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Kuwait condemns Netanyahu's pledge to annex Jordan Valley

Jordan says peace treaty 'at stake' • OIC to meet over 'escalation' • Syria slams expansionism

MP proposes stiff fines for wearing pajamas in public

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Majed Mousa Al-Mutairi yesterday submitted a draft law for safeguarding law and order by proposing to ban wearing pajamas (pyjamas) in public along with a string of other measures, or risk a fine of between KD 500 and KD 1,000. The lawmaker asked that the bill, which prohibits a large number of behaviors and practices, be given urgency in debate at the concerned committee and then in the National Assembly.

Among other things, the bill bans uttering abusive, vulgar or racist words in public. It also outlaws wearing clothes with images, portraits or remarks that are abusive to public order and morals.

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KUWAIT/CAIRO: Arab and Muslim countries yesterday led a wave of outcry after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to annex a key part of the occupied West Bank if reelected. Netanyahu's controversial pledge involves extending Israel's sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea which account for one-third of the West Bank if he wins next week's elections. It would not include however annexing any Palestinian cities such as Jericho. The pre-election promise late Tuesday drew immediate condemnation from Arab powerhouses with many warning of disastrous consequences for the stagnant Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Kuwait condemned yesterday "in the strongest possible terms" Netanyahu's plans. A source from the foreign ministry said in a statement that such an announcement is a serious and flagrant violation of the Palestinian peoples' rights, a violation of international law, the charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of international legitimacy. The official noted that Netanyahu's statements represent a violation of all efforts to

achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

He stressed the need for the international community to take its legal responsibilities in rejecting this declaration and considering it as "void with no legal effects on the legitimate and historical rights of the Palestinian people." The source concluded by affirming Kuwait's principled and firm stance in support of the Palestinian issue to establish an independent Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with international laws, the Arab Peace Initiative and international legitimacy.

"The announcement constitutes a dangerous development and a new Israeli aggression," Arab foreign ministers said. They also warned in a statement of "the ramifications of these dangerous, illegal and irresponsible" moves saying it would "undermine the chances of progress in the peace process". Jordanian and Palestinian officials said any such measure risks "killing off" and "destroying" the entire peace process.

Jordan's house speaker Atef Al-Tawameh went as far as to warn yesterday



JERUSALEM: Israeli-Arab Knesset member Ayman Odeh uses a phone to take a close-up picture of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the main Knesset chamber yesterday. —AFP

that any such move could even put the country's peace treaty with Israel - only one of two with Israel's neighbors - "at stake". Palestinian leaders said Netanyahu

was destroying any hopes for peace, while senior official Hanan Ashrawi said the plans were "worse than apartheid".

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News in brief

Saudi crown prince hosts evangelicals

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's crown prince hosted a delegation of American Christian evangelicals on Tuesday, state media said. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met the delegation, led by Israeli-American author Joel Rosenberg, at his palace in Jeddah, the official Saudi Press Agency said. "Honoured to be back in kingdom of Saudi Arabia for (the second) time in less than a year," Rosenberg said on Twitter. "We met (with) his royal highness the crown prince (and) other senior officials to discuss terrorism, peace, religious freedom and human rights." The delegation also met Prince Khalid bin Salman, the kingdom's deputy defense minister, and secretary-general of the Muslim World League Mohammed Al-Issa, SPA reported. — AFP

Trump mulls ban on flavored vapes

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday announced his administration was considering a ban on flavored vaping products, amid a growing outbreak of severe lung disease in the US that has claimed at least six lives. "It's causing a lot of problems," the president told reporters at the White House, where he was accompanied by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and acting Food and Drug Administration head Norman Sharpless. Trump added that First Lady Melania Trump had been involved in the discussions because: "She's got a son ... she feels very strongly about it." — AFP

Brotherhood chief, deputy get life

CAIRO: An Egyptian court yesterday sentenced 11 senior Muslim Brotherhood figures to life in prison on charges of spying for the Palestinian Hamas group, a judicial source said. They included the Brotherhood's supreme guide Mohamed Badie and his deputy Khairat Al-Shater, who were both handed life sentences - 25 years in Egypt. Five other Brotherhood members were sentenced to jail terms ranging from seven to 10 years while six were acquitted. The defendants were accused of "committing crimes in collaboration with foreign organizations" namely Hamas and the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah. — AFP

Fan who set herself ablaze was ill

TEHRAN: An Iranian football fan who set herself ablaze and died after being arrested for trying to defy a ban on women in stadiums was ill with a "neurological disorder", her father said. Sahar Khodayari, 30, was arrested early last year when she tried to enter a stadium in Tehran dressed as a man to watch her favorite team, Esteghlal FC. "My daughter had a neurological disorder and that day she became very angry, insulting and fought with law enforcement officers," her father Heidar Ali Khodayari said, quoted by Mehr news agency late Tuesday. — AFP

Trump vows to hit Taliban as US marks 9/11

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump pledged to hit the Taliban "harder" than ever as America marked the 18th anniversary yesterday of the 9/11 attacks that led the country into war in Afghanistan. Trump spoke after aborting what would have been a historic peace summit and as relatives remembered the victims of the single deadliest attack on US soil at cere-

monies in New York and Washington.

After a solemn commemoration at Ground Zero in Manhattan, Trump spoke at a Pentagon event honoring the nearly 3,000 people killed in the attacks - announcing an unprecedented escalation of the military assault on the Taliban. He said that over "the last four days" US forces have "hit our enemy harder than they have ever been hit before and that will continue." The nature of the offensive was not immediately clear but Trump said it was ordered after he canceled peace talks with the Taliban over the weekend in retaliation for a bomb attack that killed one US soldier last week.

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WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump listen to the national anthem during a ceremony marking the 18th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks at the Pentagon yesterday. —AFP

UK to let foreign students stay 2 yrs after graduation

LONDON: International students will be able to stay in Britain looking for work for up to two years after they graduate under new rules announced by the government yesterday. Under current rules, introduced by former prime minister Theresa May when she was interior minister, students are only allowed to stay for four months after they finish their degree. "The important contribution international students make to our country and universities is both cultural and economic. Their presence benefits Britain," Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said in a statement.

"Our universities thrive on being open global

institutions. Introducing the graduate route ensures our prestigious higher education sector will continue to attract the best talent from around the world to global Britain." The government said the new graduate route would enable students to work, or look for work, at any skill level. They could then switched to a skilled work visa if they found a job that met the requirements.

There will not be a cap on the number of students who can apply for the graduate route, it said. There are about 450,000 international students a year studying in Britain. It will apply to those who start an undergraduate level or above course from next year in any subject at "a trusted UK university or higher education provider which has a proven track record in upholding immigration checks". "About time. Should have reversed this silly policy years ago. Britain should always be open to the best talent from across the world," finance minister Sajid Javid said on Twitter.

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Water discovered in atmosphere of habitable exoplanet

PARIS: Water has been discovered for the first time in the atmosphere of an exoplanet with Earth-like temperatures that could support life as we know it, scientists revealed yesterday. Eight times the mass of Earth and twice as big, K2-18b orbits in its star's "habitable zone" at a distance - neither too far nor too close - where water can exist in liquid form, they reported in the journal Nature Astronomy.

"This planet is the best candidate we have outside our solar system" in the search for signs of life, co-author Giovanna Tinetti, an astronomer at University College London, told AFP. "We cannot assume that it has oceans on the surface but it is a real possibility." Of the more than 4,000 exoplanets detected to date, this is the first known to combine a rocky surface and an atmosphere with water.

Most exoplanets with atmospheres are giant balls of



A handout artist's impression shows the K2-18b super-Earth, the only exoplanet known to host both water and temperatures that could support life. — AFP

gas, and the handful of rocky planets for which data is available seem to have no atmosphere at all. Even if they did, most Earth-like planets are too far from their stars to have liquid water or so close that any H2O has evaporated. Discovered in 2015, K2-18b is one of hundreds of so-called "super-Earths" - planets with less than ten times the mass of ours - spotted by NASA's Kepler spacecraft.

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Energy 'transition' touted, but fossil future for Gulf

ABU DHABI: In the vast air-conditioned halls of an Abu Dhabi conference center, the world's much-vaunted transition to clean energy is the buzzword in sessions of a top industry gathering. But many executives and officials from oil-dependent Gulf states insist that while the change to renewables is essential, fossil fuels remain the future at least for the next few decades, despite the urgent need to fight climate change.

The debate has taken center stage at this week's World Energy Congress, with many officials calling for accelerating the process of moving to clean power sources and minimizing carbon emissions. Speakers addressed issues like the role of nuclear, hydrogen gas and other non-conventional sources of energy as a replacement for fossil fuels which currently account for over three quarters of the world's energy consumption.

However, delegates from oil-producing countries and particularly those in the Gulf argued that although the transition to clean energy sources must be supported, they will not be able to meet rising demand any time soon. "For decades to come the world will still rely on oil and gas as the majority source of energy," said the head of Abu Dhabi Oil Co Sultan Al-Jaber. "About \$11 trillion of investment in oil and gas is needed to keep up with current projected demand," over the next two decades, he told the congress which was attended by representatives of 150 nations and over 400 CEOs.

Energy from increasingly competitive renewable sources has quadrupled globally in just a decade, but insatiable demand for energy particularly from developing economies saw power sector emissions rise 10 percent, a UN report said last week.

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