

Local

Kuwait curfew: What you need to know

KUWAIT: Kuwait imposed a one-month partial curfew from 5:00 pm to 5:00 am starting from March 7, 2021 to help curb the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases registered in recent weeks. During the curfew hours, pharmacies, medical stores, co-operative societies and supermarkets are allowed to continue operation only through delivery services. The government later allowed co-ops and supermarkets to serve shoppers from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm every day. Also during the curfew, people are allowed to go to Fajr, Maghreb and Isha prayers at mosques only by walking, while taxis are allowed to carry only two passengers. The government meanwhile allowed salons and health clubs to reopen during the day after a one-month closure but kept restaurants and cafes closed except for drive-through and delivery services.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry launched a booking service, allowing people to shop from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm during the curfew hours. The service is valid for all co-ops and supermarkets around Kuwait. To book an appointment, a shopper should visit www.moci.shop, enter the required information (civil ID number and serial number, contact number and email address), the reason for appointment (food supply center) and the time and date of the appointment. The shopper would then receive a barcode to show once they reach the shopping center.

Where to obtain a curfew pass?

Citizens and residents that need a pass during the curfew hours to leave their homes can apply for a pass at <https://www.paci.gov.kw/>. The pass is available for those in need of emergency medical treatment, doctor's visits, blood donation, COVID-19 swabs and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Co-op delivery during curfew hours

During curfew hours, co-ops, grocery stores and other markets will be allowed to offer delivery services. Most co-ops will accept orders via delivery. Here is an incomplete list of co-op WhatsApp numbers. Each co-op will be responsible for deciding if and when they provide delivery services and not all may be providing.

Omariya Co-op
WhatsApp 6041-0067

Farwaniya Co-op
WhatsApp 6767-8211

Qairawan Co-op
WhatsApp 9000-3749

Jahra Co-op
WhatsApp 5160-2458

Abdulla Al-Mubarak Co-op
WhatsApp 6066-6338

Nuzha Co-op
WhatsApp 9784-5531

Khaitan Co-op
WhatsApp 6777-9745

Ardhiya Co-op
WhatsApp 6902-0779

Rabiya Co-op
WhatsApp 2438-8316

Wafra Farm Co-op
Tel: 9883-5245 / 5170-0085

Salmiya Co-op
Tel: 22253225

Jabriya Co-op
Tel: 1805-353
WhatsApp 6566-6084

Rawdha & Hawally
WhatsApp 9662-2883

Shaab Co-op
WhatsApp 9090-4455

Wafra Co-op
WhatsApp 5055-0539

Keifan Co-op
WhatsApp 5178-1719

Rehab Co-op
WhatsApp 9222-2358

Mishref Co-op
WhatsApp 5055-9900

Faiha Co-op
Tel: 1861-000
WhatsApp 9098-6000

Rumaihiya Co-op
WhatsApp 6066-0045

Bayan Co-op
WhatsApp 9004-2500

Fahaheel Co-op
WhatsApp 5178-9951

Adan & Qusour Co-op
Tel: 5034-3111 / 6593-3975

Salam Co-op
WhatsApp 9788-7832

One year of the pandemic, Kuwait residents tell stories of hardships

Loss, family separation, lack of income among expats' woes

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Every one of us has a coronavirus story. To some the pandemic has been difficult and hard; to others gruesome and horrible; and to the rest tough and unkind. So what is your corona story? Saby, a middle-aged Indian man, has been working in Kuwait for the last 20 years. He said January 2020 was the hardest, as his father passed away. He couldn't even be by his side during his hospital ordeal.

"Until now I am mourning the passing of my father. The fact that you cannot travel and be with your loved ones in times of emergency is the hardest part. He was in hospital in October 2020, was placed in the ICU, then got better and went home. But in December he suffered other health-related issues, so he was admitted to the ICU again. When you want to be with your loved ones but cannot do anything is the most horrible thing. This has been the saddest moment in my life. Until now I feel terribly bad. At that time I wanted to fly back to India, but the timing and reality on the ground were not in my favor. I loved my father so much, but I didn't have a choice - even if you have money you cannot do anything," Saby said.

Saby said 2020 and now 2021 have been the cruelest years he has encountered. "These have been horrible years, not just for me, but for the entire planet," he said. As of yesterday, the world has recorded 2.7 million COVID-19 deaths, with Kuwait's death toll at 1,215. The coronavirus pandemic continues to devastate countries around the world and there is no

sign the virus is going to subside anytime soon, even as the world is slowly rolling out vaccines.

Family separation

Muhammad Tariq, a 47-year-old logistics coordinator, has a disheartening family separation story. His wife and 9-year-old daughter went home to Pakistan on vacation in early Feb 2020. At that time, reports about the coronavirus were just emerging from China and there was no indication it would spread rapidly throughout the world. The virus reached Kuwait in the middle of Feb 2020, and by early March, lockdowns and curfews has started and many people were stranded outside Kuwait.

Tariq's family too was stranded in Pakistan. When Kuwait eventually opened, they waited for some more time to avoid quarantining in a third country as direct flights were banned from certain countries. Some were able to enter Kuwait early on, but others like the family of Tariq who waited for new regulations were eventually stuck in Dubai when they finally decided to return to Kuwait.

On Feb 7, Kuwait decided to ban the entry of all foreigners to Kuwait for two weeks, which was later extended indefinitely. Prior to this ban, there was already a ban on the direct entry of passengers from 35 countries - later expanded to 68 - who had to stay 14 days in a third country before flying to Kuwait.

Hope and prayer

"In early January, my wife and daughter landed in Dubai, but due to a series of border closures, my

family is still waiting to be allowed to enter Kuwait. I hope and pray that Kuwait reconsiders the entry ban, especially for dependents, and arranges a mercy flight for them. My family is not the only one stranded in Dubai. They are many others. We have been paying for hotel accommodation based on daily rates and are broke. I hope the Kuwait government will do something about our predicament," Tariq said.

Meanwhile, Raju, an Indian expat, said he was lucky to enter Kuwait just before the coronavirus outbreak. "I returned from vacation before the coronavirus struck Kuwait. A few days after I arrived, they shut the airport. I thought this will be temporary, but my vacation in 2020 was scuppered. The problem I am facing now is that all my part-time jobs were cancelled. I used to earn well from part-time jobs before; now I only have a salary from my regular job. But I am glad that me and my family in India are in good health," he said.

Melody, a Filipina business owner who had opened a restaurant in Salmiya in late-2019, said she is seriously contemplating closing her business. "I cannot earn anything anymore - no more income from my restaurant business. The amount I am now earning is not even enough to pay my restaurant workers and rent. This business before was very lucrative, but now all my savings are gone and my business is about to collapse. I am picking up the pieces that I can and am trying to sell anything to add to my income. I really pray that we survive this trial, as the only other option is to go back home," she said.



KUWAIT: People queue as they wait to receive a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at the vaccination center at the international fairgrounds in Mishref yesterday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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