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2.6m people have received one or both vaccine doses

MoH: 68.4% of Kuwait's population has been vaccinated against COVID-19

Three workers killed in Abdaly blaze



KUWAIT: At least three Asian workers died and five others were injured in a fire that broke out at a workers' camp in Abdaly early yesterday. In a press release, Kuwait Fire Force said firefighters

rushed to the location of the blaze at the workers' residence, adding authorities will look into the accident to find out its causes and circumstances. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The number of people who have received one or both doses of the vaccination against COVID-19 amounted to 2,668,082 as of yesterday, Health Ministry's Spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad announced. In a statement to KUNA, Dr Sanad confirmed that the national campaign to vaccinate people will continue until it reaches its goal. The number of people who are vaccinated represents 68.4 percent of the population of Kuwait, he explained.

Dr Sanad valued the efforts of all medical and volunteer teams and various state agencies that participated in the campaign, pointing out that the ongoing efforts of the campaign were reflected in the noticeable improvement in the indicators of assessing the epidemiological situation in the country. The level of awareness as well as cooperation of people receiving the vaccine is needed in order to achieve herd immunity and return to normal life in the near future, he underlined.

On Thursday, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said the government expects to achieve herd immunity against the coronavirus pandemic by the end of September, when 70 percent of the population will be vaccinated. Over the past few weeks, Kuwait has seen a sharp decrease in the number of new coronavirus cases, the number of patients and those in intensive care units.

On Friday, Kuwait reported 417 new coronavirus cases, taking total cases to 405,859, while three more deaths took total fatalities to 2,383. On Thursday, Kuwait reported 555 new COVID-19 cases and one death. The sharp drop in cases has prompted the government to end almost all restrictions by completely lifting a partial curfew, opening restaurants, cafes and malls to vaccinated people and ordering civil servants to return to offices starting today.

The government on Wednesday announced a plan to completely reopen schools to students of all categories. Foreign schools will open their doors on Sept 26, while public and private Arabic schools are scheduled to reopen on Oct 3. Schools were shut down in the last academic year as part of government efforts to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

Authorities also reopened Kuwait International Airport to expats from the beginning of August after a six-month closure, but imposed strict conditions on arrivals. Expats who hold legal residence in the country and wish to return must have been vaccinated with two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna or Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson jab. The Cabinet late Wednesday said it was pleased by the improvement of the health situation in the country. — Agencies

News in brief

Deadly quake strikes Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE: A powerful 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti early yesterday, causing at least 29 deaths and toppling buildings in the disaster-plagued Caribbean nation still recovering from a devastating 2010 quake. Residents shared images on social media of frantic efforts to pull people from the ruins of caved-in buildings, while screaming bystanders sought safety in the streets outside their homes. — AFP

July world's hottest month

WASHINGTON: July was the hottest month globally ever recorded, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said Friday, in the latest data to underline the climate crisis. The NOAA said combined land and ocean-surface temperature was 1.67 degrees Fahrenheit (0.93 of a degree Centigrade) above the 20th-century average of 60.4 degrees Fahrenheit, making it the hottest July since record-keeping began 142 years ago. — AFP

Iran tightens COVID curbs

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday announced new curbs to combat the spread of COVID-19 as deaths and infections surge and as the country tries to speed up its vaccination campaign. Iran's national coronavirus taskforce announced yesterday that government offices, banks and non-essential businesses must close their doors countrywide from tomorrow until the end of next Saturday. A ban on car travel between provinces will be in force from noon today until Aug 27. — AFP

US issues new terror warning

WASHINGTON: The US Department of Homeland Security issued a new terrorism threat advisory on Friday ahead of the anniversary of the Sept 11 terror attacks. It said the US faces a "heightened threat environment" from both domestic terrorists "and those inspired or motivated by foreign terrorists and other malign foreign influences". It cited increased use of "online forums to influence and spread violent extremist narratives and promote violent activity." — AFP

Taleban close in on Kabul

KABUL: Afghanistan's beleaguered president vowed yesterday to prevent further bloodshed, as Taleban fighters closed in on Kabul after routing his armed forces over the past 10 days. In a recorded address to the nation - his first since the Taleban launched their sweeping offensive - Ashraf Ghani said he wanted to stop the violence "as a historic mission". "I will not let the imposed war on people cause more deaths," he said, appearing somber and sitting before an Afghan flag.

The president gave no hint he would resign or take responsibility for

the calamitous military collapse, but said the armed forces could be "remobilized" and consultations were taking place to try to help end the war. He offered few specifics on what his administration was planning, with government control over Afghanistan all but collapsed, but the presidential palace later said in a statement that "a delegation with authority should soon be appointed by the government and be ready for negotiation".

Ghani's speech came as US Marines were sent in to oversee an evacuation of embassy employees and thousands of Afghans and their families, who fear retribution for working for the United States during its 20-year occupation. With the country's second- and third-largest cities having

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8 die in plane crash as Turkey floods kill 44

ISTANBUL: Turkey battled disaster on two fronts yesterday with eight people dying in the crash of a firefighting aircraft and rescuers racing to find survivors of flash floods in the north that have killed at least 44. In

Moscow, the defense ministry said all eight people on the Russian plane had perished on the fire-fighting mission.

The air tragedy came just as Turkey was gaining control over hundreds of wildfires that killed eight people and destroyed swathes of forest along the scenic southern coast. In Moscow, news agencies quoted the defense ministry as saying five Russian servicemen and three Turkish citizens were on board the Russian Be-200 plane that went down around 1330 GMT.

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In Lebanon, bread too is now scarce

BEIRUT: Michael Hamati emerged from a long queue at a Beirut bakery sweat dripping from his forehead, as Lebanon's economic collapse sparks increasing shortages including over bread. "There's nothing left in this country," said the 72-year-old, as dozens of people clamored behind him in the simmering heat for their turn.

Lebanese flocked to bakeries before dawn Friday, desperate to find affordable bread in a country where fuel and medicine are already in critically short supply. The rush came after the central bank on Wednesday said it could no longer afford to subsidize fuel in Lebanon. The country, struggling with political turmoil since 2019, has also been hit by the worst global economic crisis in 150 years, according to the World Bank.

At least 78 percent of the more than six-million-strong population lives below the poverty line and businesses can barely stay afloat.

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KABUL: Afghan schoolgirls walk through a pathway along the Qasaba cemetery yesterday. — AFP



This image grab taken yesterday shows a view of the wreckage of a Russian Bombardier Be-200 aircraft in Kahramanmaraş in southern Turkey. — AFP



BEIRUT: A woman leaves a bakery with a bag of bread as people wait for their turn in the neighborhood of Nabaa in the capital's southern suburbs on Friday. — AFP