



KUWAIT: Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah visits the headquarters of the General Directorate for Citizenship (GDC). — KUNA photos

AMIR GRANTS CITIZENSHIP TO 300 PERSONS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has gracefully granted citizenship to 300 persons, in the latest Amiri gesture that depicts His Highness' humanitarian approach, announced the Minister of Interior yesterday. The Amiri decision covers 180 children of Kuwaiti widows and divorcees and 120 children and grandchildren of the naturalized "of the legal age," said Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah, who doubles as the Deputy Prime Minister, in a statement, during a visit to headquarters of the General Directorate for Citizenship (GDC).

The graceful Amiri gesture will be officially announced next week after Cabinet's endorsement, the minister said, while he was looking, first-hand, into the question of passports' issue delay at the GDC. Falsifying the citizenship "is not allowed at all," he said, alluding to some

such cases where culprits must be uncovered. Minister Sheikh Mohammad indicated that he would follow up on replacement of old passports with electronic ones, simultaneously with applying the DNA print.

He urged the department personnel to maintain secrecy of the personal data, serve the citizens in the best fashion possible and deal humanely with special needs' cases. Separately, the minister examined Saad Al-

Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences, namely the revamping schemes. The academy, in the coming two years, will be subject to comprehensive review of its curricula, teachers' competence and training methods, Sheikh Mohammad declared. He underscored necessity of cadets' dispatch to foreign states for specialized studies, particularly in sectors where such education is needed, namely the Coast Guards and the Police Air Force. — KUNA

AUSTRALIA BLOCKS ELECTRICITY NETWORK SALE TO ASIAN BIDDERS AMID SECURITY CONCERNS

40% INVESTOR GROUP CONTROLLED BY KUWAITI, ABU DHABI INTERESTS

SYDNEY: Australia blocked the A\$10 billion (\$7.7 billion) sale of its biggest energy grid to State Grid Corp of China and Hong Kong's Cheung Kong Infrastructure Holdings citing security concerns, a blow to the country's privatization plan. Nine months after clearing the sale of TransGrid to an investor group 40 percent controlled by Kuwaiti and Abu Dhabi interests, Australian Treasurer Scott Morrison said yesterday he was rejecting the sale of Ausgrid to the rival Asian bidders because of risks to the national interest.

"During the review process national security issues were identified in critical power and communications services that Ausgrid provides to businesses and governments," Morrison said in a statement. State Grid, China's dominant power distributor, did not immediately respond to requests seeking comment. Cheung Kong Infrastructure (CKI), controlled by Hong Kong billionaire tycoon Li Ka-Shing, said the decision was not related to CKI. Australia's decision to reject the bids deprives the New South Wales state government of what would have been a record haul for a single privatization sale, and also underscores the country's changed political climate since a handful of protectionist senators took power in general elections last month. The Australian Senate cannot block offshore sales, but Morrison's conservative government needs to maintain favorable relations with the crossbench which now holds the balance of power in the upper house.

China ties

The decision also sets new parameters to the relationship between Australia and its biggest export partner just eight months after a A\$100 billion free trade agreement took effect. "If you put your biggest trading partner in the category of 'security risk', it might start to impact on the overall atmosphere, and on Chinese involvement in other areas," said Hans Hendrischke, a professor of Chinese business at University of Sydney's business school.

"That is not necessarily something you want with bidding for other big infrastructure projects," he added, noting Chinese interests have routinely bid in Australian infrastructure sales. Apart from Ausgrid and TransGrid - which State Grid also attempted to buy last year - the government of NSW, Australia's most populous state, has put up a third grid for sale, rural-focused Endeavour Energy, expected to fetch about A\$5 billion based on the valuation models used for the first two. The national sell-off program has been under political pressure since the 2015 sale of Port of Darwin to Chinese government-affiliated interests that sparked a backlash over the security implications and even a rebuke from US government officials. Soon after that, Morrison blocked proposed sales of the country's biggest agricultural land holding, S Kidman Co, to Chinese bidders. Britain has also delayed signing off on the \$24 billion Hinkley Point nuclear power project, which has deeply frustrated the Chinese government. — Reuters



Photo shows the Umm Al-Maradim Island - the second Kuwaiti Island to be liberated from the Iraqi forces in 1991. — KUNA photos

UMM AL-MARADIM ISLAND - 2ND KUWAIT ISLAND TO BE LIBERATED

KUWAIT: Umm Al-Maradim was the second Kuwaiti Island to be liberated from the Iraqi forces, where the invaders carved their surrender letter on its rocks in 1991. Locals named the island after its largest boulder which was called 'Mardam', as well as the birds that immigrate to the island in large numbers during spring time, referred to as 'Mardam' by Kuwaitis. Located at the extreme south of the Kuwaiti marine borders with Saudi Arabia, the island stretches over one and a half kilometers in length and 540 meters in width.

Umm Al-Maradim's nature saw some changes during the Iraqi invasion, when the soldiers set underground tunnels and barbed wire around the island. The island enjoys a diversity of life forms including different types of birds such as flamingos and seagulls, wild plants, lizards, fish and large numbers of oysters, making it a tourist attraction. Umm Al-Maradim also saw the opening of a marine entrance in 2008 and has a governmental building for customs, passport affairs and coast guard. — KUNA

KUWAIT TEMPERATURE SOARS ABOVE 50 DEGREES CELSIUS

KUWAIT: Kuwait will reach a high temperature of over 50 degrees Celsius by the end of the week, according to the official at Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi. The maximum temperature will be between 48 to 51 degrees Celsius with light to moderate northwesterly winds of a speed of 12 to 32 kilometers per hour, while the minimum temperature

will be between 33 to 36 degrees Celsius. In marine weather, the waves will be light to moderate all day and between 1 to 4 feet high.

Friday will be very hot with light to moderate northwesterly winds at a speed of 10 to 30 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature will be 33 to 36 Degrees Celsius. Marine weather today will experience light to moderate

waves, also between 1 to 4 feet high. Tomorrow will also be very hot with light to moderate north westerly winds - with a speed of 20 to 38 kilometers per hour. The maximum temperature will be 49 to 53 Degrees Celsius with light to moderate northwesterly winds between 15 to 35 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature will be 33 to 36 Degrees Celsius. — KUNA



Some of the coral reefs that surround Umm Al-Maradim Island