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KUWAITI FM REAFFIRMS CARE FOR EXPATRIATES

No bid to suspend Filipino residency

Manila yet to produce evidence on cases

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday the expatriate workers in Kuwait enjoy care and appreciation.

The affairs relating to their stay and work contracts are governed by the relevant rules of law, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah told reporters during a reception held by Indian Embassy in Kuwait to celebrate the Republic Day of India.

Citing the annual review reports that praise Kuwait's human right records, he said the country addresses the issues of foreign expats in "a candid and transparent way that preserves their rights" as per the provisions of law.

"These issues as well as the recent incident do

not affect the country's humanitarian fame," Al-Jarallah said.

"The huge expatriate community in Kuwait, including nearly 276,000 from the Philippines, testifies to the care and stability enjoyed by the expats.

"The Filipino workers enjoy comfortable conditions that guarantee their rights regardless of the recent unjustifiable fuss," he pointed out.

On behalf of Kuwait, Al-Jarallah expressed regret over the comments, recently made by President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte on the Filipino workers in Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry made its point clear to the Filipino authorities regarding the reported cases and demanded evidence of any cases but they failed to produce any, he revealed.

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Foreign Minister meets Saudi envoy

Kuwait protests insult on minister

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (Agencies): Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah he reviewed the sisterly relationship between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during his meeting with Saudi Ambassador Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez.

"We expressed regret over the offending remarks on (Kuwait's) respectable Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan who is held in high esteem by everybody," Al-Jarallah said Wednesday.

Al-Jarallah added that the talks with Dr Al-Fayez were positive and constructive.

"We assert our rejection and astonishment at this insult because of its impact on the warm and distinguished fraternal relations between the two sisterly countries," official news agency KUNA reported late on Wednesday, quoting Jarallah as

telling journalists at an Indian embassy reception.

Jarallah spoke after Turki Al al-Sheikh, in a message on his Twitter account, slammed Roudhan following a visit he made to Qatar last week reportedly to thank Doha for its help in getting a FIFA ban on Kuwaiti soccer lifted.

Kuwaiti and Qatari media had published a photo of Roudhan standing next to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani holding a Kuwaiti soccer team T-shirt.

The crisis, in which Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt have boycotted Qatar, arose in summer 2016 when the four countries cut diplomatic, transport and

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Yarmouk Cultural Centre presents an evening with 'Qannun' performed by Maestro Magdy Talaat and his band. The music is a mixture of the best classical and modern Qannun music composed by top musicians in the Arab world.

Housing aid eyed for Kuwaiti wives with foreign husbands

By Abubakar A. Ibrahim Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Women and Family Affairs Committee on Thursday discussed several items in its agenda, including the right of Kuwaiti women married to foreigners to obtain houses and housing loans in the presence of State Minister for Housing and Services Affairs Jinan Bushahri.

Committee Chairman MP Saleh Ashour disclosed they reached an agreement to amend some laws to achieve a breakthrough in granting Kuwaiti women married to foreigners the right to obtain houses.

He said several ideas and solutions were presented at the meeting such as the implementation of housing projects for Kuwaiti women married to foreigners; starting with the construction of 1,100 housing units within two years.

Meanwhile, MP Riyadh Al-Adssani denounced the alleged attempts to make it appear that the grilling of Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh was sectarian or tribal.

He retorted, "In the next few days, I will grill State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi, so is he a tribal minister?"

About his position on the no-confidence motion against Al-Sabeeh, the lawmaker asked why he will vote on the no-confidence against a minister who is striving to implement reforms and rectify mistakes.

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US-Turkey tensions escalate

KIRIKHAN, Turkey, Jan 25, (AFP): Tensions between Ankara and Washington over the Turkish army's operation in Syria escalated further on Thursday as Turkey accused the White House of misrepresenting a phone call between Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Donald Trump.

The assault by Turkish troops against a Kurdish militia in northern Syria has seen Washington's fellow NATO member Ankara attacking a US-allied force, even raising fears of military confrontation between the two Alliance powers.

Turkey says it has made gradual progress in the offensive against Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militia but has refused to give any time limit for the campaign.

After the Turkish and US presidents spoke late on Wednesday, the White House said Trump had urged Turkey to de-escalate, limit its military actions", expressing concern that the assault could harm the fight against jihadists.

But a Turkish official said the US statement did "not accurately reflect the content" of the call, adding that Trump did not share any concerns regarding "escalating violence".

Offensive

Turkey launched an offensive against the YPG militia on Saturday in their enclave of Afrin, supporting Syrian rebels with air strikes and ground troops.

Ankara views the YPG as a terror group linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) inside Turkey. The PKK is blacklisted by Ankara and its Western allies.

But the YPG is still working closely with Washington against the Islamic State (IS) extremist group in Syria, in defiance of Turkey's warnings.

In a move that could further raise the stakes, Erdogan on Wednesday raised the prospect of an operation on Manbij, a YPG-held town to the east, where there is a US military presence.

On Thursday, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim hit out at the US "support for terror organisations", which "could not be accepted".

"The country we call an 'ally' in NATO is in cahoots with terror organisations," he said in a speech in Ankara.

"This is a grave and very painful situation. For a country like America to work with terror organisations is really very humiliating," Yildirim said.

Following the Erdogan-Trump telephone talks, the US envoy to the coalition against IS, Brett McGurk, said on Twitter the "prolonged operation risks giving life to ISIS (IS) as it's on verge of defeat".

"The US (is) now engaged intensively to urge restraint and

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Senior jihadists await fate

No help from home for Euro 'jihadists'

PARIS, Jan 25, (AFP): European nations rarely miss a chance to slam the use of the death penalty by others, but they have largely turned a deaf ear to pleas from citizens facing execution in Iraq for fighting with the Islamic State group.

Several hundred foreigners, both men and women, are thought to have been detained in Iraq since the counter-offensive that dislodged IS fighters from the country's urban centres last year.

Diplomatic efforts to secure their return to Europe for trial have been half-hearted at best, with few politicians eager to be seen defending people who joined the terror group behind the deaths of dozens on home soil in recent years.

More often they reiterate that Iraq has the sovereign right to try and punish people found guilty of killing its own citizens in an effort to create a modern "caliphate".

The fate of European captives in Syria is even more complicated, since they have often been seized by Kurds who do not have a formally recognised state of their own.

Lawyers for French fighters in Syria, for example, have claimed they are being held "arbitrarily" by non-state authorities — an argument that has failed to sway official stances so far.

Faced with overwhelmingly hostile public opinion, humanitarian appeals have also made little traction, even when captives are being held with young children born after they left for Iraq and Syria.

On Sunday, an Iraqi court condemned a German woman to death by hanging after finding her guilty of belonging to IS, the first such sentence in a case involving a European woman.

So far, the German government has said only that it is providing "consular support" for four of its citizens held in Iraq, declining to provide details.

In December, an Iraqi-Swedish man was hanged along with 37 others accused of being IS or al-Qaeda members, despite efforts by Sweden to have the prisoner serve a life sentence instead.

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Qataris eye air defense system

MOSCOW, Jan 25, (RTRS): Qatar is in talks with Moscow to buy Russian S-400 missile air defense systems, Tass state news agency quoted the Qatari ambassador to Russia on Thursday as saying.

The answer to this question is yes," Fahad bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah said in an interview with Tass, when asked if Qatar was planning to buy the S-400 systems. "Talks about the subject are at an advanced stage."

He said an agreement on military and technical cooperation between the two countries, signed in October, had opened the door for further cooperation between Russia and Qatar in the defence field.

This cooperation includes "supplies of military hardware, military training of officers and soldiers, equipment and, indeed, cooperation on the level of special services."

Attiyah added that the two countries would have military attaches posted in embassies.

Qatar and Russia signed a military technical cooperation agreement and memorandum of

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Four Americans among 25 killed in Afghan hotel attack

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (Agencies): Four US citizens were killed and two injured in last Saturday's attack by the Taleban on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul, the US State Department said on Wednesday.

"We can confirm that there were four US citizens killed and two injured. We offer our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed and wish for the speedy recovery of those wounded," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.

Glenn Selig, a spokesman for Trump campaign adviser Rick Gates, was among the Americans who were killed, according to a statement from Selig's company, Selig Multimedia.

Selig represented Gates, who has been charged in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of alleged Russian meddling in

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Newswatch

DUBAI: Emirates will increase the number of flights to some US cities, it said on Thursday, in a sign that demand dented by the policies of US President Donald Trump's administration could be returning.

Emirates cut frequencies to five US cities last year, blaming new US restrictions on citizens of some Muslim-majority countries from entering the US, and curbs on carrying large electronic devices in passenger jet cabins.

The Middle East's largest airline plans to restore daily flights to Fort Lauderdale and Orlando from its Dubai hub from March 25, having been cut back to five a week last year.

This increase reflects the "steady rebound in customer

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Table with financial data: USS/KD 0.29955/65, Euro/KD 0.3742, Yen/KD 0.0027, British £/KD 0.4271, KSE +15.83 pts at closing Jan 25, DOW +161.58 pts at 21:40 Jan 25, Nasdaq +16.85 pts at 21:40 Jan 25, FTSE -27.59 pts at closing Jan 25, Nikkei -271.29 pts at closing Jan 25, Gold \$1,354.95 per oz (London), NYMEX crude \$66.05 pb, Brent crude \$70.99 pb, 3-month \$ LIBOR rate 1.75246%

Kuwait climbs on environment rating

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): Kuwait surged 52 spots on the Environmental Performance Index to reach 61st out of 180 countries, the Environment Public Authority said on Wednesday, hailing the progress as a "qualitative leap." According to the new assessment, Kuwait recorded the "second highest score in the Gulf and Arab regions," EPA Director General and Chairman Sheikh Abdallah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said in a statement.

The index is a joint effort between Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.

On its website, the EPI, which measures environmental health and ecosystem vitality over several performance indicators, said the improvement was due to the "establishment of areas protecting biodiversity and habitat." Sheikh Abdallah said the score was a result of the contributions of state, private and volunteer bodies in the country, and measures put in place to ensure the application of EPA policies, namely an environmental protection law.

The assessment illustrates the positive direction assumed by the EPA through several indicators, he added.

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