

**2** Holy Quran memorization contest concludes with awards ceremony



**5** Congress party elects first non-Gandhi head in 24 yrs



**11** Netflix gains subscribers after chilly start to year



**16** Trio of female referees set for World Cup history



## Assembly hails 'new era' after Deputy Amir speech

Ghanem congratulates Amir, Crown Prince, Speaker  
MP proposes replacement of all expat Assembly staff

Al-Majlis TV to only cover Assembly; old emblem returns  
Court confirms citizenship, deportation laws constitutional

### Deputy Amir receives chief auditor



KUWAIT: HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday at Bayan Palace head of the Audit Bureau Faisal Al-Shaya, who presented a report on examination of departments' annual accounts for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Lawmakers on Wednesday hailed the start of a "new era" as mentioned in a speech given by HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a day earlier in parliament. Kuwaiti citizens have "responded positively" to HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince's speech that set in motion the start of the parliament's new legislative term, said National Assembly Secretary Osama Al-Shaheen after talks with the parliament's office members.

Shaheen referred to several decisions taken by the National Assembly's office at its first meeting, chaired by Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun, including limiting Al-Majlis TV to only cover the work of the Assembly, its sessions, committees and deputies, and no other matters outside the workings of the parliament. It also decided to go back to the former emblem of the National Assembly, which is the official emblem of the state.

On some of the parliament's new decisions, Shaheen said MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri has been tasked with "studying the matter" of information and cyber security within parliament itself, while another contingent of lawmakers will be looking into legal cases concerning the parliament. The National Assembly has also decided not to hire any more staff until a reassessment of its hiring policies is complete, which includes more efforts to "nationalize" jobs within parliament, Shaheen added. It will also review appointments made in the past few years.

Former National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent congratulations to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the inauguration of the new Assembly term. He also sent congratulations to National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun and members of the parliament's office and committees.

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari had submitted a proposal on Wednesday to the Assembly office calling to replace all expatriate employees at the National Assembly with Kuwaitis, including legal advisors and other staff. He added advertisements should be published to invite Kuwaitis to work at the Assembly. Kandari has been leading calls to reduce the number of expats in government jobs and replace them with Kuwaitis.

MP Majed Al-Mutairi announced he will discuss with the HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah the situation of southern areas including Sabah Al-Ahmad, Wafra and Khairan, and the importance of providing services and a branch of Kuwait University and a college of applied sciences for residents. "The medical situation of residents of the fifth constituency is important, as it is not logical that a vast area from Sabah Al-Salem to Wafra has only one hospital in South Sabahiya. Therefore, we should restrict Adan Hospital only for Kuwaitis and South Sabahiya Hospital for expatriates," Mutairi said.

Continued on Page 6

### Divorce rates soar in Iraq as stigma persists

BAGHDAD: Just a year into her marriage, Manal became one of the tens of thousands of Iraqis every year who divorce in a deeply conservative nation where break-up rates have risen. For Manal, like many other women, the reason was clear - her husband's financial dependence on his family's business meant that "he couldn't take any decisions of his own". The 33-year-old was divorced eight years ago from her ex-husband, who is also her cousin and who worked for his father's appliance shop.

Not only did he depend on his family for money, but the couple also cohabited with her in-laws. "He wasn't financially independent, which caused family problems," she said. Her reasoning echoes that of tens of thousands of Iraqis, according to data published by the country's Supreme Judicial Council. Iraqi authorities cite wider economic difficulties, early marriages and infidelity encouraged by new technologies as other key drivers of divorce rates.

More than 73,000 divorces were pronounced in 2021 by the courts in the country of 42 million people, largely the same as the number in 2018. This is up from an average of just below 51,700 per year over the period 2004 to 2014, a decade that saw one in five marriages end in divorce, according to the council's website.

A study published by the Supreme Judicial Council on the causes of divorce cites "living with the spouse's family, leading in many cases to negative interference in the relationship", in tandem with "the spouse's financial dependence on his family". It also cites difficulties finding employment and "infidelities due to the Internet".

Continued on Page 6

### UK govt of Truss rocked as interior minister departs

LONDON: The UK's hardline interior minister Suella Braverman quit the government on Wednesday, heaping more doubt on the survival chances of Prime Minister Liz Truss after her right-

wing economic agenda unraveled. Braverman said she had resigned after using her personal email to send an official document to a colleague. While calling it a "technical infringement" of government rules, she wrote in her resignation letter: "I have made a mistake; I accept responsibility; I resign."

The tone contrasted with widespread criticism of Truss for failing to step down herself, after forcing her finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng to take the blame for a disastrous budget. Braverman said she had "serious concerns" that the prime minister was breaking manifesto promises.

Continued on Page 6



Suella Braverman

### Qatar gets Middle East's first pandas

DOHA: Qatar became the first Middle Eastern country Wednesday to receive Chinese giant pandas - Suhail and Soraya - who, in true Gulf fashion, took up residence in luxury air-conditioned quarters. Crowds of children and reporters watched as the four-year-old male and three-year-old female took their first steps in a temporary enclosure in a ceremony at the Al Khor park about 50 km north of Doha.

The Chinese government sent the animals as gift to mark the World Cup that starts Nov 20. China has not qualified for the event, but is a major customer for Qatar's natural gas. Suhail, who weighs 130 kg, and his female partner, who is 70 kg, must undergo 21 days quarantine following their arrival along with two keepers, said Al Khor's zoological director Tim Bouts. "In a few weeks, or in a month's time, they will be ready to be shown to the world," Bouts added.

Authorities have not yet said whether a new Panda



DOHA: A child plays with a Chinese giant panda from behind protective glass at the Panda Park in Al Khor on Oct 19, 2022. — AFP

House, one of the biggest enclosures anywhere, will be ready by the time the World Cup starts. Suhail and Soraya will have their own separate quarters in the Panda House. China's ambassador to Qatar, Zhou Jian, said the new complex was "world class, magnificent and comfortable". "I believe that these two love-ly pandas will soon become the focus of love among the Qatari people, and superstars in the Middle East," he added. —AFP

### Lebanon power plant sparks cancer fears

ZOUK MIKAEL, Lebanon: After losing four relatives to respiratory illness, Zeina Matar fled her hometown north of Lebanon's capital where she says a decaying power plant generates little electricity but very deadly pollution. Thick black smoke sometimes billows from its red-and-white chimneys, leaving a grey haze in the air above the Zouk Mikael industrial district where the toxins remain trapped by a nearby mountain chain. Zeina, aged 40, says she lost her younger sister and a cousin to pulmonary fibrosis and that two of her uncles died of lung cancer years earlier.

They all lived near the plant where, experts and residents believe, air pollution means people are more likely to develop cancer and respiratory disease than anywhere else in the crisis-torn country. "We could die tomorrow," said Zeina, who has relocated to Lebanon's south to escape the plant's emissions.

A Greenpeace study found that the surrounding Jounieh area ranked fifth in the Arab world and 23rd globally for cities most contaminated by nitrogen

Continued on Page 6