



**2** Tenants facing problems issuing civil ID after changing address



**12** Hollywood set for pandemic-era Oscars, with 'Nomadland' out front



**15** Man City, Spurs clash in League Cup final after Super League debacle




Fajr 03:47  
Shurooq 05:12  
Dhuhr 11:46  
Asr 15:21  
Maghrib 18:20  
Isha 19:42



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# Kuwait suspends flights with India over COVID

## India's death toll hits new record as virus 'tsunami' worsens



**KUWAIT:** In this August 1, 2020 file photo, passengers arrive at Kuwait international Airport. Kuwait's Civil Aviation Authority yesterday suspended direct commercial flights with India at the recommendation of health authorities. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Civil Aviation Authority yesterday suspended direct commercial flights with India at the recommendation of health authorities after a steep rise of coronavirus cases in the South Asian country. The indefinite suspension took effect from Friday midnight. Passengers arriving directly from India are banned from entering Kuwait unless they have lived at least 14 days in a third country, a statement by the Civil Aviation said.

The ban exempts Kuwaiti citizens and their close relatives - spouses and children - and their domestic helpers. Air cargo flights will continue to operate normally, the statement said. "In view of the health situation, it has been decided to suspend direct commercial air links with India until further notice," the Kuwaiti government tweeted late Friday.

Expatriate workers make up some 70 percent of Kuwait's population and include hundreds of thousands of Indians. The region's busiest international air hub, the United Arab Emirates, had already announced on Thursday that it would suspend flights to and from India from today.

As the clock ticked down to the shutdown of the air corridor between India and the UAE—one of the world's busiest—fares soared as Indians who could afford it scrambled to escape the COVID surge.

India's daily coronavirus death toll set a new record yesterday as the government battled to get oxygen to hospitals overwhelmed by the hundreds of thousands of new daily cases. Twenty patients died in one night at one New Delhi hospital suffering from oxygen shortages, medical officials said. A Delhi court said that the new pandemic wave had become "a tsunami".

Meanwhile, the Iranian authorities said yesterday that they were suspending air arrivals from India and Pakistan. "Flights to and from the two countries of India and Pakistan will be banned" from midnight, aviation authority spokesman Mohammad Hassan Zibakhsh said, quoted by state news agency IRNA. "There are no scheduled flights between Iran and India. Nevertheless, accepting connecting passengers from the noted countries will be banned."

Beyond the Gulf, Canada suspended flights from both India and Pakistan for 30 days, while the US State Department urged Americans to avoid travel to India, even if they are vaccinated. Concern has focused on one new strain of the virus in particular that has spread rapidly in India and has already been detected in Europe.

Meanwhile, Germany will shut out all travellers arriving from India apart from its own citizens, Health Minister Jens Spahn said yesterday, as a new **Continued on Page 2**

Ramadan Kareem

## What is the Noble Quran?

Abdeltawwab Mustafa

The Holy Quran is Allah's speech that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, the final messenger (peace be upon him) via Archangel Gabriel (Jabreel). The Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in stages, according to occasions and events over 23 years, which was the length of Prophet Muhammad's mission. The long span of revelation was for several reasons: 1) to strengthen the prophet's heart, 2) to support him with the message that Allah is with him at all times, 3) to guide the prophet in some situations, 4) to answer questions of the companions as they arose, and 5) to give Muslims time to gradually understand and implement the legislation, as well as to memorize the text so that they could convey it to others.

Some chapters and verses of the Holy Quran were revealed before the migration of the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah; they are called Makki, and others were revealed after his migration and they are called Madani. These two categories of verses and chapters have distinct characteristics.

Because Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sent to all mankind, the Holy Quran is a lasting miracle that does not expire or become outdated, neither with the death of the prophet nor with the passing of time. Allah (the Almighty and Majestic) promised that He Himself will protect this Book from all kinds of alterations and stated it clearly in the Quran: "Verily, it is We who have sent down the Reminder (i.e. the Quran) and surely We will guard it (from corruption)." (Surat Al-Hijr 15 - 9)

If you look at the Holy Quran objectively, you will discover that it is a great miracle. It is the only book in the world that states clearly to be the speech of Almighty God, word for word. It presents only recently confirmed facts in various fields including biology, geology, immunology, zoology, astronomy, meteorology, embryology and nutrition.

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## Ex-MP Wasmī to run for Assembly seat

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Former MP and leading opposition figure Obaid Al-Wasmī yesterday filed his papers to contest the by-election for a seat in the fifth constituency, which fell vacant after the constitutional court

nullified the election of opposition MP Bader Al-Dahoum. Wasmī's move will certainly make the fight for the parliamentary seat very interesting, as the opposition bids to reclaim its lost seat.

Wasmī, a professor of law who was elected to the National Assembly in Feb 2012 before the court scrapped the election four months later, held a series of meetings with opposition figures like former Assembly speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun before taking his decision.

Before he filed his papers, Wasmī visited Dahoum and the two paid a visit to Awazem tribal chief Falah bin Jame to

secure his support for Wasmī. The Awazem are the largest tribe in the constituency. The tribal chief had announced the tribe will boycott the by-election in protest against the nullification of the membership of Dahoum, a member of the tribe.

Opposition lawmakers hailed the move by Wasmī, who is expected to become a leader of the opposition in the National Assembly amid an ongoing political dispute with the government and the Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Registration of candidates for the by-election closed yesterday and polls will be held on May 22.



Obaid Al-Wasmī

## Gaza rockets follow clashes in Jerusalem

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli warplanes struck the Gaza Strip early yesterday after repeated salvos of rocket fire into Israel followed a second night of clashes between Palestinians and police in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem. Thirty-six rockets were launched, the Israeli army said, the most in a single night this year, after Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas voiced support for the east Jerusalem protests, which were fuelled by a Thursday march by far-right Jews.

Washington said it was "deeply concerned" by the escalating violence, while the European Union appealed for restraint. The United States, which has taken a more even-handed approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since President Joe Biden took office in January urged "calm and unity".

"The rhetoric of extremist protesters chanting hateful and violent slogans must be firmly rejected," State Department spokesman Ned Price tweeted. Tensions have been running high in east Jerusalem over a ban on gatherings, and a series of videos posted online showing young Arabs attacking ultra-Orthodox Jews, and Jewish extremists taking to the streets to bully Arabs.

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**GAZA CITY:** Smoke rises from explosions during a military drill by members of the Mujahideen Brigades, the armed wing of the Palestinian movement of the same name, along the beach in Gaza City yesterday.—AFP

## Saudis halt fresh food imports from Lebanon

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia announced Friday the suspension of fruit and vegetable imports from Lebanon, saying shipments were being used for drug smuggling and accusing Beirut of inaction. The decision is a blow to Lebanon, which is facing its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war. The local currency has dived by more than 85 percent on the black market, inflation is rampant and more than half the country now lives in poverty. Authorities "have noticed

increased drug smuggling activity targeting the kingdom from Lebanon... especially in vegetables and fruit consignments", the Saudi interior ministry said.

Riyadh will ban the entry or transit of those products through the kingdom from Sunday, it said in a statement carried by the official SPA news agency. The restrictions will remain in place until Lebanon provides "sufficient and reliable guarantees" to put an end to what it called "systematic smuggling operations targeting the kingdom". The move comes after Saudi authorities have made repeated appeals to their Lebanese counterparts on the matter, SPA said.

The agency also reported Friday that customs officials seized 5.3 million pills of captagon hidden in a consignment of "pomegranate" fruit imported from Lebanon at the Red Sea port of Jeddah.

Captagon is an amphetamine manufactured in

Lebanon and probably also in Syria and Iraq, mainly for consumption in Saudi Arabia, according to the French Observatory for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT). Lebanese media quoted the head of the country's fruit and vegetable exporters, Naem Khalil, as denying it was pomegranate season in Lebanon. Khalil said the seized cargo could not have been Lebanese but had transited via Lebanon from Syria. Lebanon's foreign ministry said it had been informed by Saudi Arabia of its decision to halt imports of fruit and vegetables, the official National News Agency reported. Drug smuggling "harms Lebanon's economy, farmers and reputation", the ministry said. Saudi Arabia has taken a step back from its former ally, angered by the influence of Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah, which is backed by Riyadh's rival Tehran.— AFP