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Heavy trucks brazenly flout driving ban on main roads

Court orders MoI to pay compensation over vehicle impoundment

MP sentenced to 7 years for 'tricking' wife

KUWAIT: The appeals court yesterday sentenced opposition MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei to seven years in jail for failing to tell his wife he divorced her and continuing to have sexual relations with her, her lawyer said. Tabtabaei, an Islamist lawmaker who is currently outside Kuwait, already faces a 42-month jail term handed down in July in another case for storming the parliament and assaulting police. The appeals court yesterday upheld a 2018 verdict finding him guilty of adultery, said the lawyer, Nasser Al-Otaibi, adding the ruling was not political.



Waleed Al-Tabtabaei

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By Nawara Fattahova and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Although the traffic law bans heavy trucks, trailers and other heavy vehicles from driving on main and side roads till the Seventh Ring Road during certain times of the day, motorists have noticed many such trucks on the streets during the ban periods. Their woes have been compounded since Arab schools and Kuwait University colleges reopened on Sunday, leading to heavy gridlock on most roads and highways.

Head of the media security department at the interior ministry Lt Col Nasser Buslaib told Kuwait Times that the hours of the truck ban are still the same and haven't changed. "Truck drivers are obliged to respect the ban, otherwise they will be penalized," he said. "Many police patrols on the main roads are monitoring the situation, especially during the rush hours. The ban timings vary according to the roads," he added.

All heavy trucks, tractor trailers and heavy vehicles are not allowed to drive inside Kuwait City, Hawally and Salmiya from 6:30 am to 3:00 pm and again

from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm. This means that no heavy trucks should be on the Third and Fourth Ring Roads and other inner ring roads or any other highways, roads or byways during the abovementioned times.

The truck ban is also on these other main highways: From the intersection of Fahheel Expressway starting from the Sixth Ring Road (Masayel intersection) all the way to Sulaibiya Road and Sabah Al-Nasser Bridge (Kabd Road). Also Sulaibiya Road between the Fifth and Sixth Ring Roads and the Fifth Ring Road till its intersection with Doha Connection and to the north till it meets the main Jahra Road. Heavy trucks cannot drive on these roads from 6:30 am to 9:00 am and again from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm.

Meanwhile, the administrative court yesterday annulled interior ministry decision 1293/2017 and clauses 29 and 27 added to article 207 of the traffic code pertaining impounding vehicles for two months for not wearing seatbelts and using mobile phones while driving. The court also ordered compensating KD 500 to the citizen who had filed the case.



KUWAIT: A truck and cars are seen on a road in this file photo. Image used for illustrative purposes only. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

The citizen's lawyer Khaled Al-Shemmari stressed he was fully confident of winning the case because the resolution was illegal. He also called for more studies of laws before passing them.

Notably, the interior ministry had rescinded the decision to impound vehi-

cles found in violation of traffic regulations pending amendments to traffic laws in Dec 2017, barely a month after enforcing it. The move came after scores of vehicles were impounded, leading to outrage from motorists and lawmakers, lawsuits and even a divorce.

News in brief

3-day national holidays

KUWAIT: The Cabinet announced on its Twitter account yesterday that Sunday (Feb 24) will be an official holiday, and work will resume on Wednesday (Feb 27). The country celebrates its National Day on Feb 25 and Liberation Day on Feb 26. Feb 24 is a day off as it falls between two holidays. — KUNA

Saudis hope to attract \$425bn

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday launched an ambitious program which it hopes will attract \$427 billion in investments in the industry and logistics sectors. To kick-start the 12-year program, the kingdom announced the signing of 37 agreements worth \$55 billion with foreign and local investors. Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said the investments would be made in the fields of industry, mining, energy and logistics. The aim is to create 1.6 million new jobs, boost non-oil exports by \$267 billion a year and add as much as \$320 billion to the gross domestic product, almost 40 percent of last year's GDP, he said. — AFP

Dubai airport retains top spot

DUBAI: Dubai International Airport said it retained its top global spot in 2018 after serving the largest number of passengers for the fifth year in a row despite falling short of its target. Traffic at the major transit hub rose slightly to 89.15 million passengers, up just over 1.0 percent on the number who used the airport in 2017, it said in a statement. Indians retained the top position with 12.28 million passengers last year and Saudis came in second with 6.47 million travellers, overtaking Britons. — AFP

Bahrain upholds life sentences

DUBAI: Bahrain's highest court upheld life sentences against three opposition leaders on charges of spying for Qatar, state news agency BNA and a rights group said yesterday. Al-Wafaq secretary-general Sheikh Ali Salman and two senior Wafaq leaders Sheikh Hassan Sultan and Ali Alaswad were sentenced to life imprisonment in November, overturning a previous acquittal. Wafaq said in a statement the ruling was made for "political reasons". — Reuters

Egypt pardons jailed Briton

CAIRO: A British woman convicted in Egypt of smuggling painkillers has been granted early release after spending more than a year in prison, an Egyptian security source said yesterday. Laura Plummer, 34, was arrested at Hurghada airport and sentenced in Dec 2017 to three years in prison after customs officers found almost 300 Tramadol pills in her luggage. — AFP

Macron presses Sisi on respect for 'freedoms'

CAIRO: French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday that he told his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi during a trip to Cairo that stability and security could not be separated from human rights. Macron, received with pomp during a three-day state visit, has been under pressure from non-governmental organizations to take a firmer stance after stating in 2017 that he would not lecture Sisi on rights.

"Real stability depends on the vitality of society. Stability and lasting peace go hand in hand with respect for individual freedoms, dignity of everyone and the

rule of law, and the search for stability cannot be dissociated from the question of human rights," he said during a joint news conference with Sisi that was dominated by the subject of rights. "Things haven't gone in the right direction since 2017 - bloggers, journalists are in prison and because of that Egypt's image can find itself suffering," Macron said.

Sisi told reporters that rights should be taken in the context of regional turbulence and the fight against terrorism. "We're not like Europe, nor the United States, we are a country or a region that has its own characteristics," he said. "Egypt does not advance through bloggers. It advances through the work, effort and perseverance of its sons."

Sisi ousted former President Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 and was elected as president a year later, presiding over

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CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (right) shakes hands with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron after their joint press conference yesterday. — AFP

Qatar blockade hits Asian Cup

ABU DHABI: When the United Arab Emirates take on bitter Gulf rivals Qatar in the Asian Cup semi-finals today, good luck spotting the Qatari fans. Not only are Qataris largely barred from UAE due to the ongoing Gulf blockade, but the hosts have gone to great lengths to make sure no pro-Qatar supporters sneak in. In a telling turn of events, the Abu Dhabi Sports Council has snapped up all remaining tickets to give away to "loyal UAE fans", it said in a tweet.

Long queues formed as supporters waited for their free tickets, but only people holding Emirati identification

were eligible. The move appears aimed at preventing a repeat of Qatar's last-16 game with Saudi Arabia, the UAE's staunch ally, when Omani fans turned up to cheer on the Maroons. It also highlights seething tensions between Qatar and UAE, one of a group of countries enforcing a diplomatic and transport blockade of the 2022 World Cup hosts for allegedly supporting terrorism - a claim Doha denies.

The result is that Abu Dhabi's 42,000-capacity Mohamed Bin Zayed stadium will be not only a sellout, but also nearly unanimously behind Alberto Zaccheroni's white-clad team. Losing to Qatar in a home semifinal would be embarrassing for UAE, and it could've got even worse if Qatari allies Iran, who

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This handout photo taken in 2018 shows Trevor the duck on the Pacific island of Niue. — AFP

'Loneliest duck' Trevor dies on tiny Niue island

SYDNEY: A lone duck named Trevor that lived on the tiny Pacific island nation of Niue has died, officials say, sparking an outpouring of grief from as far away as New Zealand. The celebrity mallard found fame last year after a visiting journalist from New Zealand discovered that his makeshift home, near a puddle, was used for directions. But his 15 seconds of fame were tragically cut short when he was "seen dead in the bush after being attacked by dogs" this weekend, a Facebook page dedicated to Trevor said.

The chief executive of the Niue

Chamber of Commerce, Rae Findlay, said it was a "sad time for Niue". "He captivated the locals, of which there are only 1,600 in Niue, and the 9,000 visitors to Niue each year," Findlay told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Sunday. "He will definitely be missed, he captured many hearts and even the rooster, the chicken and the weka were looking a little forlorn today wandering around the near-dry puddle."

Niue, a tiny speck of land, lies around 2,400 km northeast of New Zealand. One of the world's biggest coral islands, Niue does not have natural ponds or wetlands, so when Trevor turned up a year ago he was believed to have blown in from New Zealand with a storm. He quickly settled down in a large puddle near a road that the Niue fire service later topped up with water, the ABC reported.

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ABU DHABI: Qatar's midfielder Ali Yahya celebrates with the national flag after an Asian Cup quarterfinal match between South Korea and Qatar at Zayed Sports City on Jan 25, 2019. — AFP