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Illegals urged to avail of amnesty before it ends

Finance panel to review proposal to tax expat remittances

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Director General of the Residency Affairs Department Maj Gen Talal Maarafi urged residency violators to take advantage of the grace period for residency violators that will continue until April 22. He said the higher leadership at the interior ministry reviews the humanitarian circumstances of violators and offers them all facilities to quickly process their transactions. He added the number of those who benefited from the min-

isterial amnesty decision reached 46,737 by March 22, of whom 30,052 left the country without paying fines, while the rest corrected their status.

As for domestic helpers, Maarafi said the sponsor must come to the department to remove any absconding complaint to transfer their residency to another sponsor. He said violators allowed to leave during the remaining period include only those who entered the country before Feb 21 and their regular or temporary residency expired. He added the initiative also covers those whose

passports expired before Feb 21 but have a valid residency and wish to leave the country, as well as those reported absconding before Feb 21.

Separately, the parliamentary financial and economic affairs committee is scheduled to meet today to discuss a proposal to tax expatriates' remittances. The committee's chairman MP Salah Khorsheed said Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf will attend the meeting to discuss various related proposals. Khorsheed added that the committee has already reviewed a report by the parliamentary leg-

islative and legal affairs committee, which had rejected the proposal as unconstitutional. He said the topic will be subjected to further study with the finance minister.

Khorsheed denied any intentions to tax citizens' remittances and stressed that according to statistics, expats' annual remittances exceed KD 4.5 billion. He also noted that suggestions include imposing gradual taxes. "However, we will consult the finance minister and the Central Bank prior to making any decision," he concluded.

France mourns slain 'hero' officer; Amir sends condolences

TREBES, France: President Emmanuel Macron led tributes yesterday to a French policeman who died after offering himself as a hostage to help end an attack, becoming the fourth victim of the shooting spree and supermarket siege. Lieutenant-Colonel Arnaud Beltrame, 45, was among a group of officers who rushed to the scene in the southwestern town of Trebes on Friday after an attacker claiming allegiance to the Islamic State group holed up in a supermarket following a shooting spree in nearby Carcassonne.



Arnaud Beltrame

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Rare artifacts found along eastern coast

KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) has discovered tens of cemeteries and engraved items in a popular eastern resort on the shores of the Arabian Gulf. The new discoveries are reminiscent of a bronze age culture known as "Um Al-Nar", which existed around 2,500 BC in the area of modern-day United Arab Emirates and northern Oman, the director of NCCAL's department of antiquities and museums Sultan Al-Duweish told KUNA yesterday.

He pointed out that the area was at one point a vibrant trade zone that linked vast civilizations across eastern Saudi Arabia, adding the findings are the byproduct of extensive archaeolog-



Sultan Al-Duweish

ical surveys carried out on unexplored landscapes. On the purpose of such endeavors, Duweish noted it helps uncover the illustrious history of Kuwait, a nation whose soil has contributed immensely to the growth of human civilization. The NCCAL official revealed that the council has partnered with a number of renowned schools and institutes in its quest to locate hidden cultural gems. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The rare antiquities that were found along the eastern Kuwaiti coast. — KUNA

Bomb kills 2 Egypt policemen; Amir sends condolences

CAIRO: Two policemen were killed in the Egyptian city of Alexandria in a bomb attack yesterday that targeted the local security chief two days before a presidential election. Five other people were wounded by the bomb, which was left under a car and blew up as police Major General Mostafa Al-Nemr drove past, the interior ministry said. Nemr was not hurt and said later he would not be deterred from "doing his duty" in safeguarding next week's vote.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, which the state news agency blamed on the banned Muslim Brotherhood organization. Islamic State released a video last month in which it warned Egyptians against voting and urged Islamists to attack security forces and leaders. The government condemned the attack and suggested it would not affect the election beginning tomorrow in which President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi is set to win a second term.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah yesterday sent a cable to Egyptian Sisi expressing condemnation of the terrorist blast. He denounced the terrorist operation that contradicted all covenants and humanitarian values. He affirmed support for Egypt regarding any measures it opts to take to safeguard its security and stability. HH the Amir expressed condolences to the president and the martyrs' families. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

"These desperate attempts by the forces of terrorism and the states that back it to affect the positive atmosphere the country is witnessing will only increase the Egyptian state's resolve to complete its political process and economic progress," Prime Minister Sherif Ismail said. Photos posted on social media showed a burnt out car and smoke at the site of the blast. Local television stations later showed Nemr unharmed and inspecting the area.

Residents close to the scene in Alexandria, Egypt's second-largest city, reported hearing a huge blast when the bomb detonated mid-morning. "I suddenly heard a very strong explosion and ran towards the street, but I retreated out of fear," said Mohamed Ismail, a doorman at a building near the explosion. "I thought the building would collapse and kept checking on its pillars," he added.

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ALEXANDRIA: Egyptian forensics officers check a destroyed vehicle at the site of a bomb attack in this northern port city yesterday. — AFP



DUBAI: A man and two children light candles after lights were switched off for the Earth Hour environmental campaign yesterday. — AFP

Cities go dark during global Earth Hour

SYDNEY: The Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge went dark for an hour yesterday, kicking off a global campaign that saw landmark buildings around the world dim their lights to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change. Earth Hour, which started in Australia in 2007, was being observed by millions of supporters in 187 countries, who turned off their lights at 8.30 pm local time in what organizers describe as the world's "largest grassroots movement for climate change". "It aims to raise awareness about the importance of protecting the environment and wildlife," Earth Hour organizer WWF Australia chief Dermot O'Gorman told AFP.

In Kuwait, the ministry of electricity

and water urged Kuwaitis, expats and state institutions to participate in the initiative. Images from across Asia showed buildings including Kuala Lumpur's Petronas Towers, as well as the famous harbor skylines of Hong Kong and Singapore, being plunged into darkness to mark the occasion. Other global landmarks that took part include Beijing's Bird's Nest Olympic stadium, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Pyramids of Egypt and New York's Empire State Building.

With global temperatures the highest on record, O'Gorman said this year's theme was the impact of climate change on biodiversity and plant and animal species. "More than half of plant and animal species face local extinction in some of the world's most naturally rich areas in biodiversity by the turn of this century if we continue along the current path that we are trending in terms of global warming," he said.

Species at risk include Australia's green turtles, black-flanked rock wallabies and koalas, as well as the Adelle

penguin colonies in Antarctica, the conservation group said in a report it commissioned that was published in the science journal Climatic Change. The analysis, released last week, said key biodiverse sites around the world projected to be most affected by localized extinction include the Amazon, the plant's largest tropical rainforest, and southern Africa's Miombo Woodlands.

While the lights-off event is a symbolic gesture, Earth Hour has led successful campaigns over the past decade to ban plastics in the Galapagos Islands and plant 17 million trees in Kazakhstan. Sydney's Dianna Ali, who was having dinner with family as the lights went off in the city, said the initiative had made her more aware of the impact of her lifestyle on the planet's health. "Since Earth Hour started, it's made me more conscious of how much power I'm using," she told AFP. "I think... about how much one individual can make a difference." — AFP