



3 Deputy Amir's representative delivers letter to Qatari Amir



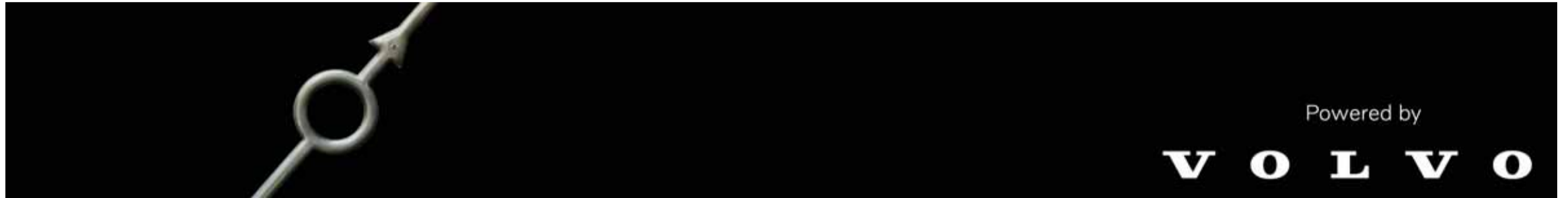
6 Anwar says has backing to form govt, PM stands firm



8 Bangladeshi weavers hanging by a thread as factories boom



16 Sports face impact of 6 more months of empty stadiums



Two leading political figures submit roadmap for reforms

Assembly session canceled over lack of quorum

Moody's downgrades Kuwait issuer rating, outlook stable

NEW YORK: Moody's Investors Service has downgraded Kuwait's long-term foreign and local currency issuer rating to A1 from Aa2 and changed the outlook to stable, concluding the review for downgrade initiated on March 30, 2020. The decision to downgrade the ratings reflects both the increase in government's liquidity risks and a weaker assessment of Kuwait's institutions and governance strength.

In the continued absence of legal authorization to issue debt or draw on the sovereign wealth fund assets held in the Future Generations Fund (FGF),

available liquid resources are nearing depletion, introducing liquidity risk despite Kuwait's extraordinary fiscal strength.

While the fractious relationship between parliament and the executive is a long-standing constraint on Moody's assessment of institutional strength, the deadlock over the government's medium-term funding strategy and the absence of any meaningful fiscal consolidation measures point to more significant deficiencies in Kuwait's legislative and executive institutions and policy effectiveness than previously assessed. (See Page 10)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Two leading political figures and former members of parliament Abdullah Al-Nafisi and Obaid Al-Wasmi yesterday met HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and submitted to him a proposed roadmap for executing comprehensive reforms in Kuwait.

The two figures said on their Twitter account that they met HH Sheikh Nawaf and handed him what they called the "Kuwait Document", which includes "five urgent and necessary measures and implementation mechanisms". They did not elaborate on the content of the five measures but said they sought the opinion of HH the Deputy Amir on the document before they reveal it for public debate.

But social media activists and news services said the document calls for

comprehensive political, parliamentary and economic reforms in Kuwait. It calls for forming a national salvation government to run the country, agree on a new election system and reform the judicial system, in addition to the economy. The document also calls for a political compromise and a general amnesty for political activists.

Nafisi, a veteran opposition politician and a highly respected analyst, was a member of parliament in the 1980s. Wasmi, a leading opposition figure and a professor of international law, was a member of parliament in the 2012 Assembly which was annulled by a court verdict. The two figures have recently been vocal in criticizing developments in Kuwait and have been very critical of a series of corruption scandals.

The move comes just two months before crucial general elections that are

expected to be held late in November amid calls to change the electoral system based on the single vote, which has been blamed for the political dilemma in the country. The meeting also comes after HH Sheikh Nawaf held a meeting with Ahmad Al-Khatib and Ahmad Al-Saadoun - highly-respected veteran opposition politicians - to discuss domestic politics. Also, a group of intellectuals and activists issued a statement in the past few days calling for wide-ranging reforms, fighting corruption and pardoning activists jailed for expressing political opinions.

The Assembly session scheduled yesterday was not held for a lack of quorum. This was supposed to have been the last regular session of the current Assembly, whose four-year term is expected to close next week following voting on a non-cooperation motion against the prime minister.

News in brief

Israeli plane flies to Bahrain

DUBAI/JERUSALEM: Israeli carrier Israir operated a flight from Tel Aviv to Bahrain yesterday, flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 showed. Israeli media reported an Israeli government delegation was onboard the flight. Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday discussed by phone the agreement to establish formal ties, state news agency BNA said. — Reuters

Record daily cases in UAE

DUBAI: The UAE yesterday reported its highest daily number of coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic at 1,083 new cases. The Gulf state has been scaling up the number of tests carried out daily and said 103,199 tests for the virus had been carried out on Tuesday in the country of around 9.9 million people. — AFP

Iran cries 'victory' over Trump

TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani yesterday declared "victory" over the United States after the UN Security Council rejected the Trump administration's bid to reimpose UN sanctions on the Islamic republic. "The Iranian nation has achieved great political, legal and diplomatic success at the United Nations," Rouhani told a televised weekly meeting of his cabinet. — AFP

Pentagon vows to help Israel

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Mark Esper pledged Tuesday to help maintain Israel's military superiority in the Middle East, amid its concerns over a possible US sale of F-35 fighters to the United Arab Emirates. "A cornerstone of our defense relationship is preserving Israel's qualitative military edge in the region," Esper said. — AFP

ISS moves to avoid debris

WASHINGTON: Astronauts on the International Space Station carried out an "avoidance maneuver" Tuesday to ensure they would not be hit by a piece of debris, said US space agency NASA, urging better management of objects in Earth's orbit. — AFP

Saudi Arabia to resume umrah from October 4

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will gradually resume the year-round umrah pilgrimage for Muslims from Oct 4, the interior ministry said Tuesday, seven months after it was suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic. The kingdom had suspended the umrah in March and later scaled back the annual hajj in a blow to millions of pilgrims around the world amid fears that the coronavirus could spread to Islam's holiest sites.

In the first stage, "6,000 citizens and residents within the kingdom will be allowed to perform the umrah per day from October 4", the ministry said in a statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency. Visitors from outside the kingdom will be permitted from Nov 1, when umrah's capacity will be raised to 20,000 pilgrims per day, the ministry added.

The umrah, which refers to the Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah that can be undertaken at any time

Continued on Page 2



MAKKAH: In this file photo taken on June 14, 2018, worshippers and pilgrims gather at the Grand Mosque. — AFP

Airlines look to tests that give instant results

ZURICH/MILAN: European airlines are pinning hopes on pre-flight COVID-19 tests that deliver results as fast as pregnancy tests to help restore passengers' confidence in taking to the skies in

confined spaces with shared air. Germany's Lufthansa, at the mercy of government bailouts for survival, is in talks with Swiss drugmaker Roche over deploying so-called antigen tests, according to two people familiar with the discussions, as the airline aims to make them available next month.

Italian operator Alitalia, meanwhile, told Reuters that from yesterday it would add two flights from Milan to Rome, to the two it is already offering from Rome to Milan, exclusively for passengers with negative tests. The tests are administered by health authorities at the airports and included in

ticket prices. If they prove popular and safe, these antigen-tested flights will be expanded to more domestic, and later international, routes, the airline said.

Unlike laboratory-based molecular tests that have been the staple of health authorities in the pandemic, antigen tests do not require machines to process. Much like pregnancy tests, they can produce results in about 15 minutes. However the tests require an uncomfortable nasal swab and are not as

Continued on Page 2

380 whales die in mass stranding

MACQUARIE HARBOR, Australia: At least 380 whales have died in a mass stranding in southern Australia, officials said yesterday, as hopes faded of saving more than a few dozen of those creatures still trapped. Nearly the entire pod of 460 long-finned pilot whales stuck in Macquarie Harbor - on the rugged and sparsely populated west coast of Tasmania -

has now perished.

"We can confirm that 380 whales are dead," Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service manager Nic Deka said, describing the three-day rescue effort as emotionally and physically taxing. "There's around 30 left still alive, but the good news is that we have saved 50," he said. It is believed to be the largest mass stranding ever recorded in Australia, and is among the largest anywhere in the world.

The first of the giant mammals were discovered floundering on Monday, sparking a major effort to free them from sandbars and beaches only accessible by boat.

Continued on Page 2



MACQUARIE HARBOR: A handout photo taken on Tuesday shows people helping a whale on the rugged west coast of Tasmania. — AFP