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KUWAIT HAILS FAST OIL RALLY KOC TO BOOST RIGS

KUWAIT: Oil Minister Ali Al-Omair said yesterday that world crude prices have recovered "faster" than expected and that recent gains will likely hold. "Oil prices have improved faster than expected," Omair told reporters. "I think it will last... It started holding gains now and hopefully, in the second part of 2015, we will see better prices," the minister said. Crude has been on a rollercoaster for the past two weeks after prices fell by around 60 percent between June and January.



Ali Al-Omair

After plumbing lows of close to \$40 a barrel, international benchmark Brent North Sea crude for April delivery rallied to \$61.19 last week. Market sentiment has been bolstered by cuts in output by North American shale producers that have raised expectations of a reduction in the current supply glut.

Omair said that reports from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries suggested that excess supply was being reduced more quickly than expected. Surplus production "is definitely lower,"

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AI-AWAR, Egypt: A relative of one of the Egyptian Coptic Christians purportedly murdered by Islamic State militants in Libya reacts after hearing the news yesterday in this village in Egypt's southern province of Minya. — AFP

CAIRO: Egyptian jets bombed Islamic State targets in Libya yesterday, a day after the group there released a video showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians, drawing Cairo directly into the conflict across its border. Egypt said the predawn strike hit militant camps, training sites and weapons storage areas in neighboring Libya, where civil conflict has plunged the country into near anarchy and created havens for armed factions.

While Cairo is believed to have provided clandestine support to a Libyan general fighting a rogue government in Tripoli, the mass killings pushed President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi into open action, expanding his battle against Islamist militancy. "And let those near and far know that the Egyptians have a shield that protects and preserves the security of the country, and a sword that eradicates terrorism," the military said.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Sisi over the gruesome crime. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables to Sisi.

Egyptian state television aired footage of fighter planes leaving a hangar with "Long live Egypt" emblazoned on the tails, followed by night-vision aerial footage showing bomb explosions and the aircraft returning in early daylight. Libya's air force also participated in yesterday's attack, which targeted Derna, an eastern coastal city seen as a base for Islamic State fighters in the oil-rich nation. "There are casualties among individuals, ammunition and the (Islamic State) communication centres," Libyan air force commander Saqer Al-Jorushi told Egyptian state television, adding that dozens were killed. Jorushi, who is loyal to Libya's internationally recognised government that set up

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News

in brief

Activist jailed for insulting tribes

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday sentenced activist and journalist Hamed Buyabas to three years in jail for writing comments on Twitter deemed derogatory to Kuwait's Bedouin tribes. The sentence has to be implemented immediately even before the court of appeals begins reviewing the case. Buyabas has also been ordered to pay a temporary compensation of KD 5,001. Meanwhile, the National Assembly's interior and defense committee yesterday approved a government-sponsored law on compulsory military service. The law will reintroduce military service for Kuwaiti males if approved at a parliamentary session on March 10. Military draft had been stopped in Kuwait for almost two decades.

Cataflam in Kuwait safe, readily available

KUWAIT: The anti-inflammatory drug Cataflam has not been rescinded by the health ministry, an official said on Sunday, denying rumors circulating on social media of its withdrawal from the Kuwaiti market. This drug being sold in Kuwait is manufactured in Switzerland, the ministry's head of drug regulation and supervision Rami Behbehani said in a statement. It is safe and readily available, added Behbehani, who said that it has been approved by the ministry of health's drug regulation and supervision department. He called on the Kuwaiti public to disregard information on medicinal drugs distributed by unofficial sources on social media unless it is confirmed by the ministry of health.

Kuwait condemns Denmark, North Carolina shootings

KUWAIT: Kuwait strongly condemns the two tragic shootings that took place in Copenhagen and North Carolina, which led to the death of innocent people. A foreign ministry source said yesterday that Kuwait calls for respecting all religions and religious symbols and stopping any provocations against Muslims. Kuwait cautioned against the increase of these criminal acts which will only lead to more violence, and hence a lack of security and stability, the source added. It reiterated Kuwait's stance that rejects violence and terrorism and calls for unifying international efforts to put an end to this vicious phenomenon.

SAUDI INITIATIVE BREWS BUSINESS SUCCESS

RIYADH: Lateefa Al-Waalan just wanted to make Arabic coffee simple: No more laborious mixing of ingredients and careful attention to boiling. Supported by a Saudi program to foster, or "incubate", technology-based businesses with high growth potential, she developed a machine to produce Arabic coffee at the push of a button - the first of its kind. In the process, Waalan and her Yatoq company became emblematic of efforts to diversify the oil-dependent kingdom's economy and employ more Saudis, particularly women.

Yatoq is one success story from the business incubation program, known as Badir (meaning "to initiate"), but it's not the only one. After hitting the market in 2013 Yatoq has grown to employ 15 people with another 75 on contract. "The factory is completely run by women,"

Waalan said at the Riyadh plant where she directs operations from her laptop and telephone in a spartan office. Women covered from head-to-toe in black, as is the custom in Saudi Arabia, handle administrative tasks in an adjoining office while the coffee is roasted and ground on large machines in another room. Her business was driven by one idea: "I love coffee but it's very complicated. I want to make it simple."

John Mercer, an Australian consultant to Badir, calls Waalan's success story "quite stunning". Badir helped Waalan create a prototype in its industrial lab and provided legal, accounting and other advice as well as valuable connections. Traditional Arabic coffee blends the ground beans with cardamom and saffron, giving the liquid a yellowish hue.

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RIYADH: Lateefa Al-Waalan, a Saudi woman who founded the Yatoq company and developed a machine to produce Arabic coffee, pours coffee in a cup at her factory in the Saudi capital on Dec 11, 2014. — AFP

'CLOUD' OVER MARS Baffles Scientists

PARIS: Amateur astronomers have spotted two strange, cloud-like plumes high over Mars, deepening the mystery of what constitutes the Red Planet's atmosphere, a study said yesterday. The phenomenon was observed on March 12, 2012 over the "terminator", the boundary between day and night on Mars. One of the plumes developed in around 10 hours and lasted for about 11 days, shifting shape from "double blob protrusions" to pillars which merged into a "finger",

the study authors wrote. A second was spotted nearby on April 6, 2012, and lasted about 10 days.

Their trails were vast, extending between 500 and 1,000 km in north-to-south and east-to-west directions. The "clouds" - if that is indeed what they were - were seen at high altitude, at about 200-250 kilometres, roughly above Terra Cimmeria, which is part of Mars' rugged southern highlands, according to the paper.

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MOI FILES THREE LAWSUITS AGAINST AL-WATAN EDITOR

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry said yesterday it had filed three lawsuits against the editor-in-chief of Al-Watan newspaper Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah for resisting and insulting police officers who wanted to execute orders to shut the newspaper's printing house. The ministry accused Sheikh Khalifa of resisting and insulting a public employee while performing his official duty and also for verbally abusing a senior police officer. The ministry said that it will implement the law on all equally and warned that no one is above the law.

Sheikh Khalifa traded insults on Sunday as a police force came to enforce the closure of the second printing house of Al-Watan based on a decision by the informa-

tion ministry. The closure is part of a month-long saga and legal battle between Al-Watan and the ministries of information and commerce which revoked the commercial and media licenses of Al-Watan and ordered its closure.

Al-Watan had challenged the decisions in the administrative court which is expected to issue its verdict tomorrow, but in the meantime obtained a decision from the emergency judge to resume publication until the date of the court verdict. But the information ministry challenged it, and at the same time issued a decision to ban Al-Watan from printing. The issue began last month when the ministry of commerce revoked the commercial license of the newspaper on the grounds that it has lost more than 75 percent of its capital.



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