

## Local

# Kuwait budget deficit expands to KD 5.6 billion

## Annual increase by 68%, but 31.8% less than projected deficit

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Finance said Thursday the budget deficit hit KD 5.6 billion (nearly \$18.4 billion) in the fiscal year ending on March 31. The figure reflects an annual increase by 68 percent, yet it is 31.8 percent less than the projected deficit in the state budget, according to a press release from the ministry. The oil revenues in the last fiscal year stood at KD 15.369 billion (\$49 billion), declining by 16.6 percent from the previous year, while the non-oil revenues declined by 13 percent to KD 1.851 billion (some \$5.8 billion). The aggregate revenues amount-



### 16.6% drop in oil revenue

ed to KD 17.220 billion (some \$55 billion), reflecting a 16 percent decline from the previous year.

The expenditure, on aggregate, topped KD 21.140 billion (\$68 billion), reflecting a 3.2 percent decrease from the previous year. The deductions for the future generations fund amounted to KD 1.722 billion (\$5.7 billion). The average oil price stood at \$61.12 per barrel. The expenditures on salaries and subsidies accounted for 76 percent of the aggregate expenditure, hitting KD 4.027 billion (some \$13 billion) or 17.5 percent less than the figures of the previous year. The capital expenditures amounted to KD 2.6 billion (nearly \$8.5 billion) representing 12 percent of the aggregate expenditure.

Commenting on the figures, Minister of Finance



**KUWAIT:** An archive photo showing buildings in Kuwait City along the Arabian Gulf coast. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Barrak Al-Sheetan said, "The budget deficit KD 5.6 billion is a normal outcome of the decline of the oil prices between FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020. The deficit was calculated after deducting the appropriations for the future generations fund amounting to 10 percent of the budget as per the

provisions of Act No 106/1976."

"The government has presented to the legislature draft amendments to the law, envisaging a halt to the 10 percent appropriations for the fund in case of budget deficit," the minister revealed. "If the amendments are passed and the final account of FY 2019-2020 is

revised, the budget deficit will be brought down to KD 3.9 billion (\$12 billion)," Sheetan added that the government has referred the final account to the National Assembly for endorsement and was ready any discussion with the MPs with a view to reaching practical solutions and adjusting the state budget. — KUNA

## Kuwait's flow of relief supplies to Lebanon proceeds

**KUWAIT/BEIRUT:** Kuwait's airborne relief supplies for Lebanon proceeded for the 11th day in a row yesterday, as two planes carrying 66 tons of medical and food aid left to Beirut. On Friday, a pair of Kuwait Air Force aircraft touched down at Beirut airport, carrying 100 tons of medical equipment and food supplies. Adviser at Kuwait Embassy Abdullah Al-Shahin affirmed in remarks that part of the supplies were handed over to the Lebanese Army and the remaining amount to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society. With the arrival of the four planes, the number of the aircraft carrying relief supplies for the Lebanese reached 18, with a cargo estimated at more than 819 tons of supplies mainly destined for those affected by the recent huge blast. Kuwait had scrambled to relieve the Lebanese people, namely in Beirut, immediately after a huge bomb explosion rocked the capital, on August 4, leaving at least 170 people dead and around 6,000 wounded. The explosion that happened at Beirut Port left heavy destruction in nearby districts and extensive damage in almost half of the city. Meanwhile, Dr Musaed Al-

Enezi, the head of the KRCS mission in Lebanon, affirmed that the batch included medical equipment and supplies that would be delivered to damaged hospitals.

Meanwhile, KRCS announced donating 10 generators to support emergency centers and field blood banks to the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC). Enezi reiterated the importance of strengthening the LRC's field efforts after the Beirut port explosion, to help it in rescue operations and treating the injured. The field team of KRCS was informed of the needs of the emergency centers and blood banks run by LRC, he pointed out. Enezi said that KRCS immediately took the initiative to provide supplies and immediate needs to Lebanon under the directives of His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which confirms Kuwait's keenness to help in difficult circumstances.

In the meantime, the Secretary General of the LRC George Kettaneh sincerely thanked KRCS for this donation, which supports the capabilities of health centers and blood bank centers that need to secure electricity at present. There has been cooperation between LRC and KRCS for many years, he said, explaining that they formed a vital partner and support for the LRC in its various humanitarian and relief efforts. He underlined that the Lebanese people always remember the humanitarian stances of Kuwait, pointing to the KRCS' great humanitarian role in many affected



**KUWAIT:** This photo released by the Defense Ministry shows relief aid being loaded into a Kuwait Air Force plane before it took off to Lebanon yesterday.

countries, especially Lebanon. Through its field team, which has been in Beirut since the beginning days of the Beirut explosion, KRCS is active in

providing direct support to the affected hospitals with medical equipment and supplies, as well as distributing aid to impacted families. — KUNA

## Trump fans false birther theory...

Continued from Page 1

Eastman was also an unsuccessful Republican challenger, losing in the primary for the 2010 California attorney general's election won by Harris, who served in that post before becoming a US senator.

Harris, 55, was born in Oakland, California to a mother from India and a father from Jamaica. She is the first black woman and woman of South Asian heritage to be granted the honor of a place on the ticket of a major US party. Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden, 77, who on Tuesday named Harris as his running mate, blasted Trump's rhetoric Friday, with his campaign calling the false claim "abhorrent".

Eastman's article followed claims shared thousands of times on Facebook that Harris could not become president because her parents hailed from abroad. — AFP

## UAE-Israel deal met with dismay...

Continued from Page 1

Palestine Liberation Organization Secretary General Saeb Erekat spelled out the potential consequences for his people if a united Arab front splintered. "The whole thing that we based our strategy on as Arabs is that the (2002) Arab peace initiative specified that once Israel withdraws, there will be peace between Arabs and Israelis. "Netanyahu came determined, with Kushner, Trump... to change the formula, that they want Arab recognition of Israel while they continue with the occupation, and the United Arab Emirates yesterday stamped the green light for this," Erekat said.

Turkey, a powerful regional rival of the UAE, said history would not forgive the Gulf country for making a deal which undercut the 2002 Arab peace plan, which had proposed peace in return for Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territory. "We may also take a step in the direction of suspending diplomatic ties with the Abu Dhabi leadership or pulling back our ambassador," President Tayyip Erdogan said after Friday prayers, adding that he could close Turkey's embassy.

Egypt and Jordan, which signed peace deals with Israel in 1979 and 1994 respectively and enjoy close ties with the UAE, both welcomed the agreement.

Jordan said the pact could make a beneficial impact if it spurred Israel to accept a Palestinian state on land it took in the 1967 Middle East war. "If Israel deals with it as an incentive to end occupation... it will move the region towards a just peace," Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said.

Oman and Bahrain praised the accord but Saudi Arabia, which has in the past led Arab policy towards Israel and hosts Islam's two holiest sites, has remained silent, as have Kuwait and Qatar. Jordan's former foreign minister, Marwan Al-Muasher, said it was possible other Gulf states could follow Abu Dhabi's lead. But none of those could address the root problem. "In the end it's not the Gulf states who are living under occupation, it's the Palestinians. And until you reach a solution with the Palestinians, it does not matter how many peace deals you make with Arab states," he told Reuters.

Under the deal, Israel and the UAE "agreed to the full normalization of relations between Israel and Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. They added that Israel would "suspend declaring sovereignty" over occupied Palestinian West Bank areas an idea proposed in Trump's controversial peace plan unveiled earlier this year.

Sheikh Mohamed stressed in a tweet that an agreement has been "reached to stop further Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories". But Netanyahu insisted afterwards that he had only agreed to delay, not cancel, the annexations. The plans remained "on the table", he said. On Friday, the prime minister appointed his national security advisor Meir Ben-Shabbat to lead the negotiations with the Emiratis. — Agencies

## Europe faces second wave...

Continued from Page 1

the Canary Islands to its list of regions where incoming travellers must show a negative test for COVID-19 or quarantine for 14 days. Austria urged its citizens to return from popular Mediterranean destination Croatia before similar rules come into effect on Monday, while Serbia introduced mandatory testing for travellers from four neighboring countries.

And thousands of Albanians queued in their cars

## UN rejects bid to extend Iran...

Continued from Page 1

Since Trump pulled out of the JCPOA and slapped unilateral sanctions on Iran under a campaign of "maximum pressure", Tehran has since taken small but escalating steps away from compliance with the nuclear accord as it presses for sanctions relief. European allies of the United States - who, along with Russia and China, signed the deal with Iran - have voiced support for extending the 13-year-long conventional arms embargo, saying an expiry threatens stability in the Middle East.

However, their priority is to preserve the JCPOA. The US text, seen by AFP, effectively called for an indefinite extension of the embargo on Iran, which diplomats said would threaten the nuclear agreement. Iran says it has the right to self-defense and that a continuation of the ban would mean an end to the nuclear deal.

Pompeo announced that members had failed to back the proposal around 30 minutes before Indonesia, the current president of the Security Council, announced that the official results included two votes against and 11 abstentions. Russia and China opposed the resolution. "The result shows again that unilateralism enjoys no support, and bul-

at the Greek border, hoping to squeeze across and return to work before tougher entry requirements designed to brake mounting infections come into effect. Some people had been waiting for three days in the 20-km, 4,000-car jam, an Albanian police source said. The US Department of Homeland Security also said it was extending a ban on non-essential travel through border crossings with Canada and Mexico throughout most of September "to slow the spread" of the disease.

French student Antoine, 23, had to rush back to Bristol, in southwestern England where he is at university, cutting short his summer holidays. "I'm a waiter in a small cafe near college, I can't afford to spend 14 days in the house," he said at London's St Pancras railway station. — AFP

lying will fail," China's UN mission tweeted.

Ambassador Gunter Sautter of Germany, which abstained, said "more consultations are needed" to find a solution that is acceptable to all council members. During a call between Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron, the leaders "discussed the urgent need for UN action to extend the arms embargo on Iran". Hours earlier, Russian President Vladimir Putin called on China, France, Russia, Britain, the US, Germany and Iran to convene an emergency video summit to avoid an escalation of tensions in the Gulf.

Washington has threatened to try to force a return of UN sanctions if it is not extended by using a controversial technique called "snapback". Pompeo has offered the contested argument that the US remains a "participant" in the nuclear accord as it was listed in the 2015 resolution - and therefore can force a return to sanctions if it sees Iran as being in violation of its terms.

European allies have been skeptical on whether Washington can force sanctions and warn that the attempt may delegitimize the Security Council. Nevertheless, the US is expected to deliver the snapback letter next week, AFP understands. Analysts suspect that Washington purposefully put forward a hardline draft that it knew Council members would not be able to accept. "The fact is that everybody at the UN believes this (resolution) is just a prelude to a US effort to trigger snapback and sink the Iranian nuclear deal," said Richard Gowan, a UN expert at the International Crisis Group. — AFP