

Local

Kuwait Amir sends condolence cables to Iraqi top officials

Sheikh Nawaf condoles with Indian, Ukrainian presidents on deadly fires

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent condolence cables to Iraq's President Barham Salih and Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadmi expressing his sincere condolences on the victims of two deadly blasts in central Baghdad. The attacks on a busy market in the Iraqi capital led to the death and injury of dozens of civilians. The cable highlighted Kuwait's "denunciation and strong condemnation of these two acts that targeted the lives of innocent people and undermined security and stability in the brotherly country."

Kuwait's Amir went on to underline Kuwait's stance in rejection of terrorism, under all forms and manifestations, and in support of all measures taken by Iraq to confront such "criminal acts." He also extended his sincere condolences to the families of the victims of the blast and wished a speedy recovery for those injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent a cable of condolences to Iraq's parliament speaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi.

Moreover, Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah reiterated Kuwait's

strong condemnation of the terrorist blasts that shook central Baghdad on Thursday and resulted in the death of dozens of innocent people and targeted the security and stability of Iraq. This came in a telephone call held yesterday between the Kuwaiti foreign minister and his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein. Kuwait's foreign minister also underlined his country's solidarity with Iraq in all measures Baghdad takes to maintain its security and stability. He also expressed his sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wished the injured a speedy recovery.



Kuwait supports Iraq's fight against terrorism

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to Indian President Ram Nath Kovind to extend his condolences for the deadly fire at a serum producing institute western India. In the cable, His Highness the Amir also offered his sincere sympathy to relatives of the victims of the fire at an under-construction site of the Pune's Serum Institute of India. The blaze left several people dead and wounded. His Highness the Amir wished those injured a speedy recovery. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables, while Speaker Ghanem sent cables of condolences to Speaker of India's parliament Om Birla and

Deadly fires

Chairman of the Council of States Venkaiah Naidu. In the meantime, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky to express his condolences on the tragic loss of life in a fire at an elderly home in southeastern city of Kharkiv. In the cable, His Highness the Amir also extended sin-



BAGHDAD: People console Louai Al-Nuaimi father of two Iraqi youngsters, Omar and Ali, killed in Baghdad's twin suicide attacks, during a condolences ceremony in the capital's Cairo neighborhood, on Friday. — AFP

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cere condolences to families of the victims and wished those injured a speedy recovery. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the Ukrainian president, while Speaker Ghanem sent a cable to his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Razumkov. — KUNA

Kuwait seeks tougher maritime laws to counter infiltration



KUWAIT: Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah during visits to Sabah Al-Ahmad Naval Base and a number of southern borders posts. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: It is imperative to strengthen legislation dealing with maritime navigation to beef up anti-infiltration efforts, Kuwait's interior minister said on Friday, a week after authorities reported suspected

trespassers into the country's waters. "We will not accept any security shortcomings or a repeat of last week's incident," Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah was cited as saying in an interior ministry statement, amid



a visit to a southern naval base, adding that national security will "never be jeopardized." Seeking to bolster Kuwait's vigilance against all foreign infiltration efforts, the statement said the minister held

talks with Housing and State Services Minister Dr Abdullah Marafi over plans to employ cutting-edge telecom technology in efforts to keep trespassers at bay. — KUNA

Imams mobilize to counter UK...

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unlikely or very unlikely to get the vaccine. Among those from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds, the figure was 42 percent. Imams are pushing back in particular at fears among Britain's estimated 2.8 million Muslims that the vaccines contain pork gelatin or alcohol, which are banned by Islam.

Asim said it was "legitimate" to question whether things were permissible under Islam but without paying attention to unfounded claims. Among the falsehoods spread about the vaccine are that it can modify DNA, make recipients sterile, or even involve inserting a microchip in the body.

Misinformation around the coronavirus is all the more dangerous given several studies have shown that it can impact minorities disproportionately. "These are precisely the communities we should be trying to target," said Nighat Arif, a general practitioner based in Chesham, near London. When she received her vaccination, she posted a video in Urdu on social media

aimed at the language's speakers living in Britain.

"I'm hoping that because they see someone who looks like them, who is a practicing Muslim, wears a hijab, someone who is Asian who speaks their language, that's more relatable than something that's coming through from the government," she added. Arif is still surprised by the refusal of certain patients to be inoculated, noting they will often get vaccinated to undertake the hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, or to visit Pakistan or India. She blames conspiracy theories spread online, which contribute to the science behind the process "being lost".

Samara Afzal, 34, a general practitioner at Netherton Health Centre in Dudley in the West Midlands, also shared a video in Urdu with her 35,000 Twitter followers to "debunk some myths". She said some people had asked her to send the video directly to them so they could forward it to skeptical loved ones via social tools like WhatsApp.

At her medical center, Afzal estimates that around 40 to 50 people out of 1,000 have refused to be vaccinated when she had expected only one or two. "It's still a fair amount of people that are saying no and obviously we haven't even addressed the younger ones, so this is just the elderly," she added. "So I'm sure when it comes down to the younger ones, there'll be a lot more that say no." — AFP

In Mexico, where hospitals have been overwhelmed and over 146,000 have died, people are queuing for hours to buy oxygen to care for the growing numbers fighting coronavirus at home. Brazilian scientists have meanwhile warned that the country faces running out of vaccine doses and basic equipment like syringes, just as its vaccination campaign gets underway - with some blaming government for the shortages.

The World Health Organization said Friday it had no plans to change its guidance recommending fabric facemasks as new coronavirus variants spread, because the mutated strains are transmitted in the same way. Germany and Austria have made medical masks mandatory on public transport and in shops - allowing only surgical or FFP2 masks, rather than fabric - amid concerns over the threat posed by the rapidly-spreading new virus mutations. — AFP

Iconic US talk show host Larry...

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as a broadcaster," Ora Media said in a statement posted on Twitter.

King's long list of interviewees ranged from every US president since 1974, world leaders Yasser Arafat and Vladimir Putin, and celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Marlon Brando and Barbra Streisand. In an emotional last "Larry King Live" show in 2010, tributes included one from President Barack Obama, who in a video message called King "one of the giants of broadcasting".

Tributes from the media, politicians and Hollywood stars poured in, led by Putin, who hailed the interviewer's "great professionalism and unquestioned journalistic authority", according to the Kremlin. Veteran CNN foreign correspondent Christiane Amanpour remembered King as "a giant of broadcasting and a master of the TV celebrity/statesman-woman interview".

Star Trek icon and social media personality George Takei noted how King understood

"human triumph and frailty equally well," while Kirstie Alley, of "Cheers" fame, described him as "one of the only talk show hosts who let you talk".

British TV hosts Piers Morgan and Craig Ferguson, both of whom have had shows in the US, paid tribute to King's interviewing skills.

"Larry King was a hero of mine until we fell out after I replaced him at CNN & he said my show was 'like watching your mother-in-law go over a cliff in your new Bentley.' (He married 8 times so a mother-in-law expert)," said Morgan. "But he was a brilliant broadcaster & masterful TV interviewer."

Born Lawrence Harvey Zeiger on Nov 19, 1933, to poor Russian Jewish immigrants in working-class Brooklyn, New York, King says he never wanted to be anything but a radio broadcaster. At the age of 23 he went to Florida to try and find a job. He became a disc-jockey for a Miami radio station in 1957, changing his name to King when the radio's manager told him it was "too ethnic".

For another Miami Beach radio station he recorded programs in a restaurant, doing live audience interviews. In 1978 he went to Washington where he anchored a national late-night radio call-in show, before being spotted by CNN, a channel founded in 1980, which hired him for its nighttime programs in 1985. — AFP

Wuhan marks one year since...

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Meanwhile the Netherlands introduced its first curfew since World War II, from 9 pm until 4:30 am. Across the Atlantic, newly-installed President Biden stepped up federal aid even as he gave his highest estimate yet of the eventual toll. "The virus is surging," he said. "We're at 400,000 dead, expected to reach well over 600,000." And in the Colombian capital of Bogota, residents were under their third weekend quarantine in a row, meaning the closure of all non-essential shops in the city of eight million from Friday at 8 pm until Monday at 4 am.

COVID forces Jordan kids to...

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determined to return to school as soon as possible. "I would love to continue my studies" and eventually become a pilot, he said. "I don't want the coronavirus to destroy my dream."

The education ministry has announced a return to classes next month for kindergarten and some elementary school levels, as well for students in their final year of high school. Everyone else will have to wait until March. UN children's agency UNICEF said that while it had no hard statistics, it believed many Jordanian children had been forced into precarious

work since the pandemic began - despite it being forbidden to employ those under 16.

Some 76,000 children were already working in Jordan according to the last official count, published in 2016. "When we see children and when we speak to people, we are concerned that the numbers are increasing," said Tanya Chapuisat, UNICEF's country representative in Jordan. "It would seem logical... because we know the levels of poverty are increasing" during the coronavirus crisis, she added.

The official poverty rate in Jordan was 15.7 percent last autumn, but the World Bank has warned this will increase by 11 percentage points over "the short term". Experts fear child labor rates will surge even higher. "I expect child labor to increase dramatically," said Ahmad Awad, director of Jordan Labor Watch. He pointed to both the rise in poverty and the pandemic's negative impact on Jordan's education system as drivers of this trend. — AFP