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'To whom it may concern' won't fly at border points

Civil ID must

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) says the certificates issued under the title "To whom it may concern" obtained by some expatriates are not an alternative to producing the Civil ID upon departure or arrival in Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Informed sources at PACI pointed out that these certificates issued by PACI include the personal data and define the residence validity but they are issued for the expatriates to use in Kuwait until their Civil IDs are ready.

Sources at PACI said these certificates cannot be used at border points.

No UN seal on arms ID

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 14, (Agencies): Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says the United Nations has not been able to independently corroborate that the cruise missiles and drones used in attacks earlier this year on an airport and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia "are of Iranian origin."

The UN chief said in a report to the council obtained Friday by The Associated Press that the UN also can't confirm that the missiles and drones were transferred from Iran "in a manner inconsistent" with the Security Council resolution that endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six key countries.

The United States has blamed Iran for the attacks. The Saudis said the missiles and drones were Iranian but stopped short of accusing Iran of firing them.

The UN chief said the UN examined debris from the weapon systems used in the attacks and is still collecting and analyzing additional information and trying to establish the supply chain. He said he will report on its further findings "in due course, as appropriate."

The report also includes allegations from the United States, Israel, France, Germany and the United Kingdom that Iran carried out ballistic missile-related activities that go against the resolution's call on Tehran not to undertake any activity related to nuclear-capable ballistic missiles. It also includes Iran's denial of all allegations and statement that none of its missiles are "designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons."

Assessment

Secretary-General Guterres made no assessment of the allegations and the denials.

The Security Council is scheduled to receive an open briefing on the report on Dec 19.

On the Saudi attacks, Guterres said UN experts were able to examine debris recovered by the Saudis from a June 12 attack on the Abha international airport in the southwest, from attacks on Saudi Aramco oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais on Sept 14, from a second attack on the Abha airport in August, and an attack on another oil facility in Afif in May.

France views as essential the respect for freedom of navigation and for maritime law in the key Strait of Hormuz through which around 25 percent of world oil supplies move every day, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Friday.

Speaking during question time in the French Senate, Le Drian underlined that protecting security in the Gulf was an action promoted by France in a number of areas.

"France, which has a particular responsibility because of its status as a permanent member of the Security Council, is therefore working for a de-escalation through several initiatives," he noted.

He said that "in the first place, France promotes action centred on maritime security in the Gulf (and) ... France is working on the establishment of a European maritime surveillance mission in order to improve knowledge of the situation as well as the navigations conditions in the area."

Denmark said on Thursday that it will send a frigate with a crew of about 155 and a helicopter to a European-led military mission aimed at monitoring shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf.

The mission was put together after Iran seized a British oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz in July. Regional tensions have risen sharply over Tehran's unravelling nuclear deal with world powers.

NATO chief 'hails' Kuwait efforts for region stability

Stoltenberg leads 'versary delegation

BRUSSELS, Dec 14, (KUNA): NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has lauded Kuwait's efforts to promote regional peace and security and stressed that the security of the members of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) is of great importance for the Alliance.

In an exclusive interview with (KUNA) ahead of his visit to Kuwait to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the ICI next Sunday and Monday, he noted that Kuwait was chosen as the venue for the major event because it hosts the NATO-ICI Regional Centre.

He said this center "has played a very

important role in furthering our cooperation with the Gulf Countries — Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative."

"I was proud to open the NATO-ICI Regional Centre in 2017; and I welcome the opportunity to go back to Kuwait very soon, together with all NATO Ambassadors represented at the North Atlantic Council, at such a historical juncture in the evolution of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative," said the NATO chief.

"I welcome Kuwait's long-standing efforts to contribute to regional stability, including through the NATO Istanbul Cooperation Initiative," he underlined.

"The security of our ICI partners is of strategic importance to NATO. Through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, we have a unique platform where we discuss security issues of common concern," said Stoltenberg.

"Over the years, we have increased the quantity and the quality of our cooperation; and our NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait has helped NATO's outreach to the Gulf Cooperation Council, Saudi Arabia and Oman. It is the sovereign prerogative of these countries, ultimately, to decide how they want to move this process forward," he added.

"We can be proud of the past 15 years of partnership under the framework of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. We have conducted a wide range of practical activities, from military training and education, to crisis management, and dealing with natural and man-made disasters," he said.

All the four Gulf partners in the ICI have Individual Partnership Cooperation Program with NATO, he noted.

Under these agreements, a wide range of activities has taken place, including on energy and maritime security, cyber de-

fense, and civil emergency planning, he stated.

He said that ICI countries have taken part in many of NATO operations and missions, including in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya.

"Our upcoming visit will be an opportunity to take stock of the achievements made and to discuss our common way forward with our partners to make our partnership even more efficient," indicated Stoltenberg.

The NATO-ICI Centre in Kuwait has welcomed more than 1,000 officers and experts from NATO and the Gulf there, for joint training, cooperation and capacity building, he noted.

"We are also working together to develop national expertise and resilience on crisis management, cyber security, energy security, maritime security, and

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NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, on Friday, sent a cable of congratulations to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on the Conservative Party's win at the parliamentary elections.

His Highness the Amir praised the bilateral and historic ties between Kuwait and the UK, stressing the constant aspiration to strengthen these common relations.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Prime Minister Johnson. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday sent a cable of condolence to German Chancellor Angela Merkel over the victims of an explosion at a residential building in the town of Blankenburg, in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, which killed one person and injured several others.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished mercy for the deceased and a swift recovery for the injured.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah voiced similar sentiments in a couple of separate cables to the German Chancellor. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwaiti nationals have been urged to avoid traveling to Iraq due to the state of instability in the neighbouring country.

The Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad urged their citizens, who are now in Iraq, to leave immediately for their security and safety, reports GDNOnline.com.

DUBAI: Oman's 79-year-old ruler has returned to his sultanate after traveling to Belgium for a medical checkup, the sultanate's state-run news agency reported Friday.

Sultan Qaboos bin Said left "for some medical checks that will take a limited period, God willing," the Oman News Agency reported a week earlier, citing a royal court statement. A similar royal statement announced his return, without elaborating. Bin Said has taken medical trips abroad in the past. (AP)

RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud issued on Thursday some royal orders regarding the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC).

According to the orders, some amendments were made to the NACC changing its name to the Control and Anti-Corruption Commission (CACC), the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported.

The CACC forms an investigation unit in criminal cases related to financial and administrative corruption crimes, the agency noted. (KUNA)

ANKARA: The Turkish Foreign Ministry summoned on Friday American Ambassador to Ankara David Satterfield, over a US congressional resolution on Armenian claims concerning 1915 events, diplomatic sources said.

Speaking to Satterfield, Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal voiced Turkey's strong criticism of the resolution, said the sources, who asked not to be named due to restrictions on talking to the media, Anadolu Agency reported. (KUNA)

ANKARA: A former Turkish prime minister who has launched a splinter party to rival President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledged on Friday a return to a parliamentary democracy and to expand rights and freedoms.

Ahmet Davutoglu made the commitment a day after he formally established the breakaway "The Future Party" — a move analysts say could tear away votes from Erdogan's ruling party.

A new presidential system, which came into effect last year and gave Erdogan vast powers, has led to "a fall in democratic standards," Davutoglu told a meeting where he presented his party's manifesto and founding members. (AP)

CAIRO: Heavy fighting raged over the past 24 hours between rebel Libyan commander Khalifa Hifter, who is attempting to take control of the capital Tripoli, and an array of militias loosely allied with the UN-supported government based there, officials said Saturday.

The fresh bout of fighting comes after Hifter, the leader of the self-styled Libyan National Army, declared Thursday that the "zero hour" of the battle for Tripoli had begun, nearly eight months since he began his offensive to take the city. (AP)

ALGIERS: Aabdelmadjid Tebboune has been elected president of Algeria with 58.15 percent of the votes in the presidential election held Thursday, the election watchdog said. (KUNA)



An anti-government protester waves a Lebanese flag in front of a barricade on fire on a road leading to the parliament building, during ongoing protests against the government, in Beirut, Lebanon on Dec 13. Lebanese protesters said they will remain in the streets despite the president's appeal for them to go home. (AP)

Protesters cut off major road

BEIRUT, Dec 14, (Agencies): Anti-government protesters in Lebanon on Friday cut off the main road between Beirut and Tripoli, said Lebanon's National News Agency.

Clashes took place between the demonstrators and the army, which opened the road by force, the agency said.

The army dispersed the demonstrators, arrested six of them and took them to a military prison, north of Beirut, before announcing their release later.

Protesters closed for the second day in a row the entrance of the Vehicles Registration Authority in Jounieh in Mount Lebanon, and prevented employees from entering their offices.

Meanwhile, a number of protesters entered the Social Security building in the city of Sidon, southern Lebanon, and demanded rights to health insurance, and full coverage of chronic and incurable diseases.

The protesters called for fighting corruption and rejecting bribery in all state departments and official institutions.

Lebanon has been witnessing demonstrations since Oct 17, calling for the formation of a technocratic government to deal with the financial and living conditions in the country.

The head of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group said Friday the best emergency government to deal with the country's worsening economic crisis is one that includes all political groups.

SPORTS SUNDAY

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New Zealand's Colin de Grandhomme bowls to Australia's Joe Burns during play in their cricket Test in Perth, Australia on Dec 14. (AP)

'Alghanim Auto' opens showroom at 360 Mall

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Protests rock Iraq

BAGHDAD, Dec 14, (Agencies): Iraqi anti-government protests on Saturday reached the 51st day, amid escalating voices rejecting the sit-in at squares, indicating the possibility of MP Mohammad Al-Sudani being nominated as new Prime Minister.

The protesters at Al-Tahrir Square, the stronghold of the protests in Baghdad, via loudspeakers, announced their refusal of Al-Sudani to take over as prime minister as inconsistent with the demands of the demonstrators that the candidate is independent and not affiliated with political parties.

Activists at Al-Tahrir Square told KUNA that they reject any candidate representing any party and all the faces that represent the current political class, and this prompted them to reject Al-Sudani, who was previously minister for more than one government.

The protesters in Al-Diwaniya in the south of Iraq called for a major mass demonstration Sunday, rejecting what they described as repositioning of political and partisan faces, said Dajlah TV channel.

In Basra, Radio Al-Mirbad, noted that the protesters in the province reject what is being raised about the possibility of Al-Sudani being nominated to head the new government and that they are calling for a change in the regime in the country.

On Friday, Al-Sudani announced his resignation from the Islamic Dawaa Party and the State of Law coalition, in a move described as a prelude to his candidacy for prime minister.

The UNSC members welcomed late Friday the efforts to carry out a comprehensive dialogue between the Iraqi government and its people to address the latter's economic, political, and legislative needs.

In a statement, the UNSC members expressed support for the independence and sovereignty of Iraq.

The council reiterated support to the people's rights for peaceful assembly, calling for a transparent and fair investigation into acts, which led to several casualties during protests in Iraq.

The UNSC expressed concerns over the involvement of armed groups in murder and abduction during the turbulent situation in Iraq, saying that all Iraqis must apply utmost measures of precaution and vigilance to avoid chaos in their country.