

Kuwaiti explorer to participate in trips to North, South Poles



Austria to tear down Hitler's birth house



Aleppo to the Ivy League: Doctor preps for end of war



Westbrook, Adams power Thunder past Timberwolves



ELECTION FEVER GRIPS KUWAIT AS SNAP ELECTIONS SET FOR NOV 26

POLITICAL GROUPS, TRIBES TO NAME CANDIDATES SOON



Min 19°
Max 39°
High Tide 00:27 & 13:35
Low Tide 07:18 & 19:33

IRAQ FORCES LAUNCH MOSUL OFFENSIVE

AL-SHURA, Iraq: Iraqi forces advanced yesterday after launching an offensive aimed at retaking Mosul and dealing a death blow to the Islamic State group's "caliphate" in the city where it was declared two years ago. The start of the long-awaited assault raised deep concerns for hundreds of thousands of civilians trapped in Iraq's second-largest city, with aid groups warning of a massive humanitarian crisis.

Some 30,000 federal forces are leading the offensive, backed by air and ground support from a 60-nation US-led coalition, in what is expected to be a long and difficult assault on IS' last major Iraqi stronghold. Iraqi forces could be seen readying weapons and ammunitions as columns of armored vehicles headed towards Mosul from the town of Al-Shura, some 45 km south of the city.

The Pentagon described the operation as a "decisive moment" in the fight against IS but the US-led coalition's top commander warned it could last weeks or more. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi announced the beginning of the assault in a televised address in the early hours of yesterday. "Today I declare the start of these victorious operations to free you from the violence and terrorism of Daesh (IS)," Abadi said. IS seized control of large parts of Iraq and neighboring Syria in mid-2014, declaring a cross-border "caliphate" and committing widespread atrocities.

The militants have suffered a string of territorial defeats this year in both countries, and the retaking of Mosul would all but end the group's presence in Iraq as a land-holding force. Iraqi forces have been closing in on Mosul in recent weeks but the battle launched yesterday could be the toughest yet in the fight against IS.

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KHAZER, Iraq: Kurdish security forces take up a position as they fight overlooking Islamic State-controlled villages surrounding Mosul yesterday. — AP

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Snap National Assembly elections will be held on Nov 26, according to a decision by the Cabinet yesterday, a day after HH the Amir dissolved the Assembly over a row over the hike in petrol prices. The Cabinet's decision will be issued in an Amiri decree and published in the official gazette Kuwait Al-Youm to signal the start of the 40-day election campaign to elect 50 new members to the Assembly.

Under the election law, the Amiri decree must be published in the official gazette at least one month before the election date. Registration of candidates will start after the publication for 10 days, and withdrawal from the race will remain open until four days before the election date. Candidates must be Kuwaiti citizens by birth and at least 30 years of age on the day of the polls.

Almost all outgoing Assembly members are expected to seek reelection. So far, only Salafist MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran said he is not contesting because the Salafist group has unanimously elected ex-minister and former lawmaker Ahmad Baqer to contest in the second constituency. The three Cabinet ministers who are elected MPs - Public Works Minister Ali Al-Omar, Communications and Municipality Minister Essa Al-Kandari and Awqaf and Justice Minister Yaqoub Al-Sane - submitted their resignations in order to be able to contest the polls. Their resignations were accepted by the Cabinet. Under Kuwaiti law, the 16-member Cabinet must include at least one elected member from the Assembly.

This year's election is expected to attract huge attention and witness heated races after many opposition groups said they will field candidates after boycotting the previous two polls in protest against the change in the voting system. The Islamic Constitutional Movement, the Kuwaiti arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, said it will name its candidates this week.

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News

in brief

Court to look into DNA law Dec 21

KUWAIT: The Constitutional Court yesterday set Dec 21 as the date to look into constitutional challenges to the DNA law. On June 13, the court received challenges to the law from citizens questioning the constitutionality of the bill. On July 1, 2015, the National Assembly passed the 13-article law making DNA testing mandatory for all people in Kuwait, with the aim of establishing a comprehensive database to be used to identify criminals and terrorists. People who refuse to take the test face a jail term of a maximum of one year and a fine of up to KD 10,000, or one of the two penalties. According to Article 11, the law applies to citizens, expats and anybody who enters the country.

Kuwait among 24 teams in Asian football cup draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait is among 24 football teams in the draw for the qualifying rounds of the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Asian Football Cup, the Kuwait Football Association (KFA) said. In a press statement released yesterday, the association said it received an official statement from the AFC on teams participating in the final qualifying rounds to be held in the UAE in 2019. The Kuwaiti team was among the best third-place winners, said KFA. AFC will announce the time of the draw later, the statement added.

Finance ministry to only use e-stamps from Dec

DUBAI: Kuwait's Ministry of Finance will stop dealing with traditional stamps and change to electronic ones from December, a step in line with the ministry's goal to modernize all financial services and transactions, the ministry's Undersecretary Khalifa Hamada said yesterday. The official's statement to KUNA came during his participation at GITEX Technology Week in Dubai. Hamada added that the new electronic system will be applied with best standards and will facilitate data extraction. The ministry is going ahead with some other projects, namely the state's unified electronic payment systems that aim at collecting fines and processing other transactions in one location.

Saleh expects production 'understanding' at OPEC

KUWAIT: Finance Minister and acting oil minister Anas Al-Saleh said yesterday he was optimistic that an understanding on production "at least" would be reached between producers at an OPEC meeting in November. He said expectations that oil prices would be between \$50 and \$60 over the next 10 to 15 months were "logical and acceptable". Saleh was speaking with journalists on the sidelines of the opening of the Ahmad Al-Jaber oil and gas exhibition.

RUSSIA ANNOUNCES BRIEF ALEPPO TRUCE

AIR STRIKES FLATTEN BUILDINGS • EU WARNS OF 'WAR CRIMES'

ALEPPO: Russia yesterday announced an eight-hour "humanitarian" ceasefire in Aleppo later this week, as the EU warned that the Syrian regime's Moscow-backed assault on the city could amount to war crimes. The United Nations and European Union welcomed the announcement, but said the planned pause in fighting

needed to be longer to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid. In the latest violence, dozens of civilians including 12 members of the same family were killed in heavy bombardment of rebel-held eastern sectors of the embattled city, a monitoring group said.

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ALEPPO: Members of the Syrian Civil Defense, known as the White Helmets, carry the body of a girl dug out from the rubble of a destroyed building following air strikes in the rebel-held Qatari neighborhood of this northern Syrian city yesterday.— AFP

TRUMP RAMPS UP VOTER FRAUD CLAIM, SLAMS WOMEN ACCUSERS

WASHINGTON: Republican candidate Donald Trump said yesterday he expected widespread voter fraud in the Nov 8 US presidential election, ramping up his warning of a rigged election without providing any evidence and despite numerous studies that show the electoral system is sound. Trump has tried to whip up fears of a flawed election as he has fallen back in opinion polls against Democrat Hillary Clinton. He is also strongly denying allegations from multiple women that he has sexually assaulted or otherwise behaved inappropriately with them.

"Of course there is large scale voter fraud happening on and before election day. Why do Republican leaders deny what is going on? So naive!" Trump said on Twitter yesterday. Trump, a New York businessman making his first run for public office, has worried

a number of Republicans over his allegations of election fraud. Some of them have urged him publicly to show proof or drop the assertions. Early voting and voting by mail have begun in many states.

While Trump's vice presidential running mate, Mike Pence, and his campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway, have tried to reshape the candidate's comments as being aimed at an unfair news media, Trump's own words have targeted the legitimacy of the election system. Even after Pence said in a televised interview on Sunday that Trump would accept the results of next month's election, Trump tweeted that the "election is absolutely being rigged by the dishonest and distorted media pushing Crooked Hillary - but also at many polling places - SAD."

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ENVOY: TOP FILIPINO DRUG KINGPIN ARRESTED IN UAE

DUBAI: A man named by Philippines' president as a major drug kingpin was arrested in the capital of the United Arab Emirates after apparently fleeing his country, a Filipino diplomat said yesterday. Rolando "Kerwin" Espinosa Jr was arrested Sunday night in an apartment in Abu Dhabi, Ambassador Constancio Vingno Jr told AP. Abu Dhabi investigators used intelligence gathered by the Philippine National Police to locate Espinosa, Vingno said. He said that his country hopes to extradite Espinosa soon.

Filipino media quoted local police as saying an overseas Filipino worker tipped off authorities. An Interpol red notice for Espinosa, the son of a mayor also accused of being a drug kingpin, says he is wanted on drug and weapons charges. It wasn't clear if he had a lawyer. Vingno said Espinosa hadn't requested consular assistance.

Espinosa and his father had been warned by Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte they faced potentially being shot on sight if they didn't turn themselves in.

It's part of Duterte's deadly crackdown on illegal drugs in his southeast Asian country that's seen more than 1,300 suspects killed in gunbattles with police - an average of 36 killings a day since he took office on June 30. Human rights groups criticize the campaign as condoning extrajudicial killings. Vingno said it was unclear if anyone else would face charges over Espinosa hiding in the UAE. Emirati officials did not immediately comment on his arrest. However, Vingno stressed that Espinosa's arrest shouldn't be taken as a stain on the reputation of the 600,000 Filipinos working across the UAE. "It should not reflect on the people we are," he said. — AP



NEW YORK: Activists rally during a protest against Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump over his 'treatment of women' in front of Trump Tower yesterday. — AFP