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Up to 200 women expected to join Kuwait armed forces

Registrations begin in December • Women exempt from living on military bases



KUWAIT: Defense ministry officials hold a press conference at the ministry yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti women will be able to register for military service from December, with 150 to 200 female volunteers expected to enlist. They are also exempt from living on military bases. This was announced during a press conference held yesterday at the ministry of defense, after the decision to allow women to serve in the army was criticized by some MPs and Islamists.

The decision was based on a previous study that was activated by ministry decree 657/2021, based on law 32/1967. According to this decision, women can join military service with ranks of specialty officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers. They will work in medical, paramedical and technical fields, according to the army's needs.

At yesterday's press conference, the ministry clarified the conditions for registration and the fields in which women will serve. Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Maj Gen Khaled Al-Kandari, explained that the conditions for women who volunteer to join the military are the same as those for men.

"Applicants will have to register online, and will receive a text message or email with the documents required, followed by the admission process, technical and medical checkups and personal interviews.

We expect training courses to start at the beginning of next year," Kandari said, adding female volunteers will not stay overnight in camps.

"Lectures and training will differ depending on the field selected. The courses are similar to those for males, excluding those that do not conform with the nature of women. Also, special training that requires female teachers will be provided by female teachers and trainers to respect religious sentiments and our traditions," added Kandari.

The main goal of this decision is to allow female employees of the ministry of defense to join the army as volunteers. All Kuwaiti women can volunteer to work in the army in certain specializations. These female officers will get the same financial benefits as male officers. Shortages in some fields was behind the decision to allow women to join the army.

"There are some fields in which women are necessary, such as medical and paramedical fields. Also, women inspectors are needed to work as Amiri guards at palaces and personal guards for delegations of women visiting Kuwait. In addition, they are important in the technical, engineering, electronics, air force, air defense and administrative fields as well," highlighted Kandari.

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News in brief

Cabinet defers return to normalcy

KUWAIT: Despite sources in the Cabinet earlier yesterday revealing that ministers had decided to end social distancing in mosques, scrap a ban on weddings and social gatherings, end mask mandates in open spaces, open the airport to all flights and issue visas to all nationalities, the Cabinet decided to wait until its next meeting before making a decision on returning to normal life.

Hezbollah has 100,000 fighters

BEIRUT: The head of Lebanon's Hezbollah said yesterday that his Iran-backed movement had 100,000 "trained" and "armed" fighters at its disposal, speaking after deadly violence in Beirut last week. Hassan Nasrallah accused the Lebanese Forces party of being behind the killing of seven members of his movement and ally Amal at a rally on Thursday, and warned it against sparking any "civil war". — AFP

150 Houthis killed in strikes

MARIB, Yemen: The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said yesterday it had killed 150 Houthi rebels near Marib, as fierce fighting raged for the strategic city in a war that has lasted seven years. Air strikes "destroyed 13 military vehicles and killed 150 terrorist elements" in Abdiya within the past 24 hours, the coalition said in a statement. In a televised speech yesterday, rebel leader Abdelmalek Al-Houthi called for continued fighting. — AFP

Investors launch Fly Aqaba

AMMAN: Jordan announced Sunday the signing of an accord to launch an airline financed by investors in the kingdom and Saudi Arabia to serve the Red Sea resort area of Aqaba. The new airline, Fly Aqaba, was set up with \$20 million in private sector investment, said Nayef Bakhit, president of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone. — AFP

Residents face loss of driving licenses under new rules

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Authorities in Kuwait are planning to withdraw driving licenses of expatriates whose employment designation changed when they changed jobs. Residents may be required to hand over their driving licenses upon renewal of their

residencies as a condition for renewal. If their new job/role doesn't meet the requirements for the license, they will lose it.

The interior ministry however didn't specify when the new regulations will be issued or enforced. The plan hasn't been finalized yet and the legal mechanism to withdraw licenses still needs final approval. But the plan could result in thousands, if not tens of thousands, of foreigners losing the right to drive in Kuwait. The interior ministry announced last week that new regulations would be issued that allows the government to even seize valid driving licenses should a resident's visa status change.

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Fire contained at Mina Ahmadi oil refinery

KUWAIT: A fire broke out yesterday at Kuwait's largest oil refinery, causing several injuries but no interruptions to site operations or petrol exports. Plumes of smoke rose above the Mina Al-Ahmadi facility, around 40 km south of Kuwait City, after an explosion in the sulfur removal unit. The Kuwait National Petroleum Company, after initially

stating that there were no casualties, later tweeted that there were a number of injuries and cases of smoke inhalation among workers.

It said that those injured had received first aid at the site or been transported to a hospital and were in a "stable condition". Approximately two hours after the company reported firefighters were at the scene, it tweeted that the blaze was under "full control". Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water Mohammad Al-Fares and KPC Executive Director Hashem Hashem with company officials were immediately at the site to oversee the ground efforts and check on the safety of workers. — Agencies



KUWAIT: Oil Minister Mohammad Al-Fares coordinates with firefighters at the Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery yesterday. — AFP

Gulf War hero Colin Powell dies aged 84

WASHINGTON: Colin Powell, a US war hero and the first black secretary of state who saw his trail-blazing legacy tarnished when he made the case for war in Iraq in 2003, died yesterday from complications from COVID-19. The 84-year-old retired four-star general was fully vaccinated, his family said in a statement, making him one of the most high-profile US public figures to die of a breakthrough infection.

President Joe Biden led an outpouring of tributes from home and abroad, describing the officer-turned-statesman as a breaker of racial barriers who believed in "the promise of America" and always put country before self. "Colin embodied the highest ideals of both warrior and diplomat. He was committed to our nation's strength and security above all," said Biden, who spent decades in the Senate and worked frequently with Powell.

"Having fought in wars, he understood better than anyone that military might alone was not enough to maintain our peace and prosperity. From his front-seat view of history, advising presidents and shaping our nation's policies, Colin led with his personal commitment to the democratic values that make our country strong."

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Colin Powell