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FINISHING TOUCHES PUT TO AIR TRAVEL RESUMPTION PLAN

Amir 'stable' ... New COVID cases 770

PACI gears up

All efforts for Civil ID output

KUWAIT CITY, July 28: Director of the Civil ID Production and Distribution Department at the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), Jassem Al-Methen said the entire department is exerting tremendous efforts to produce and distribute Civil ID cards to Kuwaitis and expatriates, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He added this is done keeping in mind all health precautions mandated by the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Health to prevent the spread of the Corona virus.

He explained, PACI has distributed since the beginning of the working hours of government agencies on July 5, about 60,000 cards and the rate of distribution is increasing at a steady pace.

Al-Methen told the daily during a tour of the card delivery devices center, about 85,000 ID cards were inside the devices before the delivery was abruptly affected following the outbreak of the virus and the government decided to stop work in March 2020 and most of them are still waiting to be collected - a majority of them for domestic workers.

He added PACI has introduced 9 special devices for these cards, each device holding 4,000 cards. Since the applicant renews the card via the internet in order to avoid paying the KD 20 fine, collection of the ID becomes a big problem because if the applicant does not collect the card after a certain period, the card can be destroyed, "but we do not do that because we do not want to waste the effort and work that the employees have done to issue these cards".

Eager

Al-Methen pointed out some people are eager to receive their cards, especially the elderly, and those who cannot do without the ID since it is required to complete the transaction.

He added, at the moment PACI still adheres to the barcode system and said the authority serves about 600 people in one hour, but lamented many people book the appointments but fail to show up although most of these appointments are made during the morning period although PACI working hours are until 6:00 pm.

He indicated continuous efforts have been exerted to renew the cards of those who had renewed them during March and onwards in that manner.

He pointed out that the authority's headquarters has 40 devices with a capacity of 200,000 cards, and the Jahra branch has 15 devices with a capacity of 75,000 cards.

He added, at the moment 122,685 cards are waiting for delivery, including what was issued before government work was interrupted and after it was resumed.

He explained in light of the precautionary measures adopted by the government 2,000 cards were distributed per day, but the rate is increasing and has reached 8,000 at the rate of 1,000 cards per hour. In normal time before the corona pandemic, PACI was distributing 15,000 cards on a daily basis.

He pointed out that the authority will soon use very modern devices to deliver the cards, as there are currently nine devices at the authority that have not been activated through which the transaction can be completed.

A text message will be sent on the phone of the applicant with a 'barcode' through which the applicant can complete the transaction and obtain the card directly from the device at a very fast speed.

KUWAIT CITY, July 28, (KUNA): The Cabinet held its weekly session virtually on Monday under chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah who assured the ministers that His Highness the Amir's health was stable.

Meanwhile, up to 770 people tested positive for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Kuwait in past 24 hours raising tally of contaminations with the dreaded bug to 6,5149 since the pandemic broke out in the country months ago.

Moreover, medical authorities counted four new deaths due to contamination with the virus, during the same period, raising toll of mortalities to 442, said official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health (MoH) Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad.

Following the Cabinet session, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said His Highness the Prime Minister, at start of the session, assured the ministers about stability of His Highness the Amir's health.

His Highness the Prime Minister prayed to His Almighty to grace His Highness the Amir, who has been undergoing medical treatment in the United States of America, with full recovery and bestow upon him everlasting health and welfare so he may return home soon.

Cabinet holds weekly session

For his turn, Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Humoud Al-Sabah briefed the ministers about the health status in the country, based on statistical figures of the casualties, recoveries and patients receiving treatment.

The ministers expressed deep admiration for the great efforts exerted by the ministry in coordination with the other competent authorities for facing the pandemic (COVID-19) and stem its spread. They also urged citizens and residents of the country to continue cooperating to pave way for applying the third phase of restoring regular life as of Tuesday.

They reminded them of the necessity to adhere to the health precautions to control the virus according to globally agreed upon methods - for sake of ending this crisis with the best possible results.

They turned to the issue of the Eid ritual, livestock slaughtering, examining several measures including usage of the digital platform, "Mata," to regulate dates for slaughtering the livestock and organize physical presence of people at the slaughter houses with least possible close mingling.

Moreover, the ministers were briefed about a recommendation by the committee of economic affairs regarding the State of Kuwait sovereign ranking by international rating agencies.

The Cabinet decided to task the supreme secretariat general for planning and development to draft a roadmap and timetable for improving the sovereign rating of the State of Kuwait in the reports of these agencies.

Moreover, the council of ministers approved bills regarding adoption of final accounts of the Capital Market Authority (2019-2020), the ports authority (2019-2020) and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries (2019-2020).

Kuwait's aviation regulator said on Monday that all preparations are firmly in place as the country looks to open its airport for commercial flights this week after a four-month hiatus.

A bilingual guidebook, which can be viewed on social media platforms, has been designed to provide travelers with a solid understanding of the health protocols and safety measures that need to be followed amid their journeys, Saad Al-Otaibi, the chief of an ad hoc committee looking into the matter, told KUNA ahead of the Aug 1 airport reopening.

As more countries require incoming passengers to provide negative COVID-19 test results, he said travelers should register their flight details online at www.kuwaitmosafer.com in order to schedule an appointment for their coronavirus diagnostic tests.

A smartphone app has also been launched in a bid to simplify travel procedures for passengers, the official added, reminding them to adhere to strict health precautions including wearing face masks and following social distancing rules.

Kuwait's International Airport will resume commercial flights as of Saturday, as part of a three-phase plan starting with no more than 30 percent capacity.



Traffic in Kuwait returning to the days before the lockdowns due to the coronavirus were implemented. Bottlenecks at every nook and corner are a common feature.

Photo by Mohammad Morsi

US affirms commitment to Kuwait, regional security

KUWAIT CITY, July 28, (Agencies): US special envoy to Iran, Brian Hook, reiterated his country's commitment to Kuwait's security and stability in light of historical and strategic relations, stressing that the United States is following up the health of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, expressing his happiness that his Highness has become well and in a better state of health.

The United States of America deeply respects His Highness the Amir who he is eyed with great admiration by leaders in Washington, the region and the world, Hook said on Monday.

A solid friendship bonds His Highness the Amir with President Donald Trump, said the US Special Representative for Iran and Senior Policy Advisor to Secretary of State, Brian Hook, who was speaking at a virtual new conference marking his current official visit to the country.

These bonds between His Highness the Amir and President Trump depict the robust links between the two friendly countries, Hook said, expressing wishes for the Amir's quick recuperation.

The friendship between the US and the State of Kuwait was manifested in the statement by President Trump during His Highness the Amir visit to Washington in 2018, Hook said, as well as the great respect Washington has had toward him.

The American official said he held talks earlier Tuesday with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, adding that these talks were fruitful and addressed most significant regional files, namely with respect of preserving security and peace in addition to the necessity for collective action to ease off tension in the Gulf.

He renewed Washington's commitment to the region security affirming his nation's keenness on preventing any action intended to undermine regional stability, sabotage infrastructure of the oil industry or hinder free sea navigation.

Moreover, the American official underscored necessity of adherence to United Nations Security Council resolutions for preserving regional and global security and peace, as well as for sake of arms proliferation, preventing arms race, combating terrorism and halting arms' shipments to tense hotspots.

In response to a question about Kuwait's stance toward the GCC unity, the State Department official indicated that he affirmed during his current visit necessity of maintaining the GCC unity in face of threats, praising Kuwait's conciliation efforts and affirming that the State has a team that can be counted upon for achieving the GCC reconciliation, in view of the fact that the Gulf crisis has lingered on.

He also indicated significance of the UNSC resolution on prohibiting arms sales to Iran, enforced since 13 years ago, for sake of achieving stability in the region and the world and stopping the arms race.

NBK posts KD 111.1mn net profit for 1H

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MP submits grilling motion

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Arab Times Staff

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a cable to King Mohammad VI of Morocco expressing congratulations by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the 21st anniversary of his ascending to the throne.

In the cable, His Highness the Deputy Amir lauded achievements during King Mohammad VI's reign and the solid ties between the two brotherly countries, wishing him everlasting welfare and prosperity for the Kingdom.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of identical content to the Moroccan Monarch. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a cable of condolences to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Monarch of Saudi Arabia.

In the cable, His Highness the Deputy Amir expressed, on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, his heartfelt condolences and solace over demise of mother of Prince Faisal bin Abdullah bin Nasser bin Abdulaziz.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah sent an identical cable to the Saudi Monarch. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, July 28: The National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim has confirmed receiving the grilling motion submitted by MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri against Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

He pointed out that as per Article 135 of the Assembly Decree, he informed HH Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Al-Saleh about the grilling and sent them copies of the three-point grilling motion. He added the motion is included in the agenda of the session slated for Wednesday.

In a related development, Al-Muwaizri said the grilling motion consists of three points as follows: taking advantage of the public official position to make illegal personal gains, violating the law and abusing power, and manipulation of the nation's will and electoral records or logs.

He intends to reveal the violations in the upcoming session, affirming his claims are supported with evidence showing that Al-Saleh has been aware of the violations in the Ministry of Interior and State Ministry of the Cabinet Affairs.

On the other hand, MP Muhammad Al-Dallal disclosed that he asked the Assembly Office to lay down a plan for the remaining period of the current parliamentary term. He pointed out that there are many issues in the agenda, but the remaining period is not enough to accomplish everything. He explained his request is aimed at arranging the priorities for the Assembly to focus on the most important issues.

Meanwhile, MP Muhmmad Hadi Al-Hewailah submitted a proposal to allocate a plot in Mubarak Al-Kabeer or Ahmadi for the establishment of Kuwait University branches. He said these two areas have no educational institutions - neither Kuwait University nor Shaddadiya University, thereby, causing suffering to students living in the two areas.

MP Khalid Al-Otaibi forwarded queries to Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi about the ministerial committee formed to evaluate the performance of executive directors of centers and sectors, in addition to another committee tasked to appoint the executive director of Environment and Life Sciences Center. He wants to know the date of submitting the reports of both committees and reason why Al-Harbi did not issue a decision to implement the recommendations in the reports.

He argued these reports concern executive directors whose terms have ended since May 2019, while there has been a recommendation not to renew the tenure of some of them. He asked about the legal situation of the executive directors who are still occupying their positions even if their term ended in May 2019.

He requested for copies of the recommendations of both committees and reports on the career of each executive director and the period they occupied their positions. He also inquired about the number of complaints submitted by employees against the executive directors, procedures taken by the ministry to investigate such complaints and results of investigations.

He asserted the recent period was chaotic in terms of the evaluation of employees, indicating the employees complained so a committee was formed to investigate their complaints. He added that forming the committees implies suspicions about conflict of interest, because the committees consist of directors who previously issued the evaluation reports. He wants to know the names and positions of the heads and members of the committees.