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# Visit-to-work visa transfers allowed, fees unchanged

## MoI issues new residency bylaws • First convicted ex-MP returns to Kuwait

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday issued new residency bylaws allowing visit visas to be transferred to residency visas in many cases. There were only minor changes to other residency rules and regulations, especially with regards to fees. The new regulations, which explain how the residency law should be implemented, became effective as of Monday after their publication in the official gazette Kuwait Al-Youm.

Visit visas may be transferred to residency visas for the following categories: Subject to the residency affairs' director's decision, visitors of ministries and public authorities (with government visit visas) holding university degrees; domestic helpers; dependents arriving on family or tourist visit visas; holders of valid residencies who do not exceed six months out of Kuwait and have to enter with a visit visa; those who enter for work and start procedures to get residency, but have to

leave for a maximum of one month; cases subject to the residency affairs directorate's judgment.

Contrary to reports published repeatedly in the local press about plans to sharply raise almost all residency charges, the new rules included no major changes to residency fees, while dependent residency rules and others remain unchanged. The only change was introducing a KD 3 fee for obtaining a visa on arrival, which used to be offered free of charge for some nationalities. Residence and renewal fees remain at KD 10 per person per year.

Dependent residency fees for spouses and children remain at KD 10 per person annually, while the regulations allow the residency department to grant relatives other than the wife and children a dependent visa against a KD 200 charge yearly. This includes parents. The regulations set a minimum of KD 500 in monthly salary for those who can bring their families from abroad on dependent visas, while they give the director of the department to exempt couples already living here from the salary condition. The regulations also

exempt a large number of professions from the salary conditions. These include judges, doctors, engineers, teachers, journalists and many others.

The new bylaws introduce a tourist visa allowing tourists to stay in Kuwait for up to three months, and a multiple entry visa valid for one year for just KD 1 for each month. Foreigners whose residence is cancelled and those who resign are given up to three months of temporary residency to leave.

In another development, former Islamist opposition MP Fahd Al-Khanna, who had been living abroad to avoid a three-year jail term, returned to the country yesterday after spending around one and a half years in Turkey. It was also reported that several other former opposition MPs and activists were returning to Kuwait after fleeing for the same reason.

The new development comes following reports that a general amnesty is expected to be issued to pardon the activists and dozens of other opposition members who are serving jail terms for either taking part in protests or

writing tweets deemed offensive to HH the Amir.

Former opposition MP Ahmad Al-Shuraian said yesterday that a large number of nationalist figures have signed a memorandum addressed to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, appealing to him to issue a general pardon for jailed opposition figures and others. He said that he has repeatedly approached officials of the Amiri Diwan to arrange to deliver the petition but his attempts have been unsuccessful. Accordingly, Shuraian said the petition will be published in order to reach HH the Amir, adding that he is confident it will be in safe hands.

The former opposition figures were handed jail terms in the summer of last year, but they left the country before the verdicts were issued to avoid being jailed. Under Kuwaiti law, they will have to give themselves up to authorities as soon as they return. Their only solution is a pardon by HH the Amir or a general amnesty law by the National Assembly, which should be approved by the government.

### News in brief

#### Pentagon chief meets Saudi king



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz meets US Defense Secretary Mark Esper yesterday. — AFP

RIYADH: US Defense Secretary Mark Esper discussed "strategic cooperation" with Saudi King Salman yesterday, shortly after Washington ordered thousands of soldiers to the kingdom as tensions fester with Iran. The meeting in Riyadh, where Esper arrived late Monday after an unannounced visit to Afghanistan, also took in defense issues and the current situation in the region, the official SPA news agency said. — AFP

#### Qatar to expand airport

DOHA: Qatar announced yesterday a major expansion of its Hamad international airport, almost doubling the number of visitors it can receive as the Gulf state prepares to host the 2022 World Cup. "The expansion... is a vital part of the future success of the Qatar Airways group, and of course of the country's preparations to host the 2022 World Cup and beyond," said the carrier's CEO Akbar Al-Baker. — AFP (See Page 11)



Akbar Al-Baker

#### Trump sends \$4.5m to White Helmets

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has authorized \$4.5 million in aid for Syria's White Helmets group, famed for rescuing wounded civilians from the frontlines in the civil war, the White House said yesterday. Trump ordered the funds for what is formally known as the Syria Civil Defense group "to continue United States support for the organization's important and highly valued work in the country," spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said in a statement. — AFP

#### I Coast tourism attracts \$5bn

ABIDJAN: Ivory Coast announced yesterday that Arab investors had pledged \$5 billion to support its program to attract foreign tourists to the West African nation. The tourism ministry said "a round table of investors in Dubai" on Sunday and Monday expressed interest in Ivory Coast and in total, the minister for tourism and leisure, Siandou Fofana, "enlisted from them pledges worth just over \$5 billion". — AFP

## Erdogan hails agreement with Putin over Syria

SOCHI, Russia: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hailed "a historic agreement" with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin after hours of talks between the two leaders over the conflict in Syria. "According to this agreement, Turkey and Russia will not allow any separatist agenda on Syrian territory," Erdogan said, addressing reporters alongside Putin after the talks in the Russian city of Sochi.

Erdogan also announced a 150-hour deadline beginning today for Syrian Kurdish YPG fighters and their weapons

to be moved back 30 km from the Turkish border. "Within 150 hours starting at 1200 noon on October 23, YPG terrorists and their weapons will be removed to the depth of 30 kilometers and their ... positions will be destroyed," Erdogan said.

He added that after the deadline, Turkish and Russian joint patrols would start in two zones stretching 10 km to the east and west of the area of Turkey's current Operation Peace Spring. "All YPG terrorists in Tal Firat and Manbij will be removed outside this region, together with their weaponry," he said. Erdogan also said both countries would take necessary measures against "terrorist infiltrations" and create a "joint mechanism" to coordinate the agreement.

Meanwhile, the commander of Kurdish led-SDF fighters has informed the United States that it has carried out all of its

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SOCHI: Russian President Vladimir Putin meets his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday. — AFP

## Hezbollah under rare street pressure

BEIRUT: When mass anti-government protests engulfed Lebanon, a taboo was broken as strongholds of the Shiite Hezbollah movement saw rare demonstrations criticizing the party and revered leader Hassan Nasrallah. On live TV and in protest sites, citizens accused the party of providing political cover for a corrupt government that they say has robbed people of their livelihoods.

This shattered the myth of absolute acquiescence among Hezbollah's popular

base, baffling even those who hail from the movement's strongholds. "No one ever expected that in any of these areas in south Lebanon we would hear a single word against Nasrallah," or Amal Movement leader Nabih Berri, said Sara, a 32-year-old activist who participated in protests in the southern city of Nabatiyeh. "It's unbelievable," the activist added, asking to use a pseudonym due to security concerns.

The popular Iran-backed movement is a major political player that took 13 seats in the country's May 2018 parliamentary elections and secured three cabinet posts. It is the only political party not to have disarmed after Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, and helped its Christian ally Michel Aoun assume the presidency in 2016.

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BEIRUT: A Lebanese protester walks with her national flag during demonstrations yesterday. — AFP

## Trudeau needs help to form government

OTTAWA: A weakened Prime Minister Justin Trudeau set out yesterday to secure the support of smaller parties he will need to form a government after winning Canada's nail-biter election but falling short of a majority. Trudeau's Liberals took 157 seats in the 338-member House of Commons, down from a comfortable majority of 177 in the last one, official results showed. Trudeau will thus have to seek some kind of accommodation with the Bloc Quebecois or the New Democratic Party.

Before launching talks with these parties Trudeau greeted people at a subway station in Montreal and posed smiling for selfies. Trudeau received congratulations Monday evening from US President Donald Trump and yesterday from European Council president Donald Tusk. "From coast to coast to coast, tonight Canadians rejected division and negativity," Trudeau said in his victory speech Monday night. "And they rejected cuts and austerity and voted in favor of a progressive agenda and strong action on climate change."

Even though he came out weakened, Trudeau did



MONTREAL: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau celebrates his victory with his supporters at the Palais des Congres on Monday. — AFP

better than expected. Up until election day polls had him neck and neck with Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer.

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## Hover-taxi whizzes over S'pore; firm eyes Asian push

SINGAPORE: A drone-like flying taxi whirred over Singapore's waterfront yesterday, with the firm behind the test hoping the aircraft will revolutionize travel in traffic-choked Asian cities. The 18 propeller vehicle, developed by German firm Volocopter and with a pilot onboard during the test flight, took off from a promontory and flew for about two minutes and 30 seconds around the Marina Bay district. Heavy rains in the morning almost delayed the flight, but the skies cleared in time for the battery-operated, two-seater taxi to quietly fly past skyscrapers.

While the hover-taxis - resembling small helicopters but powered by drone-like technology - can fly autonomously, there was a pilot aboard during the test for safety reasons. Volocopter has already tested the aircraft in Dubai, Helsinki, Germany and Las Vegas but the Singapore trial is the first in the heart of a city. The orderly metropolis is likely to be among the first to get the service, with a commercial rollout expected in two

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