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MoE to open night schools to make up for closures

Assembly panel decides to shun foreign consultants, hire Kuwaitis instead

Qatar Amir receives Speaker

DOHA: Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani received yesterday Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and his accompanying delegation in Doha. During the meeting, Ghanem conveyed HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's greetings and best wishes to the Qatari Amir. He also congratulated the Qatari Amir on the success of the first legislative elections of the Shura Council and expressed his support for that move. Meanwhile, Qatar's Amir conveyed his sincere greetings to HH the Amir of Kuwait and affirmed the deep historical relations between Kuwait and Qatar. — KUNA



DOHA: Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani receives Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Education Ministry Undersecretary Dr Ali Al-Yaqoub said yesterday the ministry plans to compensate for school closures during the pandemic by opening night schools in November in coordination with the health ministry. Speaking on the sidelines of a forum discussing the pandemic's effect on educational performance organized by Hawally educational area, Yaqoub said the compensation plan hinges on approval from medical authorities.

Yaqoub said 34 diagnostic and analytical tests were run to find solutions and put forth policies to improve students' performance. He said the absence of students from schools for nearly a year and a half led to disparate educational levels. Therefore, plans will take into consideration each student's case in an effort to compensate the skills they have missed.

Yaqoub indicated that by the end of each month, plans are reviewed and the ministry will be working with health authorities to look into all measures, including class timings and the attendance mechanism. He affirmed that the ministry of education is committed to coordinate with health authorities,

especially on the possibility of opening night schools.

Meanwhile, the newly-elected National Assembly legal and legislative committee yesterday decided to stop dealing with expat consultants and replace them with Kuwaitis.

The decision came immediately after the panel unanimously elected leading opposition MP Obaid Al-Wasmi as its head and MP Hisham Al-Saleh as its rapporteur.

Saleh told reporters Wasmii immediately decided that the panel will no longer deal with expat consultants and will seek to replace them with Kuwaitis. Most of the Assembly committees were elected by a unanimous vote in the opening session of the new term on Tuesday, reflecting harmony in the house following national dialogue called by HH the Amir. — Agencies



Dr Ali Al-Yaqoub

News in brief

KFF Instagram account hacked

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force announced yesterday that its Instagram account has been hacked. In a press statement, KFF said work is underway to restore it. — KUNA



US issues passport with 'X' gender

WASHINGTON: The US yesterday announced its first passport with "X" for gender, a landmark step for people outside the binary male or female categories. The State Department said it had issued a first passport with "X" for gender and would make the option routinely available by early 2022 both for passports and birth certificates of Americans abroad. — AFP

Mosques vandalized in Tripura

GUWAHATI: Indian security forces guarded mosques in the northeastern state of Tripura yesterday after rightwing groups attacked Muslim targets in apparent revenge for deadly violence against Hindus in Bangladesh. Authorities banned gatherings of more than four people in parts of the state, while police have issued warnings about "provocative messages" spreading on social media. At least four mosques were vandalized and shops and homes owned by Muslims were ransacked. — AFP

Mullah Omar's son on TV

KABUL: The son of Taliban founder Mullah Omar appeared in public for the first time yesterday, as Afghanistan's hardline rulers try to polish their media image. The televised event saw Mohammad Yaqoob, Afghanistan's new defense minister, appealing to local businessmen to invest in hospitals and clinics, signaling the Taliban are emerging from the shadows. — AFP

Geagea dodges court summons

MAARAB, Lebanon: Prominent Lebanese Christian leader Samir Geagea failed to show up yesterday at a military court summons over his role in a deadly flareup earlier this month in Beirut. Simultaneously, hundreds of flag-waving supporters of the Lebanese Forces (LF) leader gathered in front of the ex-warlord's home in his mountain bastion and marched in a show of support. Geagea had warned last week he would ignore the summons if his bitter

rival, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, was not called in for questioning too.

Seven people were killed in street fighting two weeks ago, following a rally organized by Hezbollah and its allies against the judge investigating last year's deadly blast at Beirut port. Hezbollah accuses the FL of firing the first shots in the Oct 14 violence. Geagea denied any involvement and claimed that his summons had no legal grounding. The army was tasked with investigating the unrest, which took place in central Beirut and over which 18 people were detained.

Geagea is the only warlord from the 1975-1990 civil war to have served jail time, and Nasrallah the only one whose movement kept its

Continued on Page 2



MAARAB, Lebanon: Supporters of Lebanese Forces (LF) leader Samir Geagea gather in front of the ex-warlord's home in his mountain bastion in a show of support yesterday. — AFP

Sudan junta tightens grip amid pressure

KHARTOUM: Sudanese security forces launched sweeping arrests of anti-coup protesters yesterday, tightening the regime's grip while the international community ramped up punitive measures. The World Bank froze aid and the African Union suspended the East African country over this week's military takeover. Armed forces deployed in large numbers after overnight protests saw clashes in the capital Khartoum, when officers fired tear gas and arrested several leading pro-democracy activists, including from Sudan's largest political party, the Umma Party.

"Police forces have removed all the barricades since Wednesday morning and arrested all the people who stood near them," said Hady Bashir, a protester, after AFP correspondents saw security forces clear rocks and tires blocking major streets in Khartoum. Beyond the capital, protesters have stood their ground to decry the country's latest military coup, setting up blockades in Port Sudan in the east, Wad Madani to the south, and Atbara to the north.

"Sporadic protests erupt every now and then



KHARTOUM: Sudanese anti-coup protesters use bricks to barricade a street in the capital yesterday. — AFP

demanding the government's return," said Osama Ahmed, a witness from Wad Madani, about 186 km south of Khartoum. Since top General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan on Monday announced the dissolution of the government and declared a state of emergency, thousands of citizens have maintained protests, chanting "No to military rule".

Shops have remained closed following calls for a campaign of civil disobedience, and pro-democracy movements ratcheted up calls for "million-strong protests" on Saturday. Yesterday, the AU called the

Continued on Page 2

44 global firms to set up regional HQs in Riyadh

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said yesterday it has licensed 44 international companies to establish regional headquarters in Riyadh, competing with Gulf neighbors, particularly Dubai, for the position of regional business hub. In February, the oil-rich kingdom issued an ultimatum to foreign firms that those seeking state contracts must have their Middle East headquarters in the country by 2024.

The ultimatum was seen as a direct challenge to Dubai, which has long dominated as the region's business hub, against the backdrop of Saudi efforts to diversify its oil-reliant economy. "Forty-four companies from various sectors and countries have signed agreements to move (their regional headquarters) and have obtained final licenses," Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih told AFP on the sidelines of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) conference in Riyadh.

Continued on Page 2



Khalid Al-Falih