

Local

Ministers receive second dose of COVID-19 vaccine

More than 20,000 people received first dose



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine yesterday. - Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah exits the vaccination center after receiving the second dose.



Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah points to the link to the digital vaccine certificate on the 'Mosafer' app.



Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah shows the QR code in the digital vaccine certificate.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as part of the national vaccination campaign at Kuwait Vaccination Center in Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref. His Highness the Prime Minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh and the Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah, who also took the second dose of the vaccine.

Sheikh Dr Basel said during the event that more than 20,000 people have already received the first dose of the vaccine in Kuwait, adding that after receiving the second dose, each individual will receive a report through SMS stating that they are vaccinated.

The health minister spoke to reporters yesterday covering the inauguration of Hall 6 at Kuwait International Fairgrounds, which is dedicated for people to receive their second dose. Sheikh Dr Basel revealed that nearly 250,000 people have already registered online to get vaccinated, further urging the entire population to do the same.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Dr Basel mentioned a project in cooperation with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, in order to issue digital vaccination certificate that will be linked with the Public Authority of Civil Information. The certificate shows that its holder has received the first and second doses, the minister said, adding that it comes with a QR code to be scanned at airports around the world for verification, adding that the code will be activated every 10 minutes to guarantee it remains valid.

In the meantime, Sheikh Dr Basel warned that the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. "The situation in Kuwait is good to the point that many people think that the pandemic is over, but the truth is that it still exists around the world," he said. He added that the quarantine periods were increased to three weeks in some countries, and recommended that people must remain cautious and wear masks, social distance and be careful about personal and society health.

About handling the vaccines, Sheikh Dr Basel said the ministry trained health care providers to handle various types of vaccines, and

that the electronic system was activated six months ago to avoid wasting vaccine quantities and mistakes that may occur. "We will not allow for mistakes to happen in vaccination similar to what happened in some countries, including one where one person received five vaccinations," he indicated. He said that each vaccination hall has a capacity of up to 10,000 persons, but vaccination is linked to the availability of the vaccine, with new shipments arriving weekly.

When asked about the condition of having a vaccination certificate to enter the country, he said Kuwait has not yet stipulated having a vaccination certificate for arrivals, but authorities have already linked the digital certificate with 'Mosafer' app just in case any other country may require it.

The minister further noted that international organizations believe that the pandemic will remain until early 2022, and in case the entire world population is vaccinated, "we can say that the pandemic is over, and new infections will be treated as individual cases such as the case with other diseases like the Swine Flu."

Kuwait lists 560 new COVID cases, zero deaths

KUWAIT: Kuwait listed 560 new coronavirus infections and no virus-related deaths yesterday, taking the totals to 156,434 and 946 respectively, the health ministry said. The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood yesterday at 5,427, with 49 of them in intensive care units, according to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, who revealed that some 10,360 swab tests were taken over the same period, bringing the total up to 1,369,781. The ministry had earlier reported that 252 patients had been cured of the virus over the same period, raising the total of those to have overcome the disease to 150,061.

Dr Sanad had earlier said that Kuwait has become one of the countries that witnessed a decline and stability in COVID-19 infection numbers, but cautioned to continue with health preventive measures. This happened thanks to

Allah, and cooperation of society's people and institutions as well as keenness on implementing precautionary measures, he added in a news conference Wednesday. He expressed his optimism about this stable situation, calling for, at the same time, continuing to adhere to these measures. MoH's hospitals are witnessing a decline in number of patients at wards and intensive care units, reaching 8 and 10 percent respectively, he noted. He highly lauded the Ministry's medical staff, and the main partners of different official bodies and institutions for their cooperation to combat the virus pandemic.

Sanad noted that the MoH wishes the safety of humanity in all parts of the earth, especially in the areas that are seeing an increase in numbers of the virus pandemic. He prayed to Allah Almighty to eradicate this epidemic and protect everyone. The world has witnessed the UK's approval of using COVID-19 vaccine that has been developed by Oxford University, he said. He hoped that Kuwait would get this vaccine after the completion of some local and global measures taken to ensure its safety and effectiveness. He renewed his call for all citizens and residents to avoid travelling outside Kuwait at present, "unless absolutely necessary." —KUNA

MP proposes permanent residency for children of Kuwaiti women

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Ali Al-Qattan yesterday submitted a draft law calling on authorities to grant children of Kuwaiti women from their foreign husbands permanent residence permits to save them trouble renewing their residencies every year. Qattan said that the measure will provide needed stability to families of Kuwaiti women married to foreign husbands.

Kuwait, like a majority of Arab countries, does not grant children of Kuwaiti women from foreign husbands Kuwaiti citizenship and treats them like expats who are required to obtain a legal residence permit to be able to live in the country. Kuwaiti women can also sponsor their non-Kuwaiti children.

Meanwhile, MP Osama Al-Shaheen cited Finance Minister Khalifa Hamada as denying

the government has any plan to impose taxes to boost state revenues. The finance ministry came under fire by MPs in the past few days after inviting bids from private companies to set up a modern system for taxes.

The move sparked fears among lawmakers that it was a prelude to imposing taxes on citizens and warned the minister and the entire government of actions.

Shaheen said that the finance minister said the project was aimed at modernizing the taxation system for minor taxes that were imposed since 1955 and there is no plan to impose additional taxes.

MP Saifi Al-Saifi yesterday submitted a draft law calling to include citizenship disputes under the authority of courts. At present, citizenship issues are considered sovereignty matters and courts are not allowed to handle them.