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JAMADA ALTHANI 10, 1437 AH

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## KUWAIT 'REJECTS DEAL TO LIFT OLYMPIC BAN'

ATHLETES CANNOT COMPETE UNDER KUWAIT FLAG AT GAMES



150 Files



Min 12°  
Max 27°



BRUSSELS: Police officers and emergency vehicles gather during a raid in the Molenbeek neighborhood of Brussels, Belgium yesterday. The main suspect in the jihadist attacks on Paris in November, Salah Abdeslam (inset) was arrested in a raid in Brussels yesterday, French police sources said. — AP



### PARIS ATTACKS FUGITIVE ABDESLAM CAPTURED

BRUSSELS: After an intense four-month manhunt across Europe and beyond, police yesterday captured the top fugitive in the Paris attacks in the same Brussels neighborhood where he grew up. Abdeslam was shot in the leg and detained by police during a raid in Molenbeek, said Ahmed El Khannouss, the neighborhood's deputy mayor. Police are still searching for another suspect who is holed up in a house that is just a few dozen meters from two schools, he added. Helmeted police with riot shields have cordoned off the area.

Brussels-born Abdeslam, 26, was among the attackers who killed 130 people at a rock concert, the national stadium and cafes on Nov 13 in Paris. In addition to Abdeslam, the whereabouts of two Paris attack suspects remains unknown, including fellow Molenbeek resident Mohamed Abrini and a man known under the alias of Soufiane Kayal. Yesterday's capture of Abdeslam comes after Belgian authorities say they found his fingerprints in an apartment raided earlier this week in another Brussels neighborhood.

In that raid, a man believed to have been an

accomplice of Abdeslam - Mohamed Belkaid - was shot dead, Belgian prosecutors say. But two men escaped from the apartment, one of whom appears to have been Abdeslam. Federal prosecutor Eric Van der Sypt said it was possible Abdeslam had spent "days, weeks or months," in the apartment. Abdeslam fled Paris after the Nov. 13 attacks. Most of the Paris attackers died that night, including Abdeslam's brother Brahim, who blew himself up. Brahim Abdeslam was buried in the area Thursday.

Salah Abdeslam, a childhood friend of suspected ringleader Abdelhamid Abaaoud, is believed to have driven a group of gunmen who took part. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attacks, in which Belgian nationals played key roles. On Tuesday, a joint team of Belgian and French police showed up to search a residence in the Forest area of Brussels in connection with the Paris investigation, and were unexpectedly fired upon by at least two people inside. Four officers were slightly wounded.

An occupant of the residence was shot dead

by a police sniper as he prepared to open fire on police from a window. Police identified him as Belkaid, 35, an Algerian national living illegally in Belgium. A Kalashnikov assault rifle was found by his body, as well as a book on Salafism, an ultraconservative strain of Islam. Elsewhere in the apartment, police found an Islamic State banner as well as 11 Kalashnikov loaders and a large quantity of ammunition, the prosecutor said.

Belgian authorities initially said Belkaid had no known background in radical Islamic activities. But yesterday afternoon, prosecutors issued a statement saying he was "most probably" an accomplice of Abdeslam who had been using a fake Belgian ID card in the name of Samir Bouzid. A man using that ID card was one of the two men seen with Abdeslam in a rental car on the Hungarian-Austrian border in September. Four days after the Nov. 13 Paris attacks, the same false ID card was used to transfer 750 euros (\$847) to Hasna Ait Boulahcen, Abaaoud's niece. Both Ait Boulahcen and Abaaoud died afterward in a police siege. — AP

BERLIN: The government of Kuwait twice refused to sign a deal hammered out in negotiations with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that would have lifted the Olympic ban on the country, the IOC said yesterday. Kuwait was suspended in October, 2015, for the second time in five years due to government interference in the country's Olympic Committee over a new sports law. Despite negotiations in January and Kuwaiti representatives twice approving a draft deal, the government refused to endorse it, Pere Miro, IOC Deputy Director General for Relations with the Olympic Movement said.

"At the end of January with representatives sent by the government of Kuwait we had meetings in Geneva with the United Nations. The United Nations was witness of the conversations," Miro said. "We were discussing for five days and after that we got two times a draft already agreed between the negotiators. We got an agreement with negotiators on what should be changed in the law." "Every time with these two drafts the government at the end gave instructions to the negotiators not to sign," Miro said.

The ban angered Kuwait which filed a civil lawsuit against the country's Olympic committee and is also trying to get the Olympic Council of Asia, head-quartered there, to leave the country. Kuwait was also banned in 2010 over a similar dispute but was reinstated before the 2012 London Olympics. The country's football federation was also banned by world soccer's governing body FIFA this month over government interference in the running of the Kuwait FA.

As things stand, Kuwaiti athletes cannot compete under their own flag at the Games and must participate in the first Olympics in South America under the Olympic flag. "Unexpectedly what happened three weeks later, the government of Kuwait, not the negotiators who had disappeared, sent to the United Nations a new proposal that had nothing to do with our discussions," Miro said. "We could not accept that. "Sooner or later someone should move for the rational way," he said. "If we got the agreement (and it was not signed), something else is behind this non-agreement." "If you don't sign it is because you have something else behind. I don't know what it is," he said. — Reuters