

'Queen of Malaysia amazed'

Cultural salon plays vital role in presenting country: Al-Asousi

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 25: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi affirmed that cultural salon the embassy has opened in Kuala Lumpur plays a vital role in presenting the country in the Malaysian society, reports Al-Rai

daily. Ambassador Al-Asousi noted members of the diplomatic mission became acquainted with Kuwaiti heritage and civilization through the salon. The Queen of Malaysia amazed

by what she saw of the real heritage was quoted as saying "I didn't know where Kuwait is located, but I have now learnt about the culture of the Kuwaiti people through this cultural salon". The ambassador explained a

visit of the Queen to his residence afforded him an opportunity to present a full cultural program and displayed Kuwaiti women fashion. Other activities on the program included varieties of Kuwaiti cuisine and meth-

od of preparation, marriage ceremony starting from the engagement to the stage where the wife moves into her matrimonial home. He revealed some 45 wives of the foreign envoys to Malaysia and

20 women aides of the Queen attended the event. He reiterated roughly 250 Kuwaitis are currently studying for Master and Doctorate degrees in Malaysia, and he hopes the number will increase in due course.

Decision to stop appointing expats in public sector being implemented

Info refers some Twitter users to Public Prosecution



Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed
Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Ghulam Dastgir posing with participants.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 25: The government continues to implement the decision to ban the appointment of expatriates in the government sector according to instructions of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), reports Al-Anba quoting reliable sources.

The sources said, there are no exceptions to this decision which includes advisers. The sources added for almost two years the government has adhered to this decision and appointments in government sector with the exceptions of the doctors and teachers, and those of limited disciplines.

The sources also welcomed the full cooperation of the Kuwaitization and Employment Committee of the National Assembly saying the government before the formation of the Committee was providing the National Assembly and the MPs all information and statistics on employment and the process of replacement, which continued as per the schedule.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Information has referred some Twitter users to the Public Prosecution for investigations and necessary legal action on allegations related to insulting leading icons in Saudi Arabia, reports Al-Rai daily quoting informed sources.

They said the concerned departments of Ministry of Information have been monitoring the reports and texts of the press and licensed mass media besides websites, adding that they have also been keeping a tab on some Twitter users who were noted to have offended political icons of Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng Ahmed Al-Manfouhi has approved a decision of the Personnel Affairs Committee to stop granting shift allowances to directors, supervisors and others holding supervisory positions from January, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to a reliable source from Kuwait Municipality, the State Audit Bureau stressed in its last report that those holding supervisory positions are not entitled to shift allowances and food allowances, which were being disbursed to them over the past years, especially since these allowances range from KD 300 to KD 400.

He indicated the possibility of a wide reshuffle in the next phase covering a number of directors and supervisors.

SAB cites violations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 25: The State Audit Bureau disclosed a number of violations related to squandering of public funds in Ministry of Interior with the spending of huge amounts for hospitality purposes such as holding parties and offering expensive gifts, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The bureau stated in its report, which it prepared based on a request from the National Assembly, that these violations pose great danger to the public funds.

It explained that the final accounts of Ministry of Interior revealed an increase in the activities related to hospitality, ceremonies, gifts and trips, all of which cost nearly KD 33,438,400. This means the sum has increased by more than KD 29 million from the sum of KD 4 million which was originally stated. The increase of 736 percent happened over two fiscal years — 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.

The total number of rooms the ministry booked for guests in hotels during the fiscal years of 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 are 8,655, as estimated by the ministry. However, the actual number of hotel rooms paid for by the ministry during that period was 191,050. This is 2,207 percent more than what the ministry had estimated.

The ministry estimated that the number of guests expected in the two fiscal years would be 53,200.



Ali Thunyan Al-Ghanim with Federal Republic of Germany's Ambassador Karfried Bergner.

KCCI chairman hosts German envoy

Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Ali Thunyan Al-Ghanim recently hosted in his office the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kuwait Karfried Bergner.

The visiting envoy was accompanied by Advisor and Deputy Head of Mission Rudiger Zettel, and the meeting was held in the presence of the Director General of KCCI Rabbah

Abdul-Rahman Al-Rabbah to discuss and prepare the ground for a visit of a powerful delegation of businesspersons from the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry set for Jan 2018.

The delegation is billed to hold bilateral meetings with Kuwaiti business sector on commercial horizons and methods of starting new investments.



Director of Safety and Security Department at Kuwait University Khalid Al-Yaqout said the Emergency Committee of the department, in coordination with the Printing Press of Kuwait University, organized an evacuation drill on Tuesday, Dec 12 at the Printing Press building within Shuwaikh campus.

He explained that the aim of the evacuation drill was to train employ-

ees on the proper steps to take in times of emergency incidents. Based on a simulated situation of a fire incident inside the Printing Press building, a call was made to report the incident. It took four minutes and 23 seconds to evacuate 32 employees from the building.

Al-Yaqout thanked the administration of Kuwait University's Printing Press for their cooperation.

Syrian forces

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playing a major role in the ongoing battles.

"The Iranian backed militias are trying to consolidate their sphere of influence all the way from southwest of Damascus to the Israeli border," said Suhaib al Ruhail, an official from the Liwa al Furqan rebel group that operates in the area.

Worried by Iran's expanding influence in Syria after the defeat of Islamic State, Israel has in the last few weeks stepped up its strikes against suspected Iranian targets inside Syria.

Early this month an Israeli strike on a base near Kiswah, south of Damascus was widely believed to be an Iranian military compound, according to a Western intelligence source

Israel has been lobbying both big powers to deny Iran, Lebanon's Hezbollah and other Shi'ite militias any permanent bases in Syria, and to keep them away from the Golan, as they gain ground while helping Damascus beat back Sunni-led rebels.

The southwest of Syria is part of a de-escalation zone in southern Syria agreed last July between Russia and Washington, the first such understanding between the two powers.

The area has not seen Russian bombing unlike other ceasefire areas in Syria. Diplomatic sources say several thousand Shi'ite fighters who have been amassing from outside the Quneitra province are pitted against hundreds of Islamist and mainstream Free Syria Army (FSA) rebels closing ranks under the banner of Itihad Quwt Jabal al Sheikh "Union of fighters of Jabal al Sheikh". They are mainly drawn from local fighters from the area.

With the army and Iranian backed offensive widening, the rebels have called on youths to enlist as mosque imams in Beit Jin called on people to take up arms and fight the army.

Rebels still have a sizeable presence in central and southern Quneitra, in the Syrian Golan Heights.

Western diplomatic sources say the crushing of the Sunni rebel presence in areas they have been in since 2013 will allow Lebanon's Hezbollah to open another secure arms supply line from its border in northern Lebanon into Syria.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, Iran has had a growing presence in the country, deploying thousands of Shi'ite fighters who have fought against both mainstream Sunni rebel groups and more militant groups.

Earlier, Iraqi Shiite paramilitary groups have deployed to the frontier to back up border guard forces who came

under fire from within Syria over the past three days, one of their commanders said on Friday.

There was no immediate word on who opened fire from Syrian territory, but forces arrayed against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria expect the group will resort to guerrilla warfare after losing its urban bastions earlier this year.

"After several Iraqi border guard positions came under several attacks by missiles, and backup from security forces was late, the 13th brigade of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) was deployed and targeted the origins of the launch," PMF commander for west Anbar, Qassem Mesleh, said in a statement.

"Operations command and the infantry brigade are now present on the Iraqi-Syrian border in border guard positions to repel any attack or movement by the enemy," Mesleh said.

"This area is not within the PMF's remit but it is our duty to back up all security forces."

The PMF is an umbrella grouping of mostly Iran-backed and trained Shiite militias that formally report to Iraq's prime minister but are separate from the military and police.

Sunni Muslims and Kurds have called on Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to disarm the PMF, which they say are responsible for widespread abuses against their communities.

An Iraqi military spokesman confirmed the deployment. Brigadier General Yahya Rasool told Reuters it was temporary, however, and "very normal" because it was the PMF's duty to back up government forces. The PMF were officially made part of the Iraqi security establishment by law and formally answer to Abadi in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

Abadi has said the state should have a monopoly on the legitimate use of arms.

Iraqi forces on Dec. 9 recaptured the last swathes of territory still under Islamic State control along the frontier with Syria and secured the western desert. It marked the end of the war against the militants, three years after they overran about a third of Iraq's territory.

Rasool, the military spokesman, denied backup to the border guards had been late.

"The primary responsibility for the borders lies with the border guards and the army, however," said Rasool.

He said Iraqi forces coordinate with both the Syrian army, which is backed by Russia, Iran and Iran-backed Shiite militias, and the U.S.-backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab militias known as the Syrian Democratic Forces opposed to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

He said parts of Syria — including many areas on the border with Iraq — were still under Islamic State control.

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