



**4** Candidates claim Kuwait held 'hostage' by corrupt forces



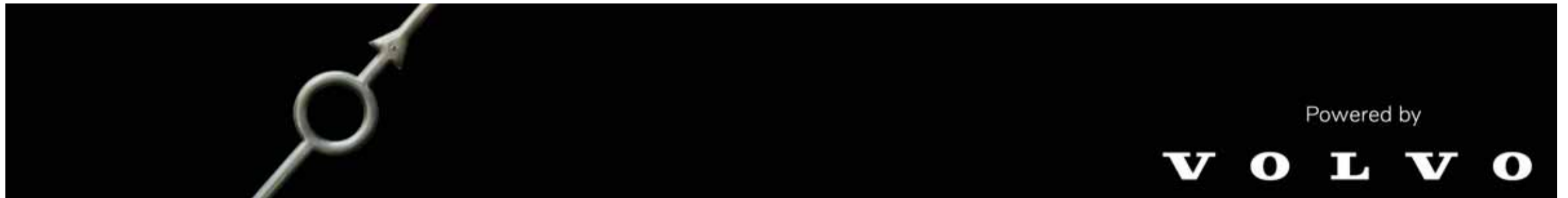
**8** Kuwait commissions state's largest crude distillation unit



**13** Mysterious obelisk in US desert draws wild theories



**15** Domestic workers take HK cricket by storm



# FM underlines significance of Kuwait-US strategic dialogue

## Pompeo hails Kuwait as a key strategic partner of US in Middle East



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah speak to the media prior to meeting at the State Department on Tuesday. — AFP

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Foreign Minister and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah held talks with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Tuesday. The meeting was held during the official visit of the Kuwaiti minister to Washington to lead Kuwait's delegation participating in the fourth session of the Kuwaiti-US strategic dialogue meeting held between Nov 9 and 24, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

During the meeting, the officials reviewed firm and close relations between both friendly countries and reiterated deep and distinguished bonds, while showing joint willingness to develop and promote them for the common interest of both countries and their friendly people, the ministry added. They also tackled the latest regional and international developments, the ministry said, noting that a joint press conference was held following official talks.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Americas Affairs Minister Plenipotentiary Hamad Al-Mashaan and Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Foreign Minister's Office Ahmad Al-Shuraim were present at the meeting.

During the joint press conference with Pompeo, Sheikh Ahmad stressed the significance of Kuwaiti-US strategic dialogue. He voiced the appreciation of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti government and people for the medical

plane and healthcare the US provided for HH the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He also commended US President Donald Trump for granting the late Amir the country's highest military rank, along with relentless US commitment towards Kuwaiti and regional security and bilateral cooperation.

The Kuwaiti minister said next year will see two watershed events - the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait and the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and the US. "Over the last four years, we have seen progress in all fields and sectors, and six working groups have made much progress in our bilateral relations in the fields of defense, security, economy, education health and human rights," he said. He underscored the importance of promoting cooperation between both countries in various realms and sectors amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pompeo hailed Kuwait as a key strategic partner of the US in the Middle East, praising HH the late Amir for making this relationship closer. He said the US administration works hard to bolster historical bonds between both countries. Pompeo added he and the Kuwaiti foreign minister had signed a memo of understanding for boosting cooperation in the areas of biomedical research and information exchange. The US official emphasized that Kuwait and the US are working together to fight today's challenges, including the fight against the so-called Islamic State. — KUNA

### News in brief

#### 8,000 births unregistered

**KUWAIT:** Informed security sources said more than 8,000 expat children have no records at the interior ministry because their parents did not register them after birth. They added the interior ministry plans to set up a direct computerized link with the health ministry to immediately register births at government or private hospitals in the interior ministry database. — Al-Rai

#### UAE visa ban on 13 states

**DUBAI:** The UAE has stopped issuing new employment and visit visas to citizens of 13 mostly Muslim-majority countries, according to a document issued by a state-owned business park. The document said applications had been suspended for nationals of Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen. — Reuters

#### Blast hits tanker in Saudi port

**ATHENS:** An explosion occurred on a Greek tanker in the Saudi Arabia port of Al Shuqaiq, but no one was injured in the blast and the causes were still not clear, the Greek ministry of the merchant marine said yesterday. — AFP

#### Sanitary products free in Scotland

**LONDON:** Scotland on Tuesday made sanitary products free to all women, becoming the first nation in the world to take such a step against "period poverty". The measure makes tampons and sanitary pads available at designated public places. — Reuters

#### Iran in prisoner swap

**TEHRAN:** Iran has exchanged a jailed British-Australian academic, Kylie Moore-Gilbert, with three Iranians who had been detained abroad, Iran's state broadcaster IRIB reported yesterday. It said an Iranian businessman and two Iranian citizens who had been held abroad "on baseless charges" had been exchanged. — Reuters

## Football great Maradona dies

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentine football legend Diego Maradona has died at the age of 60, his spokesman announced yesterday. Renowned along with Brazil's Pele as one of the greatest footballers of all time, the Argentine World Cup winning captain died of a heart attack, having undergone brain surgery earlier this month, a member of his entourage told AFP.

President Alberto Fernandez immediately announced three days of national mourning in the South American country. Shortly before the announcement that shocked a nation, Argentine media reported Maradona had suffered a serious health setback yesterday and was being treated by doctors at his home north of Buenos Aires.

## Biden presents policy team

**WILMINGTON:** US President-elect Joe Biden on Tuesday introduced a slate of veteran diplomats and policy-makers who will make up his national security and foreign policy team, saying: "America is back, ready to lead the world." Biden, 78, presented his picks for secretary of state, national security advisor, homeland security secretary, intelligence chief, UN ambassador and climate change envoy. "These public servants will

## Omani woman juggles 500 felines at home

**MUSCAT:** More than a dozen cats and dogs vie for Maryam Al-Balushi's attention as she hands out treats on a bed in her home in Oman's capital Muscat. Despite complaints from neighbors and mounting expense, she has accumulated 480 cats and 12 dogs, describing her pets as a mood-lifter

and better companions than her fellow humans. "I find that animals, especially cats and dogs, are more faithful than humans," she said as cats jumped on and off a nearby scratching pole.

Orphaned at a young age, Balushi has grown her menagerie over the past decade, identifying with her furry friends, many of which were rescued from hard lives on the street. Balushi spends about \$7,800 monthly to care for the creatures, 17 of which are blind, diligently feeding and cleaning them as well as taking them to the veterinarian for medical attention. — AFP (See Page 13)

restore America's global leadership and moral leadership," Biden said as the six men and women stood behind him wearing face-masks.

Biden said that after he is inaugurated on January 20 and Donald Trump leaves the White House, the United States will "once again sit at the head of the table, ready to confront our adversaries and not reject our allies". "It is a team that reflects the fact that America is back, ready to lead the world, not retreat from it," he said in a jab at President Trump's go-it-alone "America First" policies.

Biden's remarks came after Trump suffered further setbacks in his efforts. **Continued on Page 2**



MEXICO CITY: In this file photo taken on May 22, 1986, Argentine football star Diego Maradona balances a ball on his head as he walks off the practice field. — AFP



WILMINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden speaks during a cabinet announcement event yesterday. — AFP



MUSCAT: Maryam Al-Balushi feeds her pets at her home on Nov 20, 2020. — AFP