

Local

Kuwaiti female police officer contracts coronavirus: MoI

Family, colleagues tested, prisoners isolated

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Interior announced yesterday that a female police officer tested positive for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The officer was rushed to hospital and her family and colleagues had to undergo medical tests to verify their health conditions, according to a statement by the ministry's relations and security media department. The test results of the females in uniform has yet to be come out, the statement noted.

It affirmed that all women prisoners have been kept in solitary quarantine since their arrival at the jail pending the completion of routine health procedures, including a comprehensive medical checkup, as per the recommendations of the Ministry of Health. The statement came following a tweet, which went viral on social media, that a female police officer at a women prison contracted the virus along with her family and colleagues as well as the inmates of the prison. The tweet alleged

that a number of inmates at a men's prison were also infected and two of them died of the virus, a claim that was refuted by the Ministry of Interior.



Inmates death rumors denied

Animal leftovers

Separately, the Interior Ministry's relations and security media department said two persons who were seen collecting animal leftovers from trash containers were arrested. Both admitted to collecting the material from butcher shops to send it to a



recycling plant for export as animal fat. When asked why they were removing material from the garbage containers instead of butcher shops, they said they were late going to the shops so they took it from the container. Both were sent to concerned authorities. The Interior Ministry also announced that police arrested a person in Mahboula after he threatened others with a sharp object. The man was in an abnormal condition at the time of his arrest, the ministry explained.

Inside the whale

Pandemic Diaries



By Jamie Etheridge

etheridge@kuwaittimes.com

Yesterday, Kuwait entered a total lockdown, 24-hour curfew for the next 20 days. We are now inside the whale - with no choice but to endure, to passively accept the circumstances as they are and to try and make the best of them. The loss of control over our own lives can be difficult to swallow. It would be a challenge under normal circumstances and these are far from normal times. Kuwait has already been under months of stay-at-home orders since the coronavirus first arrived here.

But we have to remember that each of us is playing our part. We are helping the world overcome this pandemic. We are helping Kuwait to eradicate the virus here. We are making a positive contribution just by staying home, helping hospitals and medical workers cope with the cases they have without adding more burdens to their already heavy load. In isolation, staying at home, it is hard to see this. It's difficult to recognize the importance and the value of doing nothing, but as the Queen Mother told Elizabeth in *The Crown* (on Netflix), sometimes doing nothing is the hardest thing to do.

We are in more control of our lives than it seems. Yes, we are stuck at home and now under a total curfew. It would be easy to slide into depression, into feelings of total helplessness. But we can still control our reaction. Scientific studies have shown that the mind can be an important tool for impacting our health and wellness. We cannot 'think' ourselves out of having cancer, a bad diet or a heart attack. Health is a complex set of circumstances that involves chemistry, biology, genetics, lifestyle and diet as well as circumstance. But we can reduce levels of stress and anxiety by changing our perspective and mindset and that does impact blood pressure, immune responses and our body's overall ability to maintain health.

Inside the whale, we can panic and cry. Sometimes a bit of crying can release a lot of pent up emotional stress and feel like relief. Or we can also choose to find the calm. We can pray or meditate or find some other activities that help us endure this period of isolation. We can accept the reality fate has thrust upon us and find a way to make it work. We can distract ourselves through a variety of means including daily exercise (yoga, Pilates, circuit training), creative endeavors (drawing, painting, cooking), play and entertainment (video games, TV, Legos, cards, reading) or through some combination of all these.

We can think ourselves to a place of calm acceptance. We can rearrange our perspective, our view of the circumstances. We can decide to make the most of this period of isolation to reconnect with ourselves and our families. Once we realize that the situation may be beyond our power but our response to the circumstances can be determined by us, we regain control and that is the first key to a calm and peaceful life.

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 7,623 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of Friday, in addition to 49 deaths. With the exception of 95 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, 2,622 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 4,952 people receiving treatment and 4,715 quarantined. Kuwait is taking measures to test Kuwaitis coming from infected areas for potential infection, as it has already tested thousands of people.

Curfew

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 once a week during the curfew hours by making an appointment through www.moci.shop. Earlier, 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. All arrivals to Kuwait from all countries are to be placed under compulsory quarantine for 14 days, during which the person is monitored, and prescribed health procedures are applied, the health ministry said. 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.

Speaker praises Amir's address

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Saturday a cable from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem who expressed deep gratitude and appreciation for his address marking last ten days of the blessed month of Ramadan. The parliament speaker, in his cable, noted that His Highness the Amir's speech constituted a road map on how to deal with current and future challenges. He pledged to His Highness the Amir to shoulder national responsibilities in shadow of cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities. Ghanem noted that the vow to bear these responsibilities would be under guidance of His Highness the Amir as well as His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Earlier, Ghanem lauded His Highness the Amir's address as having focused on both health and future conditions in the country. He said that His Highness the Amir's speech was centered on the novel coronavirus situation, economic and financial affairs, and how to reduce reliance upon others, diversify sources of income and cut consumption. The speaker called on everyone to follow the directives of His Highness the Amir regarding all health and security measures to beat the virus, and to think about his words on the country's future so seriously. The speaker spoke highly of His Highness the Amir's call for diversifying sources of income, reducing reliance on others and cutting consumption as a reflection of his eagerness to address challenges ahead. He reassured that Kuwait would overcome this crisis thanks to the political leadership's directives and national unity.

In other news, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh on Saturday telephoned Iraqi Minister of Interior Othman Al-Ghanmi congratulating him on his assignment and on the holy month of Ramadan. A ministry statement said Saleh expressed good wishes to Ghanmi in his mission for bolstering security and stability in the brotherly country. Ghanmi for his part underscored distinctiveness of the brotherly bilateral relations between the two countries, expressing readiness to be engaged in full-fledged cooperation at the security level for sake of regional stability and security. He also expressed hope that the Kuwaiti leadership and the graceful people of Kuwait would surpass this hardship. — KUNA

In my view

Coronavirus revisited



By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com

Here we go again...health officials spoke and are speaking about how to protect ourselves against the coronavirus. The start was very simple: Wash your hands often, keep a distance between yourself and others, avoid shaking hands. If you sneeze or cough, do it in the inner side of your arm, and the best weapon against this thing is to stay home.

People's compliance with those instructions was lax and widely not adhered to or they didn't take the matter seriously. This prompted authorities to impose a partial curfew, close down certain businesses, make special arrangements to visit co-ops, then restrict co-ops to accept area residents only, besides other measures to limit the exposure, but few heeded the warnings. We had areas that were placed under total lockdown for one reason and another. The number of cases started to climb again lately despite all efforts being taken by state authorities, which called for quick action and imposition of a total curfew for a three-week period to bring the virus under control.

But people rushed to markets in huge numbers like there is no tomorrow! Scary scenes show waves of shoppers near food stores, supermarkets, co-ops, etc, standing in line. But they were close to each other and one was almost breathing in the ear of the person in front of him - what a horror situation! This is something that should be avoided under normal circumstances, and we are under the threat of a pandemic.

A brotherly Arab country, where officials moved very early and had good control over the situation, recently recorded zero cases for eight consecutive days, but had a setback as 24 cases were recorded on the ninth day. This was caused by a truck driver who was ignorant enough to invite more than 40 persons to dinner! The driver was infected with the virus and in turn infected all those who were present, and they in turn took the virus with them and gave it to others. The driver was found to have visited a hospital and the hospital is now under isolation. I mentioned this story to show how one person who ignores all instructions thwarted the efforts of five months in just less than an hour!

This is good evidence that staying home is the best weapon against this enemy. We must remember that we are not immune - no one is immune. The state proved that life can go on normally as far as food, medicine, cooking gas, gasoline and other necessities are concerned, so no need to panic and rush to stock things, as arrangements are already made to enable everyone to get what they need.

So, please listen well and do exactly what the health authorities ask you to do, because it is for your own sake, and the sake of the entire population. Thank you!

Final word: "Even the smallest act of caring for another person is like a drop of water - it will make ripples throughout the pond." — Jessy and Bryan Metteo