

Local

# Kuwait braces for different Ramadan atmosphere

## No feasts, mass prayers, umrah or Eid celebrations

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Ramadan is coming. But this month will be recorded in history as being different than in previous years. In fact, this is the first Ramadan to be observed under lockdown and curfew at the same time. The government has announced the extension of a public holiday until May 28 and the curfew from 4 pm to 8 am due to the coronavirus outbreak. It means throughout Ramadan, there will be no mass prayers, no feasts after fasting hours and no umrah pilgrimages. Also, no Eid al-Fitr celebrations will take place.

“This is the saddest Ramadan we will experience in history. Until now, we don't know what is going to happen - are we all going to die? What is in store for humanity? I feel so sad about what is going on in the world today. I ask Allah for His mercy to extend to every one of us,” said Osama, a devout Muslim. “I am quite disturbed, and we pray for Allah's mercy. We are sorry for all the iniquities done in His name, and we ask for forgiveness and a second chance,” he said.

Osama vowed to not miss a single prayer during Ramadan and observe fasting as always. “For me, there will be more fervent prayers instead with the family. Since we cannot go out to pray in the mosque, we will be praying inside the house. Plus there will be a curfew, so our movements will be limited. If I invite my children and grandchildren to come to my house, I will not allow them to go out until 8 am because of the curfew. Indeed, this will be a different Ramadan for us,” he said.

Noura's tradition of decorating her house with colorful Ramadan lamps will not be possible now, but she said she will try her best to improvise so she could still feel the usual Ramadan. “I will try to study how I can improvise the Ramadan lantern. I used to decorating my house and rooms with Ramadan lanterns, but now I cannot because all the stores are closed. Only baqalas are open and they only have limited stocks. I will really miss that very much,” she noted. “I will surely miss meeting with friends,

ghabqas, girgian, and food will be limited. Even if you want to cook much, who will eat it? Also, I will miss wearing daraas (gowns) and hadiyas,” Noura said.

Khalid normally observes Ramadan with friends, and for him, this is the most auspicious month of the year. “I still believe in the miracle of Ramadan. Allah will show His power and amazing grace to everyone. I believe that Allah is in control and will always be in control. This will be different from the Ramadans in my 62-plus years of existence...this Ramadan is a blessing for us,” he said.

Fatoum said she will not miss anything related to her faith. “I am still going to pray at home; there's no change in my regular prayer schedule. The only change is the curfew and lockdown perhaps, but it doesn't matter - it will never change my decision to pray regularly and fast,” she said.

In Kuwait, traditionally in this period, all shopping centers are adorned with Ramadan decorations, ghabqas and iftar gatherings are scheduled, and people are busy preparing food and shopping items



**KUWAIT:** This file photo shows an empty Gulf Road in Kuwait shortly after curfew started. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

needed in Ramadan. According to Fatoum, there will be free food handouts, but the usual tents will not be permitted to distribute food to the hungry. “Maybe food packets will be distributed in the streets, but no

more tents. There will be more intense prayers too, so it's a matter of accepting the new Ramadan order. This is anyway temporary and we pray that the coronavirus will be defeated soon,” she said.

## KCCI announces working hours during Ramadan

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) announced yesterday that it will be operating during the holy month of Ramadan. KCCI will continue to provide its services from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm on all days a week except Fridays. Due to the official precautionary measures and decisions related to

eliminating the spread of coronavirus, work will be limited to the KCCI headquarters only in Qibla, Abdulaziz Hamad Al-Saqer Street, opposite the Kuwait Development Fund. KCCI set these working hours to allow its member companies and institutions to finish work without delays, especially related to import and export and particularly foodstuff, medical products and vital supplies.

## Five hurt in restaurant fire



**KUWAIT:** The restaurant's kitchen after the fire.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Bidaa and Salmiya fire stations responded to a call about a fire in a restaurant caused by a gas cylinder that exploded in the kitchen. The fire was put out, and five injured workers were taken to hospital. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

### Policeman attacked

Interior ministry's relations and security information department said police responded to a call about a man attacking a house. When police asked

him for his ID, he refused to hand it then attacked and injured the policeman. The suspect was taken to the police station where he started a fire in the detention cell, causing three policemen to suffer from smoke inhalation, who were taken to hospital. The suspect is being transferred to concerned authorities. The department also commented on a video clip about a verbal exchange between a policeman and a volunteer at a co-op. It said the policeman was summoned, and when questioned, he was found in violation. Administrative measures and punishment were taken against him.



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