

US envoy lauds Kuwait for protecting workers



Accountant wins 2016 Kuwait Times Ramadan contest



## MOI SETS KD 60 AS MONTHLY MINIMUM WAGE FOR MAIDS

TOTAL LABOR FORCE AMOUNTS TO 1.8M: STATISTICAL BUREAU



Min 35°  
Max 48°  
High Tide 06:52 & 19:52  
Low Tide 00:20 & 13:59

### 'FINTAS GROUP' MEMBERS JAILED

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The appeals court yesterday jailed alleged "Fintas Group" members Sheikh Athbi Al-Fahd Al-Sabah and Sheikh Ahmad Al-Dawood Al-Sabah and lawyers Falah Al-Hajraf and Abdelmohsen Al-Ateeqi, and decided to resume their trial on July 20. Suspect Hamad Al-Haroun was sentenced to 10 years in jail, while Ateeqi, Hajraf, Sheikh Khalifa Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Dawood and Sheikh Athbi Al-Fahd were sentenced for five years.

The convictions came after the suspects were accused of spreading false news and rumors by faking and publishing a video clip on social media and YouTube claiming that the head of the constitutional court Yousuf Al-Mutawa received bribes in an attempt to shake confidence in the judiciary, in addition to insulting other judges.

The court also sentenced suspect Saud Al-Asfour for one year for insulting Mutawa through Twitter with the fake video clip. It exonerated suspects Yousuf Al-Essa, Fawaz Al-Abdullah, Ahmad Al-Enezi, Mohammad Al-Jassim, Mushari Buyabes and Jarrah Al-Thafiri over insulting HH the Amir on WhatsApp because it is a private medium, but noticed that their posts talked about the Amir disrespectfully, which is against the most basic of ethics.

### SOLAR PLANE LANDS IN EGYPT



CAIRO: The Solar Impulse 2 flies over the pyramids yesterday as the experimental solar-powered airplane arrives in Egypt as part of its global voyage — AP (See Page 29)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah yesterday issued a decision setting KD 60 as the minimum monthly wage for domestic helpers in Kuwait, in the first such step in the country. In a decision setting bylaws for implementing a landmark legislation regulating hundreds of thousands of domestic helpers in the country, the ministry also mandated that offices recruiting maids from overseas must submit a bank guarantee worth KD 40,000 valid for two years at the time of establishing the office or renewing its license.

The decision sets the procedures for settling disputes between maids, their employers or offices, which are required to provide an employment contract for them. The interior ministry's domestic helpers department is entrusted with the powers to resolve such disputes within three months. The law, passed by the Assembly last year, grants domestic helpers unprecedented rights including limiting daily working hours to eight, a mandatory weekend and a 30-day paid annual leave.

For the first time, maids are entitled to demand overtime for working extra hours. The law bans the employment of maids under 20 years and above 50 years of age. It also stipulates one maid for families of up to four, two maids for families comprising five to eight members and three maids for families consisting of more than eight people. The law also stipulates for the first time an end of service indemnity for maids equal to a month's pay for each year of service. The law applies to private drivers, maids, babysitters and cooks.

Continued on Page 13



LONDON: Britain's new Prime Minister Theresa May and her husband Philip John wave outside 10 Downing Street yesterday as she takes office following the formal resignation of David Cameron. — AFP

### MAY TAKES OVER AS PM, CAMERON LEAVES OFFICE

LONDON: Theresa May took over as Britain's new prime minister yesterday, promising a "bold, new, positive role" for the country less than three weeks after its seismic vote to leave the EU. May, the former interior minister who succeeds David Cameron after seeing off several rivals for leader of the Conservative Party, becomes Britain's second female leader after Margaret Thatcher. After formally being invited to form a government in a meeting with Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace, May arrived at her new Downing Street residence with a promise to lead a government that would tackle "burning injustice".

"Following the referendum we face a time of great national change. And I know because we're Great Britain that we will rise to the challenge," she told reporters, flanked by her husband, Philip. "As we leave the European Union we will forge a bold new positive role for ourselves in the world. And we will make Britain a country that works not for a privileged few but for every one of us."

As Scotland mulls moves that could eventually see it break away, following the referendum in which most Scots voted to stay in the EU but England and Wales voted to leave, May said keeping the "precious" kingdom together was a priority. She was expected to announce key members of her cabinet, including the foreign, interior and finance ministers, yesterday evening before getting down to business.

EU leaders are pressing for a swift divorce following the vote to leave the

bloc on June 23, which sent shockwaves around the world and plunged Britain into uncertainty. European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker was among the first to offer his congratulations to May, and said he hoped they would meet "in the near future". "The outcome of the United Kingdom's referendum has created a new situation which the United Kingdom and the European Union will have to address soon," he said. May campaigned for Britain to remain in the EU but has stressed that she will honor the popular vote, saying repeatedly that "Brexit means Brexit". However, she has refused to be rushed on the timetable.

Earlier, Cameron had made his final statement in Downing Street flanked by his wife Samantha and three children, where he wished Britain "continued success". "It's not been an easy journey and, of course, we've not got every decision right but I do believe today our country is much stronger," the 49-year-old said. He later made the short drive to the palace, where the queen accepted his resignation after six years in office. Cameron had called the referendum and campaigned to stay in the EU in a bid to try to heal divisions in his Conservative party. He gambled, and he lost.

In his final question and answer session in the House of Commons yesterday, Cameron echoed a line he had once used to taunt former Labour premier Tony Blair. "As I once said, I was the future, once," he said.

Continued on Page 13

## KUWAIT TO SELL STAKES IN OIL UNITS COORDINATION WITH SAUDIS EYED OVER BOND SALES

### ARE EGYPT, SYRIA NEXT FOR TURKEY RAPPROCHEMENT?

ANKARA: Turkey has in the last month maneuvered to end damaging foreign policy disputes with Israel and Russia, but Egypt and Syria will be tougher nuts for Ankara to crack in its drive for regional rapprochement. Turkey has had downgraded relations with Egypt since the ousting of pro-Ankara Islamist president Mohamed Morsi by the Egyptian army in 2013. And in neighboring Syria, Turkey has made the exit of President Bashar Al-Assad a precondition for ending the more than five-year civil war that has seen some 2.7 million refugees flee to Turkey.

But the appointment of Binali Yildirim - a close ally of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan - as prime minister in May signified a more conciliatory approach to foreign policy after the aggressive stance of his predecessor Ahmet Davutoglu. "We will keep on increasing our friendships by observing the interests of our region and our country," Yildirim told members of his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) party this week.

Continued on Page 13

KUWAIT: Kuwait is taking steps to sell minority stakes in units of the state oil producer as the government plans to tap global capital markets for funds and improve efficiency in its most important industry. The government has a four-year plan to organize and execute sales of shares in the international units and the shipping and chemical arms of Kuwait Petroleum Corp, Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh, also acting oil minister, said in a phone interview with Bloomberg. KPC, responsible for the country's 3 million barrels of daily crude output, won't be part of the sale, he said.

Middle Eastern oil producers are seeking to diversify their economies and develop new sources of revenue after a supply glut triggered a plunge in crude to a fraction of its 2014 average of close to \$100 a barrel. Saudi Arabia, the biggest producer in OPEC, plans to sell as much as 5 percent of the kingdom's state producer Saudi Arabian Oil Co. by 2018. Like Saudi Arabia, neighboring Kuwait is planning an economic overhaul that would involve cutting subsidies and selling some state assets.

"We are looking into privatization," Saleh said. Kuwait is planning "definitely soon" to sell stakes of 20 percent to 30



Anas Al-Saleh

percent in the oil units, he said. The government, which would keep majority control of the energy companies once it listed their shares, is preparing for the initial public offerings even as it studies in greater detail which businesses to sell and when, Saleh said. He declined to specify dates for the IPOs or estimate how much money they would generate for the government, other than to

Continued on Page 13

JAPANESE EMPEROR PLANS TO ABDICATE

PAGE 12

SAUDI REFORM DRIVE FACES JOBS CHALLENGE

PAGE 21

## OMAN MAID ABUSE VERGES ON SLAVERY

DUBAI: A leading international rights group yesterday said that foreigners employed as maids in Oman can face physical and verbal abuse while working entrapped in conditions that near slavery. A new Human Rights Watch report blames in part Oman's system of tying workers' visas to their employers, as well as police failing to enforce laws and returning runaway maids to abusive homes. The report alleges Oman's neighbor, the United Arab Emirates, acts as a gateway for maids to be trafficked into the sultanate, as Emirati employment agencies along the border put women on display "like window shopping".

"Many find themselves trapped with abusive employers and forced to work in exploitative conditions, their plight hidden behind closed doors," the HRW report said. "It is clear that abuses are widespread and that they are generally carried out with impunity." Oman's government-sponsored Human

Rights Commission and the Omani Embassy in Washington did not respond to requests for comment from AP.

Many from Asia and Africa come to Gulf Arab countries to work as maids, often as the sole provider for their families back home. While some find success, others can face abuse or find themselves working in conditions far different than those promised by recruiters, trapped without their passports. Oman, a country of 4.4 million people on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, is home to nearly 2 million foreigners, according to the government's National Center for Statistics and Information.

In the report, Human Rights Watch said its investigators interviewed 59 female migrant workers with some recounting being beaten, verbally abused, denied fair pay and working as much as 20-hour days. The report said employers routinely seized maids' passports in violation of Omani laws and those that

fled abusive situations often had police return them to their abusers under laws that consider the workers "absconders".

"Situations like those described below are at the very least dangerously close to situations of slavery," the report said. The report called on Oman to overhaul its "kafala" employee sponsorship system. The system, versions of which are used throughout the oil-rich Gulf states, gives bosses considerable power over workers by effectively binding them to a given employer. It also urged Omani police not to return those who flee violence to abusive homes.

The New York-based group also implicated the UAE for allowing maids to sneak into Oman despite restrictions from some of their home countries and other visa restrictions. It described a series of employment offices in the Emirati border city of Al Ain serving as a point for Omanis to find domestic workers. — AP