

BeAware, but **don't panic**, says Dr Al Qahtani on Monkeypox



There is no need to worry in light of the availability of all possibilities to limit its spread. Our medical team is fully prepared to deal with developments and take the necessary precautionary measures following health protocols in force locally and globally

DR AL QAHTANI, AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONSULTANT AT THE MILITARY HOSPITAL, A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TASKFORCE TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19).



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Bahrain's top infectious disease expert, Lieutenant-Colonel Dr Manaf Al-Qahtani, called on all to remain cautious but advised to shed fears confirming that the Kingdom is fully prepared to handle monkeypox infections. "There is no need to worry in light of the availability of all possibilities to limit its spread," said Dr Al Qahtani, an infectious disease consultant at the Military Hospital, a member of the National Taskforce to combat the Coronavirus (Covid-19).

"Our medical team is fully prepared to deal with developments and take the necessary precautionary measures following health protocols in force locally and globally," he reassured. He, however, cautioned that the virus that causes monkeypox, like other viruses, is not specific to a specific group and requires awareness from everyone to prevent it.

Dr Al Qahtani said Bahrain started preparations to handle the infection several months ago and was "able to discover the first case of monkeypox timely, reducing the chances of spread." "Health authorities here confirmed the first case in Bahrain in record time, with transparency," he pointed out in a tweet. "We have all the necessary preparations and medical tools for examination, treatment and procedures for tracing contacts with a specialised team to limit

the spread of monkeypox. "Preparations included educating health workers about monkeypox and transmission methods, setting up a mechanism for reporting suspected cases to the Public Health Department, providing treatment and laboratory needs for diagnosis, identifying mechanisms for follow-up cases, tracing contacts, and providing anti-vaccinations. "The Ministry of Health has been keen to develop an emergency proactive plan to deal with monkeypox since cases started emerging in several countries to preserve public health. Al-Qahtani also tweeted

thanks to everyone for cooperating with the Ministry of Health and contributing to taking vaccinations according to medical instructions.

Bullying @ school: MoE opens investigation

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The Ministry of Education has opened an investigation into assaulting and bullying charges levelled against a group of students by a parent. The Communications Department of the Ministry of Education reports that the Operations Department of the First Educational Zone has begun taking necessary measures. The complaint by the parent alleges that his son was assaulted and bullied by a group of students at a Preparatory School for Boys. The ministry said that it would take deterrent actions against physical violence and



bullying. Actions will follow an investigation into the complaint, the ministry said.

Court rejects appeals of human traffickers; confirms jail, fine

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Two women convicted of human trafficking charges had their appeals rejected by the High Appeal Court. The women, both Asian nationals, will now have to spend five years in a Bahraini jail and pay a fine of BD2,000 each. Police say the suspects lured a woman, another Asian national, to come to Bahrain with fake job offers. The victim, later rescued by cops, told the court that upon



Representative picture

reaching Bahrain, the suspects took her to an apartment, locked her up and forced her to have sex with strangers. When I resisted, they intimidated me and said I had no other option but to pay for my tickets and visa. However, on a lucky day, the victim got a window of opportunity, which she used to alert a passer-by, who in turn alerted the police. Police sent a squad and rescued the woman from the clutches of her captors, leading to the court battle.

Drug mule gets 15 years for smuggling heroin capsules

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Attempting to smuggle 50 heroin-filled capsules by swallowing them before boarding a plane to the Kingdom landed a man in a Bahraini jail for 15 years. The High Criminal Court passed this judgement in a case involving a suspect in his twenties. He was arrested at the Bahrain International Airport after customs officers subjected him to further examinations on the red lane after stoking suspicion of abnormal behaviour. After spotting this man, we removed him to the red lane for a detailed examination.



Representative picture

"We also gave him a chance to confess before going ahead. "However, he stood his ground and denied having anything illegal with him. "We also failed to spot any hidden spaces or anything illegal from this baggage after an inten-

sive search. "However, the man showed severe physical discomfort, which made us subject him to a medical examination. "An x-ray scanned, however, told a different story. The scan revealed that the

suspect was carrying drug capsules in his abdomen. "Doctors at the Salmaniya Medical Complex counted 50 capsules inside his stomach. They also gave him laxatives to help the capsules pass through his body. Later, during an interrogation, the suspect confessed to working as a drug mule. "A friend of mine promised me a job if I bring these capsules here." Police continued their investigation and found that the arrested man was a member of a drug smuggling network. **How smugglers risk their lives?** Experts at the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime point out that this is a dangerous way of smuggling drugs. Popularly known as 'drug mules', the victims swallow balloons containing illicit drugs and travel across borders. Once they 'reach' their destination, traffickers retrieve these balloons from their bodies. The balloons are of multilayered condoms that are often force-fed to the victim. The traffickers use a 'special machine' to open the condom and put drugs into it. UN points out that on many occasions, the drug mules first take a soup laced with drugs to numb their throats. The soup is very oily and makes the balloons

slide down their throat. The victim's mouth can also be sprayed with anaesthesia, enabling them to swallow up to 120 balloons. A drug mule may swallow up to one kg of illicit drugs. This painful procedure can lead to 'serious injuries in the throat'. During the journey, they take medication to inhibit bowel movement. After reaching the destination, laxatives are fed for the balloons to pass through their bodies. This medically dangerous way of transporting drugs can lead to the death of persons if and when balloons rupture within the body. Stomach acids can sometimes cause the rupture of the balloons, and death is quick.