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Hashem calls to limit expats' stay in Kuwait to only 5 years

Lawmaker proposes deporting expats for traffic offenses

300 kg of hashish, opium seized



KUWAIT: Doha customs inspectors foiled an attempt to smuggle 300 kg of hashish and opium hidden in a wooden boat arriving from Iran, said security sources, noting that the street value of the confiscated drugs is around KD 500,000. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Safa Al-Hashem, who has been campaigning against expatriates in Kuwait, yesterday called to limit expats' stay in the country to just five years that can be extended only once for a similar period. Any extension should be based on educational qualifications, she added. In a set of proposals filed yesterday, Hashem provided a long list of cases where expatriates should be deported along with their families and prevented from returning to the country.

The proposals said expatriates should be deported if their residence permit expires or if their profession in the residence permit contradicts what they actually do, and those who work for employers other than their sponsors. The loosely-worded proposal also calls for deporting foreigners who work in construction if their age is above 40 years and those who suffer from any disability or illness. It also requires contractors to ensure their workers leave the country after projects are completed.

The proposal requires the deportation of teachers and workers in private schools if their residencies are not with their employers, insisting their family members must also be deported and everyone must be prevented from coming back. In her proposal, Hashem calls for

deporting expatriates who have been convicted in court even if they have served any jail term or if their cases ended with a pardon. She also calls for deporting expats who commit three traffic offences, without describing the nature of the offences.

In another item, the lawmaker calls for deporting expats whose identification documents have expired without renewal. These people must also be fined KD 500. Kuwaitis who provide shelter or work for expats without a legal contract should be fined, according to the proposals. The lawmaker said that she submitted the proposal after the demographic imbalance in favor of expatriates reached a "dangerous level", causing the crime rate to jump, especially by residency violators.

Hashem, the only woman member in the 50-seat National Assembly, has repeatedly called for taking actions to reduce the number of expatriates in the country, whose numbers have reached 3.3 million against 1.4 million citizens. The lawmaker had called for making expatriates pay for all the services they receive from the state and also for imposing taxes on their remittances to their home countries. Last month, she again called for forcing expatriates to pay for the "air they breathe", and later said she received death threats via email.

US starts Syria border pullback, alarming Kurds

QAMISHLI, Syria: US forces in Syria started pulling back yesterday from Turkish border areas, opening the way for Ankara's threatened military invasion and heightening fears of a jihadist resurgence. The withdrawal from key positions along Syria's northern border came after the White House said it would step aside to allow for a Turkish operation President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has warned could come at any moment.

The move marks a major shift in US policy, and effectively abandons the Kurds, Washington's main ally in Syria during the years-long battle against the Islamic State group. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Kurdish-led militia that controls much of northeastern Syria, said early yesterday in a statement that "US forces withdrew from the border areas with Turkey".

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor confirmed that US forces had pulled back from key positions in Ras Al-Ain and Tal Abyad. A US base in

Ras Al-Ain was empty of personnel yesterday, said an AFP photographer, who had seen troops there the night before. Turkey has sent reinforcements to the border in recent weeks, and Erdogan said yesterday in televised remarks the long-threatened offensive could "come any night without warning".

His comments came after Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Twitter that Turkey was "determined to ensure our country's existence and security by clearing terrorists from this region". He was referring to the SDF, which has ties to Kurdish militants inside Turkey and which Ankara considers a terrorist organization. Fearing yet another chapter of bloodshed and mass displacement in the Syrian conflict, the United Nations said it was "preparing for the worst". The European Union warned that civilians would once again bear the brunt of a military assault.

In its statement, the White House made clear it would stand aside when its NATO ally Turkey moves in. Trump yesterday said the region would have to "figure the situation out" and that America needed to get out of "ridiculous Endless Wars." But US Senator Lindsey Graham called the move "a disaster in the making" and "a stain on America's honor," warning of a Senate resolution demanding the White House alter course.

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ALEPPO: Turkish-backed Syrian rebel fighters gather near the Syrian-Turkish border yesterday. — AFP

Judge orders Trump to hand over tax returns

NEW YORK: A federal judge yesterday said US President Donald Trump must hand over eight years of tax returns to Manhattan prosecutors, forcefully rejecting the president's argument that he was immune from criminal investigations. Trump's immunity claim was "repugnant to the nation's governmental structure and constitutional values," US District Judge Victor Marrero wrote in a 75-page decision. "The court cannot square a vision of presidential immunity that would place the President above the law," Marrero added.

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Trio wins Nobel over how cells adapt to oxygen

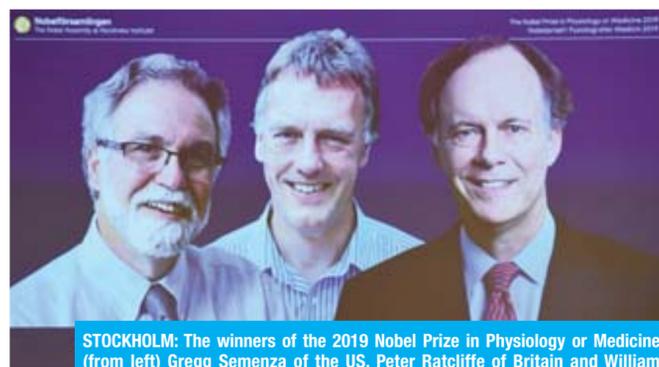
STOCKHOLM: Three researchers from the US and Britain yesterday shared the Nobel Medicine Prize for research into how human cells sense and adapt to changing oxygen levels, opening up new strategies to fight common diseases such as cancer and anemia. William Kaelin and Gregg Semenza of the United States and Britain's Peter Ratcliffe split the nine million Swedish kronor (\$914,000) award.

While the fact that humans need oxygen to survive has been understood for

centuries, how the body registers and responds to oxygen was little known prior to the trio's pioneering work. "They established the basis for our understanding of how oxygen levels affect cellular metabolism and physiological function," the jury said.

Semenza studied a gene known as EPO which causes the body to create more red blood cells and isolated the specific DNA segments that help it to adapt to low oxygen levels. Ratcliffe and Semenza then applied this knowledge to show that the oxygen sensing mechanism was present in virtually all human tissues. Kaelin identified another gene, present in patients with a genetic disorder that puts them at far greater risk of certain cancers.

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STOCKHOLM: The winners of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (from left) Gregg Semenza of the US, Peter Ratcliffe of Britain and William Kaelin of the US appear on a screen during a press conference at the Karolinska Institute yesterday. — AFP

Climate 'rebellion' sees mass arrests and blocked roads

NEW YORK: Climate protesters from Sydney to New York blocked roads yesterday, sparking mass arrests, as they started two weeks of civil disobedience demanding immediate action to save the Earth from "extinction". The demonstrations, triggered by the group Extinction Rebellion, were mostly limited to a few hundred people in each city, far from the size of last month's massive Greta Thunberg-inspired demonstrations.

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Blanchett decries 'heartbreaking' plight of stateless

LONDON: Film star Cate Blanchett urged the world to end the devastating plight of millions of people with no nationality yesterday, describing statelessness as a "heartbreaking" waste of human talent and potential. The double Oscar-winner made the plea at a major intergovernmental meeting in Geneva aimed at accelerating a global campaign to eradicate statelessness - an issue she admitted she was unaware of until relatively recently.

"Statelessness has a devastating impact on millions of people around the world. They experience marginalization and exclusion from cradle to grave ... It's total invisibility," she told the media afterwards. Stateless

people are often denied education and medical care, cannot travel, open a bank account, marry or even get a death certificate when they die, she said. Almost every country is represented at the meeting, which marks the midway point in a decade-long campaign to end statelessness called #Ibelong.

The Hollywood star held up her own passport, credit card and Medicare card as she urged ministers and government officials to imagine how difficult life would be if they had no documents. "It's a condition of invisibility and it lurks in the margins and in the shadows," she said. "Stateless people are unseen and unheard."

Blanchett, a UNHCR goodwill ambassador, interviewed activist Maha Mamo, who spent 30 years as a stateless person in Lebanon before acquiring Brazilian citizenship last year. "Her personal story absolutely blew me away," the actress said. "(She's) an extraordinary beacon of hope." Mamo told delegates how her hopes of studying medicine and joining a Lebanese

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GENEVA: Australian actress and UNHCR ambassador Cate Blanchett (right) and formerly stateless refugee in Brazil Maha Mamo show their passports during a press conference yesterday. — AFP