

Local

UK hosts Global Vaccine Summit with Kuwait's participation

By Michael Davenport, British Ambassador to Kuwait

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest public health challenge we have faced for generations. Currently, there is no vaccine. Without one, we risk seeing recurrences of the disease and a return to the various strict measures we have seen around the world, including in the UK and Kuwait. These measures have helped to shield our health services, and bought us time, but economies have been hit, incomes reduced and jobs lost. Decisive and coordinated action is now needed on a global scale to find an effective vaccine and ensure it is distributed widely and affordably for all.

To kick-start the monumental international effort required, on 4 May we joined the European Commission, Germany, France, Spain, Norway, Italy, Canada, Japan and Saudi Arabia to host the Global Coronavirus Response Initiative, in which Kuwait also participated, to raise over \$7.5 billion for research and development. The United Kingdom contributed \$475 million to that initiative for Coronavirus treatments, vaccines and tests.



Michael Davenport

Only by working together can we win this battle. The international effort to develop a vaccine is already under way. In the UK, scientists are working at pace at Oxford University and Imperial College, London, supported by British government funding. Human clinical trials are now taking place and delivering preliminary results.

No single country, and no single pharmaceutical company, will be able to develop or produce a vaccine alone. The more we pull together and share our expertise, the faster our scientists will succeed. We need global coordination and global resources – from development to delivery. Crucially, we must ensure that

any effective vaccines are available to those who most need them, including in the world's poorest countries.

This is where Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, comes in. In its 10 years of operations, Gavi has delivered vaccines to over 700 million children worldwide. Over the next four years Gavi's goal is to deliver vaccines, including any future Coronavirus vaccine, to a further 300 million children, saving 8 million lives. The UK is Gavi's largest donor and has made a fresh commitment of over \$2 billion to Gavi for 2021-2025. Gavi needs at least \$7.4 billion dollars to achieve its goals. That's why the UK is virtually hosting the 4 June Global Vaccine Summit – to ensure that Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has the funds needed to deliver vaccines against diseases such as measles, polio and cholera in the world's poorest countries, and to guarantee equitable access to effective new coronavirus vaccines, especially in developing countries. I am delighted that Kuwait, which is already contributing generously to the World Health Organisation's international effort to tackle COVID-19, will be represented by Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister.

As a world-leading and pioneering research hub, the UK is offering scientific leadership to develop new vaccines to tackle this major global health threat. We are supporting the vaccines, treatments and tests development process 'end-to-end' – from research and development, through to access and delivery – working closely with our international partners, Kuwait included. We have all been impressed by Kuwait's sober assessment at an early stage of the pandemic, with robust measures put in place swiftly and efficiently. Kuwait has used innovative measures to track those returning to the country and embraced technological solutions to problems such as access to food and essential services.

We are proud to be standing side by side with our international partners in tackling coronavirus. Through learning from each other, we can be prepared for future challenges. Through sharing our knowledge and pooling our resources, we can react more quickly and more effectively to new outbreaks. And through our support for global institutions like Gavi and the WHO, we can ensure vaccines and treatments will be made available as widely as possible.



KUWAIT: People jog in Salmiya on May 30, 2020 during the two-hour exercise period, one day before the total curfew was eased. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

In My View Being nostalgic



By Abdellatif Sharaa

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I hope that by now everyone knows which area they reside in as far as the lockdowns are concerned after the confusion of determining the area of Maidan Hawally. I have lived in Kuwait for over 50 years and witnessed the development of this beloved country – areas were expanded and new ones were created. For example, in the early 70s Jabriya was an empty land with very few Arabic style houses mostly adjacent to the current Fourth Ring Road: the same was for Rumaihiya.

I remember the main street of Kuwait City with elegant top class shops on both sides. I remember the market guards, who were appointed by the interior ministry to roam the streets of the city day and night to make sure the markets were secure.

At that time, there were areas called Hawally, Nugra and Maidan Hawally, and realignments throughout the years kept changing the boundaries until we reached the current situation. Nugra is remembered by a police station named after it, and Maidan Hawally has the same – a police station and a traffic department named after it as the area shrunk significantly as far as boundaries are concerned.

We the old generation are aware of areas when they are mentioned and have no problem with that, and I believe the confusion was with those who came to Kuwait in the 1990s and are familiar with the current situation only.

When the government news conference was broadcast and areas to be under lockdown were announced, many were worried and confused for not knowing where Maidan Hawally is, and some people asked me if it really exists. I do not blame them because their civil IDs read Salmiya – again it is realignment that caused this.

Life goes on, and changes do happen, and here it is very important for those who visit countries with plans to stay for some time to read about them and their laws, customs and what is right or wrong, because cultures differ from one place to another, so that they do not find themselves in violation of the law or customs.

Let this Maidan Hawally drama be an example and a call for all officials, citizens and expats that announcements should be as clear as possible to avoid confusion and misunderstanding.

Final word: "Nostalgia is the heart's way of reminding you of something you once loved. It travels in many forms: on a song, in a scent or in photographs... but no matter how it comes to you it will always have the same bittersweet taste." — Ranata Suzuki

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 26,192 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of Saturday, in addition to 205 deaths. With the exception of 206 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 thousands have been discharged from quarantine after exhibiting no symptoms during their 14-day quarantine period, the Ministry of Health confirmed. Meanwhile, 11,386 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 14,601 people receiving treatment and 23 quarantined.

Curfew

Kuwait imposed a three-week partial curfew starting May 31, as part of a five-phase plan for a gradual return to normal life, brought to a standstill by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The first phase also includes a total lockdown on Farwaniya, Khaitan, Hawally and Maidan Hawally, joining Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh which were put under lockdown earlier.

Activities to resume in first phase included home deliveries of restaurants, telecommunication companies, food retailers, companies' transportation of employees, gas stations, private clinics and car workshops. The second phase will see the curfew shortened to be between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am, while resuming work in the government and private sectors with the workforce being less than 30 percent, in addition to resumption of constructions, banking sector, malls opening for eight hours and according to special instructions, parks and pickups from restaurants.

The third phase would see an end of curfew, and health authorities would be assessing situation of areas under lockdown. It would see increase of workforce to less than 50 percent. Visits for social care homes would be allowed, reopening of hotels, resorts and hotel apartments. Taxis will be allowed to operate with only one passenger, and Mosques would be allowed to perform Friday prayers.

Phase four would see an increase in workforce, restaurants would be receiving customers but with restrictions, and public transportation resumed but with distancing. All activities would resume in phase five, government and private sector returned to normal, families could gather, weddings and graduation ceremonies, health clubs and gyms to reopen, as well as cinemas and theaters.

Earlier, Kuwait imposed a total curfew from May 10 to May 30, allowing room for people to walk out for daily exercise between 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, and to shop at co-ops and supermarkets once every six days

during the curfew hours by making an appointment through www.moci.shop. Before that, Kuwait enforced a country-wide partial 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. Kuwait took all measures to test Kuwaitis repatriated from infected areas for potential infection. Kuwait had required 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. 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. 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.

Kuwait suspended issuing entry permits and visas unless those issued through diplomatic missions. 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). During the amnesty period, individuals desiring to procure valid residencies in Kuwait and were willing to pay the fines without being subjected to investigations were allowed to pay the fines and legalize their status if they meet the required conditions.

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