

Local

National Guard Deputy Chief calls for respecting the law

KNG officials follow up procedures to implement partial curfew

KUWAIT: Deputy Chief of Kuwait's National Guard (KNG) Lieutenant General Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Sunday called for respecting the law, good dealing with the public, provide assistance to citizens and residents, and maintaining the good image of the National Guard. This came in a statement by the KNG after the meeting between the Deputy Chief of the National Guard with National Guard Undersecretary Lieutenant General engineer Hashim Al-Rifai and senior commanders and officers to follow up the procedures for the implementation of the partial curfew imposed by the government, and to help the state institutions concerned to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf conveyed the directives of His Highness Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah to harness all resources to provide maximum support to state institutions in implementing Cabinet decisions aimed at reducing the spread of the coronavirus. He stressed caution and vigilance in all locations where the National Guard is responsible for security, whether the main tasks in protecting state installations and sensitive sites or emergency tasks to assign state agencies, especially the ministries of interior and health, to implement the partial curfew. According to the statement, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf listened to a summary from Training Assistant Major General Faleh Shujaa, in which he reviewed the plans of national guard operations developed in such circumstances to deal with any government measures regarding the coronavirus crisis. He also reviewed a summary from the Commander of Protection and Reinforcement, Brigadier General Hamad Salem, on the measures taken in implementing the hotel security plan that the National Guard was mandated to secure.—KUNA



KUWAIT: A photo shows a deserted street in Kuwait city, on Sunday, as a nationwide curfew from 5 pm until 5 am is imposed for one month to curb a sharp rise in coronavirus cases.— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Prime Minister receives outgoing UK Ambassador



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Britain's Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport on the occasion of ending his tenure.— KUNA

Al-Shaheed park open for walking



KUWAIT: This photo shows people walking at Al-Shaheed Park on March 6, 2021, one day before the partial curfew went into effect.— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: Al-Shaheed Park in Kuwait City announced on their official Instagram account that they will be open every day from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm starting yesterday. The park had originally announced that it would be closed during the entire month of the curfew period until April 8 but has now reversed this decision.

News in brief

Kuwait first in Gulf in freedoms

KUWAIT: Kuwait ranked first among Gulf states in the Freedom House 2021 report in civil and political freedoms. The report said that Kuwait achieved progress in civil freedoms last year. The report ranks Kuwait 143 worldwide out of 201 countries, finishing with a score of 37 out of 100.

Teachers' payment suspended

KUWAIT: The education ministry has suspended payment of salaries to nearly 600 "newly-stranded" teachers in various education zones. Educational sources said these teachers are those who were at work until the end of the first school semester but did not report to work for the second semester, adding they were given until Sunday to show up before rules related to absence were applied.

Quarantine sites 'returned'

KUWAIT: The management of quarantine sites that were established to support health measures to confront the coronavirus pandemic is now the responsibility of ministries and state departments that leased them, such as the ministries of finance, public works, defense and Kuwait Oil Company. Al-Rai Arabic daily reported yesterday quoting informed sources. They said the quarantine sites went to the relevant authorities after carrying out their responsibilities during the process of repatriating citizens from abroad. The finance ministry completed contractual procedures with resorts or hotels that were rented for this purpose. It said that the role of the health ministry was to prepare the fairground quarantine and field hospitals that are still carrying out their roles in facing the pandemic. Meanwhile, construction or financial procedures at other quarantine sites is the responsibility of the relevant authorities, while the role of the health ministry is limited to presenting health services. The sources said the ministry of public works quarantine site near Jaber Stadium was prepared and paid for by MPW, Al-Zour quarantine site by KOC and the same for the ministry of defense near the military hospital.

Qatar Amir meets Saudi FM...

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and a process of reconciliation began. Since then, Qatari officials have met in Kuwait with their opposite numbers from Egypt and the United Arab Emirates to discuss how to move on from the spat. "(The Amir) received an oral message from Saudi

Arabia's King Salman... during the reception of Prince Farhan," the state-run Qatar News Agency reported. The Saudi foreign minister later met his Qatari counterpart and discussed bilateral relations, the agency added.

Egypt's Al-Ahram daily reported Doha's delegation was led by senior foreign ministry official Mohamed bin Saud Al-Thani to "discuss cooperation between Egypt and Qatar". The visit is the latest sign of warming ties between the two countries after their respective foreign ministers met last week on the sidelines of an Arab League session in Cairo.— AFP

Bus riders walk home on first...

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"I realized that I will never get a bus from Shuwaikh to Salmiya, so I took any bus that came and ended up in Kuwait City. There I waited for more than an hour for another bus. All the buses were filled to capacity, but people were rushing to the bus wanting to get in. I was stuck there until 5:15 pm as the scenes in Kuwait City were even worse than Shuwaikh. At 5:20 pm, I decided to go home by foot," Saby told Kuwait Times.

"I was ready to walk from Kuwait City to Salmiya because that's what people were doing as there were no more buses and no taxis. I saw crowds of people of various nationalities walking in different directions, bracing to be caught by the police. But thank God, the police only yelled at us, telling us to go home," he said. Luckily, a Good Samaritan offered Saby a ride home from Mirqab

when he saw him walking.

Maricel, a regular bus passenger from Salmiya to Farwaniya, said she left her workplace in Salmiya at 2 pm and reached home after an hour. "At that time, the traffic was just starting to build up. I reached home relatively quickly, but on regular days, I could have been home in 15-20 minutes," she said. "Buses at the time were already filled to capacity and we already saw the rush at 2 pm," she added.

Mike, who was in a taxi with his friend from Kuwait City headed to Hawally, said they were stuck on the road from 3 pm to 5:30 pm. "My home is near Al-Bahar Mall on Tunis Street in Hawally. I came from Kuwait City in a taxi with my friend. The taxi driver chose to take road 30, assuming that traffic there would be less, but he was wrong, and we were stuck for two hours. I kept checking the time, worried we would not make it home before 5 pm. Finally, when we entered Hawally, the taxi driver suggested we would move faster if we walked, so we got out and walked the rest of the way home, which took us another 20 minutes. We were not so worried because we saw many people walking at that time," Mike said.

Two MPs file to grill PM over...

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Meanwhile, the Cabinet yesterday ordered the ministry of commerce and industry to start accepting online bookings by the public to visit cooperative societies between 5 pm and 10 pm during the partial curfew. The Cabinet was briefed by Sheikh Basal on the health situation in the country. The minister revealed 322,000 people in Kuwait have so

far been vaccinated against COVID-19. Kuwait yesterday reported 1,326 new coronavirus cases and six deaths, taking total cases to 201,898 and deaths to 1,133.

The Assembly's legal and legislative committee meanwhile approved a draft law barring the appointment of expats to public sector jobs unless there are no jobseekers among Kuwaitis, children of Kuwaiti women married to foreigners and Gulf citizens. The bill forces the government to announce such jobs for Kuwaitis first and then for children of Kuwaiti women, and later to Gulf citizens. If the positions are not filled, then government agencies can invite foreigners.

Harry, Meghan unload on...

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Meghan, a mixed-race former television actress, described herself as "naively" unprepared for life in the pressure cooker of the royal family. But she said she was denied help for a mental health crisis, targeted by lies in an incident involving her sister-in-law, and there was even official concern about the skin colour of her unborn son.

"I... just didn't want to be alive anymore. And that was a very clear and real and frightening constant thought," she told Winfrey, describing the impact of vitriol from hostile tabloids in Britain and social media. Asked if she had had suicidal thoughts while pregnant with son Archie, Meghan replied: "Yes. This was very, very clear."

Meghan, 39, also told of "concerns" about "how dark" Archie's skin would be, saying Harry revealed to her conversations over their baby's appearance, as well as the security he would be entitled to, ahead of his birth on May 6, 2019. The couple both declined to name the royal involved but Winfrey said Monday that Harry had told her the queen, 94, and her 99-year-old husband, Prince Philip, were not part of the conversations.

The revelations have triggered a storm of reaction on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly the explosive claims about racism, opening up a wider debate about prejudice in British society. Harry himself has faced accusations of using a racist slur against a former military colleague, and of wearing a Nazi soldier's uniform at a fancy dress party. He has said Meghan had made him confront the issue and since vowed to tackle institutional racism. The couple have been outspoken supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Anti-monarchy group Republic said the revelations showed the institution was "rotten to the core" and facing "its worst crisis since the abdication in 1936", referring to Edward VIII's decision to step down to marry an American divorcee. Meghan won wide-ranging support, including from tennis ace Serena Williams and Bernice King, daughter of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

Amid political calls for a full investigation, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson - whose own views during his time as a newspaper columnist have been seen as racist - refused to comment. But he told reporters: "I've always had the highest admiration for the queen and the unifying role she plays in our country and across the Commonwealth." — AFP