

Local

Kuwaiti citizens repatriated on 19 flights Monday

Global airline to bring home nationals in out of reach cities



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti nationals leave Kuwait International Airport upon their return as part of a repatriation plan on Monday. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

KUWAIT: Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said 19 flights brought hundreds of citizens back home on Monday, the second day of a repatriation plan aimed at bringing back nationals amidst spread of coronavirus. The second day of a three-day plan included Arab and European capitals and cities, DGCA said in a statement. It said 19 flights brought citizens from Jeddah, Dammam and Riyadh, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Manama, Cairo, Amman and London. Kuwait Airways operated 10 flights while Jazeera Airways operated nine flights. President of DGCA Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah had said earlier in the day the second phase of repatriation plan would start tomorrow and lasts for three days. The second phase will include following destinations: Amman, Casablanca, Nouakchott, Istanbul, Vienna, Alexandria, Cairo, New York, Brussels, London, Paris, Manila, Bangkok, Dakar, Tunis, Malta, Beirut, Tbilisi, Baku, Mumbai, Delhi, Sarajevo and Amsterdam.

Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Affairs Dr Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said. Al-Mutairi, also the supervisor on medical testing facilities at Kuwait International Airport, said four cases were transferred to different hospitals to continue their treatment they were undergoing abroad. Mutairi



146 transferred to quarantine

said 3,089 Kuwaiti citizens were repatriated on 27 flights on Sunday.

Global airline

In the meantime, Kuwait plans to contract a global airline to bring home nationals stranded in cities unreachable by its two domestic airlines, Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways, amid the global spread of the deadly coronavirus. The Cabinet is the sole body responsible for choosing the operator, Kuwait airport's Deputy Director at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation,

Saleh Al-Faddaghi said on Monday. Four flights arrived late Monday, which represents the second day of the huge endeavor. This comes after another 15 flights arrived earlier and another 27 arrived the day before, bringing the total to 46 flights, thus far. The recent flights are part of a phase one, which includes trips from neighboring Gulf Arab countries and some Arab and global destinations. This particular phase will be followed by a "rest day," said the official, ahead of the commencement phase two on Thursday, which focuses on the remaining Arab countries and the rest of the world. This period will also target a three-day repatriation of passengers with specific medical needs.

The whole plan is being administered under the directions of the Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah and is being executed by a ministerial committee led by Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran. The operating procedures for each body under the plan at Kuwait International Airport, have been outlined under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and healthcare authorities. Passengers will be supervised by Kuwaiti authorities upon entering the plane at their respective locations, during their flight, at the airport where they will be administered virus detection health checks, upon receiving baggage and upon departing the airport to their mandatory home or institutional quarantine or to a medical facility. — KUNA

Association condemns assault on Kuwaiti doctor

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Medical Association (KMA) strongly condemned an assault on a female Kuwaiti doctor while on duty at Al-Bahar ophthalmology center. KMA Deputy Chairman Dr Ali Al-Moussawi stressed that the association totally condemns assaulting any doctor, adding that it will take all possible legal actions to deter any further attacks on medical staff. Moussawi also noted that KMA had immediately contacted the assaulted doctor and investigative authorities.

KMA Treasurer Dr Mohammad Al-Obaidan called for accelerating the process of passing a law on medical practices and patients' rights, which had been discussed over a year ago and still not passed. Obaidan also called for showing no tolerance with those who assault doctors and urged the Ministry of Health (MoH) to protect doctors in such situations.

The doctor also filed a case against the husband of one of her patients, saying he kept complaining about his wife kept waiting to be examined and kept shouting, which affected the doctor's focus while tending to another patient. "I opened the room door and asked him to keep his voice down and went back in," the doctor said, noting that, instead, the assaulter barged into the room shouting abusive words and assaulted her, before others controlled him. She then went to a police station to report the assault.

Infected workers

Responding to news about some co-op workers testing positive for COVID-19, KUCCS Deputy Chairman Khaled Al-Hudhaiban said that in a preventive measure, KUCCS called for testing all co-op workers. Hudhaiban added that MoH promised to randomly test 100 workers in each co-op soon. "This comes as a preventive measure to protect co-op customers," Hudhaiban added, noting that co-ops where the cases were found were immediately closed down to have all staff members tested and sanitize the entire place, which would not be reopened until proven safe. Notably, Ishbelia Co-op Society's board had announced closing the main supermarket after a worker tested positive for COVID-19. The co-op board added that it would remain closed until sterilization is over.

Pandemic Diaries

Locked-in syndrome



By Jamie Etheridge

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On Monday night, the Cabinet decided to extend the public holiday until the end of Ramadan and the partial curfew from 4 pm to 8 am - effectively giving us all a clear timeline for how this next month will play out. For many, the continuation of the curfew and closures will be difficult to take. Many people spend the month going to the mosque, gathering with family and friends for iftar, attending ghabqas and enjoying the many night-time activities of the month.

Spending it under lockdown will be a new experience for us all. Even the pleasure of having food delivered after curfew starts cannot compare with the loss of seeing family and friends and the gatherings that make Ramadan special.

At the same time, the clear timeline gives us all a gift that might go unnoticed. Choice has been temporarily taken out of our hands. Whatever our individual circumstances, we are collectively locked down, and that means we cannot do anything to change the situation. Whether we still work or we are stuck at home without income, we now have one month guaranteed of the status quo.

One month to make of it what we will. Under great constraints can come great creativity. If we are lucky enough to have our basic needs met and to not get sick, we can spend this next month exploring. We can build, create, draw, learn or simply wonder and think. We can read. We can build a new habit or break an old one. We can take the daily stress, anxiety, fear and uncertainty that has insinuated itself into our daily lives and channel that into mindfulness practice, into art, into something that we would never in our normal lives have the time or opportunity to do.

We've been given the gift of time. Yes, it's under the worst of circumstances and yes we still have worries and pressures, demands and concerns. Our children need help e-learning as well as time and attention. Our homes need taking care of, dinners need cooking. Some of us have lost our jobs or had our salaries cut and just survival and daily meals will be a major concern. But we have blessed Ramadan and Insha'Allah we will all have enough food and shelter, family and friends (even if via Zoom and Facetime).

At the basic level of survival, we have no choice, but we do have control over how we view our circumstances. We do have a choice of what we do with this time. In the book, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, journalist Jean-Dominique Bauby recounts memories from his life and explores what it is like to live with locked-in syndrome. Bauby survived for 15 months after having a stroke, completely paralyzed except for small movements of the head and face.

But he didn't give up, didn't stop living. He used his eyes to communicate and the entire book was written by his eyelids opening and closing to indicate letter by letter the ideas he wanted to share with the world before he died. "I am alive and I can think," Bauby wrote, "and no one has the right to deny me these two realities."

We are alive and we can think. Now we know we have one month before us. We can see it as a gift or a jail sentence. We cannot change the situation but we can change how we live it.

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has so far recorded 2,080 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), in addition to 11 deaths. With the exception of 46 cases in intensive care, all infected cases are in stable condition and are recovering in quarantined locations designated by the government for this purpose, while hundreds have been discharged from quarantine after exhibiting no symptoms during their 14-day quarantine period, the Ministry of Health confirmed. Meanwhile, 412 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, the ministry said. There are 1,657 people receiving treatment and 1,367 quarantined as of yesterday. Kuwait is taking measures to test Kuwaitis coming from infected areas for potential infection, as it has already tested thousands of people. Meanwhile, Kuwait requires all expatriates who arrived from travel on March 1 and beyond to visit Kuwait International Fairground where the Ministry of Health has set up a center to test people for possible infection.

Curfew

Kuwait enforced a country-wide curfew from 5:00 pm to 6:00 am, which was later extended to start from 4:00 pm until 8:00 am during Ramadan, while allowing restaurants and food stores to make home deliveries from 5:00 pm until 1:00 am. The government also locked down Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in a bid to contain the spread of the virus and enable health workers to test inhabitants. Earlier, the government decided to close all shopping malls, beauty salons and barber shops as part of its measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The government also allowed supermarkets, restaurants and shops to host a maximum of five people at a time and in case there are lines, the distance must be at least one meter between people. The Ministry of Commerce launched a website (www.moci.shop) to enable people to book appointments to shop at co-operative societies in their areas. The Public Authority for Industry also announced that companies can apply to evacuate their workers from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Mahboula. To do so, they must fill a 'workers evacuation form' available on www.pai.gov.kw, and send the form via email to: Jasiri@moh.gov.kw.

Precautions

Kuwait halted all commercial flights until further notice, and has sent special flights to repatriate Kuwaitis back home from countries affected with the virus' spread. All arrivals to Kuwait from all countries are to be placed under compulsory institutional quarantine for 14 days, during which the person is monitored, and prescribed health procedures are applied, the health ministry said. Meanwhile, the Cabinet announced on April 9 the operation of all airline flights for expats who are wishing to return back to their countries. Authorities also announced a public holiday in the country from March 12 to May 28, with work resuming on May 31, while entities providing vital services will

remain open. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has suspended classes for March at all public and private schools (for both students and teaching staffs); first from March 1 to March 12, and later extended it until March 29, before eventually suspending schools until August for grade 12 and October for other stages.

Kuwait suspended issuing entry permits and visas unless those issued through diplomatic missions. State departments have been on high alert to take precautions against the potential spread of the virus. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has taken measures to make sure that facial masks, hand sanitizers and other goods remain accessible to the public.

Amnesty

The Interior Ministry issued an amnesty allowing residency violators to leave the country between April 1 and April 30 without paying any fines or airfare with a chance to return to Kuwait later. The amnesty was issued in view of the circumstances the country is currently going through and as part of the precautionary measures taken to fight the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Individuals desiring to procure valid residencies in Kuwait and are willing to pay the fines without being subjected to investigations will be allowed to pay the fines and legalize their status if they meet the required conditions.

Special centers in Farwaniya were allocated to accommodate violators who finalize their papers pending departure. Male violators are received at Al-Muthanna primary school for boys, Farwaniya, block 1, street 122, while female violators are received at Farwaniya primary school for girls in Farwaniya, block 1, street 76. Violators are received from 8 am till 2 pm according to the following dates and nationalities: Philippines (April 1-5, 2020), Egypt (April 6-10), Bangladesh (April 11-15), India (April 16-20), Sri Lanka (April 21-25), other nationalities (April 26-30, 2020). The Interior Ministry later opened two new locations in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh to receive residency violators from all nationalities: Female violators are received at Roufayda Al-Aslameya School - Block 4 - Street 200, while male violators are received at Naeem bin Masod School - Block 4 - Street 250.

Hotlines

The Ministry of Health has set the following hotlines to receive inquiries about the coronavirus 24/7: 24970967 - 96049698 - 99048619.

The Education Ministry set the following hotlines to receive inquiries on school closures related to the anti-coronavirus measures:

- 24970967 (24/7 hotline)
- 51575591 (Capital Educational Zone)
- 51576117 (Hawally Educational Zone)
- 51576576 (Farwaniya Educational Zone)
- 51577055 (Jahra Educational Zone)
- 51577655 (Ahmadi Educational Zone)
- 51577951 (Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Zone)
- 51578171 (Religious Studies Department)
- 51588599 (Private Education Department)
- 51592515 (Services Department)
- 51594544 (Public Relations Department)

Medicine delivery

Kuwait's Ministry of Health (MOH) launched a

new medicine delivery service for people in Kuwait, which they can use to order medications to be delivered during curfew hours. The medications will be delivered within 72 hours after the order is submitted. To place an order, patients should send a WhatsApp to the numbers for the hospitals and medical centers as listed below. The patient should include their name, Civil ID number, hospital or clinic file number, mobile phone number and the medicine needed to the following numbers:

- Amiri Hospital: 50880699
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital: 50880755
- Farwaniya Hospital: 50880852
- Adan Hospital: 50880908
- Jahra Hospital: 50881066
- Sabah Hospital: 97632660
- Jaber Hospital: 96992079
- Ibn Sina Hospital: 99613948
- Chest Hospital: 99258749
- Razi Hospital: 97633487
- Kuwait Cancer Control Center: 96735242
- Psychiatric Hospital: 97350113
- Physiotherapy Hospital: 99824037
- Maternity Hospital: 98559531
- As'ad Al-Hamad Dermatology Center: 98514508

• Zain Hospital: 97552031

- NBK Hospital: 96931761
- Al-Rashed Allergy Hospital: 94162470
- Infectious Diseases Hospital: 96989164
- Palliative Care Hospital: 94024786
- Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center: 90952469
- KFH Addiction Treatment Center: 94169363

Meanwhile, all licensed pharmacies in Kuwait delivering medicine are allowed to continue their services 24 hours a day.

The Ministry of Health is also asking doctors and nurses affiliated with the private medical sector to volunteer in order to contribute to the fight against the virus. Volunteering is available through the link: <http://volunteering.q8-ehealth.com>. The ministry had closed all private clinics and medical centers effective March 22, 2020 until further notice.

Mental health assistance

The Kuwait Psychological Association (KPA) is providing consultation through the phone for people suffering from the psychological impacts of coronavirus. Different doctors are working on the hotline in different timings as follows:

Dr Rashed Al-Sahh: on Monday and Wednesday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. Call 9797-6168.

Dr Fahad Al-Tasha: daily from 8:00 pm - 12:00 am. Call 9904-8258.

Dr Othman Al-Asfour: daily 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Call 9938-5350.

Dr Mohammed Al-Khalidi (head of this team): daily 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. Call 9903-6470.

Dr Ahmad Al-Khalidi: daily 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 9910-7965.

Dr Muneera Al-Qattan: Monday and Wednesday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Call 9953-3108.

Dr Zainab Al-Saffar: Sunday and Thursday 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 9954-9908.

Dr Sameera Al-Kandari: Tuesday 9:00 pm - 12:00 am. Call 6770-9434.

Dr Kawthar Al-Yaqout: Monday and Wednesday 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 5521-0088.

For information and other concerns, call 9401-4283.