



KUWAIT: Sheikh Ahmad receiving his new smart ID card.— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

3,000 IDs every day

PACI launches smart ID cards

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) yesterday held an official launch event for smart ID cards at its headquarters in South Surra. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, State Minister for Development Affairs, State Minister for Housing Affairs and Chairman of the PACI, launched the ceremony by receiving his personal ID card produced by the newly introduced high-tech equipment. This was the first smart civil ID card to be received personally from the PACI, and the fourth overall, with the first being His Highness the Amir's, as well as the Crown Prince's and the Prime Minister's, all of which were dispatched by special courier.

As of today, citizens will be able to submit their application with the PACI for the new smart cards. "At present, 3,000 IDs can be issued per day, and we will work on increasing this number to 5,000 daily. The smart ID cards will be issued gradually to all citizens. Expats will receive them later," Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad explained after receiving his own ID card.

The new smart cards have additional abilities, with each card containing an electronic chip carrying further personal data and information. "It is a substantial change in dealing with technology and the easy accessing of data and information. This ID was approved as a unified symbol. The new ID will include a personal photo, fingerprint and DNA data. The electronic chip placed on the smart ID will allow a lot of personal data to be saved," he revealed.

Introducing the new smart ID cards will simplify government services and mean that official transactions can be more rapidly processed.

"We are also working on ensuring that smart ID cards can replace credit card or be used to pay fees for different services in the public sector in the first phase. In the second phase we will work with the Ministry of Health to include each person's health records on the ID card," the minister went on.

The chip can carry a great deal of data, and the PACI will coordinate with various state bodies to benefit from it.

"The PACI will also coordinate with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice to use the smart ID cards as a voting ID card in the future. I hope this ID card will become a complete ID for to be used for all activities and services in Kuwait," said Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmad.

The minister concluded his speech by thanking all the bodies and individuals who worked on the smart ID card project for their efforts, which ensured that it was completed within a year.

The smart ID cards will each be valid for five years, allowing holders to update their personal information periodically.

Priority in issuing the cards will be given to

1. Those whose ID cards have expired.
2. Newborn babies.
3. Those who have changed their personal details, such as addresses.
4. Those who have just attained citizenship.

The smart ID cards are extremely sensitive, so the PACI has emphasized that holders must protect them from scratching or other damage and not expose them to direct sunlight. The front of each card will include data in both English and Arabic, including the bearer's name, civil ID number, nationality, sex, birth date and the card's issue and expiry dates. The back of each card, meanwhile, will list the civil ID number again, as well as the bearer's blood type, detailed address, the ID card's serial number, international MRZ data and an eight-digit electronic address number. The electronic chip will contain the same data, as well as the bearer's e-mail address, phone number, fingerprint and other information.

The new smart ID cards can be used by citizens as personal ID for travelling between GCC countries instead of using a passport, as well as to obtain subsidized goods in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce. It can also be used for the bearer's electronic signature in cooperation with the Central Authority for Information Technology, as an 'e-purse' with K-NET and for many other purposes.