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Government proposes hefty rise in traffic fines, penalties

MPs question Trump's statement on normalizing ties with Israel

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government has sent amendments to the traffic law to the National Assembly proposing massive increases to penalties and fines in a bid to curb traffic offenses that have been on the rise in recent years. The new law, which has to be reviewed and approved by the Assembly, proposes a three-month jail term and a fine of between KD 200 and 500 for a variety of offenses that include running the red light, reckless driving, racing, speeding, driving against traffic and using a mobile while driving.

The same applies to ferrying passengers in a private vehicle and driving a vehicle without a number plate. Fines in the existing law for most of these crimes do not exceed KD 50, and the fine for some violations is just KD 10.

The draft law also proposes a two-month jail term and a fine of between KD 100 and 200 for allowing a child under 10 years to sit in the front seat, driving with defective brakes, allowing people with no driving license to drive one's vehicle, causing damage during a traffic accident and not staying in lanes. It also proposes a one-month jail term and a fine of between KD 50 and KD 100 for using high-beam lights, stopping vehicles on highways, driving or parking on pavements, using loudspeakers and others.

The law will be reviewed by the next Assembly following general elections in late November, as the current term is expected to close this week. The Assembly is scheduled to hold its final sessions tomorrow and Wednesday to debate two grillings against the prime minister and discuss a number of legislations.

Meanwhile, a number of lawmakers called on the foreign ministry to issue a statement denying remarks made by US President Donald Trump claiming that Kuwait was likely to normalize ties with Israel soon. The remarks were made at the White House on Friday following a ceremony in which Trump awarded HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the prestigious Legion of Merit, a top US honor. The honor was received by Sheikh Nasser, the Amir's eldest son, as HH the Amir is receiving medical treatment in the United States.

In a question to Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah, MP Mohammad Al-Dallal inquired about Trump's remarks, which contradict Kuwait's official position and parliamentary and popular positions, which reject the Israeli occupation and establishing ties with Israel. He also asked

if the government contacted the US administration to see why Trump made such remarks and if the Kuwaiti government has denied the country's intention to normalize ties with Israel.

Dallal also asked if the Kuwaiti delegation which received the award discussed the issue of normalization with US officials and why the foreign ministry has not issued any statement regarding Trump's remarks, which apparently aim at involving Kuwait in the normalization issue.

Also yesterday, MP Osama Al-Shaheen said he and MP Dallal submitted a proposal calling to expand voting timing beyond the normal 12 hours because of the coronavirus crisis. Ballots in Kuwait open at 8 am and close at 8 pm. The proposal also calls for allocating four schools in each committee instead of two, and also to allow candidates to explain their election programs on state TV.

News in brief

India infections surge

MUMBAI: India's coronavirus case tally surged to 5.4 million as it added 92,605 new infections in the last 24 hours, data from the federal health ministry showed yesterday. The country has posted the highest single-day caseload in the world since early August, and lags behind only the US, which has 6.7 million cases in terms of total infections. A total of 1,113 people died of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said, taking mortalities to 86,752. — Reuters

Houthi attack wounds 5

RIYADH: A projectile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels hit a village in Saudi Arabia's southern Jizan province, wounding five civilians, state media reported. The civilians were rushed to hospital after suffering "minor injuries" from flying shrapnel, the official Saudi Press Agency reported late Saturday. Three cars were also damaged in the border village, it said, without naming the village. — AFP



A handout picture shows one of 14 2,500-year-old coffins discovered in a burial shaft. — AFP

Egypt discovers 14 tombs

CAIRO: Egypt's antiquities ministry announced yesterday the discovery of 14 coffins in the Saqqara area that had lain buried for two and a half thousand years. The tombs were found two days ago during an archaeological dig, and follow 13 wooden sarcophagus discovered in the same burial spot last week, the ministry said in a statement. — AFP

Trump to name woman

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he would nominate a woman to succeed late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. "I think it's going to move quickly actually," Trump told reporters outside the White House Saturday, adding that he thought his choice would be made "next week". — AFP

US defies world to say Iran UN sanctions back

TEHRAN: Iran said yesterday its arch-foe the United States is facing "maximum isolation" after major powers dismissed a unilateral US declaration that UN sanctions on Tehran were back in force. The Trump administration said the sanctions had been re-activated under the "snapback" mechanism in a landmark 2015 nuclear treaty - despite Washington having withdrawn from the deal.

As other signatories cast doubt on the move having any legal effect, Washington threatened to "impose consequences" on states failing to comply. But Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said a concerted campaign by Washington to pressure Tehran had backfired. "We can say that America's 'maximum pressure' against Iran, in its political and legal aspect, has turned into America's maximum isolation," he said in a televised cabinet meeting.

He also praised the UN Security Council's approach to the issue as "very valuable" as it

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TEHRAN: A woman walks past a mural painted on the walls of the former US embassy in the Iranian capital yesterday. — AFP

Mask, visor rules make Philippine commuters sweat

MANILA: In the sweltering heat and humidity, 31-year-old Caitlyn Tojanos grumbles about having to wear a face shield over her mask as she waits in line for her bus in the Philippine capital Manila. "It's

uncomfortable. Combined with the long queues it means we get to work already tired and bathed in sweat," said Tojanos, whose commute involves three buses and takes several hours.

But she is resigned to the new normal in the Philippines, where it is now compulsory to wear both masks and plastic shields in indoor public spaces and on public transport to curb the spread of the coronavirus. "With COVID, it's up to the people to maintain discipline," said Tojanos, who works as a store manager in the sprawling capital of 12 million where most of the country's infections have been recorded.

"People should not put the entire burden on the government. We must practice self-discipline."

Some measures have been eased to help kick-start the devastated economy. "It's a big adjustment having to wear a mask and a face shield and having to wash your hands with alcohol each time you touch something," said Jeff Langurayan, 31, his voice slightly muffled by the layers of material and plastic over his face. But he accepts the need for precautions. "A lot of people have died and you do not know what will hit you and what effect it would have on your body." — AFP

How Tehran transformed post-war Iraq

BAGHDAD: In the four decades since Iran and Iraq went to war, Tehran has turned enmity into influence, seeing its allies installed in Baghdad's halls of power and becoming its top trading partner. It's a turn of events Aziz Jaber, a political science professor at Baghdad's Mustansariyah University and a survivor of the conflict, never thought possible. "It would have been hard to imagine at the time that this would happen - that the parties linked to Iran would now hold the reins," Jaber told AFP.

Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded Iran on Sept 22, 1980, fearing the threat to his rule if Tehran's new clerical rulers tried to replicate their 1979 Islamic Revolution in neighboring Iraq. Throughout the war, Iran offered safe haven to a range of anti-Saddam groups, from Kurdish figures to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and its military wing, the Badr Corps - both founded in Iran in 1982.

It nurtured those contacts up to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 - meaning it had closer, older ties than Washington did to Saddam's successors. In the 17 years since, Iran's ancient allies have cycled through Iraq's corridors of power. Of Iraq's six post-invasion prime ministers, three spent much of the 1980s in Tehran, including

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AHVAZ, Iran: In this file photo taken on Jan 22, 1987, an Iranian soldier guards Iraqi prisoners of war who were captured in the two-week-old Karbala-5 offensive. — AFP