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**Active COVID-19 cases continue rise as another life taken**

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The coronavirus (COVID-19) took the life of a 57-year-old expatriate man in Bahrain yesterday, the Ministry of Health announced.

His passing brought the total number of virus-related deaths in the Kingdom to 166.

The Health Ministry also reported early this morning that out of 10,420 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 460 new cases were detected. These included 199 expatriate workers, 260 contacts of active cases, and one travel-related case.

There were also 332 additional recoveries from the virus yesterday, bringing the Kingdom's total number of discharged individuals to 41,836.

The total number of current active cases continued its recent rise and is now at 3,262, with 38 in critical condition and 79 receiving treatment.

The total tests conducted in Bahrain increased to 933,762.

**Bahrain's World, Asian Cup qualifiers postponed again**

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Bahrain's remaining qualifying matches for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 have been postponed yet again.

This follows a joint-decision by FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in many countries.

Originally rescheduled to be played in October and November, the games are now set for 2021, with the new dates and other details to be announced in due course.

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**Diligence call in re-opening**

Health officials warn that failure to comply with precautionary measures may halt phased lifting of restrictions



Speaking at yesterday's conference, from left, were Dr Al Salman, Dr Al Manea and Dr Al Qahtani

● **Bahrain continues regional, international research collaboration, information exchange to bolster COVID-19 treatment**

● **All steps followed at the highest global levels in Kingdom's initiation of phase three clinical trials for inactivated vaccine**

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The National Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) warned yesterday that a failure to comply with precautionary measures will accelerate the spread of the virus and therefore require a roll-back in Bahrain's ongoing phased re-opening.

This was said by Ministry of Health undersecretary Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea during the national taskforce's Press conference held at the Crown Prince Centre for Training and Medical Research at the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Hospital, where they highlighted measures taken to mitigate COVID-19. Dr Al Manea was joined by

fellow-national taskforce members BDF Infectious Disease Consultant and Microbiologist Lt. Col. Dr Manaf Al Qahtani and Salmaniya Medical Complex Infectious and Internal Diseases consultant Dr Jameela Al Salman.

Dr Al Manea said that the national taskforce is closely monitoring all COVID-19 cases with the re-opening of certain sectors.

He added that they are paying particular attention to the percentage of positive cases, total active cases, hospital occupancy rate, and the number of cases requiring medical care as they continually assess the situation in the Kingdom amidst the gradual lifting of a number of restrictions.

Dr Al Manea said that regional and international research collaboration and information exchange helps to bolster the progress in COVID-19 treatment.

In this regard, he noted that the Health Ministry has announced the initiation of a phase three clinical trial for a COVID-19 inactivated vaccine, in collaboration with UAE-based artificial intelligence company G42 Healthcare.

With regards to patient outcome, Dr Al Manea explained that the recovery rate is currently at 92.6 per cent in Bahrain with a 0.4 per cent death rate.

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**The WHO-listed inactivated vaccine does not cause infection but triggers an immune response producing antibodies to fight the virus; the effectiveness of these antibodies will measure the vaccine's success**

Isolation centre capacity also stood at 21 per cent, with 1,752 out of 8,357 beds occupied, and 1,383 asymptomatic cases being under optional home self-isolation after meeting the set criteria.

Speaking on the vaccine trials, Dr Al Qahtani emphasised that the inactivated vaccine does not cause infection, but triggers an immune response producing antibodies to fight the virus. The effectiveness of the produced antibodies will then be assessed as a measure of the success of the vaccine.

**Procedures set for volunteers in vaccine trials**

Volunteers who will be accepted into Bahrain's phase three clinical trials for the coronavirus (COVID-19) inactivated vaccine will be checked on a daily basis for the first two weeks after receiving the World Health Organisation-listed job.

This was revealed yesterday by BDF Infectious Disease Consultant and Microbiologist and National Taskforce for Combatting COVID-19 member Lt. Col. Dr Manaf Al Qahtani.

Accepted volunteers will have a number of ways of communicating with medical officials during the trial's 12-month period, including a special hotline to call or a dedicated e-mail to send any concerns. They will also be asked to maintain a diary during the process.

Dr Al Qahtani noted that the facility hosting the vaccine trials is fully ready and was set up in just a short period of time, adding that all medical requirements and conditions have been met. He also enthused that there is a great spirit amongst members of the national taskforce and medical professionals regarding the vaccine trials, which have been studied extensively from all aspects by the authorities, to ensure that all medical and moral standards are met.

Dr Al Qahtani added that the clinical trials follow the successful completion of the first two phases in China, which have reported good success rates. The first trial proved the effectiveness of the vaccine while the second tested the immunogenicity of the vaccine on a limited number of volunteers.

Dr Al Qahtani revealed that the trial will enlist up to 6,000 volunteers who have not previously contracted COVID-19, are over the age of 18, and are willing to undergo a health assessment, in accordance with the set health requirements.

He also reassured all interested volunteers that everything has been done and all steps have been followed—at the highest levels—to make sure that the trials are as safe as can be to volunteers. On her part, Dr Al Salman noted that Bahrain has safeguarded freedom of movement for citizens and resident while restricting gatherings to minimise the

spread of the virus—a process that has set precedents for the re-opening of selected sectors at each stage of the phased plan, whilst avoiding roll-backs.

Dr Al Salman added that the Health Ministry is continuously expanding COVID-19 testing capacity to identify, isolate, and break chains of infection; and random community-based testing sites have helped identify asymptomatic cases.

She went on to recognise the importance of continuing to adhere to preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and allow for the next phases of reopening, as emphasised by the World Health Organisation's recent conference and call to "do it all" when complying with preventative measures.

Dr Al Salman underlined that these preventative measures have now been adopted by the majority of the community since the discovery of the first case in Bahrain five months ago.

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

**Kingdom's human trafficking fight draws US recognition**

TDT | Manama



Al Absi

Bahrain's battle against human trafficking has drawn recognition in the US, it has been reported by a popular American news channel.

Labour Market Regulatory Au-

thority CEO and National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons chairman Ausamah Al Absi told Fox News: "Human trafficking is exploiting vulnerabilities, and we needed to understand the scope of the problem we are facing. So, we opened our hearts and opened

our doors, and we decided that everyone who will contact us will be helped."

Al Absi has been at the forefront of Bahrain's charge against human trafficking.

The Kingdom is among a select group of countries that has

stepped up its efforts against the crime, which has become one of the world's most rampant human rights violations.

Bahrain has implemented an open-door policy for its citizens and residents to report suspected human trafficking cases.

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