

News

Panel: Remittance tax a fee for expats...

Continued from Page 1

remittances on behalf of citizens for trade and commercial reasons. The bank explained these remittances include sums sent to non-labor exporting countries such as the EU, the US and the UAE.

Furthermore, the Central Bank noted that taxing expats' personal remittances will affect domestic helpers and lead to demands of pay hikes. It also warned that taxing commercial remittances will lead to an increase in prices, which will negatively affect citizens. The bank also warned that such taxes will force expats to make illegal remittances and create a black market that will affect the money exchange market and weaken the Central Bank's financial control.

The Central Bank added that this tax will violate article 15 of law number 32/1968 pertaining currency, the Central Bank and regulation of the banking system, which states that it is one of the Central Bank's duties "to endeavor to secure the stability of the Kuwaiti currency and its free convertibility into foreign currencies". In addition, the bank reminded that Kuwait is a member of the IMF since it joined it on Sept 3, 1962, and stressed that article 8 of the IMF treaty states: "No

member shall, without the approval of the Fund, impose restrictions on the making of payments and transfers for current international transactions". The bank added that since expats' remittances are current international transactions, this makes imposing such taxes or fees illegal and requires IMF's approval.

Notably, the proposal on taxing expats' remittances includes the following articles:

- 1- Remittances made by expats residing in Kuwait will be taxed regardless of the currency transferred.
- 2- Remittances related to treaties on protecting investments and capital movement will be exempted.
- 3- Remittances will be taxed by 1 percent for sums up to KD 99, 2 percent for sums between KD 100 to 299, 3 to 4 percent for sums between KD 300-499 and 4 to 5 percent for sums more than KD 500.
- 4- Supervised by the Central Bank, certified banks and money exchange companies will send the tax value to the finance ministry.
- 5- Violators of the previous article will be penalized a maximum of KD 10,000. Those who make remittances outside the certified banks or exchanges will be penalized by up to five years in prison and a fine not less than twice the sum transferred.
- 6- Based on the presentation made by the finance minister, the Cabinet will issue the law's executive charter within six months of publishing it in the official gazette.
- 7- The prime minister and finance minister will, each within his/her jurisdiction, put this law into practice.

Amir warns Arab sky overcast, laments...

Continued from Page 1

On the latest developments on the ground, the Amir said: "We have been following - with utmost concern - the latest air strikes, which came as a deterrent for the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime. We reiterate that these developments, once again, took place because of the United Nations Security Council's inability to reach a political solution for the conflict in Syria. We are looking forward for the Council to overcome differences among its members and show unity so as to shoulder its historic responsibility in preserving international peace and stability."

On Iraq, HH the Amir congratulated the Iraqi people on liberating all of their territories from the so-called Islamic State, noting that Kuwait organized a successful international conference for rebuilding Iraq. He expressed hope that parliamentary elections in Iraq, due next month, would be successful and represent various segments of the Iraqi people. The Amir condemned recurring missile attacks on Saudi Arabia from Yemen, praising the role of the states participating in the coalition for restoring legitimacy to Yemen, namely their role in tackling difficult humanitarian conditions in the troubled country.

HH the Amir expressed deep distress at Washington's decision to transfer its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in violation of international legitimacy resolutions. "I call from this platform upon the US administration to rescind its decision and play its role as sponsor of this (peace) process," he said. The Security Council, he noted, should have taken action towards the recent killing of scores of Palestinians. As to Libya, he hoped conciliation efforts would restore security to this nation. On terrorism, HH Sheikh Sabah called for doubling efforts to wipe it out. Regarding Iran, he urged Tehran to abide by international laws, good neighborliness principles and abstain from meddling in regional states' affairs.

Meanwhile, Saudi King Salman slammed Iran's "blatant interference" in regional affairs and criticized the US over Jerusalem. The monarch dubbed the Arab League meeting the "Jerusalem summit" as he took aim at Washington's decision to transfer its embassy in Israel to the holy city. Seventeen heads of state from across the Arab world - minus Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad - gathered in the eastern Saudi city of Dhahran for the 29th Arab League summit, which this year comes as world powers face off over Syria and tensions rise between Riyadh and Tehran.

The meeting opened only 24 hours after the barrage of strikes launched by the US, Britain and France hit

targets they said were linked to chemical weapons development in Syria, which was suspended from the league seven years ago. But King Salman avoided any mention of Syria in his address, as a seat marked "Syrian Arab Republic" sat empty in the hall. Instead the king focused on rivalries with long-time foe Iran - only 160 km across the Gulf from Dhahran. "We renew our strong condemnation of Iran's terrorist acts in the Arab region and reject its blatant interference in the affairs of Arab countries," the king said.

And despite being a stalwart ally of the United States, the ruler also criticized US President Donald Trump's controversial decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and shift the US embassy there. "We reiterate our rejection of the US decision on Jerusalem," Salman said. "East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Palestinian territories." The king said he had named this year's meeting "the Jerusalem summit so that the entire world knows Palestine and its people remain at the heart of Arab concerns".

Arab ministers at a preliminary meeting in Riyadh on Thursday focused heavily on blocking the embassy move, unanimously condemning Trump's decision. King Salman yesterday announced a \$150 million donation for the maintenance of Islamic heritage in East Jerusalem and \$50 million for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Earlier this month, the monarch reiterated the kingdom's "steadfast stance on the Palestinian issue and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital". His comments came just days after his son, powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, 32, told reporters during a US tour that Israel also had a "right" to its own state. The remark suggested increasing rapprochement with Israel, which like Riyadh, sees Tehran as its archrival.

The summit also comes with Saudi Arabia and Qatar locked in a months-long diplomatic standoff, with Riyadh accusing Doha of supporting Islamist extremists and being too close to Iran. Tensions have eased slightly in recent months but Qatar still only sent its representative to the Arab League to the Dhahran summit. Among the leaders in attendance was Sudan's Omar Al-Bashir, who walked the red carpet and was greeted by King Salman. Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for five counts of crimes against humanity, three counts of genocide and two counts of war crimes.

Summits of the Arab League, established in 1945, rarely result in action. The last time the bloc made a concrete move was in 2011, when it suspended Syria's membership over the Assad regime's role in the war. Syria's war, the most complex of the region's conflicts, is the main point of contention pitting Riyadh and its allies, who mainly back Sunni rebels, against regime backer Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah. Gulf Arab states have made massive donations to Syria but have not officially offered asylum to Syrians. — Agencies

Inspectors launch Syria probe after...

Continued from Page 1

buildings were mostly empty and the Western trio swiftly reverted to its diplomatic efforts. US President Donald Trump lauded the "perfectly executed" strike, the biggest international attack on President Bashar Al-Assad's regime during Syria's seven-year war, but both Damascus and Syria's opposition rubbished its impact.

A team of chemical experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, based in The Hague, arrived in Damascus hours after the strikes. They have been tasked with investigating the site of the alleged April 7 attack in the town of Douma, just east of the capital Damascus, which Western powers said involved chlorine and sarin and killed dozens. They arrived in Damascus on Saturday but there were no reports they had travelled to Douma to begin their field work, as announced by a senior Syrian official earlier.

Arrest in India rape case as outrage...

Continued from Page 1

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested Kuldeep Singh Sengar, a lawmaker from Uttar Pradesh state which is ruled by the Hindu nationalist BJP, for allegedly raping the 17-year-old last year. Police only brought a case against the powerful politician last week after the young victim attempted to burn herself alive outside the state leader's residence. The next day, her father, who had been in police custody, died from injuries he sustained in an alleged beating.

"We arrested the second person, a woman named Shashi Singh, in our ongoing investigations of the case on Saturday," R K Gaur, a CBI spokesman, told AFP yesterday. Sengar appeared in court the same day and was ordered detained for seven days. The girl's family - who fought unsuccessfully for nearly a year to get the police to register their case - said Singh had taken their daughter to the state legislator on the pretext of a job. Singh then allegedly stood guard at the door while Sengar raped the girl, the family's initial complaint to police stated.

Public outrage escalated as details surrounding the brutal rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl in January in Jammu and Kashmir state made national headlines. The girl was kidnapped, drugged and repeatedly raped over five days - including inside a Hindu temple - before being strangled and beaten with a rock. Jammu and Kashmir is India's only Muslim-majority state, but the Jammu region in the south, where the rape and murder took place, is Hindu-dominated.

The case has heightened fears of communal tensions in the region. Muslim activists have demanded action against what they see as a crime against their community while some right-wing Hindu groups have argued

An AFP reporter saw Deputy Minister Faisal Mokdad enter the Four Seasons hotel where the chemical experts are staying and leave three hours later. The fact-finding team usually starts its investigation by meeting top officials but any talks were held behind closed doors and both parties imposed a strict media blackout. "We will ensure they can work professionally, objectively, impartially and free of any pressure," Assistant Foreign Minister Ayman Soussan told AFP. The OPCW itself had declared that the Syrian government's chemical weapons stockpile had been removed in 2014, only to confirm later that sarin was used in a 2017 attack in the northern town of Khan Sheikhun.

The inspectors will face a difficult task, with all key players having pre-empted their findings, including Western powers, which justified the strikes by claiming they already had proof such weapons were used. The OPCW team will also have to deal with the risk that evidence may have been removed from the site, which lies in an area that has been controlled by Russian military police and Syrian forces over the past week. "That possibility always has to be taken into account, and investigators will look for evidence that shows whether the incident site has been tampered with," Ralf Trapp, a consultant and member of a previous OPCW mission to Syria, told AFP.

that the accused were unfairly charged. Eight people have been arrested over the killing, including four police officers and a minor. All are Hindus.

Scenes last week of lawyers trying to stop police from entering court to file charges against the accused sparked nationwide revulsion. The Supreme Court on Friday warned lawyers in Jammu against any further attempts to obstruct justice, the Press Trust of India reported. Two state ministers from Modi's BJP - Choudhary Lal Singh and Chander Prakash Ganga - resigned after attending a controversial rally by local Hindu groups held in defense of the accused.

"They have resigned because of the way the entire thing has been presented across the country. They have been victimized," Balbir Singh, a spokesman for Choudhary Lal Singh, told AFP. "All they want is a fair probe and the real criminals to be caught." The BJP yesterday demanded that the main opposition Congress party sack its state leader in Jammu and Kashmir after he suggested the police investigation was politically motivated.

The crimes have shaken India in a way reminiscent of the fatal gang-rape of a Delhi student on a bus in 2012 that made headlines around the world. That case unleashed public anger over rampant sexual violence against women in India, and the introduction of tough new laws to punish rapists. But high numbers of assaults persist, with 40,000 rape cases reported every year. Police in western Gujarat state said yesterday that a post-mortem examination of a young girl found dumped by a highway near Surat this month indicated she been raped and murdered. "There were also many minor injury marks over her body. The girl is around 11 years old. We are still trying to establish her identity," Surat police commissioner Satish Kumar Sharma told AFP.

Protests and vigils were held yesterday in some parts of India including Delhi, the financial capital Mumbai and southern Kerala state. Modi on Friday promised justice for the victims as anger mounted, while India's women's minister called for the death penalty for child rapists. — AFP

Envoy: Ethiopia to send helpers only...

Continued from Page 1

Adem said provisions in the draft include: Salary of workers must be given to them based on the prevailing salaries in the market and shouldn't be less than KD 120; Ethiopian housemaids must work only 8 to 10 hours daily; passports of the workers should be handed to the embassy or preferably retained by the employees; and salaries must be deposited in the bank at the end of the month.

"Almost five years ago, our government stopped sending domestic helpers to the Middle East. There

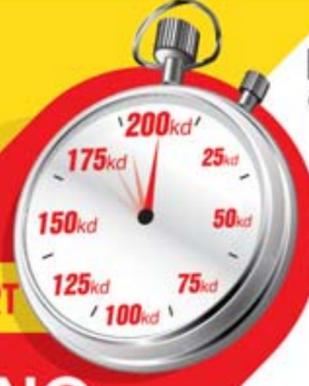
were problems of abuses not only in Kuwait, but in other countries too. We also have the problem of human trafficking, so we banned sending our people to work here and the rest of the GCC. At that time, we wanted to know how we could reorganize labor migration from Ethiopia, so we demanded some agreements to be signed. While we were doing that, our government passed a law on domestic helpers. Our government prefers that Ethiopian workers work only in Ethiopia. But we cannot stop them if they want to work abroad and improve the lives of their families," Adem said.

Kuwait set a minimum wage of KD 60 (\$200) a month for domestic staff in 2016 after the National Assembly passed a law the previous year that limited work hours to eight a day and introduced a mandatory weekend and 30 days of annual leave. Other changes included overtime pay and the need for employers to provide end of service gratuity.



Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
ads@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net



Panasonic
CS-YC24TKF

24000 BTU/hr

2 طاق

START SAVING OFFERS

209 249

40 SAVE



Midea
Window AC

MWTF-18CM

18000 BTU/hr

1.5 طاق

84 105

21 SAVE



Symphony
siesta 70

70 لتر

49 69

20 SAVE

Water Tank 70 Litre
Fan 16 Inch
3 Speeds
1300 RPM



1809 809