

Linking visa and ID card to begin in Fujairah

A single application for ID, residency and labour card will be introduced in future when the three documents are integrated

- By Binsal Abdul Kader, Staff Reporter
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Abu Dhabi: The ID card registration will be linked with visa issuance and renewal in Fujairah emirate by early next year, a top official told Gulf News.

It is part of a two-pronged strategy to enrol all expatriates in the country, after an extension of the December 31 deadline, Dr Ali Al Khoury, director-general of Eida, said.

As *Gulf News* reported earlier, ID registration was linked with visa medical tests in Umm Al Quwain in June this year. A single application for ID card, residence visa and labour card will be introduced in future when the three documents are integrated. Then an ID card will serve the purpose of three documents. Instead of showing the visa page of the passport or labour card for any official purpose, expatriates will be able to produce the ID card.

Beginning with the northern emirates, the system will gradually extend to all over the country by the end of next year and all expatriates will register for ID cards, the official said.

About 25 ID registration centres will be opened at primary health centres across the country which conduct visa medical tests, ensuring that expatriates undergoing visa medical tests are registering for the ID cards. "But the existing system will continue registering expatriates, because most of them cannot wait until their visa expires because ID cards will be mandatory for many more government services," Al Khoury explained. "This is the second part of the two-pronged strategy which will affect professionals and businessmen or women among the expatriates," he said. "I am naming professionals and businessmen because they have to regularly make many transactions with the government," the official said.

Eida is in talks with more government and semi-government entities to make the ID card mandatory for accessing their services. "We will also work with the private sector to make the card mandatory for providing their services," Al Khoury said.

Mandatory norm

- Dubai Courts have made the ID card mandatory for Emiratis to access its services.

- Ministry of Interior made it mandatory for all residents (both Emiratis and expatriates) in four northern emirates to have an ID card from November 22, 2009, to avail of its services, except for visa renewal. The list of services include driving licence application, vehicle registration, renewal and several others in Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman and Umm Al Quwain.
- ID card is mandatory to access traffic services in Abu Dhabi, including driving licence and vehicle registration.
- Abu Dhabi Distribution Company announced last week that the card will soon be mandatory to access its utility services.

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