



SUBSCRIPTION

Established 1961
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

40 PAGES

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2010

THULHIJA 3, 1431 AH

NO: 14905

150 FILS

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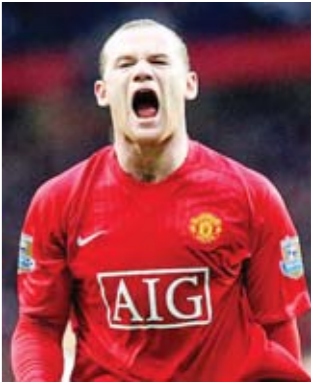
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Jordan's women face uphill election battle



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Wayne Rooney, from hero to bonfire villain



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Zain agrees to 'open books' for Etisalat

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Zain telecom said yesterday it has agreed to 'open its books' for due diligence to UAE operator Etisalat which has offered to buy a controlling stake in the firm worth around \$12 billion. The move follows a formal request by Al-Khorafi Group, the largest private shareholder in Zain, said a statement posted on Zain's website after a lengthy meeting by the board of directors on Sunday.

"Following the meeting, the Zain board announced that it had formally accepted the (Al-Khorafi) request to permit Etisalat to commence this process," added the statement, which was also posted on Kuwait bourse website. "Furthermore, Zain's executive management will fully cooperate with

Etisalat in completing all the necessary procedures of the due diligence, while at the same time ensuring the preservation of the company and shareholder interests," it said.

"It is important to note that one of the conditions for completing the transaction is the sale of Zain Group's stake in its mobile operation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the statement said. Etisalat, based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the biggest telecoms provider in the region by market value, said on Wednesday it had signed a preliminary agreement with Khorafi Group to buy 51 percent of Zain shares traded on the Kuwait Stock Exchange at KD1.7 (\$6.1) per share.

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MPs push for release of Kuwaitis in Gitmo

Economic affairs committee approves pension law amendments

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The head of the National Assembly interior and defense committee MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said yesterday he is prepared to travel among a popular Kuwaiti delegation to Guantanamo to press for the release of the remaining two Kuwaiti detainees in the US military camp. Kuwaiti lawyer Adel Abdulhadi said he will request a meeting with US President Barack Obama through the US embassy in Kuwait and the White House to sit with the president and explain to him the position of the remaining Kuwaiti prisoners in Guantanamo.

The statements came after two US military advocates representing the two Kuwaiti detainees, Faysel Al-Kundari and Fawzi Al-Oudah, visited the National Assembly yesterday to urge for more popular and government pressure to free the Kuwaiti prisoners. Muwaizri said that he and MPs Mohammad Hayef and Waleed Al-Tabtabai met with the two American lawyers and discussed means of government and parliamentary support for the prisoners' release.

The United States had released 10 Kuwaitis from Guantanamo Bay in Cuba during the past few years, but has adamantly refused to release the remaining two or charge and try them in US courts. MP Hayef said it is illogical to remain silent while our sons continue to suffer in that camp, adding that "we support sending a popular Kuwaiti delegation to Guantanamo to protest the continuous detention of Kuwaitis at that illegal camp which violates all international human rights rules". The two American lawyers however informed the National Assembly of what measures the Kuwaiti government can take to speed up freeing the two Guantanamo prisoners.

Meanwhile, the financial and economic affairs committee yesterday approved

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NAJAF: Iraqi police inspect the charred remains of a car and a bus that was among three carrying Iranian pilgrims and targeted by a suicide bomber yesterday. — AFP

Car bombings kill 18

KARBALA: Twin bombings in Shiite holy cities targeting Iranians killed at least 18 people yesterday, 10 of them pilgrims from Iran, at the start of a ninth month of wrangling over a new government. Police and local officials said the attacks also wounded 58 people, mostly Iranian pilgrims. In Karbala, a suicide bomber pulled up his booby-trapped vehicle alongside a bus carrying pilgrims from neighboring Iran then detonated his payload, police officials said.

The explosion killed 10 people, four of them Iranians, and wounded another 42, hospital officials said. The bomber struck in the northern part of Karbala through which traffic headed to Karbala's tightly-guarded shrines passes on the way down south from Baghdad. The second attack targeted three buses carrying Iranian pilgrims, police said. A bomb blast killed eight people, six of them Iranians, and wounded 16 others, said Khaled Jashani,

a member of Najaf's provincial council. The buses and two other vehicles were gutted, he said.

About 1,500 non-Arab pilgrims a day from predominantly Shiite Iran visit the faith's holiest shrines in Karbala and Najaf as well as in the capital of Iraq, a Shiite majority. The attacks came as political rivals who have been bickering over a power-sharing agreement that has left the country without a new government for eight months met in the Kurdish city of Arbil, northern Iraq. Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said last week that the surge of violence, including a hostage-taking by Al-Qaeda gunmen at a Baghdad church which left 46 worshippers dead on October 31, was due to the failure to form a government.

"The attacks and explosions ... are due to the constitutional and political vacuum and the delay in the formation of the government, which gave the terrorists the

opportunity to attack civilians," he said. Yesterday's meeting in Arbil came a day after statements in Baghdad that the main Kurdish and Shiite parties had reached a power-sharing agreement. Government spokesman Ali Al-Dabbagh said that under the deal, Nuri Al-Maliki, a Shiite, would retain the post of prime minister and Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, would stay on as president.

The Sunni-backed Iraqiya party of former premier Iyad Allawi had been offered the position of parliament speaker. Allawi's bloc won narrowly more seats than Maliki's bloc in the March 7 parliamentary election and the two men have since been at loggerheads over who should head and form a new government. Iran has been seen as a strong supporter of Maliki, while Allawi, although himself a Shiite but with a secular line, has drawn support from Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Arab states. — AFP

Israel approves 1,300 homes in E Jerusalem

Move provokes Palestinian outrage

JERUSALEM: Israel's approval of more than 1,300 new homes in occupied East Jerusalem yesterday sparked a furious reaction from the Palestinians who accused Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu of sabotaging peace talks. The plans, announced as the Israeli prime minister was in the United States to discuss a revival of peace talks with the Americans, prompted a furious reaction from the chief Palestinian negotiator.

"We thought that Netanyahu was going to the United States to stop settlement activity

and restart negotiations but it is clear to us that he is determined to destroy the talks," Saeb Erakat said. "He has shut all the doors to negotiations and we hold him responsible for destroying them." Direct peace talks which began in early September quickly ran aground when an Israeli moratorium on West Bank settlement construction expired six weeks ago, prompting the Palestinians to freeze ties until Israel reimposes the ban.

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Awlaqi urges killing of Americans, slams Iran

Gulf Sunnis will be 'the first victims' of Iran

SANAA: US-Yemeni radical cleric Anwar Al-Awlaqi has called for the killing of Americans "without hesitation" and accused Iran of trying to impose control over Sunnis in the Gulf, SITE monitors said yesterday. "Do not consult anyone in killing Americans," Awlaqi said in a 23-minute video posted on jihadist websites, according to the US monitoring group. "Killing the devil does not need any fatwa (religious edict)," he added.

"It's either us or you," Awlaqi said, addressing Americans in the video, which first surfaced on October 23 when one minute of footage was posted on jihadist forums. "America and Israel are controlling our ummah (nation) and soon Iran will interfere to get its share of the pie," he said. "There is a US-Israeli struggle on one side and an Iranian on the other to impose their control on Sunni areas." The Gulf's "Sunni citizens" will be

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Anwar Al-Awlaqi

Sniffer 'hero rats' saving lives in war zones, labs

MOROGORO: A baby rat in a tiny red and black harness twitches its pointed nose incessantly, probing a grassy field where it is being trained by a pioneering Dutch NGO to sniff out deadly landmines. Other rats trained under the same scheme have already helped clear large swathes of land in neighboring mine-infested Mozambique. Babette, the two-month-old baby, walks unsteadily across the weedy patch followed by two trainers rolling a bar that teaches her to go back and forth across the patch in straight lines.

Light, with an acute sense of smell and easily motivated by food rewards, giant African pouched rats have been found to be highly effective in mine detection by APOPO, the Dutch non-governmental organization that launched the training project — the first of its kind — in this Tanzanian town. The rodents are trained to detect the TNT in landmines through Pavlovian conditioning: a click sound to signal a food reward whenever

they make the correct detection.

Other rats in the same project undergo a different type of training—they learn to sniff out tuberculosis in laboratory sputum samples, providing a second-line screening for hospitals in Tanzania where lab testing has 60 percent accuracy. Training begins at four weeks old when the baby rats are exposed to humans to rid them of their fear of people and new surroundings, after which they are taught to associate a click sound with food.

Once that is achieved, they are then trained to distinguish TNT scent from other smells. When they successfully distinguish it, the click is sounded and they are given a bit of banana, thus reinforcing the link between positive TNT identification and food. In all, it takes nine months of painstaking on- and off-field training for a rat to be deployed for mine detection. "This work is not easy," recounts trainer Abdullah Mchomvu, holding a rat under his left arm. "You have to be patient. Sometimes I get frustrated, but

then again I tell myself these are animals."

But "this work saves lives," he added. It takes two deminers a day to clear a 200 square-meter minefield, but if they work with two rats they can sweep it in two hours. "Rats have an image problem"—"Detection is the most difficult, dangerous and expensive part of mine action. Since rats are much easier to train than dogs, rats in this environment are much more appropriate," said Bart Weetjens, the founder of APOPO.

"They are very effective. We have very high success rates. So far they have helped re-open almost two million square meters of land" in Mozambique. In the lab, the rats use their keen noses to positively identify tuberculosis sputum samples. Ten samples are slotted into the bottom portion of a long rectangular glass cage containing one trained rat. The animal sniffs each sample and scratches intently over any suspect sample, with a

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MOROGORO: A baby giant African pouched rat is being trained by a pioneering Belgian NGO to sniff out deadly landmines. — AFP

Qatar donates \$2 million for Interpol

Interpol urged to fight 'radicalization'

DOHA: Qatar said yesterday that it will give two million dollars towards a new anti-crime centre in Singapore as global police organization Interpol opened its annual assembly in the gas-rich emirate. Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani announced the funding at the opening session of the 79th Interpol General Assembly, which is expected to approve detailed plans for the new centre.

The so-called Interpol Global Complex is intended to complement the agency's existing general secretariat in Lyons, France, and is planned to go into full operation in late 2013 or early 2014. It will provide innovative forensics and database research, and enhance the organization's ability to provide round-the-clock support to national police forces across time zones, the Interpol website says. The assembly is also expected to approve a new Interpol passport, which will allow the agency's staff to travel more easily across the 188 member countries. Several countries have already announced their agreement to allow entry of the new passport holders without a visa.

Security officials around the world need more grass-roots strategies to understand the "radicalization process" and win over extremists with brains-over-brawn outreach such as moderate clerics, said a report yesterday. The paper - compiled by former counterterrorism experts from agencies including the CIA and FBI - urges authorities to expand traditional

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