

Indian minister applauds Bahrain's fight to tackle COVID-19 outbreak

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Bahrain's success in combating Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has been hailed by the Indian Minister of External Affairs Dr Subrahmanya Jaishankar.

In a telephonic conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Dr Jaishankar praised the strict precautionary plans and measures taken by the competent authorities in the Kingdom in dealing with the outbreak.

The minister said, yesterday, his country is thankful to the Bahraini government for providing constant care to the Indian community here.

Describing the friendly relations between the two countries



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani

as "solid", the minister further thanked the health authorities

for providing labourers here with necessary laboratory tests and treatment, which contributed to limiting the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Dr Al-Zayani told Dr Jaishankar that the royal orders of His Majesty the King ensure comprehensive care and free treatment for all residents and expatriates in the Kingdom of Bahrain and highest standards of healthcare.

The Foreign Minister also said the plans adopted by the government to combat this pandemic were praised by the World Health Organization, and that the authorities continue to provide treatment according to the approved medical protocols for Coronavirus.

He also stressed the importance of the international community's solidarity in these

The attention and care given by the competent health authorities to maintain the health and safety of the Indian labour force and provide them with the necessary laboratory tests and treatment contributed to limiting the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

INDIAN MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DR SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR.



exceptional circumstances and the unification of efforts, wishing India and its friendly people further security, peace and

prosperity.

They discussed historical friendly relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the

Republic of India and ways to promote bilateral cooperation to serve the two countries' common interests.

GCC virtual Labour meeting reviews COVID-19 precautionary measures



Labour and Social Development Ministry Undersecretary Sabah Salem Al-Dosari took part in the video call.

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Bahrain yesterday took part in an urgent virtual coordination meeting to evaluate the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) wide initiatives to ensure a safe working environment and boost production.

The virtual meeting of the GCC Labour Ministries Undersecretaries' Committee focused on the efforts being exerted by member states to protect workers, ensure public safety and health and maintain production in the private sector companies.

Labour and Social Development Ministry Undersecretary Sabah Salem Al-Dosari took

part in the video call.

Al-Dosari highlighted Bahrain's efforts to maintain continued workflow in the private sector firms, stressing the need to continue contributing to national development.

The officials stressed commitment to preserving the rights of GCC nationals and expatriates working in the private sector, taking into account national legislation and international labour standards.

The meeting highlighted precautionary measures to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the importance of mitigating the pandemic's impact on the GCC economy and stability of the labour market.



Education Minister Dr Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi with a delegation from the American International School of Bahrain, comprising Abdullatif Al-Sahhaf, Khalid Maseeh and Khalid Ahmed Mustapha. The delegation briefed the minister on their multi-phased school which is expected to open at the beginning of the new academic year, outlining the measures taken so far. The meeting was attended by Assistant Undersecretary for Private and Continuous Education Jaffer Al-Sheikh.

Do more to aide poorer countries face the pandemic: Guterres

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"The virus has shown how swiftly it can move across borders, devastate countries and upend lives."

He said that parties to conflict in a number of countries, including Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Libya, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen, have expressed support for his call.

"But there is a huge distance between declarations and deeds -- between translating words into peace on the ground and in the lives of people," Guterres said. "In many of the most critical situations, we have seen no let-up in fighting -- and some conflicts have even intensified."

While expressing gratitude for support of his earlier call from some 70 countries, NGO groups and religious leaders worldwide including Pope Francis, Guterres said more concrete work was necessary.

"We need robust diplomatic efforts to meet these challenges. To silence the guns, we must raise the voices for peace," he said.

Since the beginning of the global pan-

demic, the Security Council has not met once on COVID-19, making no statement or joint resolution.

On Thursday the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for international cooperation and "multilateralism" in addressing the virus, which has infected more than one million worldwide and killed more than 50,000. Guterres appealed for developed countries and multilateral institutions to do more to aide poorer countries face the pandemic.

"To act early rather than later is essential... This is particularly true with the developing world," he said.

Guterres noted that the ceasefire in Idlib, Syria is holding but said it needs to be expanded to the entire country to allow full efforts to slow the coronavirus spread.

But he noted that expressions of support for a ceasefire by different factions fighting in Libya had not ended the violence.

"This war is now not allowing the response to COVID-19 to take place," he said. "This is the moment to stop. It's not morally acceptable to continue with this conflict."

Covid-19: Airborne threat

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The Chinese paper on the other hand raised concerns that personal protective gear used by health care workers could itself be a source of airborne virus.

The team studied hospitals in Wuhan and found that there were two major areas where the virus was aerosolized: the bathrooms of patients, and rooms where medical staff removed their protective gear.

This may be because doffing protective gear causes the particles to get re-suspended in the air. Even if these particles are not of breathable size, they could settle on people's hands and bodies, the NAS panel said.

So far, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been more cautious on the airborne threat.

In an analysis published on March 29, it wrote that aerosol transmission was only known to occur during particular medical treatments that required assisted breathing.

On the recent preliminary research, such as the University of Nebraska's paper, the WHO cautioned that the detection of the virus' genetic code in patient's rooms did not necessarily amount to viable amounts of the pathogen that could be transmitted onward.

If the virus can be suspended in the ultrafine mist we expel when we exhale, in other words an aerosol, it becomes much harder to prevent its spread

NPRA to stop receiving applicants starting Sunday

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Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) has announced they will stop receiving applicants starting tomorrow.

Instead, all services will be processed automatically through the Contact System on website www.npra.gov.bh, an NPRA statement said.

Going forward, to process applications, NPRA said applicants are required to fill forms online and attach documents required.

The Bahraini passports would be handed through per-



sonal attendance from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm from Sunday to Thursday at the Isa Town branch.

The move is part of the precautionary measures against the spreading of coronavirus.