

Local

Kuwait extends partial lockdown until April 22

MPs demand questioning, dismissing speaker

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The council of ministers yesterday decided to extend the partial nightly curfew for another two weeks, ending April 22 but reduced it for one more hour, government spokesman said yesterday.

Tareq Al-Mazrem said starting from April 8, curfew will start at 7 pm and end at 5 am and this will apply during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, expected to start on April 13. During Ramadan, the cabinet allowed delivery services from restaurants, cafes and catering to operate between 7 pm until 3 am.

It also allowed people during Ramadan to exercise walking from 7-10 pm but only on foot without using vehicles. Shopping at cooperative societies and supermarkets is also allowed between 7 pm and midnight but through pre-booking.

In another decision, the cabinet allowed expats to leave only through land and sea ports.

The cabinet did not refer to a ban on the entry of foreigners into the country, meaning that the ban is still effective until further notice. In the meantime, opposition MPs yesterday submitted a draft law to allow lawmakers to question and even dismiss the speaker who is immune from accountability under the current law.

The move comes following Tuesday's accusations that assembly speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem violated the law and the constitution in a number of decisions the assembly had taken amid an opposition boycott.



MP wants expats at psychiatric hospital deported

MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqaabi proposed adding a new article to the national assembly internal charter that allows MPs to hold the speaker accountable for violating the constitution which could develop into dismissing him.

Meanwhile, former MP Obaid Al-Wasmi, a professor of law, said that questioning the assembly speaker is allowed under the law. He said that although there is no law to govern the process, at the same time there is no law to prevent that.

MP Bader Al-Mulla, a lawyer by profession, said he supports Wasmi's statement, adding that he will begin collecting signatures of MPs to dismiss the speaker if he does not announce that a law, to delay grilling the prime minister for over a year, passed illegally on Tuesday is null and void.

MP Bader Al-Humaidi said yesterday that he will propose legislation that calls on authorities to deport all expats receiving treatment at the psychiatric hospital in Kuwait. He said that he was informed by the health ministry that as many as 37,000 expats are receiving treatment at the psychiatric hospital at a huge financial cost.



Government spokesman
Tareq Al-Mazrem

Public sector Ramadan work hours no more than four and half hours

KUWAIT: Working time at public sector departments during the holy month of Ramadan should not exceed four and a half hours, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced in a circular yesterday. During this time, COVID-19 health measures should be observed, CSC added, but several public bodies, like the Health Ministry, may determine their own work schedule given the nature and requirements of each job. CSC went on to refer to its gradual post-COVID-19 recovery plan for public employees, approved by the Cabinet. It said that government bodies will continue to implement "flexible" working hours, without the need of being bound by official work schedules. —KUNA



Decline in COVID-19 infections among Kuwaiti citizens

KUWAIT: Ministry of Health (MoH) Spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad on Wednesday announced a noticeable decrease of coronavirus infections among Kuwaitis compared with previous months. Speaking at a news conference, Sanad said the ratio of COVID-19 infection among Kuwaitis is less than 55 percent compared with 68



Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad

percent at some times over the last few months, warning against an increase in infections among residents. Field medical swabs still indicate to a rise in the infection rate, he showed, calling for taking utmost measures of caution. Getting out of this crisis requires a common responsibility, receiving vaccination and continue abiding by preventive measures, he stressed.

Despite all challenges facing those who deal with the pandemic, there are still hopes for a better future to get out of this crisis, he affirmed. On the occasion of National Doctors' Day; on March 30, Sanad expressed gratitude to all doctors and medical staff as well as all frontline workers for their efforts in facing the pandemic. He noted that the global indicators are still growing as figures have increased from 127.8 million cases to 128.8 million in two days. Earlier Wednesday, Dr Sanad announced five deaths and 1,282 new cases of COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, taking the death toll to 1,313 and total infections to 232,103. —KUNA

Kuwait Audit Bureau spares treasury \$264 million spending

KUWAIT: Kuwait Audit Bureau's examination of planned expenditures spared the treasury (unnecessary) spending estimated at KD 80 million (\$264 million) in the current fiscal year. Fatma Al-Fahad, auditor at the pre-supervision department for economic affairs at the diwan, said in a press statement yesterday that the spared sum was double the savings achieved in the previous financial year.

She indicated that the bureau stopped (unnecessary) spending of KD 80 million (\$264) in the current fiscal year against KD 36 million (\$118 million) in the previous identical year, 122 percent higher, also noting that the personnel assigned for the task focused on cancelling or trimming amounts of products and prices, according to the diwan studies. Totally, the bureau examined 2,850 proposed transactions worth KD 3.4 billion (\$11.2 billion) for the fiscal year 2019-2020. —KUNA

News in brief

Temperatures rise over weekend

KUWAIT: Kuwait's weather during the weekend will witness a gradual rise in temperatures accompanied by dust-carrying winds over open areas and light rain, possibly thunderous, a forecaster said yesterday. Today's weather will be at a range of 34-36 degrees Celsius and Saturday's forecast is expected to be between 22-24 degrees Celsius, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi of the Kuwait Control and Meteorological Center (KCMC) noted. —KUNA

Chamber calls for allowing expats in

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry has requested allowing expats with valid visas into the country similar to domestic helpers, in order to maintain inflation and wage rates in the Kuwaiti market, Al-Qabas daily reported yesterday.

Kuwaiti oil price down

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti crude oil dropped by 42 cents to reach \$63.90 per barrel on Wednesday from \$64.32 pb a day prior, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said. Elsewhere, the price of Brent Crude also witnessed a decline of \$1.43 to reach \$62.74 pb as did West Texas Intermediate, which saw a \$1.39 decrease to \$59.16 pb. —KUNA