

GCC countries seek unified security legislations



First woman leader takes charge in Indian Kashmir



Swift, Bieber take spotlight at energetic iHeart awards



Messi denies tax evasion in Panama Papers scandal



## PUBLIC BODIES MOVE TO LAY OFF EXPAT WORKERS

MEASURES SEEK TO BOOST KUWAITIZATION, CUT EXPENSES

By A Saleh

### AMIR ATTENDS 'WE ARE ALL KUWAITIS' OPERETTA



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is greeted by children as he attends a national operetta titled "We are all Kuwaitis" at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 3)

KUWAIT: Various ministries and government bodies have started taking measures towards reducing the number of expat employees in order to provide more job opportunities for Kuwaitis and cut expenses in the state's budget. The measures are also meant to handle demographic imbalances that have so far resulted in limiting national manpower in the local market to less than 25 percent.

In this regard, the education ministry has made a list of 450 expat teachers the ministry no longer needs pending terminating their contracts by the next school year. But Al-Qabas newspaper, quoting educational sources, said Education Minister Bader Al-Essa refused to sign the decision to terminate the teachers and instead postponed the issue until next year, bearing in mind that new schools will open soon. Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) has decided not to accept expat students in its various colleges from the next academic year because those colleges' capacity is only enough for Kuwaitis.

Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi has also decided to lay off 400 expat employees with the aim of cutting expenses. Notably, the ministry of social affairs and labor has banned recruiting any expat without direct approval from Minister Hind Al-Subaih. The ministry has also decided to lay off a number of expat employees working on a 'pay for work' basis.

The ministry of communication, which has the least numbers of expat employees, is assessing the performance of some of them to be laid off and substituted by Kuwaitis. Kuwait Petroleum Corp has also instructed its subsidiary companies to sack expat secretaries working in the oil sector and make the ones needed to work through contractors. KPC has informed all CEOs to notify expat secretaries and make them choose between working through contractors or termination.



Min 15°  
Max 30°  
High Tide 10:42 & 23:16  
Low Tide 04:22 & 16:25

## News

in brief

### Govt plans KD 2bn sukuk, bond issue

DUBAI: Kuwait's government plans to issue KD 2 billion (\$6.6 billion) of Islamic and conventional bonds to help cover a budget deficit created by low oil prices, Al-Arabiya television quoted unnamed official sources as saying yesterday. The finance ministry has asked the central bank to arrange the issuance, Al-Arabiya said. It did not specify the timing beyond saying the issuance would occur this year. The government has begun drawing down its financial reserves to cover part of the deficit, which it projects at KD 12.2 billion in the current fiscal year that began on April 1. But it also wants to start issuing debt to limit the speed of the drawdown and develop the local financial market. The KD 2 billion issuance will be divided equally between conventional and Islamic bonds (sukuk).

### Finmeccanica to finalize Eurofighter project today

ROME: Italian defence company Finmeccanica will finalize a multi-billion contract from Kuwait for 28 Eurofighter jets today, two sources close to the deal told Reuters yesterday. Kuwait signed a memorandum of understanding in September to buy the planes, but efforts to close the deal have hit repeated snags and a third source urged continued caution. The 20-year contract is expected to be worth between €7 billion and €8 billion (\$8-\$9.1 billion), with Finmeccanica's share seen at roughly half of the total. The rest is in the hands of a group of companies in the Eurofighter consortium, including planemaker Airbus and Britain's BAE Systems. Finmeccanica Chief Executive Officer Mauro Moretti said in March that the state-owned conglomerate was in the final stages of discussion with Kuwait over the deal and hoped "to conclude in a short period".

### UAE court jails 'Hezbollah' trio

ABU DHABI: An Emirati court sentenced yesterday three Lebanese, including a Canadian dual national, to six months in prison for forming a local affiliate of Iran-backed Hezbollah, local media said. The supreme federal court convicted the trio of "forming a group for the terrorist Hezbollah (movement) in the country," Ittihad daily reported, adding that they will be deported after serving their sentences. They "were found guilty of setting up an office of the militant group in the UAE and carrying out commercial, economic and political activities without licenses," the daily Gulf News reported. It named the men as Canadian-Lebanese Suhail Naif Gareeb, 62, and Lebanese nationals Asaad Ameen Qansouh, 66, and Ahmed Ebrahim Qansouh, 30. Their trial opened in early February.

## 'PANAMA PAPERS' REVEAL OFFSHORE WEALTH

### WORLD LEADERS, CELEBRITIES, SPORTS STARS EXPOSED

LONDON/PANAMA CITY: Governments across the world began investigating possible financial wrongdoing by the rich and powerful yesterday after a leak of four decades of documents from a Panamanian law firm that specialized in setting up offshore companies. The "Panama Papers" revealed financial arrangements of global politicians and public figures including friends of Russian President Vladimir Putin, relatives of the prime ministers of Britain, Iceland and Pakistan, and the president of Ukraine.

While holding money in offshore companies is not illegal, journalists who received the leaked documents said they could provide evidence of funds hidden for tax evasion, money laundering, sanctions busting, drug deals or other crimes. The law firm, Mossack Fonseca, which says it has set up more than 240,000 offshore companies for clients around the globe, denied any wrongdoing and called itself the victim of a campaign against privacy.

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REYKJAVIK: Iceland's Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson speaks during a parliamentary session yesterday, insisting he would not resign after leaked documents allegedly link him to an offshore company. — AP (See Pages 7, 10, 11, 14, 20, 23 & 36)

## RENEWABLES USE COULD SAVE \$750BN IN MENA

KUWAIT: Middle Eastern and North African nations can make a "net benefit" of \$750 billion if they achieve their set targets on the use of renewable energy, a senior official said yesterday. "Almost every country in the (MENA) region has a target for renewable energy from 5-15 percent," by 2030, Adnan Amin, director general of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) told reporters. "If we are able to meet these targets, we will have a net benefit of about \$750 billion for the power sector in the MENA region," Amin said on the sidelines of the sixth MENA (Middle East and North Africa) renewable energy conference.

Amin said the world is looking to double the current share of renewable energy of 16-17 percent in the global mix to 36 percent by 2030. He said doubling the renewable energy share will help achieve the reduction by half of carbon emissions which would be a pre-requisite for limiting global warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) as decided by the Paris climate change summit. Amin told the conference that global

investments in renewable energy rose by 22 percent last year to a record \$330 billion.

The cost of production of renewable energy has dropped significantly in the past few years, he said. In the past five years, the cost of solar photovoltaic power generation dropped by 80 percent, Amin said. "It is already competitive with natural gas. There can be further reduction in cost," he said. But Bassam Fattouh, director of Oxford Energy Institute Studies, said the targets set by MENA countries are "very ambitious". He said several challenges hamper renewable energy production in the region, like state monopoly of the power system, a lack of institutional capacity and conventional energy subsidies.

Nearly half of all new installed power generation capacity in 2014 was in renewables - 37 percent wind, a third solar and a quarter hydro, according to the International Energy Agency. Renewables only account for about 20 percent of global electricity generation, and three-quarters of that is hydro. — AFP (See Page 5)



Adnan Amin

## MPs CONTINUE TO REJECT GOVT'S POWER TARIFFS

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers yesterday continued to express their total rejection of a government bill to raise power and water charges, saying the proposed increase would certainly harm low and middle income people. MP Madhi Al-Hajeri insisted that there is no way to allow the government charges to pass and impact the finances of citizens. He criticized the government's proposals, saying that it has no strategy to finance the budget deficit due to the fall in oil prices except through harming low income people. Hajeri called on the government to search for other alternatives to meet the budget shortfall

away from the "pockets of citizens". The government had proposed two sets of increases - for private homes, a majority of which are owned by Kuwaiti citizens, and for apartments, where the majority of expats live. For private houses, it proposed 5 fils for the first 3,000 kilowatts, 8 fils for between 3,000 and 6,000 kW, 10 fils for between 6,000 and 9,000 kW and 15 fils per kilowatt for consumption above 9,000 kW. For apartments, it proposed 5 fils per kilowatt for the first 1,000 kW, 10 fils for between 1,000 and 2,000 kW and 15 fils per kilowatt for higher consumption.

But the National Assembly financial and economic affairs committee on Sunday pro-

posed major changes only for citizens. It proposed keeping the current rate of 2 fils per kilowatt for consumption of up to 6,000 kW and 5 fils above that. It did not propose any changes for apartments. The government is expected to respond to the committee's proposal tomorrow and the issue is expected to be debated on April 12.

MP Awdah Al-Awdah said the charges issue could strain relations between the government and the Assembly, especially if the government insists on its proposals. He said that if the government does not change its plans, the issue will remain without approval in the Assembly for a long time. The lawmaker said that MPs will not vote unless the issue

is in favor of citizens. Previously, a large number of MPs had voiced their rejection of what they called massive fee increases by the government.

In another development, MP Mansour Al-Dhafiri said that the principles of justice and equality in the Kuwaiti constitution call for granting Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis a housing loan of KD 70,000 like their Kuwaiti male counterparts.

He said that the housing law must be adjusted to treat Kuwaiti women on an equal footing with their male counterparts. The lawmaker said that Kuwaiti women married to foreign husbands should also be given social and children allowances like men.