



7 Austria anti-virus measures fuel rise in homeschooling



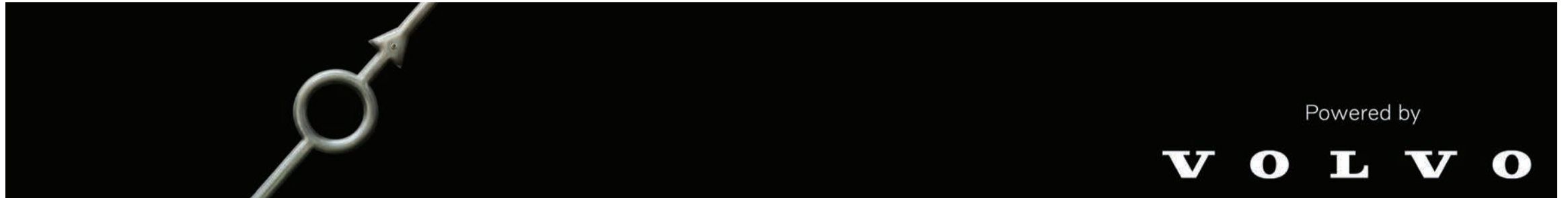
9 Global Finance names KFH 'Safest Islamic Bank in the GCC for 2021'



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15 Hamilton claims 100th win amid high drama in Russia



Students begin returning to school after 18 months

Some private schools reopen with strict health and safety protocols

Officials congratulate Kuwait Times on 60-year anniversary



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah (left) and Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abd Al-Rahman Badah Al-Mutairi (right) congratulated Kuwait Times on the 60th anniversary of its founding.



German Ambassador to Kuwait Stefan Mobs reads the first issue of Kuwait Times. The envoy, along with a large number of other personalities, companies and readers, sent congratulatory messages to Kuwait Times.

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Students returned to schools for the first time in more than 18 months yesterday after several private schools resumed on-campus classes with strict implementation of health protocols. Like most countries around the world, Kuwait shut down schools and universities in March 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and resorted to online education.

All foreign-language and bilingual schools were permitted to resume in-person classes from yesterday, but many did not reopen due to logistical challenges. Online classes however continue. Public and private Arabic schools will reopen on Oct 3. The maximum capacity for any classroom is 20 students, with students sitting one to two meters apart. Students aged over 12 years and all teachers must be vaccinated, while masks should be worn at all times. Those who choose not to get vaccinated are required to undergo a PCR test every week on Sunday.

Classes are divided into two groups: The first group will go to school on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, while the second group will go on Monday and Wednesday. In the next week, groups will swap attendance, with the second group going

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KUWAIT: Students arrive at a school yesterday as in-person classes resumed after more than 18 months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 4)

MP says exiled activists will be pardoned soon

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Mohannad Al-Sayer said yesterday he believes that a decision to pardon a number of opposition ex-MPs and activists - who have been living abroad for several years - will be issued soon. "We will be pleased shortly with the return of our brothers who are living abroad," Sayer said in reference to around a dozen opposition figures who have been living in self-exile for over three years in Turkey.

The opposition figures left the country in the summer of 2018 to escape harsh jail terms issued by the state's highest court, which convicted them of taking part in storming the National

Assembly building during an anti-corruption protest in Nov 2011. Sayer said opposition lawmakers support any initiative for cooperation on this issue and reject politicizing it.

The opposition has been pressing to pass legislation in the Assembly that would issue a general pardon to the exiles and other prisoners jailed on political and freedom of expression charges. But their attempt has so far been unsuccessful and efforts are currently underway to secure a decree by HH the Amir to pardon them.

Last week, nine of the exiled figures issued a statement in which they criticized the failed efforts of the opposition MPs and accepted a reported initiative to pardon them as part of a dialogue for national reconciliation. Former MP Faisal Al-Mislem, one of the exiles, wrote on Twitter yesterday that if no pardon is issued, then opposition MPs must submit the general pardon legislation in the first session of the Assembly's new term in late October.

Iceland elects women-majority parliament

REYKJAVIK: Iceland yesterday became the first country in Europe to have more women than men in parliament, a day after a general election that saw the left-right coalition win a clear majority. Of the 63 seats in the Althing parliament, 33 were won by women, or 52 percent, projections based on the final results showed yesterday. No other European country has had more than 50 percent women lawmakers, with Sweden coming closest at 47 percent, according to data compiled by the World Bank.

Around the world, five other countries currently have parliaments where women hold at least half the seats, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union: Rwanda (61 percent), Cuba (53 percent), Nicaragua (51 percent) and Mexico and the United Arab Emirates (50 percent). Unlike some other countries, Iceland does not have legal quotas on female representation in parliament, though some parties do require a minimum number of candidates be women.

The Nordic country has long been a pioneer in gender equality and women's rights, and has topped the World Economic Forum's ranking of most egalitarian countries for the past 12 years. Iceland was the first country to elect a woman as president in 1980. "I am 85, I've waited all my life for women to be in a majority... I am really happy," Erdna, a Reykjavik resident, told AFP.

While Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir's left-right coalition won a majority in Saturday's vote, it remained to be seen whether the three parties would continue to govern together. The coalition has brought Iceland four years of stability after a decade of political crises, but Jakobsdottir's Left-Green Movement emerged weakened after losing ground to its rightwing partners, which both posted strong showings.

The Left-Green Movement, the conservative Independence Party and the center-right Progressive Party together won 37 of 63 seats in parliament, up from the 33 they held before the vote. But the Left-Green Movement itself won only eight seats, three fewer than in 2017, raising questions about Jakobsdottir's future as prime minister.

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Zionists kill 5 Palestinians in West Bank

BIDDU: Zionist forces clashed with Palestinians in the West Bank yesterday in several fierce gun battles that left five Palestinians dead and two Zionists seriously wounded, officials said. The violence started after Zionist army troops and special police units launched an overnight operation to dismantle a Hamas cell and arrest suspected militants, the Zionist army said.

The raids marked some of the heaviest fighting in recent weeks in the Palestinian territory that has been occupied by the Zionist state since 1967. The Palestinian health ministry confirmed five deaths from Zionist gunfire, including two near Jenin and three more in the Biddu area, made up of several villages between Ramallah and Jerusalem.

"The sound of gunfire" rang out around 4:00 am (0100 GMT), followed by "strong explosions", said Ayed Shamasneh, 44, a resident in the Biddu area, where an AFP photographer saw blood soaking the ground in the village of Beit Annan.

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BURQIN: Mourners carry the body of Osama Soboh, a Palestinian killed by Zionist soldiers, during his funeral in this village in the occupied West Bank yesterday. — AFP

Egypt to tax social media personalities

CAIRO: Egypt said it will tax social media content creators in a revenue raising exercise as more citizens look to online platforms to make a living. The tax authority said "YouTubers and bloggers" earning over 500,000 pounds (\$32,000) annually would be taxed, in a statement issued Saturday. Egypt, the

Arab world's most populous country with over a 100 million people, has reached a 60 percent internet penetration rate, according to official figures.

Social media was awash with comments after the taxation move. "Poor vegetable sellers are taxed, so we can also tax the rich," an Egyptian wrote on Twitter. But another said the latest decision would drive content creators out of the country. "If the government wants to tax YouTubers then it must at least give us better Internet and scrap the whole limited gigabytes packages," a

user chimed in on Twitter.

Mohamed Al-Gayyar, a senior tax authority official, tried to temper reactions yesterday. "Anyone who makes a profit in Egypt must be fairly taxed whatever their field of work is," he said on public television. In a late Saturday interview on private television, another tax official Mohamed Keshk said those who fail to comply with the new decision could be found in breach of tax evasion laws carrying a jail sentence of up to five years.

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