



6 Tunisia president appoints new govt after power grab



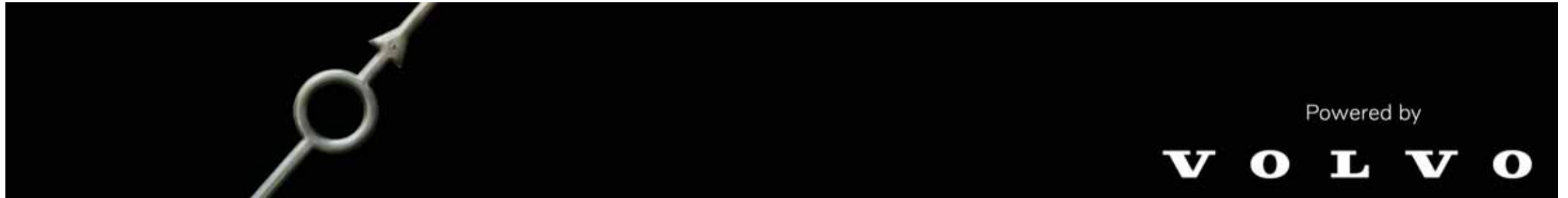
8 Energy-rich Qatar unhappy with high natural gas prices



13 Sweet taste of Squid Game success for candy couple



16 France beat Spain to win Nations League



Visa curbs, worker exodus lead to manpower crunch

Plenty of service sector jobs, but few applicants despite higher salaries

Tens of thousands of residents to lose driving licenses

KUWAIT: Security sources revealed there are plans to confiscate tens of thousands of expired driving licenses from residents who continue to use them in violation of the law. The sources said many of these residents "cheat" the law to avoid deportation by continuing to use expired licenses. They only pay a fine of KD 5 when caught because they are treated as individuals who have licenses which have not been renewed, although the purpose for which they were given the license no longer exists.

Sources said they should be treated as residents who do not have licenses and should be deported if caught driving. Sources said around 20,000 driving licenses were issued to university students, but most of them completed their studies and did not hand over their licenses.

Continued on Page 2

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A severe shortage of workers in Kuwait is affecting companies and the job market, especially in the services sector. According to a human resources manager, because of the high demand for manpower, many small and large companies are now paying higher salaries to workers compared to pre-pandemic times. "Nowadays, hiring people locally is very difficult for many companies in Kuwait, but it's a great time for workers, because those getting a salary of KD 150 before are now being offered KD 250-300," Julie Gayon said.

According to official figures, the total number of workers in the labor market was 1,536,033 in the private sector and 411,464 in the public sector until the end of March. A labor market report found nearly 200,000 expatriates left Kuwait in one year since March 2020. Meanwhile, more than 67,800 expats left Kuwait in the first quarter of 2021, according to a government report.

"There are too many vacancies and

too few applicants. Companies are telling me to provide them with only a few workers, but we can't find anyone. We have a high demand for restaurant workers, but we cannot supply the manpower easily," Gayon said. Besides domestic helpers, demand for workers continues to grow in the hospitality, health and retail sectors.

Last week, Kuwait reopened entry visas (commercial visit visas and permits) for foreigners to work in activities related to food security in the country. The decision, effective immediately, covers the following activities: Farms, restaurants, catering and bakeries, fishing and fish sale, shepherding and dairy production, foodstuff factories, suppliers and supermarkets, and water and soft drink bottling companies.

But several manpower agencies told Kuwait Times that the ban hasn't been lifted yet. "We tried already, but the ministry said they are prioritizing healthcare workers for now. I don't know when they are going to start issuing visas," officials at manpower and



KUWAIT: A worker welds a metal bar at a workshop in Shuwaikh in this recent file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

recruitment agencies said. "We have several people ready to be deployed from the Philippines, but visa applications are still stalled. The ministry peo-

ple are saying they're not ready. We are eagerly waiting for the approval," a recruitment officer added.

Continued on Page 2

News in brief

Outdoor exhibitions to resume

KUWAIT: The Cabinet yesterday allowed commercial exhibitions with proper permits to resume in open public spaces from Sunday, Oct 17, provided the venues comply with guidelines aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19. — KUNA

Dubai seizes 500 kg of cocaine



DUBAI: The UAE authorities seized half a ton of cocaine with a street value of more than \$136 million, Dubai police said on Sunday. Officers "recently thwarted a smuggling attempt of 500 kilograms of pure cocaine into the country", a police statement said. In the operation dubbed "Scorpion", a suspect of Middle Eastern origin was arrested. — AFP

Lebanon fuel tank fire put out



BEIRUT: Firefighters in Lebanon put out a huge blaze that raged at a key fuel storage depot yesterday to the relief of many in the country gripped by desperate energy shortages. The fire broke out around 8:00 am in a large petrol tank belonging to the army at the Zahrani facilities some 50 km south of Beirut.

Vaccines prevent severe COVID, even from Delta

PARIS/GENEVA: Vaccination is highly effective at preventing severe cases of COVID-19, even against the Delta variant, a vast study in France has shown. The research published yesterday - focusing on prevention of severe COVID and death, not infection - looked at 22 million people over 50 and found those who had received jabs were 90 percent less likely to be hospitalized or die. The results confirm observations from the US and UK, but researchers say it is the largest study of its kind so far.

Looking at data collected starting in Dec 2020, when France launched its jab campaign, the researchers compared the outcomes of 11 million vaccinated people with 11 million unvaccinated subjects. They formed pairs matching an unvaccinated individual with a vaccinated counterpart from the same region and of the same age and sex, tracking them from the date of the vaccinated person's second jab to July 20.

Continued on Page 2

3 economists win Nobel for 'natural experiments'

STOCKHOLM: Three US-based academics yesterday won the Nobel Economics Prize for research on the labor market using "natural experiments", or observational studies, that have revolutionized empirical research in the field, the jury said. Canadian-American David Card, Zionist-American Joshua Angrist and Dutch-American Guido Imbens shared the prize for providing "new insights about the labor market" and showing "what conclusions about cause and effect can be drawn from natural experiments", the Nobel committee said in a statement.

The Economics Prize wrapped up a male-dominated 2021 Nobel season which saw a total of 12 men win prizes and only one woman. Card won half of the 10-million-kronor (\$1.1 million) prize for work focused on the labor market effects of minimum wages, immi-



KUWAIT: People are vaccinated against COVID-19 at a field clinic in Bneid Al-Gar yesterday, a day after the health ministry announced it is launching a COVID-19 vaccination campaign across several areas in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 3)



Guido Imbens Joshua Angrist David Card

gration and education. The framework they developed has been widely adopted by researchers who work with observational data. "By clarifying the assumptions necessary to establish a causal relationship, their framework has also increased the transparency - and thus credibility - of empirical research," the committee said. The three laureates "have revolutionized empirical work in economics. They have shown that it's indeed possible to answer important questions, even when it's not possible to conduct randomized experiments," Nobel Committee member Eva Mork told reporters. — AFP

Saudi, Iran signal warming ties but 'real steps' needed

RIYADH: Regional archrivals Saudi Arabia and Iran are showing signs of warming relations, but experts say more work is needed to ease tensions after a five-year rift. Saudi Arabia and Iran cut ties in 2016 after protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in the Islamic republic following the kingdom's execution of a revered Shiite cleric. In recent weeks, officials from both countries, on opposing sides in multiple Middle East conflicts, have spoken positively about breakthrough talks held in Baghdad since April.

The discussions were launched under Iran's former moderate president Hassan Rouhani and have continued under his ultraconservative successor, Ebrahim Raisi. A foreign diplomat residing in the kingdom who is privy to the negotiations said that

Continued on Page 2