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Parliament dissolved over 'threats to national unity'

New polls must be held within two months



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses for a group photo after receiving His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and members of his Cabinet at Bayan Palace. — Amiri Diwan

MoI halts issuance of family visit visas

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior has decided to extend its decision to halt the issuance of family visit visas until the end of this current year. According to sources, the Ministry of Interior said that security of the state and the parliamentary elections are of vital importance to the Ministry. The Ministry will deploy its personnel - and will increase its presence in strategic areas during electoral gatherings, election day and campaigns. The new elections will be held at the beginning of October. Files related to security need adequate time to be studied, especially the ones related to issuing family visas. A commission is currently waiting for a report to harmonize and to fix the population imbalance in the country.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A few hours after swearing-in the new Cabinet, Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday issued an Amiri decree dissolving the National Assembly less than 20 months after its election, paving the way for holding snap polls within two months. Invoking constitutional powers delegated to him by HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in November, the Crown Prince cited prolonged political disputes, giving priority to personal interests and to actions that undermine national unity as some of the reasons for dissolving the National Assembly.

"To rectify the political scene which involved lack of harmony and non-cooperation, differences and disputes, giving precedence to personal interests and ... undertaking practices and actions that undermine national unity ... it became neces-

sary to resort to the people ... to rectify to the course in a way to achieve their national interests" the decree said.

The decree to dissolve the Assembly, elected on December 5, 2020, was issued a few hours after the new Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah, was sworn in. The premier and the 12 Cabinet members took the constitutional oath before the Crown Prince, then immediately held a brief meeting and passed the decree that dissolved the Assembly.

Under the Kuwaiti constitution, fresh polls must be held within the next two months, otherwise the dissolution will be considered as null and void and the outgoing Assembly will be revived. The new Cabinet was announced on Monday, a week after Sheikh Ahmad was named a new prime minister, replacing Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.

This was the 10th time in Kuwait's 60 years of parliamentary democracy that the National

Assembly was either suspended, dissolved or revoked by the court. Social media activists warmly welcomed the dissolution, with some declaring it as the start of a new era in Kuwait's democracy path. It was unclear when the decree inviting voters to elect the new Assembly will be issued but it must be issued by a few weeks before the election date which cannot exceed October 2.

Since the new government did not arrange for passing the 2022/2023 budget through the Assembly, an Amiri decree passing the budget is expected to be issued soon. It will then be approved or rejected by the new assembly. Several members of the dissolved Assembly said they will contest the polls. They included Abdulkarim Al-Kundari, Khaled Al-Oteibi, Abdullah Al-Mudhaf, Muhalhal Al-Mudhaf, Muhammad Al-Sayer, Saud Al-Mutairi, Thamer Al-Suwait and others.

US kills Qaeda chief in Afghan drone strike



Ayman Al-Zawahiri

KABUL: A United States drone strike killed Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri at a hideout in Kabul, President Joe Biden said Monday, declaring "justice had been delivered" to the families of the 9/11 attacks. Zawahiri's assassination is the biggest blow to Al-Qaeda since US special forces killed Osama bin Laden in 2011, and calls into question the Taliban's promise not to harbor militant groups.

It was the first known over-the-horizon strike by the US on a target in Afghanistan since Washington withdrew its forces from the country on August 31 last year, days after the Taliban swept back to power. The Taliban condemned the drone strike Tuesday, but made no mention of casualties nor did they name Zawahiri.

"Justice has been delivered and this terrorist leader is no more," Biden said in a sombre televised address, adding he hoped Zawahiri's death would bring "closure" to families of the 3,000 people killed in the US on September 11, 2001. Zawahiri was believed to be the mastermind who steered

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US Speaker Pelosi defies China threats

TAIPEI: United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi landed in Taiwan on Tuesday evening, defying a string of increasingly stark warnings and threats from China that have sent tensions between the world's two superpowers soaring. Pelosi, second in line to the presidency, is the highest-profile elected US official to visit Taiwan in 25 years and Beijing has made clear that it regards her presence as a major provocation, setting the region on edge.

Live television images showed the

82-year-old lawmaker, who flew on a US military aircraft into Taipei Songshan Airport, being greeted on arrival by foreign minister Joseph Wu. Pelosi is currently on a tour of Asia and while neither she nor her office confirmed the Taipei visit, multiple US and Taiwanese media outlets reported it was on the cards - triggering days of anger from Beijing.

Moments before her arrival, Chinese state media announced advanced Su-35 fighter jets were crossing the Taiwan Strait. The brief report had no details on timing or precise location of the crossing. "The US breach of faith on the Taiwan issue is despicable," Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said in comments

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TAIPEI: A US military aircraft with US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on board lands at Songshan Airport in Taipei on August 2, 2022. Pelosi (inset) landed in Taiwan on August 2 evening, defying days of increasingly stark warnings from China that have sent tensions between the world's two superpowers soaring. — AFP

Tehran slams 'destructive' US sanctions

TEHRAN: Iran on Tuesday slammed as "destructive" new US sanctions targeting its crucial energy sector and vowed a response, at a time when nuclear talks have stalled for months. US President Joe Biden's administration "is not stopping this unproductive and destructive action even at a time when efforts are underway to resume negotiations to revive the Iran nuclear deal," said foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani. Iran will "show a firm and immediate response" to the sanctions announced the previous day and "take all neces-

sary measures to neutralize" their potential impacts on the country's trade, Kanani vowed in a statement.

The US government blacklisted six companies Monday that it said helped Iran export petrochemicals to East Asia in avoidance of sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program. Three Hong Kong-based trading companies and one United Arab Emirates firm were hit with US Treasury sanctions for helping Iran's Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industry Commercial Co. ship "millions of dollars worth" of petroleum and petrochemical products to unnamed East Asian buyers, the Treasury said.

In addition, the US State Department blacklisted two shipping firms, based in China and Singapore, for helping arrange the shipments. The sanctions block any assets the entities own under US jurisdiction and ban US persons or entities from doing business with them, effectively constricting their access to the global financial system.

The move came as talks in Vienna between Iran and several major powers, including the United States, to revive the frayed 2015 international agreement on the Iranian nuclear program have been at a standstill since March. Last Tuesday, EU foreign policy chief and coordinator of the nuclear talks between Iran and world powers, Josep Borrell, submitted a new draft text and urged all sides to accept it or "risk a dangerous nuclear crisis".

Kanani criticized the Biden administration for "continuing and even expanding" the "failed" policies of his predecessor Donald Trump, who unilaterally withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal in 2018. Tehran, for its part, has been gradually backing away from its obligations. Iran had expressed "optimism" on Monday that the nuclear talks would resume after Borrell's draft compromise was reviewed. — AFP