



7 Thailand to cut quarantine for vaccinated tourists



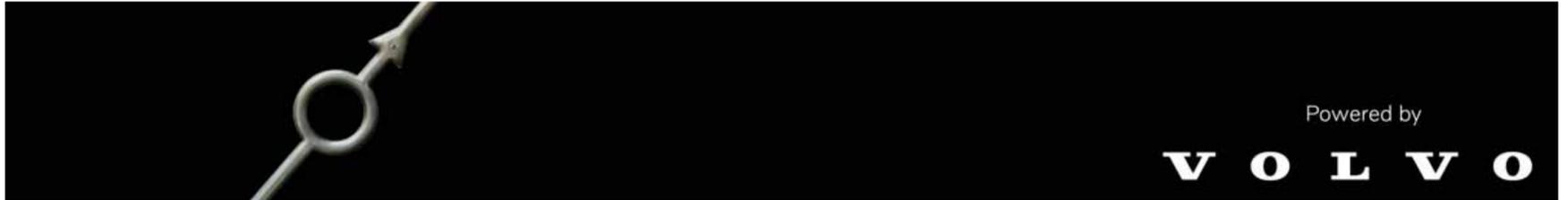
8 Afghan saffron boss says Taliban will not silence her



13 'Ancestor' of Mediterranean mosaics discovered in Turkey



16 US young guns overwhelm Europe in Ryder Cup rout



Democratic Forum launches reconciliation initiative

Lawmaker, ex-MP jailed over primaries • MoH ex-officials flee before final verdict

Ban on workplace sexual harassment, discrimination

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the Public Authority of Manpower Abdullah Al-Salman issued a decision banning sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace in the private sector. The decision warned employers against discriminating based on gender, age, pregnancy and social



Abdullah Al-Salman

status. The decision also banned sexual harassment at work in all its forms, including on social media, without affecting the right to recourse to items 198 and 199 of the penal code. The decision said PAM will refer cases that fall under the two above-mentioned categories to concerned authorities.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Kuwait Democratic Forum said yesterday it has launched a national reconciliation initiative aimed at resolving ongoing political crises in the country and to allow the National Assembly to resume normal work. Secretary general of the liberal political group Abdullah Al-Sanafi said yesterday the initiative was formulated after meetings with the prime minister, Assembly speaker, MPs, political activists and others.

Copies of the initiative have been delivered to the Assembly speaker, prime minister, MPs and various political activists. The initiative calls to cancel a decision by the Assembly to delay grillings of the prime minister and proceed with needed legislation. It also calls to pardon all political activists and remove all barriers on freedom of speech,

in addition to a number of other recommendations.

There has been no comment on the initiative. Reports have surfaced in recent days that political foes, who have been locked in ongoing disputes since the December election, have agreed to a national dialogue under the auspices of

SEE PAGE 3

HH the Amir. Opposition MPs have insisted that any such move must be preceded with a pardon of a dozen former MPs and political activists who have been living in exile for the past three years.

Meanwhile, the criminal court yesterday sentenced MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa and former MP Sultan Al-Shemmari to two years in prison for taking part in outlawed tribal primary elections to select a candidate to represent their tribe in

December's general polls. The court asked the two to pay KD 5,000 each in bail to suspend the implementation of the jail term until the courts of appeals and cassation look into the verdict.

Also yesterday, the court of cassation, whose rulings are final, upheld a seven-year jail term against two former senior health ministry officials for accepting bribes for awarding contracts. Since the verdict is final, the two former officials, health ministry undersecretary Khaled Al-Sahlawi and health ministry assistant undersecretary Mahmoud Abdulhadi, must go to jail.

But MP Muhannad Al-Sayer said yesterday that the two had reportedly fled the country, and sent a series of questions to the justice and interior ministers. He asked the ministers if the report of their escape was true and if the ministry had lifted a travel ban on them.

News in brief

67 killed in Yemen clashes

DUBAI: Sixty-seven Yemeni rebels and pro-government troops have been killed as fighting intensifies for the key city of Marib, military and medical sources said yesterday. A volley of air strikes from the Saudi-led coalition targeted the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who have stepped up their assault on the government's last northern stronghold. — AFP

Instagram pauses kids' version

NEW YORK: Facebook said yesterday that it is suspending development of a version of its Instagram photo-sharing app for children aged under 13, after widespread criticism of the plan. Instagram chief Adam Mosseri complained that the project, which would have created a parentally-supervised version of the app for youngsters, had been widely misunderstood. — AFP (See Page 8)

2 Iran Guards killed in fire

TEHRAN: Two members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards have died of their injuries after a fire at a research facility west of Tehran, the Corps said on its website yesterday. Its Sepahnews website said two of three casualties in Sunday's blaze died in hospital "due to the seriousness of their injuries", naming them as "martyrs" Seyed Morteza Karimi and Hossein Abedi. — AFP

Macron hit with egg

LYON: A man pelted French President Emmanuel Macron with an egg while he was visiting a restaurant and hotel trade fair in the southeastern city of Lyon yesterday. The egg hit his shoulder but bounced off without breaking. The assailant was quickly subdued and removed from the room, with Macron saying he would try to speak with him later. — AFP

Signal hit by brief outage

SAN FRANCISCO: Encrypted instant messaging app Signal was hit by a brief outage early yesterday that interrupted services on the platform at the same time as localized interruptions on other social media services. Signal blamed hosting issues for the disruption, which Internet outage monitor DownDetector said began at 11:05 pm Eastern Standard Time (0305 GMT), citing user reports. — AFP

Germany in limbo after narrow SPD win

BERLIN: Germany is headed for weeks, if not months, of protracted coalition haggling as Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives insisted yesterday on trying to form a government even after losing to the Social Democrats in a tight race. Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, who led the Social Democrats' (SPD) campaign, said Europe's biggest power would not be thrown off by the power struggle, stressing that Germany would remain "stable" even as parties

UK fuel pumps run dry amid panic buying

LONDON: Desperate motorists queued up at fuel pumps across Britain yesterday, draining tanks, fraying tempers and prompting calls for the government to use emergency powers to give priority access to healthcare and other essential workers. The government maintains a lack of tanker drivers to deliver fuel and unprecedented demand is behind the crisis, not a shortage of fuel, and has made a U-turn to ease post-Brexit immigration rules to try to entice foreign

truckers back.

But long queues were again seen outside filling stations, even overnight, frustrating drivers and stoking concern about the effects on the wider economy. "People are desperate. If I don't get petrol now, I can't get work anymore today," one driver, David Hart, told AFP as he queued at an Esso garage in London after a fruitless search at the weekend.

Britain's biggest public sector union, Unison, said key workers, including doctors, nurses, teaching and police staff should be given priority access rather than having to wait in queues. "The government could solve this problem now by using emergency powers to designate fuel stations for the sole use of key

Continued on Page 2

India exam cheats caught with Bluetooth flip-flops

NEW DELHI: Ten people have been arrested in India for planning to cheat in fiercely competitive teaching exams using Bluetooth devices concealed in their flip-flops, police said. Cribbing has long been a problem in India and, for Sunday's government exams involving 1.6 million students in Rajasthan state, police had permission to snap mobile Internet access while the tests lasted.

But one group planned to get around this with devices hidden in the soles of their flip-flops that

could receive ordinary calls which would be transmitted wirelessly to tiny receivers hidden in their ears. The plan was for accomplices outside to call the hidden contraptions and dictate the correct answers to the exams, said Priti Chandra, a police official in the western city of Bikaner.

But the group of would-be teachers were arrested acting suspiciously outside the examination hall on the evening before the exams and the devices in their footwear were discovered. "We were aware of the possibility of cheating but we thought it would be a question paper leak or someone would use the internet, which is why it was restricted in many cities," Chandra told AFP. "But this was a totally new modus operandi. (They) are getting so tech savvy."

Investigations revealed that at least 25 students had bought these flip-flops from a gang for

Continued on Page 2



BERLIN: Vice-Chancellor and SPD candidate for chancellor Olaf Scholz arrives at the party's headquarters yesterday. — AFP



TONBRIDGE, United Kingdom: A sign informs motorists that there is no fuel at a petrol station in southeast England yesterday. — AFP



AJMER: A man shows a flip-flop with a concealed Bluetooth device on Sunday. — AFP