

Local

Health minister discusses hospitals' readiness amid COVID cases' spike

Kuwait reports 5,808 new COVID one day after setting new record

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Khaled Al-Saeed discussed with the COVID-19 team yesterday the capacity and readiness of hospitals in case the number of patients in COVID-19 wards and ICUs continues to grow, after Kuwait registered unprecedented numbers of daily coronavirus cases. This came in a statement by the minister after his meeting with the team, in the presence of Undersecretary Dr Mostafa Redha, in light of the rise in occupation at hospitals and the worrying numbers of deaths in some countries in the region. The meeting comes within the framework of the periodical follow up of the epidemiological situation and readiness of the country's health facilities, he said. The minister lauded all sincere efforts and efficiencies of all health staff that are putting the country's health security, and the safety of nationals and expats ahead of anything else.



12,721 new cases over the weekend

yesterday in addition to two deaths and 5,547 recoveries. Meanwhile, the number of patients in ICUs dropped from 88 on Friday to 84 on Saturday. The number of patients hospitalized on the other hand increased from 414 to 469, while total active cases rose from 50,172 to 50,431. The percentage of daily new cases to new tests dropped from 19.3 percent to 16.6 percent, while the percentage of recovery remained almost unchanged at 90.1 percent, according to the health ministry's bulletin. Some 31,198 swab tests were conducted over the same period, out of a total of 6,853,435 so far, the ministry added. The new figures bring total cases to 534,062, total deaths to 2,494 and total recoveries to 481,137. Kuwait has reported 12,721 new cases over the weekend as the country announced 6,913 new cases on Friday: the highest number of daily record since the start of the pandemic. Health authorities also reported two deaths and 5,674 recoveries on Friday. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Khaled Al-Saeed speaks during a meeting with the COVID-19 team yesterday. —KUNA

Zain offered COVID-19 booster shot to staff

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, held a fourth COVID-19 vaccination campaign for its staff at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The company provided the booster shot of the COVID-19 vaccine to its employees with the aim of supporting the nation's efforts in immunizing the community.

Zain considers itself an active partner of the Ministry of Health and other institutions in protecting the local community against the threats of the pandemic. Since the early days of the crisis, Zain was keen on effectively responding to the efforts of various authorities in the nation by supporting initiatives and programs that contributed to lessening the health, economic, and social impacts of the pandemic.

The fourth internal vaccination campaign came as a continuation of the first three campaigns Zain held back in June and July of 2021 and January 2022, where a large number of Zain staff received their vaccinations at the company's main headquarters. The Ministry of Health's medical and administrative teams were present a fourth time to administer booster shots in an effort to reinforce

the immunity of the largest number of employees.

Zain expressed its utmost appreciation and gratitude to the Ministry of Health's officials for responding to its call to conduct the four internal vaccination campaigns, as well as for their keenness on being present at the company's main HQ to coordinate the campaign efficiently. The company hopes such initiatives would contribute to imprinting a positive impact in strengthening social immunity and supporting MOH's efforts in protecting the nation from the pandemic.

Throughout the past two years, Zain has showcased the spirit of responsibility as a leading national company by making its human and tech resources available to shoulder the public sector and maintain the nation's wellbeing. The company also launched numerous social awareness campaigns aimed at elevating the health and safety of the community. Not only that, but Zain was also keen on continuing its support of social, educational, and cultural initiatives - which it has always been a top supporter of - in a virtual format this time to adhere to official health measures and guidelines to keep everyone involved safe.

Zain's tireless efforts have extended throughout the year, where it has launched its own social initiatives, supported existing health and social programs, in addition to handling the crisis, all under its corporate sustainability and social responsibility strategy. Being one of the biggest private sector leaders in the country, Zain was keen on reflecting its role by supporting the public sector, especially during crises which show the nation's true soul.



KUWAIT: Zain officials with MOH's team during the campaign.

Embassies refute rumors, explain travel conditions

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Travel restrictions are systematically changing depending on the pandemic situation. Massive losses have led to some relief in health restrictions on travel. Some European countries have announced lifting most restrictions by February. Meanwhile, some social media users posted a list of 10 countries claiming they have lifted all restrictions, including PCR tests, vaccination certificates and quarantine.

But this information is not accurate. Kuwait Times contacted six of these countries' embassies and received the following information: None of these countries is imposing mandatory quarantine. Surprisingly, Japan is currently closed to all visitors, and its embassy is not issuing any kind of visa.

The exact opposite is Mexico, which welcomes visitors from all over the world with no restrictions at all. "Any visitor can enter Mexico without any PCR test prior or after the flight, even if they aren't vaccinated. Of course no quarantine is imposed. We encourage

tourism, and the visit visa costs \$48," said the secretary at the Mexican Embassy.

To enter Brazil, a passenger must be fully vaccinated and have a negative PCR test result not older than 72 hours. The same rule applies for travelling to Spain, where the traveler must submit their vaccination certificate along with the visa application. The Czech Republic applies the same rule with additional online registration on a public health passenger locator form.

Turkey is a little easier to travel to, as fully vaccinated visitors don't need to undergo a PCR test, while unvaccinated travelers should have a negative PCR test result not older than 72 hours. The official website of Sweden states there is temporary entry ban on entering the country. To mitigate the effects of the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the outbreak, a temporary ban on entry to the EU via Sweden is also in force.

Updated and accurate information on PCR tests is always provided by airlines. According to an employee of an agency that facilitates issuance of visas to the European Union, tourists from Kuwait are very interested to travel to Europe. "People have started to apply for visit visas for the summer, as they want to avoid crowding at the beginning of the season. During the pandemic, many European countries shortened the period of the Schengen visa to only one month instead of the previous 90 days. But every embassy sets its own rules, as I think they want to compensate for their losses," the agent told Kuwait Times.

Motorist dead in King Fahad Road collision



KUWAIT: A collision between a sports utility vehicle and a truck left a citizen dead and an Arab resident critically injured, Kuwait Fire Force said on Friday. The accident took place on King Fahad Road and was handled by Abdullah Port firemen, it added, noting that an investigation was opened into the case. Meanwhile, Mishref and Bedaa firemen responded to a fire in a Sabah Al-Salem area

building. Residents were evacuated, as the fire was put out, KFF said. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire which broke out Thursday evening, it noted. Separately, airport cargo customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle around two tons of chewing tobacco, which is a banned substance by commerce and health ministries.

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