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# Two MPs file to grill PM over 'selective' application of law

Health minister under fire • 322K people vaccinated • Co-op appointments from 5-10 pm

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Leading opposition MPs Bader Al-Dahoum and Mohammad Al-Mutair yesterday filed to grill HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah over what they charged is the "selective" implementation of laws. The move came after the government decided to refer some 15 MPs, including the two grillers, and dozens of activists to court for breaching health measures by holding a gathering attended by some 300 people.

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said he received the grilling and informed the government, adding that the grilling will be placed on the agenda of the next session to determine a date for its debate. The Assembly can meet only after March 18, because HH the Amir suspended regular sessions for a month from Feb 18.

A large number of lawmakers



Bader Al-Dahoum

expressed total support for the grilling and it is highly expected to get enough votes to declare non-cooperation with the prime minister, triggering yet a new political crisis. Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah is also facing a tough time after MPs declared that they will file at



Mohammad Al-Mutair

least two grillings against him for his "confusing" decisions that failed to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

MP Hasan Jowhar said a meeting with government ministers failed to defuse tensions over the health minister's grilling, adding that the minister should "resign or



HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

face the grilling". MP Ahmad Al-Azemi said yesterday he will file to grill the health minister over the damage caused by the coronavirus and his recommendations that harmed the country. A large number of lawmakers also declared their support for the minister's grilling, which

means that the grillers have enough votes to dismiss the minister out of office.

In their grilling, MPs Dahoum and Mutair said they had agreed to turn a big public rally into a press conference after a meeting with Interior Minister Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah due to health restrictions. They said they were surprised that the ministry still sent them to court for violating health measures, which shows that the government did not keep its word and was selective in applying the law, as it closed its eyes to many similar events.

The grilling said the government had taken no action toward a group of supporters of the Assembly speaker who disrupted the Assembly's opening session in December. The prime minister and the entire Cabinet resigned in January after three lawmakers filed to grill the premier. The resignation was accepted by HH the Amir, and Sheikh Sabah was later renamed to form the new Cabinet.

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## News in brief

### Assad, wife contract COVID

**DAMASCUS:** Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and his wife Asma have tested positive for COVID-19 after experiencing mild symptoms, the presidency said yesterday. "After experiencing mild symptoms that resemble... COVID-19, President Al-Assad and first lady Asma Al-Assad took a PCR test, and the result showed that they are infected with the virus," the presidency said in a statement, adding the couple will quarantine for up to three weeks. — AFP

### Vaccinated can gather sans masks

**WASHINGTON:** People who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can gather indoors unmasked with others who have been vaccinated, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in new guidance yesterday. Those who are fully vaccinated can also visit with unvaccinated people from one other household indoors without masks or distancing so long as the unvaccinated people are not at high risk for severe COVID-19. — AFP

### Houthi target Saudi oil facilities

**RIYADH:** A missile and drone attack targeted the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry on Sunday in an assault claimed by Yemen's Houthi rebels, a new escalation in the six-year conflict. The Saudi defense ministry said it had intercepted a drone targeting a petroleum storage yard at Ras Tanura and a ballistic missile aimed at Aramco facilities in Dhahran. Shrapnel from the missile fell close to an Aramco residential compound in the city. — AFP

### Tourist destinations shut

**MADRID:** Almost one-third of destinations worldwide are currently completely closed to international tourists because of the pandemic, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) said yesterday. At the start of February, 69 destinations out of 217 worldwide, or 32 percent, were completely closed to international tourism - including 30 in Asia and the Pacific, 15 in Europe and 11 in Africa, the UN body said. International tourist arrivals fell by one billion, or 74 percent, in 2020. — AFP

## Bus riders walk home on first day of curfew

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Thousands of people were left stranded on the streets Sunday afternoon as the partial curfew came into effect. Buses stopped picking up passengers long before the expected 3 pm deadline and left riders stranded on roadsides, many of whom were forced to walk home in the afternoon heat. Similar scenes of people waiting for the bus were also witnessed yesterday.

Meanwhile, main arteries in Kuwait

City, Salmiya, Farwaniya, Industrial Shuwaikh, Mahboula, Fintas and elsewhere were choked with vehicles as drivers stuck in traffic jams could not move to reach home in time for the 5 pm curfew. There were no reported cases of people being rounded up for violating the curfew even though many failed to reach home before the curfew came into effect.

"I was at the bus stop at 3 pm but buses just drove past without stopping. They wouldn't stop because they were already filled to capacity. Everyone was rushing to be home by 5 pm," said Saby, who normally rides the bus home to Salmiya from his job in Shuwaikh. Saby said he wasn't aware that buses would stop taking passengers after 3 pm.

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**KUWAIT:** People wait for a bus at a bus stop on Ghazali Street as cars are stuck in a traffic jam yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Qatar Amir meets Saudi FM in Doha

**DOHA:** Saudi Arabia's top diplomat met Qatar's ruler Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha yesterday, official media reported, as the countries heal following a bruising rift. Prince Faisal bin Farhan's visit came as a Qatari delegation arrived in Cairo to continue restoring diplomatic relations between Egypt and the Gulf monarchy fractured by years of discord, Egyptian media reported.

Saudi Arabia led a coalition of countries including Egypt to break off ties with Qatar in June 2017 over claims it was too close to Iran and backed radical Islamist groups, which Qatar has always denied. But following Kuwaiti mediation, Qatar was invited to a regional meeting in Saudi Arabia in January at which Qatar was brought back into the regional fold.

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**DOHA:** Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani meets Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud yesterday. — AFP

## Harry, Meghan unload on royal family

**LONDON:** Suicidal thoughts, a racist relative and an heir-to-the-throne trapped by tradition - Prince Harry and his wife Meghan have lifted the lid on life inside Britain's royal family with an explosive interview that reverberated around the world. The two-hour sit-down with Oprah Winfrey by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex was the most startling since Harry's late mother Princess Diana made her own

bombshell revelations in 1995, and triggered similar questions about the ability of Queen Elizabeth II's family to weather the storm.

Harry described feeling "really let down" by his father Prince Charles, who had stopped taking his phone calls for a time. Both Charles - the queen's heir - and Harry's elder brother William were "trapped" by the conventions of the monarchy. "They don't get to leave. And I have huge compassion for that," Harry said in the interview broadcast on CBS Sunday night, explaining the couple's dramatic exit from royal life last year, which has now seen them stripped by the queen of their honorary titles and patronages.

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**WASHINGTON:** This undated image released on Sunday shows Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan in a conversation with US television host Oprah Winfrey. — AFP (See Pages 12 & 13)