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# FAKERS FACE

**MANAMA:** The Shura Council yesterday backed a clampdown on fake goods with the approval of a tough new anti-piracy bill.

New legislation approved by the upper house includes jail sentences of up to life imprisonment and a maximum fine of BD20,000 for dealers and importers of fake goods that lead to someone's death.

By MOHAMMED AL A'ALI

It also contains prison sentences of up to 10 years and maximum fine of BD10,000 for dealers and importers of fake products that cause long-term injury.

People caught selling pirated products would face up to a year in

jail and a fine of BD1,000, but the penalty would double if the goods were harmful.

The bill will now go to the Cabinet before being passed back to parliament and the Shura Council for review.

Other punishments include two years in jail and a BD3,000 fine for switching labels on products, which

would double if fake documents were used to authenticate them.

If passed, people selling fake food or medicines for humans and animals would get up to five years in jail and a BD5,000 fine, but this would double if they were harmful.

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Minister quizzed - Page 7

# LIFE IN JAIL

## Death sentence for Al Sabah

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwait's appeals court yesterday upheld a death sentence against a member of the ruling Al Sabah family for drugs trafficking.

The court also confirmed a life term against three accomplices, a Bedouin (stateless Arab), a Bangladeshi and an Indian.

Two others, a Lebanese and an Iraqi, were sentenced to seven years in jail each.

The lower criminal court in January sentenced Shaikh Talal to death.

The sentence must be confirmed by the Supreme Court and then signed by the ruler before he can be executed by hanging.

Kuwaiti police arrested the group in April last year with a large drugs haul, including at least 10kg of cocaine and 120kg of hashish.

The arrest was made on the orders of Kuwait's Defence Minister Shaikh Jaber Al Mubarak Al Jaber Al Sabah, a former interior minister who is a leading figure in the ruling family.

## Committee will choose kings

**RIYADH:** Saudi King Abdullah has issued a royal decree naming 35 sons and grandsons of the kingdom's founder to a commission that would help select future kings.

In October, he had issued a decree that detailed how he would choose members of the Allegiance Commission and how it would pick future successors in an effort to help ensure a smooth transfer of power.

Saudi Arabia's rule has been passed down to the sons of the kingdom's founder Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The 35-member commission includes 16 of Abdulaziz's sons and 19 of his grandsons, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

One of the princes named to the commission was Talal bin Abdulaziz.

## Banks may curb mortgage lending

**MANAMA:** Central Bank of Bahrain said yesterday that it wants to limit banks' exposure to the real estate market and proposed capping the value of mortgages at 25 per cent of total loans.

Banks would be able to finance up to 70pc of the value of a property if the proposal is approved, the bank said in a consultation paper posted on its website. It did not say whether there were limits now.

"Limits are aimed at promoting best practice in banks' exposure to real estate and the avoidance of over-concentration by banks in real estate exposure," it said.

"There will be an aggregate credit concentration limit for real estate financing to individuals, corporations and contractors of 25pc of the bank's gross loan portfolio," it said.

The bank is asking lenders to submit comments on its proposals by January 31.

● Bahrain revised its economic growth figure for 2006 down to 6.5pc from an August estimate of 7.1pc, according to central bank data.

Non-oil industry expanded 7.8pc, led by finance and manufacturing. Manufacturing grew 13pc and financial services 8.2pc, the bank said. Oil industry was unchanged.

## The world this morning

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### Haj monorail?

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia is planning a \$5 billion (BD1.89bn) monorail network to transport millions of pilgrims around the Muslim holy sites during the Haj pilgrimage. The kingdom is to carry out a feasibility study into the proposed network of five lines linking Muzdalifah, Mina and Arafat, the Arab News reported.

Meanwhile, Eid Al Adha, which marks the end of the Haj, will be celebrated on December 19, Saudi Arabia's Supreme Judicial Council said last night.

### New Bapco chief

**MANAMA:** Engineer Abdul Karim Al Sayed has been named as the new Bapco president and chief executive, to replace Dr Mustafa Al Sayed who leaves the company by the year-end. Oil and Gas Affairs Minister and Bapco chairman Dr Abdulhussain Mirza congratulated Engineer Al Sayed on his appointment and thanked Dr Al Sayed for his efforts.

### Arcapita buys US firm

**MANAMA:** Bahrain-based Islamic investment bank Arcapita said yesterday it had bought US drill-bit maker Varel for \$401.4 million (BD151.7m). "Varel has potential to penetrate the \$3 billion oil and gas drill-bit market," the bank said in a statement. "Since 2004, the company has been growing at more than 40 per cent per year."

### 300kg of hashish seized

**MANAMA:** Police seized a huge haul of hashish last night from four men at Suq Waqf, Hamad Town, reports RASHA AL QAHTANI. A team from the narcotics department conducted the operation in which 300kg of the drug was confiscated and the Bahrainis arrested, said Public Security deputy chief and Acting CID director Tariq bin Dayna.

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