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MP files to grill 2 ministers, deepening political crisis

Lawyers Society demands probe into financial rewards to frontline workers

More aid lands in India; Canada, Brazil struggle

NEW DELHI: More international aid arrived in India yesterday as the daily COVID-19 death toll reached a new record in the South Asian nation. The country struggled to contain one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks with nearly 400,000 new infections reported. Surges in Brazil and Canada also highlighted the persistent threat of the pandemic, with the COVID-19 death toll approaching 3.2 million even as many nations ramp up vaccination drives. — AFP (See Page 7)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Leading opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri yesterday filed to grill the foreign and finance ministers for "failing to respect the constitution and law" in a move that is expected to deepen the political crisis in the country. Muwaizri said in a brief statement that he filed to grill Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah and Finance Minister Khalifa Hamada for failing to respect article 99 of the constitution and article 121 of the Assembly's internal charter.

Both articles emphasize the constitutional right of all members of parliament to ask questions to the prime minister and all Cabinet ministers, and their right to get replies and comment on them. The two grillings are perhaps the shortest in the history of Kuwait's parliament, since Muwaizri did not include any explanations, as is usual. Grillings in Kuwait are

normally made up of several pages.

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said he received the two grillings, which will be added to the agenda of the next Assembly session. Assembly sessions have been suspended until after the Eid Al-Fitr holidays and the first session is not expected before May 25.

It was not immediately known if the move is a new tactic by the opposition, locked in a standoff with the government and the speaker over a decision to delay grillings of the prime minister for 18 months. The opposition says the delay is a violation of the constitution.

It seems the opposition has decided to grill ministers instead of insisting to grill the prime minister first, which has already caused the disruption of Assembly sessions. Grillings can lead to a vote of no-confidence against ministers, which requires just 25 votes to pass. The opposition has more than enough numbers to vote any minister out of office. Two opposition MPs had already

filed to grill Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah for allegedly failing to manage the coronavirus crisis.

Unconfirmed reports state that other opposition MPs may file grillings against other ministers, effectively voting all Cabinet members out of office, which could lead to the dissolution of the National Assembly and fresh polls.

Meanwhile, the Lawyers Society in cooperation with the Public Funds Protection Society yesterday asked the Anti-Corruption Authority to launch an investigation into financial rewards to frontline workers, saying the amount is highly inflated. Press reports showed that the government is proposing a financial reward of KD 586 million to as many as 214,000 employees who have contributed to the campaign to combat the coronavirus pandemic. The size of the amount has been strongly criticized, and several MPs have charged that the process of granting the rewards could involve corruption.

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