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Assembly panels finalizing election commission law

Legislation aims to guarantee free, fair and fully transparent polls

Marking Ramadan at Camp Arifjan



KUWAIT: Muslim US army soldiers perform Maghrib prayers led by Kuwaiti cleric Mohammad Al-Naqwi at the end of the day's fast during the holy month of Ramadan at a chapel tent at Camp Arifjan on March 28, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 3)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's legal and legislative committee on Wednesday discussed in a meeting a draft law calling to establish an independent higher election commission to oversee parliamentary polls. Rapporteur of the panel MP Hisham Al-Saleh, a member of the court-reinstated Assembly, said the committee will vote on the draft law in a meeting on Sunday.

He said the draft legislation states that the commission board will comprise of seven representatives from each of the judicial, legislative and executive authorities, in addition to representatives from civil societies. The bill places controls on election campaigns and limits spending on such campaigns. It also has a set of controls to ensure free and fair elections.

The legal committee only ensures that the draft law is in line with the constitution and existing laws. The bill will be given final approval by the interior and defense

committee. A number of MPs from the reinstated 2020 Assembly have alleged that the Sept 2022 elections witnessed wide-ranging rigging and MP Obaid Al-Wasmi has called for an investigation.

Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem last week called for fresh and fair elections as a way out of the ongoing political crisis in the country. But he insisted that any elections must be held only after establishing a high election commission to oversee the polls.

Head of the Assembly's interior and defense committee MP Saadoun Hammad on Wednesday called on the legal committee to refer the election commission draft law to his committee to study it. Hammad said that the committee wants to ensure that the legislation will guarantee free, fair and fully transparent elections. He said the law will ensure that candidates will have representatives at election centers and during the counting of votes, and that they will have complete access to monitor the election process.

KIA sells €1.4bn Mercedes stake

KUWAIT: Kuwait Investment Authority, the country's sovereign wealth fund, has sold shares worth about €1.4 billion (\$1.5 billion) in Mercedes-Benz Group AG — roughly a quarter of its stake — after

the carmaker's stock almost quadrupled over the last three years. KIA will own around 53 million shares after the share placement of about 20 million shares, which is part of an effort to diversify its portfolio, according to a statement.

The stake sale, which represented about 1.9 percent of Mercedes' share capital, was priced at €69.27, according to the terms seen by Bloomberg. The price was a 3.6 percent discount to the

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RAMADAN KAREEM

Benefits of reconciliation

By Yasmeem Mohammad Salim

A man might say, "This guy has betrayed me, insulted me and harmed me so many times, I'm furious. I'll get back at him and make him beg for mercy." That right there is an example of a vengeful person, holding a grudge against someone. A grudge is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "a persistent feeling of ill will or resentment resulting from a past insult or injury".

Many of us are prone to bearing a grudge against each other for different reasons. However, in doing so, we would never end up harming ourselves because hatred and resentment lead to both physical and mental destruction therefore, letting go of a grudge is the best for your health. This is proven by both science and religion.

By seeking revenge and having malicious thoughts, a man will only inflict long-term grief and torment on himself. This in return, will reflect negatively on his health. According to one study, long-term resentment can lead to cognitive decline in adults. Another study shows that holding a grudge can cause various mental disorders, namely, anger, anxiety, depression, and mood swings and it can get as bad as, self-harm or suicide. Living with all these negative emotions can be stressful and exhausting.

Regrettably, mental illnesses are not the only outcome of resentment. Hatred and resentment can also have detrimental physical effects on the human body. It has been proven that harbouring grudges and stressful emotions can cause serious symptoms that include heart diseases, digestive issues, insomnia as well as a weak immune system.

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Big facelift as Bahrain bids to join Gulf boom

MANAMA: With a multibillion-dollar economic revamp in full swing, Bahrain is vying to keep pace with its Gulf neighbors after more than a decade beset by political unrest. It's a difficult path for the island nation that is a neighbor to gas-rich Qatar and connected by a causeway to Saudi Arabia, a key ally and the world's biggest oil exporter. The United Arab Emirates, another regional powerhouse with well-developed trade, tourism and financial industries alongside its large oil sector, is just a short flight away.

Bahrain has witnessed turbulence since the crushing of an uprising in 2011 but has since begun a modernizing facelift, instigating economic and fiscal reforms. Extensive land reclamations are literally changing the shape of the country, while a host of gleaming new buildings dot the skyline and cranes work above nascent housing developments.

The small, non-OPEC oil producer, is seeking to decrease its reliance on its oil sector which accounts for 80 percent of revenues, much of that from refining. "The principles are clear: We want to grow. We want to grow faster than the world," Khalid Ibrahim Humaidan, head of the government's Economic Development Board, told reporters this month in Manama, the capital.

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MANAMA: Workers work on the construction site of the Golden Gate towers at Bahrain Bay on March 25, 2023. — AFP

Saudi moves in on aviation market in Gulf

RIYADH: Undeterred by a crowded Gulf market, Saudi Arabia is going all in on an aggressive aviation expansion, with a massive jet order and the launch of a new national carrier. The project aligns with a bid to remake the once closed-off kingdom as a business and tourism

magnet, but analysts say that even with official backing, its path to success is complicated.

This month Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman unveiled Riyadh Air, the new airline which is intended to transform the capital into "a gateway to the world", according to state media. Two days later, officials said Riyadh Air and Saudia, the kingdom's existing flag-carrier based in Jeddah, would purchase 78 Boeing 787 Dreamliner jets.

The deal, which the White House valued at "nearly \$37 billion" with options for up to 121 planes, constitutes the fifth largest by commercial value in Boeing's history. Riyadh Air's chief executive, Tony Douglas,

told AFP that the airline would serve the international, regional and domestic markets — putting it in direct competition with Gulf heavyweights Emirates and Qatar Airways. That raises hard questions about how Riyadh Air will grab market share, especially at a time when long-haul non-stop flights that avoid the Middle East altogether are on the rise, said independent aviation analyst Alex Macheras. "Replicating and then building on the successful business models of Gulf airline neighbors is going to be tricky in a crowded market where passengers are spoilt for choice," Macheras said. Saudia, also known as Saudi Arabian Airlines, was

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One of biggest black holes ever recorded found

PARIS: One of the largest black holes ever recorded has been discovered using a new technique that could spot thousands more of the insatiable celestial monsters in the coming years, according to astronomers. The ultramassive black hole, one of just four

ever observed, is more than 30 billion times the mass of the Sun, a new study said.

It is the first black hole ever observed using a phenomenon called gravitational lensing, in which light travelling towards us from a distant galaxy appears to magnify and bend inwards, giving away the presence of a dark giant. James Nightingale, an astronomer at the UK's Durham University and the study's lead author, told AFP the process was "similar to shining light through the base of a wine glass".

He said it was "very fortuitous" that the light of a galaxy in the distant universe travelled extremely

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An artist's impression of a black hole in the Milky Way galaxy, which distorts light passing near it, creating a phenomenon known as "gravitational lensing". — AFP

