



Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah take a group photo with other officials during the students' visit to FAO.— KUNA photos

## GCC CONDEMNS CLAIMS OF QATAR LINK TO CAIRO BOMB

**RIYADH:** Gulf states have condemned Egypt's accusation of Qatari involvement in a Cairo church bombing last week that killed 25 people, a statement from the Gulf Cooperation Council said. "GCC states are upset over dragging the name of member-state Qatar into this heinous crime," the group's Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani said. "This is unacceptable," he said, warning that "unverified statements could harm the strong relations between the GCC and Egypt."

In addition to Qatar, the GCC groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Its statement late Thursday came after Qatar denied involvement in Sunday's deadly bomb attack on the Saint Peter and Saint Paul Church in Cairo, which was claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group. On Monday, Egypt accused fugitive Muslim Brotherhood leaders who fled to Qatar of training and financing those responsible for the attack.

Cairo's Interior Ministry pointed the finger at suspect Mohab Mostafa El-Sayed Qassem, also known as "The



Doctor", who travelled to Qatar in 2015. It said Qassem was offered financial and logistical support to carry out attacks in Egypt. Qatar dismissed the claims as baseless, insisting that Qassem visited the Gulf state just "like hundreds of thousands of others." Sunday's incident was the deadliest attack in recent memory on Egypt's Christian minority, who make up about 10 percent of the population. The Brotherhood has denied any

involvement. Meanwhile, Al Zayani has affirmed that the Gulf states are standing side by side with Egypt in its fight against the terrorist organizations. This came in Al Zayani's statement, saying that "Egypt's security is GCC member states' security". He stressed the GCC states' firm stance against terrorism, referring to the Gulf countries' condemnation of bombing church of St Peter in Cairo this week.—Agencies

## GCC STUDENTS VISIT UN'S FAO, ITALY'S CIVIL PROTECTION DEPT

**ROME:** On the fourth day of a journey to Italy, a Gulf student delegation has visited the headquarters of the UN and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, and the Italian Civil Protection Department. The Italian tour is part of the "Youth Ambassadors of the Gulf" initiative. During the FAO visit on Thursday, the students were accompanied by Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Qatari Ambassador Abdulaziz Ahmed Almalki Aljehni.

The delegation was welcomed by head of the FAO Director General's

Office Mario Lubetkina who stressed that the GCC is a major partner of the organization. The students also took part in a discussion with some of the FAO officials on the role of the major international organization. Lubetkina referred to the cooperation between the FAO and the GCC, saying that the organization offers the bloc's member states technical assistance and consultations on various issues. On his part, the Kuwaiti envoy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled urged the Gulf youth to get involved in the work and training programs between the FAO and the GCC to gain more expertise and skills.

During the visit to the Civil Protection Department the delegation was briefed by officials there on the nature and the role of authority established in 1982 for mustering national resources to offer assistance in grave emergency situations like earthquakes. They also visited the central strategic operating theaters at the department. In addition, the delegation visited the Islamic Cultural Center and mosque where they met with some Italian Muslim youth, and participated in an open dialogue with Imam Dr Salah Al-Sayed from Al-Azhar.— KUNA

### News

In brief

#### Arab social affairs officials call for eradicating poverty

**CAIRO:** Arab Social Affairs officials yesterday affirmed necessity of eradicating all forms of poverty in the Arab countries, as part of the sustainable development strategy ending in 2030. The ministers and officials, at end of the Council of Arab Social Affairs' 36th regular session, said in a statement that they decided to hold a special session on sidelines of the UN forum on sustainable development, due in New York next year. They asked the technical secretariat to pursue efforts, in coordination with specialized UN agencies, to back the Arab League member states' efforts for executing the Arab declaration on implementing the sustainable development strategy (2030). They also decided to set up a panel to examine proposed plans, adopted the five-year scheme for 2017-2021 and the one million dollar budget of the Arab social fund for 2017.

#### First GCC-Slovenian conference kicks off

**LJUBLJANA:** The first-ever GCC-Slovenian Conference kicked off on Thursday in the Slovenian capital to discuss boosting cooperation, economic, commercial, and investment ties between the two sides amid aspirations to bolster the volume of commercial exchange between the two nations. The conference aims at tackling challenges and development opportunities in GCC countries, in addition to finding ways to boost cooperation between Slovenia and Gulf countries, Karl Erjavec, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, stated to KUNA following the conference opening. This event, which is attended by GCC Secretary-General Abdullatif Al-Zayani and a number of senior Gulf officials, provides a significant chance for exchanging views on improving investment opportunities, commercial exchange, and ways to face joint challenges and obstacles, Erjavec said. He also added that the conference tends to find common grounds of possible procedures between Slovenian and GCC states in order to rise above the current level of economic relations between them.

#### Kuwait concludes festival marking its 'designation'

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO has concluded festivals marking Kuwait's proclamation as the 2016 Islamic Cultural Capital, with activities involving UNESCO-accredited schools. The acting commission secretary-general, Nadia Al-Wazzan, said at the conclusion ceremony, sponsored by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, that the committee had organized a series of exhibitions and workshops on the occasion. Kamel Abduljelil, General Director of the National Library, affirmed during the ceremony support of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters for the UNESCO activities, noting the full harmony of the two sides' goals and messages, aimed at boosting the role of culture and knowledge for sound nurturing of the youth.

#### Kuwait's pavilion attracts visitors in Beirut Book Fair

**BEIRUT:** Kuwait's pavilion at the 60th Beirut international book fair has attracted all kinds of visitors, managing director of the Kuwait's University Journal of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Sabah said yesterday. Sheikha Suhaila added that a variety of 5,500 Kuwaiti-published books were sold during the fair. This contributes to promoting science, knowledge and culture among Arab readers, she said. Kuwait has always been eager to participate in these kind of fairs to display its publications. On his part in a special statement to KUNA, Head of the Arab Cultural Club Fadi Tamim, who organized Beirut's international book fair, hailed Kuwait's distinguished pavilion in the fair, which represents a cultural beacon for the Arab world. Tamim added that maintaining Beirut's fair for 60 years shows the success of the event, pointing out that the fair witnessed an enormous attendance and significant books sales, compared with the sales in last year's fair. More than 180 Lebanese publishing houses in addition of 75 from Arab and foreign countries took part in the event.