



4 Kuwait exports first low-sulfur, low-aromatic gasoline: KNPC



7 First Ukraine grain shipment completes checks in Turkey



12 Focus on Samira, celebrity snapper of southern Iraq



14 Dolphins punished, stripped of 2023 first-round NFL Draft pick



Ghanem hits at corrupt forces as Kuwait readies for elections

Budget deficit plunges as oil prices soar

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Speaker of the dissolved National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem yesterday hit hard at what he described as "those who robbed our wealth" during the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion of the country. The former speaker also welcomed the dissolution of the Assembly, saying it is a golden opportunity for the Kuwaiti people to discover their true representatives.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Tuesday issued a decree dissolving the National Assembly hours after swearing in a new Cabinet led by new Prime Minister HH Sheikh Ahmad

Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah. Under Kuwait's constitution, new polls must be held within two months of the dissolution date.

"As we remember our martyrs on August 2 (1990 Iraqi invasion) ... we recall with bitterness those who stole our wealth during those dark days under the belief Kuwait has been wiped out forever", Ghanem wrote on Twitter. The thieves "are still spending that money to fund their tools to destroy the homeland and carry out their suspicious agenda in tarnishing the image of honest people," he added.

In another tweet, Ghanem welcomed the decree to dissolve the National Assembly. "I am confident that this is a golden opportunity for the Kuwaiti people to

discover those who truly represent them and those who cheat them", a reference to his critics. The election campaign will kick start immediately after issuing a decree fixing the date for snap polls.

Nevertheless, the opposition Progressive Movement yesterday called on the opposition groups to unify their efforts in the election by forming joint lists for reformist candidates to ensure the largest number of them win seats. In the meantime, the budget deficit for the fiscal year 2021/2022 which ended on March 31, 2022 plunged to just KD 3 billion from KD 10.7 billion shortfall posted in the previous year, according to figures by the Finance Ministry.

The sharp increase in oil revenues, mainly in the

last quarter of the previous fiscal year (January to March, 2022) was the main reason for the drop in the deficit. Oil income for the whole year jumped from an estimated KD 8.7 billion to KD 16.2 billion. Kuwait has been posting a budget deficit since the fiscal year 2015/2016 due to the sharp drop in oil prices which recovered in the past several months.

The country is expected to post a budget surplus in the current fiscal year as both prices and the level of production sharply increased. Oil Minister Mohammad Al-Fares said yesterday Kuwait's output will increase to 2.818 million barrels per day from next month, way up from around 2.3 million for the past several years.

US warns Americans after Zawahiri killing



KABUL: This handout image shows the building (left) in which Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri was probably located at the time of the strike that killed him in Kabul. — AFP

WASHINGTON: The US State Department Tuesday warned Americans traveling abroad they face an increased risk of violence after US forces killed Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri. His death in a drone strike in Kabul over the weekend dealt the biggest blow to Al-Qaeda since the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011, prompting US President Joe Biden to declare that "justice had been delivered."

Following the strike, the State Department Tuesday urged US citizens to "maintain a high level of vigilance and practice good situational awareness when traveling abroad." "Current information suggests that terrorist organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against US interests in multiple regions across the globe," the department said in a statement. "These attacks may employ a wide variety of tactics including suicide operations, assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings and bombings."

A senior official in the Biden administration said the 71-year-old Egyptian jihadist was on the balcony of a three-story house in the Afghan capital when targeted with two Hellfire missiles after dawn Sunday. It was the first known over-the-horizon strike by the United States 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.

Weeks before the first anniversary of a retreat from Afghanistan that critics said exposed President Joe Biden's weakness, he shrugged off both COVID and detractors to announce the killing in Kabul of Al-Qaeda's leader—an operation the Democrat says shows the US remains as strong as ever. "When I ended our military mission in Afghanistan almost a year ago, I made the decision that after 20 years of war, the United States no longer needed thousands of boots on the ground in Afghanistan," Biden told the nation late Monday as he announced the death of Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

Continued on Page 6

Oil Minister urges OPEC+ to coordinate

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister, Oil Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Fares on Wednesday underscored the need for cooperation and coordination among all producers to face any challenges or impacts on the supply of oil markets.

This was in a press statement issued by the Ministry of Oil after Al-Fares headed the delegation of Kuwait to the 43rd meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee

(JMCC) of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia (OPEC+), along with the 31st ministerial meeting of OPEC+, which were held via video-conference.

OPEC+ will enter a new phase of cooperation to effectively manage the oil markets and play a greater role during the upcoming period, he said. He expressed his sincere condolences over the death of the Former Secretary General of OPEC Mohammad Barkindo - noting his time over the past years in leading the organization and the efforts he made in bringing the views of member states closer.

He congratulated the Secretary General of OPEC Haitham Al-Ghais, who assumed his duties

Continued on Page 6



Kuwait's Oil Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Fares attends the meeting via video-conference. — KUNA

US OKs sale of missile systems to Saudi, UAE

WASHINGTON: The United States has announced the sale of major missile defense systems to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates worth more than \$5 billion. The approval was announced two weeks after US President Joe Biden met leaders of the two countries in Saudi Arabia on

a trip seen as crucial to strengthen frayed relations with them, and as both nations perceive a heightened threat from Iran. The State Department said Saudi Arabia would buy 300 Patriot MIM-104E missile systems, which can be used to bring down at long-range incoming ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as attacking aircraft.

The value of the missiles and attendant equipment, trainings and parts is \$3.05 billion, the department said. Saudi Arabia has faced recent rocket threats from Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have been supplied with Iranian equipment and technology. "These missiles are used to defend the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's borders against persist-

ent Houthi cross-border unmanned aerial system and ballistic missile attacks on civilian sites and critical infrastructure in Saudi Arabia," the State Department said.

Separately, the United States will sell THAAD surface-to-air missile systems to the UAE for \$2.25 billion. The UAE has also recently been targeted by Houthi rocket attacks, which have been fended off in part by defense systems run by the US military based in the country. "The proposed sale will improve the UAE's ability to meet current and future ballistic missile threats in the region, and reduce dependence on US forces," the State Department said. — AFP

Taiwan defiant; China gears for military drills

TAIPEI: Taiwan struck a defiant tone Wednesday as it hosted US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, with a furious China gearing up for military exercises dangerously close to the island's shores in retaliation for the visit. Pelosi landed in Taiwan late Tuesday despite a series of increasingly stark threats from

Beijing, which views the island as its territory and warned it would consider the visit a major provocation.

China responded swiftly, announcing what it said were "necessary and just" military drills in the seas just off Taiwan's coast - some of the world's busiest waterways. "In the current struggle surrounding Pelosi's Taiwan visit, the United States are the provocateurs, China is the victim," Beijing's foreign ministry said. But Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said the island of 23 million would not be cowed.

"Facing deliberately heightened military threats, Taiwan will not back down."

Continued on Page 6



XIAMEN: A man looks through a pair of binoculars in Xiamen, across Taiwan's Kinmen Islands on August 3, 2022. — AFP

Sri Lanka faces 'great danger'

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka faces a "great danger" with fuel shortages sparked by its unprecedented economic crisis set to continue at least till the year's end, President Ranil Wickremesinghe warned Wednesday. The 73-year-old, who was propelled to power last month after his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa was

forced to flee the country and resign after months of protests, said the financial meltdown had turned into a serious political crisis. "Today we are facing an unprecedented situation that our country had never faced in recent history," he said while opening a new session of parliament.

"We are in great danger." Tens of thousands of people overran Rajapaksa's official residence last month over acute shortages of food, fuel and medicines endured by Sri Lanka's 22 million people since late last year. Wickremesinghe said the only way to escape the crisis was "if we all face this challenge together as one people," and asked all parties in par-

liament to join his initiative for a "unity government". Sri Lanka was considered a prosperous middle-income country before defaulting for the first time on its foreign debt of \$51 billion in mid-April.

The country has run out of foreign exchange to finance imports with officials estimating the country urgently needs at least \$4 billion to bring in essential goods and address current shortages.

Wickremesinghe has been leading talks with the International Monetary Fund to secure a four-year bailout program. He told parliament the negotiations were progressing but did not provide a timeline for when a deal would be finalised. — AFP