

Second Kuwaiti Minister Resigns in One Month

KUWAIT (Dispatches) – Kuwaiti Minister of Electricity and Water Mohammed Bushehri has resigned from his post, only two weeks after his appointment. Bushehri is the second Kuwaiti minister to resign within a month, after Ghadeer Asiri, who was the Minister of Social Affairs, resigned only one month after her appointment. He resigned after the Kuwaiti Court of Cassation found him guilty of leaking official documents from the ministry when he was a senior employee there. In December, Kuwait formed a new government a month after the former Cabinet minister quit due to a row between members of the ruling family and parliament.

When you have to depart from this world and have to meet death (eventually), then why wish delay (why feel nervous about death).

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Taliban Rule Out Afghan Talks Until Prisoners Released



Image shows a U.S. trooper on guard following suicide attack at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in the Nangarhar province in 2014.

KABUL (Dispatches) – Taliban militants will not take part in intra-Afghan talks until about 5,000 of its prisoners are released, a spokesman says, presenting a major possible barrier to ending the war. Under an accord between the United States and the Taliban signed on Sat-

urday, the two sides are committed to working toward the release of combat and political prisoners as a confidence-building measure.

The agreement calls for up to 5,000 jailed Taliban prisoners to be released in exchange for up to 1,000 Afghan

government captives by March 10.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, not involved in the talks, has since rejected that demand.

“We are fully ready for the intra-Afghan talks, but we are waiting for the release of our 5,000 prisoners,” Taliban

spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Reuters by phone.

“If our 5,000 prisoners - 100 or 200 more or less does not matter - do not get released there will be no intra-Afghan talks.”

The United States has said it hopes negotiations toward a permanent political settlement and ceasefire can start in coming days, but diplomats and analysts see stark challenges ahead.

Ghani said on Sunday that U.S. President Donald Trump had not asked for the release of the prisoners and that the issue of prisoner releases should be discussed as part of a comprehensive deal.

Zabihullah said the majority of prisoners on the list of 5,000 had been captured by American forces and were held in Afghan government prisons and that they had prioritized sick and older prisoners.

Zabihullah said that a truce agreement in the seven days leading up to Saturday's pact in Doha had formally ended.

“As we are receiving reports that people are enjoying the reduction in violence, we don't want to spoil their happiness, but it does not mean that we will not take our normal military activities back to the level that we were before,” he said.

“It could be any time, it could be after an hour, tonight, tomorrow or the day after.”

Iraqi Prime Minister Designate Drops Out

After Failing to Secure Parl't Support



The file photo shows Iraqi parliament in session.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi Prime Minister designate, Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, has announced in a video his resignation from office after failing to secure support of parliament for his government.

Allawi apologized for his failure to form a government in an official letter to Iraqi President Barham Salih, following the vote in parliament.

The official said that several political parties were not serious about reform, by their use of smear campaigns and a subsequent lack of a quorum in parliament.

“I anticipated the equation - the post of prime minister, in return for a lack of honesty with my people and continuing this position at the expense of their suffering. The choice was simple and clear: I must remain to be with my patient people, especially when I saw that some political parties are not serious about reform and keeping their promises to the people, and have instead put obstacles in the way of the birth of an independent

government that works for the country,” Allawi tweeted.

The Iraqi president has reportedly accepted the prime minister-designate's apology and announced that consultations had begun to choose a replacement.

On Sunday, the parliament in an extraordinary session failed for the second time to achieve a vote of confidence for a Muhammad Tawfiq Allawi government amid continuing political unrest in the country.

Parliament had been scheduled to vote on the Allawi government on Saturday, but the session was postponed due to a lack of a quorum.

In October 2019, Iraq witnessed nationwide protests demanding the government's resignation as well as seeking reforms to improve the quality of life in the country. During the demonstrations, the biggest since the ouster of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, over 600 protesters were killed, according to official estimates.

Egyptian Court Sentences 37 to Death Over Terror Charges

CAIRO (Dispatches) – An Egyptian court has issued death sentence for 37 people on charges of killing policemen and carrying out terrorist attacks.

Cairo Criminal Court's judge Hassan Mahmoud Farid announced the verdict on Monday after reviewing the opinion of Egypt's Grand Mufti, the official news agency MENA reported.

The defendants have been accused of plotting a failed assassination attempt against a former interior minister, murdering policemen and bombing security buildings since 2013, local media reported.

The investigations proved that they were trained inside a camp and contacted one of the al-Qaeda ringleaders for targeting the U.S.

ships crossing the Suez Canal.

The Grand Mufti, the country's top jurist, whose non-binding opinion has reduced the court's sentence in many cases, has confirmed the death sentence.

A wave of terrorist activities started in Egypt following the military's ouster of former President Mohamed Morsi in July 2013 in response to the mass protests against his one-year rule and his currently outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group.

Hundreds of policemen, soldiers and civilians have died in the terror attacks, while Egyptian security forces have killed hundreds of terrorists and arrested thousands of suspects during the anti-terror war launched since Morsi's ouster.



Mourners and members of security forces carry a coffin containing the body of Egyptian military officer Abdulrahman Ali Mohammed who was killed in a clash with militants in North Sinai, during his funeral, in Cairo, Egypt, on February 17, 2019.

Lebanon PM Says to Make Decisions on Solving Issues

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab says his government assumes its responsibilities while being fully aware of the complicated missions it faces, the National News Agency has reported.

He insists on solving chronic issues in the country, adding that the government will make an important decision in the coming days which will constitute a milestone for the future of the country. “We are facing major dilemmas today but the state's work is faced by sectarian restrictions, corruption and lack of vision in public institutions,” Diab said during his meeting with members of the Consular Corps in Lebanon.

The government is currently in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to decide what to do about a 1.2-billion-U.S. dollar Eurobonds maturing in March.

Debate has lately intensified among officials and experts about the necessity to repay Euro-

bonds, with some insisting on repaying them to protect Lebanon's reputation, while others advising to avoid repayment and restructure of the country's public debt under the supervision of the IMF.

To make things worse, the Lebanese economic and financial crisis that has intensified since the protests that started on October 17 forced an increasing number of Palestinian refugees into unemployment.

Hanadi, a 36-year-old Palestinian woman, can hardly wait to leave Lebanon and settle in a country where she can acquire a nationality and a sense of belonging.

“As Palestinians, in general, we do not feel that we belong here. This feeling is very bad,” Hanadi told Xinhua.

Foreign workers including Palestinians are required to have work permits to work in Lebanon while they are barred from working in at least 25

professions.

This leaves a lot of highly educated Palestinian refugees jobless.

Head of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee Hassan Mneimneh assured that Palestinian refugees are the most impacted by the economic crisis in Lebanon given their already fragile situation.

Mneimneh called upon the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) to inform donor countries about the reality of the catastrophic situation facing Palestinian refugees in Lebanon while emphasizing the need to adopt an emergency plan, which responds to these challenges in the short and medium-terms.

The UNRWA provides aid, mostly in the form of education, health care, food security and other essentials, to Palestinians registered as refugees in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

Candidates Use Virus Rumors to Win Zionist Elections

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – People were voting on Monday in the Israeli-occupied territories' third general elections in less than a year, amid accusations that rivals are spreading fake coronavirus reports to tip the scales of the vote.

The voting began at 7 a.m. and will come to an end at 10 p.m. Monday evening amid concerns that some could exploit fears of the coronavirus to affect the results after ten people contacted the deadly virus.

Police said Sunday they were establishing a special task force to deal with the situation.

Benny Gantz, the leader of Blue and White party and prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's main rival, on Sunday accused the premier's Likud party of spreading fake reports about the coronavirus to push supporters of his centrist alliance away from polling stations.

“It doesn't bother the Likud propagandists to promote with all [their] strength the message that there's the coronavirus in Givatayim. Did you ask yourselves why in fact Givatayim?

Because it's a stronghold of Blue and White,” Gantz tweeted.

“This is exactly what Netanyahu intends to do tomorrow,” the Blue and White leader added. “He intends to disrupt election day, spread fake news in every area identified with Blue and White.”

Gantz was referring to news reports that parts of a mall in Givatayim were shut down due to a suspected case of coronavirus infection.

The Likud party dismissed Gantz's remarks, saying he “is talking nonsense.”

The health ministry announced that 16 special polling stations had been set up for more than 5,600 individuals who were under home quarantine.

The Zionist regime has been mired in a political deadlock after two inconclusive elections last year failed to produce a clear winner.

The elections will see people deciding whether Netanyahu, who has been indicted in a corruption scandal, should remain in office for a fifth term.