

Local

Health Ministry launches drive-thru coronavirus testing site at airport

Pharmacies must sell masks at state-approved price

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health inaugurated late Saturday a drive-through novel coronavirus testing center at Jazeera Airways Park and Fly facility at Kuwait International Airport. The center will help increase the number of tests carried out by the ministry to discover unreported infection cases, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah told reporters during the inauguration ceremony. He pointed out that the center will be used to conduct 180 tests a day for 180 people from the six governorates. The ministry will cooperate with the Public Authority for

the Civil Information to randomly nominate 180 persons, representing the different state areas, the two sexes and different age categories, for the tests. SMS's will be sent to the phones of the selected persons including all related information about the date, time, location of the testing, he clarified, adding that the center can receive 15 cars at once.

Separately, the Health Ministry said Saturday that pharmacies will have to sell masks at a price approved by the state, which should not exceed 150 fils a piece. Undersecretary at the Ministry Dr Ab-

dullah Al-Bader affirmed that the decision came in line with the health authorities' guidelines to encourage people to wear face covers in Kuwait. He affirmed that the concerned authorities would monitor the sale of masks to make sure that pharmacies are abiding by the price regulation.

In other news, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has completed the inspection of 59 supermarkets, commercial establishments and pharmacies to ensure the flow of purchases and food deliveries and price stability. The ministry is also

currently monitoring 50 subsidised food outlets and will continue to dispatch its inspection teams around the country during the coronavirus lockdown measures, it said in a statement yesterday. Some 193 consumer complaints were received by the ministry on its 135 hotline. The need to comply with laws and regulations amid these unprecedented circumstances was strongly underlined, and the ministry warned it would be on the lookout for those seeking to take advantage of the current situation. — KUNA

Police arrest man who quarreled with army officer

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior announced late Saturday that it has arrested an Arab man who appeared in a video clip, posted on social media, quarreling with an army officer at a shopping mall in Sulaibikhat. In a press release, the ministry said the man has been taken to the northwestern Sulaibikhat police station where he was cross-examined by prosecutors. The suspect was charged with two accounts of curfew rules violation and mobile phone misuse, it pointed out. It added that he will remain in jail pending further investigations. The ministry stressed that it will closely follow up this case and will take all necessary legal actions to maintain full respect to security and military personnel. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Companies distributed bread to residents in Farwaniya, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Standing in Solidarity and Joining Hands to Fight COVID-19

By LI Minggang, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait

Currently, COVID-19 is sweeping the globe, posing a grave threat to people's lives and health and a formidable challenge to global public health security. Some have described it as the darkest moment faced by humanity in a century. In a time of increasingly challenging situation under the shadow of COVID-19, it is even more imperative for us to stay rational and sustain confidence with the aim of looking for solutions to contain COVID-19, and have faith that humanity will triumph over this health crisis. As Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out in his article entitled "Solidarity and Cooperation are the Most Powerful Weapons for the International Community to Defeat COVID-19," mankind is a community with a shared future. To defeat a disease that threatens all, solidarity and cooperation are the most powerful weapons.

The Chinese government and people have exerted tremendous efforts and sacrifices in fighting against the COVID-19 outbreak, and have yielded significant results. China will never forget the valuable understanding and support from the international community during the most difficult moment in our battle against the virus. Accordingly, China is fully aware that only with global solidarity can the international community win the battle against this deadly virus. China has been shouldering its due responsibilities by supporting the global response to COVID-19 in an effort to fulfill China's solid commitment to solidarity and cooperation.

To date, China has set up a special fund on COVID-19 cooperation worth 2 billion yuan (KD 87 million), provided anti-epidemic supplies to over 150 countries and international organizations, shared experience on prevention, control, diagnosis and treatment with the rest of the international community, established online knowledge center on epidemic prevention and control that is open to all countries, and held over 120 video conferences with more than 160 countries and international organizations. In the spirit of mutual support, China is not only reaching out to developing countries with vulnerable healthcare systems, but also extending its outreach to the hard-hit developed countries in Europe and the US. At the most difficult times when the world is combating COVID-19, the Chinese medical expert teams put themselves in harm's way and headed to many parts of the world to support

the global response, which shows their fearlessness and strong sense of commitment. China, running at full steam around the clock, has been providing anti-epidemic supplies to other countries to the best of its ability, which gives sustained support for ensuring crucial strategic supplies in the global fight against COVID-19. According to incomplete statistics, from March 1 to April 30, China exported 27.8 billion face masks and 73.41 million COVID-19 test kits. China is producing medical supplies the world needs at record speed to help people get through the trying times.

Since the outbreak, China and Kuwait has been mutually supporting each other in the spirit of sincerity, setting a good example for countries in anti-epidemic cooperation. President Xi Jinping and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah exchanged letters to express solidarity with each other. At the critical moments in China's fight against the epidemic, Kuwait donated \$3 million of medical supplies to China, and China has been facilitating Kuwait in procuring medical supplies from China, with over 10 Kuwaiti Air Force planes heading to China for bringing medical supplies back to Kuwait. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health attended three video conferences held by the Chinese side to discuss COVID-19 response and exchange experience. In an effort to aid fight against COVID-19, a Chinese medical expert team visited Kuwait and had in-depth discussions with the Kuwaiti counterparts to exchange experience in epidemic response and COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment, which demonstrates the great spirit of love across borders and our genuine friendship in times of need.

Viruses respect no borders. The only way to defeat them is through concerted efforts of all. As His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah stressed in his speech, fighting the COVID-19 epidemic necessitates the concerted efforts of the entire international community and the joint endeavors of scientists and medical specialists to develop an effective vaccine for the virus. Kuwait has been keen to support global humanitarian causes. Under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah as a Humanitarian Leader, Kuwait has made a total donation of \$100 million in contribution to the global COVID-19 response, which adequately reflects the Kuwaiti government's great significance attached to international anti-epidemic cooperation. We appreciate and greatly value the humanitarian contribution from the Kuwaiti government.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues ravaging the world, more and more countries have come to realize that protecting the health and security of their own people means preserving global health security, and helping other countries in containing the outbreak helps to alleviate their burden, as only through solidarity can the international community foster greater efforts. However, we regret that as people all around the world are joining hands in fighting the epidemic, some politicians attempt to label the virus, politicize COVID-19 and continuingly stigmatize and tarnish other countries. It is worth underlining that human history is an evolutionary process of constant battles and adaptation between humans and nature. The novel coronavirus may appear in any place in the world, and its origin should be researched by scientists worldwide. Slanders, smears, blame games and lies will not help tackle the crisis, but will only waste more time and even lead to more loss of lives. Our common foe is the virus rather than each other. Putting political expediency before people's lives and health and spreading "political virus" are more worthy of vigilance than the novel coronavirus itself.

As the most professional international institution with the highest authority in global public health security, the World Health Organization (WHO) plays an irreplaceable role in the face of global public health crisis. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the WHO, under the leadership of Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has played a leading and coordinating role in promoting international anti-epidemic cooperation by actively fulfilling its responsibilities, which has been widely recognized and highly praised by the international community.

The 73rd Session of the WHO's World Health Assembly (WHA) will take place today, May 18, 2020. It is believed that the WHA will further foster international solidarity and promote the global COVID-19 containment efforts. Both China and Kuwait have all along advocated and practiced multilateralism, actively carried out international anti-epidemic cooperation, and extended unwavering support for the United Nations and the World Health Organization's leading role in coordinating international cooperation against COVID-19. Supporting WHO is to safeguarding international solidarity in the battle against the disease. We have reasons to believe that, with firm confidence and a collective response in solidarity, humanity will prevail over this outbreak and embrace a brighter future.

News in brief

Cat rescued

KUWAIT: A cat stuck inside a restaurant on Blaajat Street in Salmiya for three days was rescued after local animal rescue account @icareq8 posted videos of the trapped cat. The account utilized crowd sourcing to notify officials and locate employees of the restaurant who contacted management and Ministry of Interior officials to release the cat. It was freed early yesterday morning and given food and water.

Six flights

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that six flights departed Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying expatriates wishing to go back home. They include one flight to Doha, three flights to Egypt, and two flight to Bangladesh, carrying a total of 1,035 passengers.

Curfew violators

KUWAIT: Police arrested 14 curfew violators on Saturday, the Ministry of Interior announced. The suspects, all Kuwaiti, were arrested as follows: Seven in Hawally governorate, one in Farwaniya, one in Jahra, two in Mubarak Al-Kabeer and three in Al-Ahmadi.

KD 300,000 million

KUWAIT: Kuwait government may save more than KD 300,000 million (\$1 billion) after suspending all government sponsored travel, exhibitions, conferences, official functions and related expenses. Citing an unnamed analyst, Gulf News reports that the Kuwait government will save significantly because it will not be spending government budgets on food and hotel allowances, transportation, gifts and other travel-related expenses for government departments and ministries.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

