



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis shop at a market in Kuwait City during the second day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Guards charged with assaulting Bahrain inmates

DUBAI: Twelve prison guards in Bahrain have been charged with physically assaulting inmates, the authorities said yesterday, a rare move in the kingdom which has witnessed sporadic unrest since 2011. The Special Investigation Unit, a public prosecution commission tasked with investigating government officials and employees, said it received on April 11 complaints of

“assault” in Jaw prison south of the capital Manama. “Twelve security (personnel), including two officers, were charged (with assault) and transferred to court,” the commission said after investigating the allegations. It said the court will hold its first hearing on May 20. In a separate incident, a security guard this year was sentenced to six months in jail after being charged with

assault, the commission said, without disclosing the date of his arrest.

It said it had received 29 complaints of “torture, mistreatment, and use of excessive force” in the first four months of this year, adding that 67 security personnel were questioned. Bahrain, home to the US Navy’s Fifth Fleet, has been gripped by bouts of unrest

since 2011, when authorities cracked down on Shiite-led protests demanding political reform. Since then, hundreds of protesters have been jailed and those convicted of terrorism offences have been stripped of their nationality. Bahrain accuses Iran of inciting protests among its Shiite citizens. Tehran denies the accusation. — AFP

## US: Iran planning imminent attack...

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from the “aggressor” United States, which deposed Iran’s arch-enemy Saddam Hussein in a 2003 invasion. Pompeo, whose trip to Iraq is his second this year, said he spoke at length about Iran’s influence with Shiite militias.

“We’ve urged the Iraqi government for its own security to get all of those forces under Iraqi central control,” Pompeo said. “In each of those meetings, those two leaders promised that that was their objective, too, they were moving towards that goal,” he said. In Iraq, a debate has been raging in recent months over the fate of some 5,200 US troops stationed across the country. Their presence angers the Hashed al-Shaabi, a paramilitary force that is dominated by pro-Iran factions which played a key role alongside government forces in the fight against IS.

In a press conference a few hours before Pompeo’s arrival, Abdel Mahdi said Iraq would not accept any attack on foreign troops on its land. “Iraq really is taking the responsibility to avoid any attack on any of our friends here, coalition forces or any of our friends here,” he told reporters. “This is an obligation that Iraq would honor, (and) not accept any attack on anyone—whether Iraqi, foreigner, whether it’s

an embassy or a company or a military mission,” he said.

The Trump administration has imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran, including trying to stop all exports of its oil, although it has issued a waiver for energy-starved Iraq to keep buying power from its neighbor. Iranian media have said that Rouhani will announce retaliatory measures on Wednesday to mark the anniversary of Trump’s pullout from a 2015 nuclear accord under which Tehran drastically scaled back its sensitive work.

With the imposition of US sanctions, Iran has grown increasingly frustrated that it has not seen the fruits of the agreement, with which UN inspectors say it is complying. Pompeo had been travelling from Finland, where he had attended a meeting of the Arctic Council, to Germany, where he was due to meet both Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas later Tuesday. Germany has wide disagreements with the Trump administration and along with other European nations still supports the 2015 nuclear deal negotiated under former US president Barack Obama.

German parliamentary foreign affairs committee chair Norbert Roettgen said that “even if the reasons for the rejection are unavoidable, it unfortunately fits in with the current climate in the relationship between the two governments”. But Pompeo said that Maas was “most gracious” in a telephone call in which he told him he would scrap the visit. Pompeo, who returns to Europe for talks Wednesday in London, said he would try to reschedule his trip “as soon as we possibly could”. — AFP

## Slice of Ramadan dipped in the...

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He continued to love them and carried out his task, diligently. However, on his way back from the stream, with a pot filled to the brim with water, he usually encountered some individuals who invariably were thirsty.

Despite knowing that his aunt would berate him (often get a beating too) for fetching half-filled pots, this boy would stop and offer water to these individuals. One day, he couldn’t bear the scolding from his aunt, so he swore never to give anyone water. But on one particular day on his way back, he met a strange looking man who begged him for water. The strange man lay by the road side with an injury.

The young boy remembered his vow - never to give anyone water - but contemplated for a moment. His heart filled with mercy for the stranger and so he gave the man some water. When he got home, his aunt noticed the half-filled pot, and again poured on him - this time with even more cruelty than ever before. As she was beating this young lad, there was a knock on the door.

It was the strange wounded man - a mailman who would have died of thirst on the way if not for the boy’s mercy. Apparently, he came from town with an envelope for this very same young boy. It contained a scholarship with an additional gift of cash for the boy! You can only imagine the boy’s feelings of profound joy, deep happiness and intense gratitude which was reflected in his profession.

The boy grew up to be a famous orator and he always opened his lectures talking about his childhood experi-

ence because he realized that it was God who had put him in the “mailman’s way” and it was God who had placed mercy in his heart for others. With mercy comes a heart filled with compassion & love for the giver and the beneficiary. It is rightly said that where there is mercy, there is life. Your everyday good deeds, however small, are never in vain for they shall return to you when least expected.

Some questions as food for thought - will I become less of a person if I smile at and pray for the less fortunate, the needy and those whose paychecks are not as heavy as mine? Will I be termed a weak person if I forgive those who have hurt me - be it strangers or loved ones? Will I lose my wealth if I practice some charity and give alms? Will I lose my health if I practice forbearance and tolerance with everyone around me - at home and at work? Practice does make perfect! Make it your resolution to subscribe to just one of these adjectives and you will reap benefits galore.

My experience has taught me that mercy begins by opening oneself to those with whom one might strongly disagree. Mercy doesn’t end there, of course. It may begin with small acts of understanding, but can lead to life-changing experiences of love, peace & tolerance. And this ode is for those sisters and brothers who have Shakespeare on their bookshelf: The quality of mercy is not strain’d. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven: Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes. Shakespeare’s ‘The Merchant of Venice’

*Courtesy of the TIES Center: the TIES Center aims at empower Kuwait’s expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and inter-faith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, you can contact TIES at Tel: 25231015/6; Hotline: 94079777; e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.*

democratic practices while grilling the minister.

In the meantime, Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem said yesterday that he has received a motion signed by a number of MPs calling to convene a special session on Sunday to debate a general amnesty draft law. Ghanem said he will call for the session and inform the government to attend. The government’s attendance is essential to hold the session in addition to the required quorum. Sources expected that the government will not attend the meeting and therefore is unlikely to take place.

## World gets first glimpse of UK’s...

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The couple revealed Queen Elizabeth’s husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, had got a sneak preview in a chance encounter in the corridors of Windsor Castle. “We just bumped into the Duke as we were walking by, which was so nice,” said Meghan. “It’ll be a nice moment to introduce the baby to more family.” Prince Charles, on a visit to Germany on Tuesday, said he was “obviously delighted” and “impatient” to see his fourth grandchild.

The heir to the British throne, speaking in German, said he would see the baby “in the coming days when things are calmer”. Crowds have gathered outside Windsor Castle, west of London, all week to wish them well. It was a rare piece of good news for a nation consumed by the protracted Brexit drama. And it has given people a chance to celebrate royal traditions — this time with a young American twist.

Former US TV star Meghan has created a fresh buzz around the century-old House of Windsor. Some fans have also been intrigued by her heritage. “I want to see how he’ll look. As Meghan is mixed race, I’m curious”, said Zahra Kibue, 34, who lived in Kenya before moving to England a few years ago. Meghan

has also made waves with her modernizing ways. She raised eyebrows by closing her own car door - a task usually performed by aides - and has ignored tradition by keeping the birth private and well away from the prying media’s eyes.

Most UK media assumed that Meghan had opted for a home birth, but The Daily Mail reported that those plans were “dashed as she was secretly whisked to a London hospital on Sunday by Harry and his Scotland Yard security team”. The Sun, a competing tabloid, said Meghan ended up being secretly rushed to a £15,000-a-night (\$20,000, 17,500-euro) London hospital before giving birth “at exactly sunrise”.

British bookmakers will be pleased that the suspense remains around what the new arrival will be called, after a busy few months of betting on the name. “It’s been crazy,” Amy Jones, a spokeswoman for Paddy Power bookmakers said. “Now that the baby has arrived, everyone is backing the name Alexander.” UK royal names are normally chosen from a relatively restricted pool of those used by past kings and queens.

But Meghan and Harry are anything but normal royals. “Meghan Markle and Prince Harry to choose UNUSUAL name for baby that UNIFIES the US and UK.” The Daily Express wrote, sparking a wild guessing game on Twitter filled with puns and jokes. Perhaps only half in jest, bookies were offering 250-1 odds on the boy being named Donald, in honour of US President Trump. Although the couple received congratulations from former US first lady Michelle Obama, the White House remained silent. — AFP

## Tehran rolls back nuclear...

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industries from US sanctions. “If the five countries came to the negotiating table and we reached an agreement, and if they could protect our interests in the oil and banking sectors, we will go back to square one,” Rouhani said in a televised address.

“The Iranian people and the world should know that today is not the end of the JCPOA,” he said, using the acronym for the nuclear deal. “These are actions in line with the JCPOA.” The 2015 accord was signed between Iran, Russia, China, Britain, France, Germany and the United States, before President Donald Trump took office. Iran agreed to limits on its nuclear program in return for the lifting of sanctions. Washington’s European allies opposed Trump’s decision to pull out and have tried, so far in vain, to find ways to blunt the economic impact of new US sanctions.

France and Germany both said they wanted to keep the deal alive, and warned Iran not to violate it. The Kremlin accused Washington of provoking Iran’s move. Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said President Vladimir Putin had predicted consequences from the “unthought-out steps” of US withdrawal. “Now we are seeing those consequences.” China said the agreement should continue to be implemented and called on all sides to avoid an escalation of tensions.

Nuclear arms control experts said Iran’s steps announced yesterday appeared tailored to avoid triggering renewed sanctions under a “snapback” mechanism in the 2015 accord. Mark Fitzpatrick, an associate fellow of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said Iran was not yet close to exceeding its allowed stockpile limit of low-enriched uranium, and its heavy water stockpile was a comparatively minor issue.

“Enriching (uranium) to 20 percent would surely spark sanctions, so I expect in 60 days there will be various ‘technical’ reasons why it can’t be done right away,” he said of Rouhani’s threat to exceed the enrichment purity limit to levels farther along the road toward

high-enriched, bomb-grade uranium. The weeks leading up to the anniversary of Trump’s withdrawal from the agreement have seen a sharp tightening of US sanctions and an increase in tensions on other fronts.

From this month, Washington has effectively ordered countries worldwide to stop buying Iranian oil or face sanctions of their own. The Trump administration has revoked waivers that had allowed some countries to continue buying Iranian oil and it aims to reduce Iranian crude exports to zero. Washington has also blacklisted Iran’s Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist group. Iran responded with threats to close the Gulf’s Strait of Hormuz - the conduit for about a third of the world’s seaborne oil exports - if its ships were blocked there.

Washington announced the deployment of an aircraft carrier to the Gulf to counter what it says are Iranian threats. Tehran says the USS Abraham Lincoln is merely replacing another carrier under a scheduled rotation, and calls the announcement old news. The looming total ban on oil sales is likely to sharply increase the economic hardship for Iran’s 80 million people. Finding a response is the biggest test yet for Rouhani, a pragmatist who has faced strong opposition from hardliners.

The nuclear deal was his flagship policy to end Iran’s isolation and open up its economy to the world. Ultimate authority in Iran lies with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, a cleric in power since 1989, who signed off on the nuclear deal but remains close to the hardline faction challenging Rouhani. Washington’s European allies say Trump’s repudiation of the deal weakens the pragmatic wing of Iran’s leadership and plays into the hands of hardliners. It means ordinary Iranians see no economic benefits from Rouhani’s efforts to open the country.

The Trump administration argues that the deal, negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama, was flawed because it is not permanent, does not address Iran’s missile program and does not punish Iran for meddling in the affairs of other countries. Trump’s hard line is backed by Israel and Washington’s Gulf Arab allies, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which see Iran as a foe and which gain leverage over global oil prices by keeping Iranian crude off the market. — Reuters

## Kuwait Information Minister survives...

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Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri. His Highness the Amir hailed the minister’s distinguished performance in response to the recent interpellation at parliament. His Highness also lauded MPs’ respected and sophisticated