Tuesday declared that there are no coronavirus patients at the intensive care units (ICUs) at any hospitals across the country over the past 24 hours.

"After nearly two years of the outbreak of the pandemic, we announced that there are not any Covid-19 patients at the ICUs at all our health institutions over the past 24 hours," the Ministry's spokesman Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad said in a press statement.

Al-Sanad thanked all the staff at the health institutions for their sacrifice and services. (KUNA)

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince oversaw the signing of several investment and cooperation deals Wednesday, as Turkey and the United Arab Emirates move to repair relations and boost economic ties.

The agreements were signed during a visit by the crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who is seen as the de facto leader and the force behind the UAE's foreign policy posture. It was his first official trip to Turkey since 2012, and the highest-level visit by an Emirati official since relations hit a low.

The crown prince's brother who is the UAE national security advisor, Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, visited Turkey in August as the first major step toward mending strained ties. (AP)

RABAT: Israel and Morocco signed a landmark agreement Wednesday that lays the foundation for security cooperation, intelligence sharing, and future arms sales.

The memorandum of understanding is the centerpiece of a visit this week by Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz to Morocco, which established formal relations with Israel last year as part of the U.S.-brokered Abraham Accords.

Gantz's trip is the first official visit by an Israeli defense minister to one of the Arab states that normalized ties under the accords. (AP)

VIENNA: The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog warned Wednesday his inspectors are close to being unable to "guarantee" they know what's going on at all of Iran's nuclear sites.

Rafael Mariano Grossi's words sharply contrasted with the optimistic tone his Iranian hosts offered the day before. They signal the Islamic Republic's harder line as renewed talks over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers resume next week. (AP)



NBK Launches the First Digital Bank in Kuwait "Weyay" .. An Integrated Digital Bank Serving The needs of Kuwaiti Youth See page No. 8 & 9