

Local

Cabinet expected to ease coronavirus restrictions

MPs demand approval of civil rights law for bedoons

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The council of ministers was expected at a meeting yesterday to approve easing the coronavirus restrictions and take the country into the second phase of the five-phase return to normal life.

That move was delayed a week ago because of the steep rise in the number of cases especially among Kuwaiti citizens, and although the number of cases remains relatively high, the cabinet is likely to decide on the move.

The health ministry has however attributed the rise in the cases in the past few days to the house testing campaign launched by ministry teams earlier in the week, but there

are some signs indicating the situation was improving, especially that the recovery rate hit 80 percent. Under the second phase, malls will reopen, curfew will be relaxed to be from 9:00 pm to 5:00 am, restaurants and cafes will partially reopen and government offices will resume with a limited capacity.

Central bank governor Mohammad Al-Hashel, who heads a government committee on economic stimulus during the coronavirus crisis, said yesterday that reopening the economy as quickly as possible while maintaining health precautions, is the best way to help the national economy.

Bedoons' rights

In the meantime, a number of MPs yesterday

called for approving a draft law that grants basic civil and humanitarian rights to over 100,000 of stateless people, locally known as 'bedoons'.

The call came following reports of a young bedoon man, studying at the medical college, attempting to commit suicide by taking pills apparently over difficult living conditions. The man was rescued at hospital and his action triggered angry reactions on social media.

MP Mohammad Hayef said the rejection to approve the civil rights law for bedoons in the assembly has compounded their tremendous sufferings and led to deterioration in their living conditions.

He said that these difficult conditions have

caused psychological and physical illnesses to a large number of bedoons, especially those who are unable to renew their IDs from the Central Agency for Illegal Residents, which is essential for most bedoons to do their transactions. Hayef said the coronavirus crisis has even complicated the misery for many bedoons.

MP Nasser Al-Dossari called on the assembly's human rights panel to keep the draft law ready so it can be debated and approved in the next assembly session, adding that the law grants bedoons basic human rights. MP Thamer Al-Suwait said that MPs must insist to debate and vote on the civil rights law at the earliest in order to end the human sufferings of bedoons.

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