



NOTICE

Due to a public holiday on the occasion of the Prophet's (PBUH) birthday, Kuwait Times will not publish its print edition (Friday Times) on October 22. Readers can stay informed with breaking news, events and information via KuwaitTimes.net and our digital media channels on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @KuwaitTimes

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9 KFH achieves KD 168.1 million net profit until end of Q3 2021



14 Back to the future as Salah spearheads Liverpool revival



Kuwait returns to normal life

Airport to operate at full capacity
All types of visas to be issued

No social distancing in mosques
Weddings, conferences allowed

Masks not needed in open spaces
Country in final phase of reopening

Amir asks high-level panel to set rules for pardon; Ghanem hails initiative

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday asked the heads of the National Assembly, Cabinet and the judiciary to propose regulations and conditions for pardoning some Kuwaiti convicts, the Amiri Diwan announced. The proposals will pave the way for issuing an Amiri decree to pardon a number of opposition figures and activists who have been sentenced to jail terms for expressing political views deemed to be in violation of the law.

The panel which will propose the pardon rules comprises of National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and head of the judicial authority Ahmad Al-Ajeel. The Amiri order gave no timeline for the panel to complete its work. The Amiri Diwan said in a statement that the decision was taken after HH the Amir was briefed on the outcome of the national dialogue by the



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Assembly speaker and the prime minister, and after around 40 MPs signed an appeal to HH the Amir calling on him to pardon the former MPs and activists.

"The Amir has decided to use his constitutional right based on article 75 of the constitution," which states that the Amir has the right to pardon someone of their penalty or reduce it.

Ghanem thanked HH the Amir for his initiatives of calling for national dialogue, backing its outcome and then asking the top panel to set the conditions for the pardon. Former speaker and prominent opposition leader Ahmad Al-Saadoun also thanked HH the Amir for intending to issue the pardon decree.

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By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government yesterday announced a "cautious" return to pre-pandemic life, ending 20 months of closures. From Oct 24, the airport will resume operations at full capacity and all types of visas will be issued. "Today, we announce the cautious return to normal life and the start of the fifth and final phase" of returning to pre-pandemic life, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said in a brief speech following an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet.

He also announced the cancellation of all restrictions which the government began to impose in late February last year to contain the spread of the coronavirus, which has claimed more than 2,400 lives in the country. Sheikh Sabah expressed thanks to frontline workers, whom he called the "white army", and all volunteers who participated in the extraordinary efforts to combat COVID-19. He admitted that some mistakes had been committed, "but successes have overtaken mistakes", and authorities are now dealing with a post-pandemic Kuwait.

Government Spokesman Tareq Al-Mazrem said the Cabinet approved proposals by the coronavirus emergency committee that led to reopening the country, but urged the public to comply with health conditions. He said that the Cabinet asked the ministry of Islamic affairs to end social distancing in mosques from Friday, Oct 22, provided that worshippers are vaccinated, bring their own prayer mats and continue to wear facemasks.

The Cabinet also allowed the return of conferences and wedding parties, provided only vaccinated people are allowed to attend and participants should wear masks. The decision is effective from October 24. Mazrem said the Cabinet also decided to lift the requirement to wear masks in open areas from Oct 24, but masks remain compulsory in closed areas.

The Cabinet asked the interior ministry and the

manpower authority to start issuing all types of visas to people vaccinated with approved vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson) from Oct 24, he said. The Cabinet also directed the Civil Aviation Department to operate Kuwait airport at its full capacity of around 30,000 passengers per day from Oct 24, Mazrem said.

Kuwait's Union of Tourism and Travel Offices said in a statement yesterday that the main reason for skyrocketing prices of air tickets, which have risen by 500 percent, was due to the limited capacity of the airport, saying airfares will drop sharply after the airport resumes full operations.

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HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

News in brief

Bitcoin hits record above \$66,000

LONDON: Bitcoin surged yesterday to a record above \$66,000 after taking another step towards mainstream status as the world's most popular cryptocurrency forayed onto Wall Street. A bitcoin futures exchange-traded fund (ETF), a type of financial instrument, launched on the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday. The news electrified demand for the cryptocurrency, which scaled an all-time pinnacle of \$66,976 in London yesterday. — AFP

19 dead in Cairo accident

CAIRO: Nineteen people died in Egypt yesterday when a minibus was hit by an oncoming lorry travelling the wrong way on a Cairo bypass, medical and security sources said. The accident happened in the October 6 suburb on the western edge of the capital, killing the driver of the minibus and 18 passengers, the sources said. Travel accidents are frequent in Egypt, where many roads are badly maintained and traffic rules often neglected by drivers and authorities. — AFP

Lebanon hikes fuel prices

BEIRUT: Lebanon raised fuel prices yesterday in a de facto end to state subsidies, pushing the cost of filling a vehicle's tank to more than the monthly minimum wage in the poverty-stricken nation. A revised price list published by the energy ministry set the cost of 20 liters of 95-octane petrol at 302,700 Lebanese pounds, or around \$15 at the black market rate. — AFP (See Page 8)

Attacks kill 27 in Damascus, Idlib town

DAMASCUS: A rare bombing of an army bus in Damascus and shelling shortly after of a town in rebel-held northwest Syria killed at least 27 people yesterday, in the deadliest flare-up in months. Two bombs planted on an army bus in central Damascus were detonated early in the morning, killing 14 people, in the worst such attack in the capital in four years, state news agency SANA reported.

There was no immediate claim for

the bombing, but government shelling shortly after killed 13 people in Idlib province, parts of which are controlled by groups that have claimed such attacks in the past. "A terrorist bombing using two explosive devices targeted a passing bus" at a key bridge in Damascus, the state news agency said, reporting that at least three people were wounded.

Images released by SANA showed first responders searching the charred carcass of the bus and what it said was a bomb squad defusing a third device in the same area. SANA quoted a military source as saying the bombs were detonated as the bus passed near the Hafez Al-Assad bridge, close to the national museum in the heart of the capital.

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DAMASCUS: A firefighter puts out a blaze on a Syrian army bus that was targeted with explosive devices yesterday. — AFP

Floods, landslides kill 116 in India and Nepal

DEHRADUN, India: The death toll from days of flooding and landslides in India and Nepal crossed 100 yesterday, including several families swept away or crushed in their homes by avalanches of mud and rocks. Experts say that they were victims of ever-more unpredictable and extreme weather across South Asia in recent years caused by climate change and exacerbated by deforestation, damming and excessive development.

In Uttarakhand in northern India, officials said 46 people had died in recent days with 11 missing. At least

30 were killed in seven separate incidents in Uttarakhand's Nainital region early Tuesday, after cloudbursts - an ultra-intense deluge of rain - triggered landslides and destroyed several structures. Five of the dead were from a single family whose house was buried by a massive landslide, local official Pradeep Jain told AFP.

Authorities ordered the closure of schools and banned all religious and tourist activities in the state. Television footage and social media videos showed residents wading

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RAMPUR, India: Commuters stand on a flyover on a flooded national highway after the river Kosi overflowed following heavy rains in Uttar Pradesh state yesterday. — AFP