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MP questions MoI over terror cell as suspects sent to Egypt

Govt praises ministry for busting Brotherhood-linked network



KUWAIT: Sailors apply a mixture of white cement and animal grease (habab and shouna) to the body of a dhow yesterday as part of preparations for the pearl diving festival. Pearl-diving trips are held annually under the patronage of HH the Amir in order to keep alive traditions that accompanied the once important national trade of pearl diving, prior to the discovery of oil. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 4)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday sent a series of questions to the interior ministry requesting details on the alleged Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood terrorist network that was busted by Kuwaiti police a few days ago and whose members were handed over to Egyptian authorities. The lawmaker inquired about the names of the members in the cell, verdicts passed against them in Egypt and their confessions in Kuwait. He also asked about the means and date of their entry into Kuwait and where they had been at the time of arrest.

He also asked the minister about the nature of employment of the members, their sponsors and any other details related to their residence permit in the country. Kuwait said yesterday it handed the members of the network to Egyptian authorities just a few days after arresting them. The interior ministry had said on Friday the eight Egyptians belonged to a "terrorist" cell linked to the Brotherhood. They had fled to Kuwait after being sentenced by Egyptian authorities to jail terms of up to 15 years, it said.

Kuwait has not specified the circumstances of their sentencing, and there has been no official comment on the case from Egyptian judicial authorities either. The men were returned under the terms of bilateral agreements, KUNA quoted a

senior foreign ministry official as saying late on Sunday. The interior ministry said investigations are ongoing to discover other cell members.

Later yesterday, the government praised interior ministry personnel for apprehending the terrorist cell. Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet about the circumstances that contributed to the discovery of the cell, the government said in a statement following its weekly meeting chaired by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He said the cell members confessed they carried out terrorist operations in Egypt and attempted to undermine security in different parts of Egypt. Sheikh Khaled said investigations are ongoing to learn who was covering and cooperating with this cell.

Egypt banned the group in 2013 after late Muslim Brotherhood President Mohamed Morsi, the first democratically elected head of state in Egypt's modern history, was toppled by the military following widespread unrest. Since then, Egyptian authorities have arrested tens of thousands of political opponents, many of them Islamists, according to human rights organizations. The Brotherhood says it publicly renounced violence decades ago and pursues an Islamist political vision using peaceful means.

News in brief

Trucks to pay to use causeway

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) said yesterday that truck drivers will start paying fees while using Sheikh Jaber Causeway from today. PART said in a press release that the fees for the transit of trucks on the bridge will be KD 1 per ton of the truck's total weight, adding that payment will be collected at entrances in Shuwaikh, Doha and Subbiya. Truckers should comply with the compulsory route to the truck weighing station to pay the transit fee through bankcards or prepaid cards, as cash payment is unacceptable. Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Boushehri said the expected revenues will be used to cover part of the cost of maintenance and operation and periodic inspection and supervision. — KUNA

Housing loan for women hiked

KUWAIT: The Cabinet has amended the conditions under which women are given housing loans, said a minister yesterday, describing the measure as an effort to establish gender parity in the state. As per the new changes, Kuwaiti divorced women and widows are now entitled to housing loans worth KD 35,000, said Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr Jenan Boushehri. On previous housing loan figures, she said women received no more than KD 30,000 for private residences and a maximum of KD 25,000 for government-owned properties. The minister said the new law also entails changes to ensure expedited and complete divorce proceedings for women in a bid to ensure stability in their lives. — KUNA

Erdogan hails S-400 deal on coup 'versary

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday hailed the controversial delivery of a Russian missile defense system despite the threat of US sanctions, as Turkey marked the third anniversary of a bloody coup attempt. Just days before the anniversary, the first batch of the Russian S-400 defense system was delivered to Turkey despite repeated US calls for them to cancel the deal or face punishment. "We have

begun to receive our S-400s. Some said, 'they cannot buy them'... God willing the final part of this (delivery) will be in April 2020," Erdogan told a crowd of several thousand in Ankara.

The anniversary comes at a difficult moment for Erdogan. He faces a weakened economy, worsening relations with NATO ally the United States over the S-400 purchase, and a humiliating loss for his party in the recent Istanbul local election. In 2016, nearly 250 people were killed - excluding the coup-plotters - and more than 2,000 injured after a rogue military faction tried to wrest power from the president. Thousands took to the streets in response to Erdogan's call to defeat the uprising.

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ISTANBUL: People wave Turkish flags at the Ataturk International Airport yesterday. — AFP

Trump steps up attacks on congresswomen

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump stepped up his attacks on four progressive Democratic congresswomen yesterday, saying if they're not happy in the United States, "they can leave". "All they do is complain," Trump told reporters gathered at the White House for a "Made in America" event. "These are people that hate our country," he added. "If you're not happy here, you can leave." Trump also accused the four Democrats, all of whom are women of color, of having "love" for US "enemies like Al-Qaeda".

Trump spoke out a day after launching xenophobic attacks on the progressive congresswomen on Twitter, saying they should "go back" to the countries they came from. He did not identify the women by name in his initial attack although yesterday he made it clear he was referring to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, who is of Puerto Rican origin, and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, who is of Somali origin.

The attacks also appeared to target Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, the first Palestinian-American woman elected to Congress, and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, who is African-American. Ocasio-Cortez, Tlaib and Pressley were all born in the United States while Omar came to the United States from war-torn Somalia when she was a child.

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WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump waves after signing an executive order during the 3rd annual Made in America product showcase on the South Lawn of the White House yesterday. — AFP

President: Drug gangs behind Lanka bombings

COLOMBO: International drug syndicates orchestrated Sri Lanka's deadly Easter Sunday bombings, the country's leader claimed yesterday, despite earlier blaming the attacks on Islamists. The statement comes amid a nationwide narcotics crackdown, with President Maithripala Sirisena aiming to reintroduce capital punishment for drug offences.

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Weapons souq thrives in Taz

TAEZ, Yemen: Once overflowing with handicrafts, the old Al-Shinayni market in Yemen's third city of Taz is now bursting with Kalashnikovs and bullets as traders scramble to scratch out a living in the war-ravaged country. Yemen has been plunged into a devastating war since the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels swept into the capital Sanaa in a late 2014 offensive, sparking a military intervention months later by a Saudi-led coalition.

The southwestern city of Taz is controlled by govern-

ment forces but under siege by the Houthis, who have repeatedly bombarded the city of 615,000 people. Many civilians in tribal Yemen, the Arab world's most impoverished country, carry personal arms even under normal circumstances and weapons trade is common. But the war has seen the arms market surge, and traditional trades pushed aside.

"In the past, the city's old souq (market) used to sell mainly handicraft items made by blacksmiths, potters and tailors," said merchant Abu Ali. "When the war erupted, most merchants turned to selling weapons," the tailor-turned arms trader told AFP. "Some sell (Yemen's highly popular mild narcotic leaf) qat, and others have fled. Half of the shops have shut down," he added. — AFP (See Page 21)



TAEZ, Yemen: A man displays a rocket launcher at a shop in Yemen's third city on July 13, 2019. — AFP