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# Saudi king in Russia with oil, investment, Syria on agenda

## Iran, Turkey vow to halt Iraqi Kurds' secession



(Left) Saudi King Salman and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin review an honor guard upon the king's arrival in Moscow's Vnukovo Airport yesterday. (Right) Iranian President Hassan Rouhani greets Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a welcome ceremony in Tehran yesterday. — AP/AFP

**RIYADH/MOSCOW/ANKARA/TEHRAN:** The leaders of Saudi Arabia and Russia, the world's biggest oil exporters, are expected to discuss cooperation on oil production and differences over Syria and Iran today during the first visit to Moscow by a reigning Saudi monarch. King Salman arrived in Moscow late Wednesday. A slew of investment deals, including on a liquefied natural gas project and petrochemical plants, could also be signed during King Salman's trip and plans for a \$1-billion fund to invest in energy projects are likely to be finalized.

The visit, including talks in the Kremlin with President Vladimir Putin, reflects a rapid deepening of ties between Russia and Saudi Arabia, driven by a mutual need to stem a drop in global oil prices. The two countries helped secure a deal between OPEC and other producers to cut output until the end of March 2018, but back competing sides in Syria's civil war. Riyadh supports rebels fighting President Bashar Al-Assad's forces while Russian troops and Iranian militias have sided with Assad.

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## MP urges debate over scrapping petrol hike

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Opposition MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari yesterday began collecting signatures of other lawmakers on a request to debate a report by the financial and economic affairs committee over scrapping the hike in petrol prices. Kandari demanded in his request that the report of the committee be debated urgently and approved during the National Assembly's opening session of the next term on Oct 24.

The government raised the petrol prices last year by up to 80 percent, and

its decision was met with strong opposition by the previous Assembly and later by the current Assembly elected in Nov 2016. The government utilized a loophole in a law issued in 1995 that bans the government from raising prices of charges on public services, except all types of fuels.

Several months ago, a number of MPs submitted an amendment to the law to plug the loophole by making any increase in fuel prices to be carried out in accordance with the law and after the approval of the Assembly. An attempt to get the government decision scrapped by court has failed, after top courts rejected the move.

Meanwhile, Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei yesterday sent a series of questions to Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh about reports of an imminent merger between two Islamic banks. Tabtabaei asked the minister if the two banks have submitted an application for their impending merger either to the Central Bank or the Capital Markets Authority.

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