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Britain agrees to deploy troops to Kuwait



KUNA photo
Florida Governor Rick Scott with Director of the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah.

Florida Governor joyful in Kuwait

Florida Governor Rick Scott expressed his happiness to be in Kuwait and thank the US army for their services as part of the US Independence Day.

"I am happy to be in Kuwait this Independence Day to thank our Florida national guard and army reserves for their service," Scott told KUNA on Thursday.

He also said it was his pleasure to meet with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman and Director of the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah to discuss US-Kuwaiti relations.

"Florida is happy to welcome thousands of Kuwaiti tourists each year and the more than 600 students who are currently studying at our universities," he said. "I am grateful for the support Kuwait provides to our military and look forward to continued collaboration between our nations," he also added. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, July 5: A senior diplomatic source has confirmed Britain's agreement to deploy troops to Kuwait following a joint steering committee meeting last week during the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid to the United Kingdom, reports Annahar daily.

The same source added that Britain welcomes the Kuwaiti request and details of the pact are to be discussed later. He noted the troops will most likely be deployed at the end of this year.

The British media revealed that the United Kingdom is considering a request for a limited military presence in Kuwait, indicating the country's interest in deploying an additional force.

In this context, British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport said in an interview with the British military network that the size of the troops will not be huge and "We are looking at all options available for that, noting security relations is the pillar of bilateral relations between the two countries".

The ambassador stressed that "sending a British military force to Kuwait would be part of the joint defense cooperation between the two countries, known as the Joint Steering Committee". He described the security relations between London and Kuwait as "pivotal" in the framework of bilateral friendship that has been going on for 120 years.

Ties between both countries are age-old. In the late 19th century, Kuwait's then ruler

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Hormuz for all or no one: Guards; We'll open it: US

Russia to do everything possible to keep N-deal

LONDON, July 5 (Agencies): The head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Thursday their forces were ready to implement Iran's threat to block the Strait of Hormuz and that if Iran cannot sell its oil under the US pressure, no other regional country will be allowed to.

"We are hopeful that this plan expressed by our president will be implemented if needed ... We will make the enemy understand that ei-

ther all can use the Strait of Hormuz or no one," Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, was quoted as saying by Tasnim news agency.

The US Navy stands ready to ensure free navigation and the flow of commerce, the US military's Central Command said on Thursday, as Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned they would block oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz if necessary.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and some senior military commanders

have threatened in recent days to disrupt oil shipments from the Gulf countries if Washington tries to cut Tehran's exports.

Praising Rouhani's "firm stance" against the United States, the head of the Revolutionary Guards said on Thursday their forces were ready to block the strait which links the Gulf to the open sea.

In May, US President Donald Trump pulled out of a multinational deal under which sanctions on Iran were lifted in return for curbs to its nuclear programme. Washington has since told countries they must stop buying Iranian oil from Nov 4 or face financial measures.

If Iran cannot sell its oil under US pressure, then no other regional country will be allowed to either, said Mohammad Ali Jafari, who commands the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iran's most powerful military force.

The Strait of Hormuz is the most important oil transit channel in the world with about one-fifth of global oil consumption passing through each day.

"The US and its partners provide, and promote security and stability in the region," Central Command spokesman Navy Captain Bill Urban said in an email to Reuters.

Asked what would be the US Naval Forces' reaction if Iran blocks the strait, he said: "Together, we stand ready to ensure the freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce wherever international law allows."

The Guards' naval arm lacks a strong conventional fleet. However, it has many speed boats and portable anti-ship missile launchers, and can lay mines.

A senior US military leader said in 2012 the Guards have the ability to block the strait "for a period of time" but the United States would take action to reopen it in such an event.

Iran's representative to OPEC says US President Donald Trump should stop tweeting about wanting lower oil prices, saying that doing so has the opposite effect.

Hossein Kazempour Ardebili was quoted by the oil ministry's website Thursday as telling Trump to "please stop," adding that "with your frequent and indecent tweets oil prices have gone up 10 dollars."

Trump has repeatedly called on the oil cartel to reduce prices. On Wednesday he tweeted that OPEC is "doing little to help," adding that "if anything, they are driving prices higher."

Tehran blames rising prices on US sanctions imposed on Iran and Venezuela, founding members of the cartel. Last month, members of OPEC agreed to pump an additional 1 million barrels of crude daily, a move that should help contain prices.

Russia will do everything possible to maintain the global nuclear deal with Iran, the foreign ministry in Moscow was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency on Thursday.

France on Thursday rejected

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NewsWatch

BAGHDAD: Russian forces killed the son of Islamic State group leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a missile attack on a Syrian cave in which he was hiding, Iraqi intelligence said Wednesday.

IS's propaganda outlet Amaq said Hudhayfah al-Badri was killed in an "operation against the Nussayriyyah and the Russians at the thermal power station in Homs", in a statement published Tuesday alongside a photo of a young man holding an assault rifle.

Nussayriyyah is the term used by IS for the Alawite religious minority sect of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. (AFP)

MISHKAB, Iraq: Iraq has banned its farmers from planting summer crops this year as the country grapples with a crippling water shortage that shows few signs of abating.

Citing high temperatures and insufficient rains, Dhafer Abdalla, an adviser to Iraq's Ministry of Water Resources, told The Associated Press that the country has only enough water to irrigate half its farmland this summer.

But farmers fault the government for failing to modernize how it manages water and irrigation, and they blame neighboring Turkey for stopping up the Tigris and Euphrates rivers behind dams it wants to keep building. (AP)

DUBAI: Coalition forces supporting the Yemeni government shot down a rebel drone Thursday over their military base in the southern city of Aden, a source in the Saudi-led alliance said.

The Iran-allied Houthi insurgents claimed via their Al-Masirah TV to have "successfully" targeted the Brega military base in Aden with a drone.

They said it was the first time they had targeted the coalition in the port city, where President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's government has its headquarters. (AFP)

JERUSALEM: Israeli police scuffled with activists protesting the planned demolition of a Bedouin hamlet in the West Bank on Wednesday amid international opposition to the razing of the site.

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Smoke rises above rebel-held areas of the city of Daraa during reported airstrikes by Syrian regime forces on July 5. Waves of air strikes pounded rebel-held areas of southern Syria after the failure a day earlier of Russian-brokered talks to end the offensive in Daraa province, which has killed dozens and forced tens of thousands from their homes. (AFP)

Hezb aid Syria assault on south

BEIRUT, July 5, (Agencies): Hezbollah is helping to lead a Russian-backed offensive in southern Syria, pro-Damascus sources said, exposing the limits of US policy that hopes Moscow can get Iran and groups it backs out of the country.

Hezbollah's role in the offensive near the border with Jordan and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights has also defied Israeli demands that Iranian proxies be kept away from its frontier — a fault line of the decades-old Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Hezbollah is a fundamental participant in planning and directing this battle," a commander in the regional alliance that backs Damascus told Reuters. "Everyone knows this — the Israeli enemy, friends, and even the Russians."

Hezbollah's role includes directing Syrian forces, the commander said. It has also deployed its own elite forces.

But the Iranian-backed group is keeping a lower profile than in past Syria campaigns, acknowledging the risks of Israeli escalation.

A senior official in the regional alliance that backs Assad said Hezbollah was fighting "under the cover" of the Syrian army in the south. A European diplomat said Iranian-backed forces were not thought to be taking part "in strength".

For Assad, the campaign holds out the prospect of reopening a vital trade artery to

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MPs take action for Baha'i rights

By Ahmed Al-Naqeeb
Arab-Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 5: Backing their initiative with the Constitution, MPs Ahmed Al-Fadel and Khaled Al-Shatti submitted a proposal to cancel Article 39 of Ministerial Decree 66/1966 which prohibits certification of marriage within the Baha'i faith.

The MPs argued that the State must allow followers of Baha'i faith to authenticate their marriage certificates and be acknowledged by the authorities as per

the Constitution, which is the foundation of Kuwaiti democracy and was enacted to safeguard integrity of the country and rights of the people.

They cited articles seven and eight of the Constitution stipulating: "Justice, freedom and equality are the pillars of society; and cooperation and compassion are firm links binding all citizens. The State shall preserve the pillars of society and guarantee security, tranquility and equal opportunities for all citizens."

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General view of the Palestinian Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar, east of Jerusalem in the occupied West Bank as Israeli police claimed the village closed military area on July 5. Khan al-Ahmar, which Israeli authorities say was illegally constructed and the supreme court in May rejected a final appeal against its demolition, is located near several Israeli settlements along a road leading to the Dead Sea. Activists are concerned continued Israeli settlement construction in the area could effectively divide the northern and southern West Bank. (AFP)

Resistance to 'Abraaj' deal

DUBAI, July 5, (RTRS): US investment manager Colony Capital's deal to take control of four funds belonging to Dubai-based Abraaj is encountering investor resistance, four sources familiar with the matter said, piling further pressure on the embattled Middle East buyout firm.

Colony's offer last month to buy the fund management business that runs Abraaj's Latin America, Sub Saharan Africa, North Africa and Turkey funds followed months of turmoil caused by a dispute between Abraaj and four investors over the use of their money in a \$1 billion healthcare fund.

Abraaj denies any wrongdoing but the dispute has weighed heavily on what is the largest private equity firm in the Middle East and Africa. Having managed almost \$14 billion in assets at its peak, Abraaj filed for provisional liquidation in the Cayman Islands last month.

Colony's proposed deal in its original form could be put aside because of resistance from some investors, two sources said without identifying specific aspects of the transaction.

"The issue is how the deal would be structured. Colony doesn't want to do anything

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US\$/KD 0.30250/60
Euro/KD 0.3535
Yen/KD 0.0027
British £/KD 0.4001
KSE +34.03 pts at closing July 5 See Page 29
DOW +155.20 pts at 21:30 July 5 See Page 30
Nasdaq +61.35 pts at 21:30 July 5
FTSE +30.13 pts at closing July 5
Nikkei -170.05 pts at closing July 5
Gold \$1,256.90 per oz (London)
NYMEX crude \$73.21 per barrel
Brent crude \$78.06 per barrel
3-month \$ LIBOR rate 2.33731%