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Oil price vagaries impact Kuwait economy

STAFF REPORT

The 1.2 million barrels-per-day (b/d) cut in oil production instituted by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and some non-OPEC countries from January of this year has seen crude oil prices jumping by 27 percent from their lows in December 2018.

While official figures are not yet available, survey data shows a drop in OPEC output of 1 million b/d in January. The major slash in production has come from Saudi Arabia, which is reported to have cut production by 0.4 million b/d, deeper than targeted. Many analysts, oil company representatives, and OPEC officials, buoyed by recent rise in crude prices are already predicting even higher prices in the months ahead. While this optimism may have some grounds there are heavy headwinds ahead.



Kuwait which remains committed to OPEC mandated production cuts has seen its crude output fall even as the price of Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) jumped by 17 percent in January and more than recouped the losses sustained in December. In compliance

with production cuts, Kuwait is expected to curb production by 85,000 b/d to 2.72 million b/d, which would leave crude output down around 1 percent on average in 2019 from a 1.4 percent increase last year.

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Renewing Europe



BY EMMANUEL MACRON
President of France.

EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

Never, since World War II, has Europe been as essential. Yet never has Europe been in so much danger.

Brexit stands as the symbol of that. It symbolizes the crisis of Europe, which has failed to respond to its peoples' needs for protection

from the major shocks of the modern world. It also symbolizes the European trap. That trap is not one of being part of the European Union (EU). The trap is in the lie and the irresponsibility that can destroy it.

Who told the British people the truth about their post-Brexit future? Who spoke to them about losing access to the European market? Who mentioned the risks to peace in Ireland of restoring the former border? Nationalist retrenchment offers nothing; it is rejection without an alternative. And this trap threatens the whole of Europe: the anger mongers, backed by fake news, promise anything and everything.

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Expatriate population reaches 3.3 million



As of the end of February 2019, Kuwait's population stood at 4.7 million, of which 1.4 million were Kuwaitis and the remaining 3.3 million were expatriates, shows a

new report on the breakup of demographics in Kuwait.

The increase in population over the last decade was 27 percent for Kuwaitis, whose numbers rose from 1.1 million in 2009 to 1.4 million by 2019. In the same time interval, the number of expatriates rose by 41 percent, from 2.34 million a decade ago to 3.3 million today.

Statistics show the number of Kuwaitis rose by 310,000 in 10 years, compared to 970,000 for expatriates. For every new Kuwaiti child born, there are almost 3 new expatriates.

The increase in the number of expatriates can be attributed to the launch of several mega projects during the last decade, especially after

the adoption of the 2010 development plan which required bringing additional labor from abroad. Also, the increase in the Kuwaiti population resulted in jump in demand for domestic workers. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of domestic workers increased from around 570,000 to over 677,000. In other words, there has been an increase of more than 15,000 new domestic workers annually over the last decade.

The report shows that, in the past few years, the boom in recruitment of foreign workers has relatively eased, especially since the sharp fall in oil prices in mid 2014 and the implementation of a policy to replace expatriates with nationals in the government sector began to take place.

Belgian delegation attends B2B event

A visiting business delegation from Belgium held a highly engaging and interactive B2B meeting with Kuwaiti business people at Four Points by Sheraton on 5 March.

The two-day event, which was organized by the Embassy of Belgium Trade Office in Kuwait, included representatives from 20 leading businesses specialized in various sectors including entertainment and events; construction equipment; architecture and urban planning; and legal services, from Belgium.

The Belgian Economic Delegation is in Kuwait to explore various prospects in the Kuwaiti market and meet with potential Kuwaiti business partners to establish contacts.

Representatives from various Kuwait companies attended the session seeking out business opportunities with the Belgian delegation.



Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Piet Heirbaut graced the occasion to inaugurate the function. In his address to the audience, Belgian Ambassador Heirbaut said, "I am happy to inaugurate this event today. This is a very focused event to help Kuwait businesspeople to decide on venturing into new businesses in collaboration with representatives from the Belgian commerce and industry."

He added, "Our business interests in Kuwait are growing and we have seen the interest of the Kuwaiti business community as well. It's a good sign and Kuwait is a country that has a very bright vision about its future. And I believe that this is a very exciting time for all of us."

"We are in full support of the business people who are here today and we hope for a very fruitful business venture with you all. Thank you for supporting Belgian companies," he said. Economic and Commercial Counselor Sam Servaes, said that over the last two years there has been a steady growth in trade volume between Belgium and Kuwait, with bilateral trade going from US\$220 million in 2016 to \$259 million in 2017.

He welcomed the fact that in recent years a large number of young Kuwaitis were visiting Belgium as tourists. The embassy is aiming to boost tourism to Belgium and in this regard, a special tourism promotional campaign will be held next week, revealed Mr. Servaes.

With regards to the participation of Belgian companies in Kuwait's developmental projects, Mr. Servaes said that currently, many Belgian companies were studying the new business laws and regulations that Kuwait recently implemented, especially the ones that allowed a foreign investor to own 100 percent of a company's capital.

He added that the Kuwaiti investments in Belgium are evident in all of Belgium's cities, most notably that of Kuwait Petroleum International, since most gas stations in Belgium belong to this company. Kuwaiti presence was also evident in the Belgian real estate sector where many Kuwaitis had invested over the years, said the Counselor.

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Reception held to mark 62nd Independence Day of Ghana



The Ghanaian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Alhaji Ahmed Rufai Yahaya Iddi hosted a reception to celebrate his country's 62nd Independence Day at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on 7 March. Kuwait's Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water Dr. Khaled Al-Fadhel was the chief guest on the occasion.

Expressing his thanks to the Kuwait government, officials and authorities for their assistance in helping establish the Ghanaian embassy in Kuwait, Ambassador Iddi said, "On the same day, the foreign ministers of both countries signed a memorandum of understanding that aimed to create a framework for mutually beneficial co-operation in the various fields of

trade, business, investment and allied pursuits."

He added, "We are also looking forward to signing a number of agreements between our two countries such as a Bilateral Labor Agreement to manage migration and labor movements between Ghana and Kuwait."

Calling for Kuwaiti investments in his country, the ambassador said, "We have expanded infrastructure in a number of regions in Ghana to facilitate investment opportunities to harness the rich and resources present in these regions and to provide food security and jobs for our people."

"We have started an ambitious industrialization venture to establish

one factory in each of the over 200 Districts in Ghana in order to boost industrialization and jobs, and promote investment co-operation with partner countries like Kuwait.

These flagship programs among others are geared towards the socioeconomic transformation of the country through an all-inclusive industrialization and economic

development program," he added.

While highlighting the generous assistance from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in the form of infrastructure loans and other social development ventures, Ambassador Iddi also revealed that to further strengthen relations between Ghana and Kuwait preparations were underway to facilitate a visit to Kuwait by the President of Ghana.

For his part, pointing to the investment potential of oil industry in Ghana, Minister Al-Fadhel said, "We are interested in increasing Kuwaiti investments in oil to Ghana as it is one of the successful economies in Africa, and offers avenues for cooperation."



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Russian embassy celebrates Armed Forces Day



The Russian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Nikolay Makarov, along with the Military, Air and Naval Attaché Valery Kotogarov, hosted a reception at the Russian embassy on 3 March to celebrate Russia's Armed Forces Day, also known as Defender of the Motherland Day. Major General Anwar Jassem Al-Mazidi of the Kuwait Defense Ministry General Staff, was the chief guest at the gathering that included members of the diplomatic corps, special invitees and media personnel.

Praising the 55-year-old close relationship between Russia and Kuwait, Attache Kotogarov said these relations continued to grow. He then

went on to emphasize the importance of the annual Russian Army Day celebrations, which is observed on 23 February to honor the Russian military and veterans, while recognizing the strength of the Russian armed forces and their contribution to many peacekeeping missions around the world.

On his part, Ambassador Makarov revealed that Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, is on a tour of the Middle Eastern region, starting from Qatar, then Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates from 3 to 7 March. He added that during the visit to Kuwait, Mr. Lavrov will meet top Kuwaiti officials for bilateral talks

that will include all issues of mutual interest within the regional and international arenas, including the situation in Syria and Yemen, the Palestinian issue and the Gulf crisis.

Highlighting the three-day Kuwait-Russian Joint Committee meeting for Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which will be held in conjunction with the visit of the Russian Foreign Minister to Kuwait, Ambassador Makarov said the committee will discuss cooperation between Russia and Kuwait in various fields and focus on how to move forward the bilateral relationship in existing and new areas, as well as review

agreements previously signed.

For his part, Major General Al-Mazidi praised the Kuwait-Russian relations as distinguished and historical, and stated it was evidenced in the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Sochi in 2015 to hold official talks with President Vladimir Putin.

He also underscored the cooperation between armies of the two countries in various fields, the joint military exercises between the two nations, and the various agreements signed between Russia and Kuwait after conducting tests and experiments with Russian weaponry.

Gulf Voice of Goa presents mesmerizing night of music



The first ever Gulf Voice of Goa (GVOG) Konkani singing competition – a tribute to legendary Goan musician and lyricist Chris Perry, created history with a mega show of entertainment at Khaldiya University Auditorium on 22 February.

The event was the biggest singing competition outside Goa that offered the best platform for aspiring singers to showcase their talent on the

part in the entertainment show. Special invitees for the event included Gurudas Pilernekar (Director – Art & Culture, Goa), Thomazinho Cardozo (Tiatr Academy of Goa - TAG), Cezar D'Mello (TAG), Henry Fernandes (Dubai), etc. The main competition was classified for Gulf residents of Goan origin. Two participants from each country, a male and a female, were shortlisted for the finals. Melodious Goan voices from the Gulf countries along with a number of dignitaries and supporting fans made their way to the event. Kuwait's Romeo Braganza and Dubai's Aviella D'Souza were adjudged best Gulf Goan Male and Female singers. Romeo's winning song 'Maria' received thunderous applause while Aviella sang her award-winning number 'Meu Amor'.

John Pereira (UAE) with 'Sopnan Fottoilo' and Slenzitta D'Cruz (Bahrain) singing 'Kalliz Velem Chorun' finished as Runner-Ups. As well as receiving glittering crystal trophies, the winners and runners-up were awarded cash prizes and gift hampers. Other contestants who contested the final included Aeral Paul Fernandes (Bahrain), John De Sa and Natcey Barretto (Qatar), Maurice Rosario and Velriza Pereira (Oman), and Kuwait's Zelia Rodrigues. All the participants were felicitated with mementos.

One of the highlights of the show was the return to the stage of one of Konkani stage's most respected loving son and star Jose Rod after a 10 year gap. Apart from the competition, entertaining songs, dances and comedy skits were a special feature of the show. Kuwait-based artistes performed two comedy skits in-between.

Chief coordinator of the event and President of Goan Cultural Centre (GCC) Carmo Santos addressed the audience and thanked all the sponsors and well-wishers for the support in making the show a grand success. Mr. Santos noted that the aim of the competition is to popularize Konkani singing culture and to stir interest of song and music in the new youth generation.



international stage. Singers who took part in singing were Trupti Marshall, Flavia Fernandes, Felia Alphonso, Neeta Fernandes, Jessie Leitao, Larissa Fernandes, Esparansa Barretto and Carrie Santos.

A minute silence was also observed at the onset of the program for jawans killed in the terror attack at Pulwama, Kashmir.

A number of celebrity artists and delegates took

Report - Gasper Crasto
Photographs - Pearl Vaz

In appreciation...

BY AGNELLO A. S. FERNANDES

Zuari River as it flows down from the hills divides a village into two: the northern part is called Sanvordem and southern Curcholem. A little farther from the two villages lies the riveting brilliance of God's creation in the startling marvel of Dudhsagar waterfall. The gushing water from the streams creates an illusion of milk flowing through the mountains and this gorgeous waterfall attracts thousands of tourists.

I was privileged to spend most of my primary and secondary schooling years in this scenic area.

In the late 1960's when I was at Guardian Angel High School in Curcholem, we looked forward to the evenings when we had to walk over a kilometer to reach our playing fields. After a tiring game of football, on our way back to the school, we would make it a point to visit a small house located near our playing field. The lady of the house, who was affection personified, would draw up pots of water from her well to quench our thirst. A brief conversation with her substituted for the motherly affection we missed at the boarding school, and many a times I visited the house under the pretext of drinking water, when all I wanted was to chat with her. To all of us, she was simply known as Jose Rod's mother.

I cannot recollect exactly how and when, but as years went by I became very close to her son Jose Rod. After a gap of many years he too came to Kuwait seeking work and we got together catching up on lost time and spent many evenings discussing everything under the sky.

Along the route success touched him in many ways; he was a skillful football player; a top notch singer, writer, director, and a superb actor on the Konkani stage. My wife and I became his die-hard fans. Unfortunately one day fate caught him by surprise, but despite the challenges brought on by fate, he faced it bravely and continues to successfully overcome one hurdle after another. That was the Jose Rod we all came to know and admire.

When my friend Carmo Santos approached me to assist him in hosting the first ever 'Gulf Voice of Goa' in Kuwait, the first person I contacted was Mr. Rod, who agreed to be the judge for the competition. In fact it was he who suggested that the event be dedicated to the memory of legendary Goan musician, composer, songwriter and film producer Chris Perry. That was how the event came to be titled 'A Tribute to Chris Perry'. On the evening of the show, it took me a while to convince him to climb on to the stage, which he

eventually did. Today, after the successful event, billed as one of the biggest of its kind to happen in the Gulf, only a single thank you note to Mr. Rod would be meaningless. Therefore, embracing the difference between simply expressing thanks, and expressing our heart-felt appreciation, I have somehow gathered the courage to mix both and say:

Thank you for sharing your work not only with us but the world. You make something so deeply personal and then present it to the world with an open heart. Not everyone is so selfless. Art can speak things that cannot always be said with words. Through your craft, you helped others to validate their own emotions; providing comfort that we are not the only ones feeling a certain way.

Thank you for reminding us of what is possible. It is invigorating to see you dedicating your life to do what brings you joy. By pursuing these passions despite the risks and fears on your life, you inspire us to do the same.

Thank you for creating an outlet for us to be challenged. Despite the onslaught of pain and severe trauma, you fearlessly climbed the stage on 22nd February of this year to entertain your fans. We call that dedication. You mentioned to me many times that "Life is a challenge", we are grateful to you for being an inspiration to all of us.

Thank you for sharing stories that otherwise might not have had a voice. Sharing your moments with the legend Chris Perry to the audience on that day, helped us to escape to a different land without taking a step. As an example, it was an absolute thrill to know that Chris Perry was the music director behind the blockbuster movie titled 'Julie'. Today, when I hear songs from that movie, I can feel the essence, aroma and signature of Chris Perry, which otherwise would have remained unknown to me.

Thank you for agreeing to be ushered on stage by my grandchildren Kyle and Kiara. There is no bigger joy and satisfaction to me than to see my grandchildren ushering back to stage a star of your caliber. These two youngsters will go down in the books of Goan theater history for escorting a great star back to the show business after a gap of 11 years. My wife and I are truly humbled and grateful.

As news trickles in about your successful operation, we raise our hearts in thanksgiving to the Almighty for once again bringing you safely through a major operation. For now, all I can say is you have once again proven that "Failure is not an option". We look forward to welcoming you back in Kuwait and watching you do things you like to do the best.



Passports will no longer have residence stickers

An amendment to the Foreigners Residence Law by authorities in Kuwait means that residence permit stickers will no longer be applied to passports of expatriates.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah, the decision to cancel the residence permit stickers is part of an ongoing process to upgrade services in various government departments.

For his part, Assistant Undersecretary for Residence Affairs, Major-General Talal Marafie

said the data that was previously included in the residence stickers will now be mentioned in the civil IDs.

The General Department for Residency Affairs at the Ministry of Interior held a press conference on 6 March to explain ministerial Decision No. 135/2019, on the canceling of residence permit stickers in the passports of expatriates.

Director General of General Department for Residency Affairs, Brigadier Abdulqader Al-Sha'aban, clarified that ministerial Decision



No. 135/2019, will be implemented in stages.

The first stage will launch on 10 March and will encompass domestic workers with

residence permit of Article 20. Expatriates with all other residence permit types will be covered in the second stage.

Brigadier Al-Sha'aban stressed that an expatriate will not be allowed to enter or exit Kuwait without a valid passport and a valid civil ID card issued by Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI). He indicated that those with residence permit stickers in their passports prior to the enforcement of this decision will be exempted provided their residency and civil IDs are valid.

Asoy - candles with a difference



STAFF REPORT

Many people in the Middle East light candles for aromatic or decorative purposes, but most of these candles are made from paraffin wax. Unfortunately, most people using these candles are unaware that when lit, they release into the air toluene and benzene — two dangerous carcinogens, or cancer causing agents.

Soy wax is a vegetable wax derived from soybean oil and a perfect alternative to paraffin wax based candles. After the soybeans are harvested, they are cleaned, cracked, de-

hulled and rolled into flakes. The soy oil is then extracted from the flakes and hydrogenated. The hydrogenation process alters the melting point of the oil, making it a waxy solid at room temperatures.

Although in Kuwait there are several home décor and fragrance outlets, very few offer 100 percent pure soy candles. It is true that soy wax is not as cheap as paraffin but if you weigh the many benefits of soy candle and consider the negatives of paraffin candles then paying more for soy candles makes sense.

asoy as a concept was started by Mary Abraham from Australia, who fell in love with soy candles, began asoy as a concept. She spread her passion for soy candles to her friend Sweta Lea. and together the two ladies launched asoykuwait with firm belief that the natural aroma and healthy air of soy candles were a better option to paraffin wax candles.

Some of the benefits of soy candle include:

- Soy wax is made from soybean. It is a hydrogenated vegetable oil that turns solid at room temperature. It is a natural product.
- Unlike paraffin candles made from petroleum producing heat and soot when lit, soy candles do not produce soot and burns cooler, which means that you can enjoy your soy wax candle for much longer than a paraffin candles.
- Soy wax is non-toxic and does not release harmful by-products into the air.
- Soy wax has low melting point, which means that if you accidentally spill wax on your body, you will not burn your skin.
- Soy wax is biodegradable and cleans up with plain old soap and water.

asoykuwait offers a variety of scented soy candles and can produce customized candles for all occasions and events.

asoycandles are currently available in Australia, Kuwait, India and will soon be available in Dubai and Qatar.

Instagram/Facebook account - asoykuwait
WhatsApp - 98764304



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asoycandles are currently available in Australia, Kuwait, India and will soon be available in Dubai and Qatar.



A day of fun at the IIT-IIM AA annual picnic

The alumni of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management Alumni Association (IIT-IIM AA), celebrated their annual picnic on 8 February at AIRTEC Desert Camp in Wafra. The event, sponsored by AIRTEC, was attended by a large gathering of enthusiastic members and their families along with their

invited guests. IIT-IIM Alumni Association President, Peeyush Jain welcomed all those present at the venue and gave an insight into the Association.

Members participated in kite flying and children enjoyed the sporting facilities available at the camp. There were games for women and men, couple games, and some other innovative games for kids, women and men to keep the enthusiasm high. There was also ample time for all the members to mingle socially. The grand finale was a game of Tambola and lotto with an interesting twist.

IIT-IIM Alumni Association, Kuwait is growing day by day with the full commitment and dedication of all the members and the Core Committee.

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Thought for the week

“ Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results.

- Willie Nelson

For a complete list of featured restaurants, visit http://www.timeskuwait.com/News_Dining In Kuwait

Japanese Cuisine is the healthiest

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Enjoy Japanese cuisine with its variety of light, fresh and tasty dishes filled with all sorts of healthy ingredients. Did you know that Japanese people have less fat and look younger compared to other people? One of the main reasons is the great cuisine and the healthy ways they approach cooking and dining.

They consume food fresh on

season: They choose ingredients that are available in season as the fruits and vegetables are at its best quality. Supermarkets in Japan are full of fresh food that is free of preservatives, which helps to maintain optimal levels of wellness and health, hence less diseases.

They eat a small portion of everything: Rather than have a big meal or big portions, Japanese people go for varieties of food but in small portions, having a bit of everything in their meals. They chew their bites very slowly, which allows their food to be easily digested and, prevents bloating. This ensures they maintain a flat belly.

The food is lightly cooked: The Japanese are very health conscious when it comes to the food. They stay away from excessive oil, heavy cooking or anything unhealthy. They always choose fresh food, lightly cooked like pan grilling, steaming and boiling. They believe that too much cooking destroys a good amount of the food value. I completely agree with the sentiment.

Steamed rice in their meals: Although a lot of you think that



eating rice contributes to obesity, I have to correct this wrong information. It is not the rice that makes you gain weight, it is rather the way you cook it. Adding oil, butter or margarine will eventually turn this food into a saturated unhealthy one. Steamed rice is wheat-free and can be easily digested. The way you cook your food plays an important role in your health and calories intake.

Breakfast is their king's meal: Breakfast is the major and the

biggest meal of the day in Japan. It consists of many items such as steamed rice, omelette, fish, and miso soup with tofu. Not to forget the daily green tea. People who

have a larger meal at breakfast and smaller dinner tend to be thinner than others.

They exercise daily: Japanese people tend to be active with a daily workout routine. Bicycle riding, walking, and hiking are the main exercises that keep them healthy, which they do outside in the nature. So their lifestyle is naturally active, which prevents having medical problems, osteoporosis or arthritis.

So here was a small example towards healthy eating, healthy living, reducing fat and looking younger. And it is very easy to imitate, you can do the same.

To subscribe to my diet programs, don't forget to log in to: www.eatlikemira.com.

Mira is a go-to source for nutrition and wellness and has joined The Times Kuwait team in a new weekly column discussing nutrition and answering queries. You can send in your questions to infotimeskuwait@gmail.com



Nizamat Hyderabad offers invitingly good Indian cuisine

Nizamat Hyderabad, the only authentic Hyderabadi restaurant in Kuwait that presents a variety of exclusive dishes from the kitchens of the Nizams, opened its second branch at Salmiya Salam mall on 21 February.

Cooking Hyderabadi dishes, such as the Dum Biryani and Haleem, is regarded as an art form in terms of finesse. The cooking techniques required to produce the authentic taste is a closely guarded secret. When slow cooked on dum, the ingredients cook in their own juices and slowly release their flavors. Under the process, the food retains its flavors, and matures into a rich, wholesome, savory dish.

The restaurant's Chefs (Ustaads) have several years of experience in the catering and restaurant industry

in Hyderabad and UAE, and they have, over the years, perfected the methods of delivering dish after dish of mouth-watering Hyderabadi cuisine.

Apart from Hyderabadi cuisine, Nizamat Hyderabad prepares Mughlai dishes such as the popular Butter Chicken, Chicken Lababdar and Bhuna Gosht. Diners will immediately notice the mellow taste of the Mughali dishes that are very enticing. Popularized in India by the Chinese community living in Kolkata, Indo-Chinese dishes are today an integral part of the Indian cuisine. Chinese food is often served with rice or noodles, with generous servings of gravy or as a dry item. Reflecting the true taste of the Indian adaptation of Chinese dishes, there are a variety of Indo-Chinese



dishes on the menu. The most recommended being the Chinese soups, Manchurian and Schezwan dishes, and the popular Chicken Satay. Other popular choices are the tandoor items that have become

immensely attractive to diners. Sample the range of delicious varieties, from Chicken Tandoori or Fish Tandoori to Malai Kabab and Achari Kabab.

Lastly, round out your great

Indian meal with a sweet dessert. Nizamat offers three types of Hyderabadi desserts – Badam ki Kheer (Almond Rice Pudding), Double ka Meetha (bread soaked in milk, sugar syrup and nuts) and Qurbani/Qubani ka Meetha (Dried apricot based dessert).

At Nizamat Hyderabad, discover the simple brilliance of authentic Indian cuisine in a relaxed and casual setting.



Canadian embassy and BWIT mark International Women's Day



The Embassy of Canada in collaboration with Canada's Business Women in International Trade (BWIT) program, organized an event titled 'Women Empowerment' in recognition of International Women's Day, at the Radisson Blu Hotel on 4 March.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait, H.E. Louis-Pierre Emond, underscored that the empowerment of women and girls, and the realization of their human rights are key Canadian priorities, both in Canada and abroad. He added, "Canada has intensified its long-standing commitment to the human rights of women and girls with the



affirmation of feminist values as core to its foreign policy efforts and launch of its Feminist International Assistance Policy in June 2017. The policy places achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the heart of its efforts."

For his part, Secretary General of Kuwait's Supreme Council for Planning

and Development, Dr. Khaled Mahdi, stressed that the issue of women's empowerment was a crucial subject in Kuwait's National Development Plan. He revealed that today, "only 12 percent of decision-makers in the government and 15 percent of decision makers in the private sector are women. "Our target is 35 percent and this is an

ambitious target, but it is doable", he said, though it falls short of the United Nations prescribed goal of 50 percent.

However, he added, "We don't need to go from a masculine empowered society to a feminine empowered society. We need balance. Competency should be an agent for change rather than gender."

He disclosed that Kuwait has been a member of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women since 1994, and has continued to sign treaties in that sphere. In 2015, Kuwait signed the SDG agenda 2030 which underscores the need for gender equality and women empowerment.

He also encouraged attendees to focus on self-empowerment, stating, "From my personal experience of raising five daughters, I know that if you just give them room to grow and flourish they will empower themselves. Our women are our future achievers."

As part of the evening's program, Canadian and Kuwaiti women delivered presentations on pertinent women's issues. The event helped to promote potential partnerships between Canadian Businesswomen and local Kuwait organizations that support and deliver business opportunities for women entrepreneurs and exporters.



IHG shows appreciation to corporate clients and bookers

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), one of the world's leading hotel companies, with a vast portfolio of hotels and resorts that cater to every sort of clientele, including well-known hotel brands such as Kuwait Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn Al Thuraya City and Holiday Inn Salmiya held IHG bookers event at the InterContinental Dubai Festival City.

The event allowed the hotel

representatives to interact with their corporate clients and bookers to show their appreciation for their years of service and for being their partners in success. Antoine Flouty, Area General Manager of Kuwait, and Sayed Tayon, Area Director of Sales and Marketing Dubai, welcomed the gathering. An upbeat interactive session and a cordial ambiance added to the event's enjoyment for invitees.

ONCOST Cash & Carry announces partnership agreement with Shifa Al Jazeera Medical Group

ONCOST Cash & Carry, the first wholesale membership retail establishment in Kuwait, has signed a partnership agreement with Shifa Al-Jazeera Medical Group, a leading medical service provider in Kuwait and the GCC, at a special ceremony that was held at ONCOST Headquarters at Salhiya Complex, Kuwait City, on 28 February.

Saleh Al-Tunaib, Chief Executive Officer of ONCOST, speaking on the occasion stated that this partnership agreement will offer special benefits to all ONCOST Membership Card holders.

Dr. Khalid Al Kandary, Executive Board Advisor of Shifa Al Jazeera Medical Group also stated that the ONCOST Membership Card hold holders can enjoy quality medical services in departments such as General Medicine, Ob & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Orthopaedics, Internal Medicine, Dermatology, Ophthalmology,



Physiotherapy, X-Ray, Laboratory services etc. at very affordable price at the Group's three clinics located at Farwaniya, Fahaheel, and Jleeb Al Shuyoukh. Mr. Munthasar Majeed, Vice Chairman, Shifa Al Jazeera Medical Group, who was present on the occasion, further added that this partnership will not only add value to ONCOST Membership Card holders, but also will offer the same benefits to all the employees of ONCOST and their family members.

As part of the agreement, the

ONCOST Membership Card holders and ONCOST employees will enjoy 25% discount on Laboratory tests and 20% discount on Radiology services (X-Ray and Ultrasound).

In attendance on the occasion were Remesh T. A., Chief Operating Officer and Talal AlGharaballi, Manager Business Development & Marketing from the ONCOST side and Zubair Usman, General Manager Farwaniya branch and Mona Hassan, Marketing Manager from the Shifa Al Jazeera Group side.

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Medical insurance to be made mandatory for all visitors to Kuwait



Visitors to Kuwait will now need to be covered by medical insurance for the duration of their stay in the country, according to a draft law tabled in parliament last week.

The draft law stipulates that the interior ministry should approve applications for visit visas only if they are accompanied by medical insurance coverage for the duration of the applicant's stay in Kuwait.

Lawmakers said the draft law is intended to prevent visitors benefiting from the services and medicines provided by the state at public health facilities to citizens and residents. The bill, which won approval from 47 lawmakers with only 4 opposed to it, reflected the wide consensus among lawmakers that expatriates and foreign visitors were responsible for deteriorating health services in the country.

Some parliamentarians in support of the bill alleged that residents and their dependents who came on visit visas misused and misappropriated medical services and resources of the state. One lawmaker claimed that there were foreigners who took the

medicines provided by hospitals or health centers to offer them as gifts for their relatives, or to sell in pharmacies in their home countries. Another parliamentarian alleged there were foreign patients who came to Kuwait for post-natal treatment, cancer treatment, obesity treatment and others and called for the imposition of an insurance scheme.

Expatriates are usually accused of clogging services at health facilities and using up medical resources, thereby depriving nationals from receiving due treatment in a timely manner. In the past, the government cajoled by lawmakers, had sought to relieve pressure at health facilities with slipshod solutions, including banning expatriates from accessing medical services in the morning hours.

In 2013, a public hospital in Jahra was the first to provide medical services in the morning session only to Kuwaitis. Treatment for

expatriates, except in emergency situation, was confined to the evening session. More recently, the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Hospital, the largest in the Middle-East with a bed capacity of 1,168, which was officially inaugurated in November 2018, is slated to provide health services exclusively to Kuwaitis.

Other measures intended to discourage expatriates from accessing public health services include steeply increasing the health charges for treatments, services and medicines, and imposing medical insurance and building separate medical facilities for expatriates.

The draft will now be referred to the government and the health ministry will have one month after its publication in the official gazette to issue its bylaws that will decide, among other topics, the amount to be paid by foreigners when applying for a visit visa to Kuwait.

Costo flagship outlet opens in Kuwait



Regency Group, one of the leading players in the Middle East retail sector, launched its new retail brand-Costo with the opening of its pilot store in Khaitan on 7 March. Costo is a cost-efficient neighborhood daily store where everyday requirements of customers are met. Costo Khaitan outlet is strategically located in the 55th ring road and is easily accessible from all major roads like Fifth and Sixth roads.

Situated in the basement floor of Naser Al Geean Complex (Block 8, Nasser Sanhath Al Usaimi Street), this 14,000 sq.ft store, unlike normal supermarkets and hypermarkets, will feature only a limited set of products across categories that

caters to the daily needs of a customer.

Costo stores will feature categories like fresh, food and non-food, butchery, fishery, household, fashion, footwear, electronics, mobile and laptops. All the perishable goods, farm produces and meat are exclusively flown in from around the globe on a daily basis to offer uncompromised quality standards and to ensure they are available fresh to the end users.

Speaking on the opening of the new brand, Dr. Anvar Ameen- Group Managing Director said, "It gives us immense joy to announce the launch of our new revolutionary retail store brand in Kuwait. The concept of Costo was arrived

after a lot of in-depth research done by our internal research wing along with consultants from Europe and Turkey. The research studies indicated a space in daily or regular purchase market where there is a scope to provide products directly to customers with better price and quality. This triggered the very idea of Costo."

Ayyoob Kachery, Kuwait Regional Director stated that the new concept store differentiates itself by providing consumers with high-quality products that are uniquely selected to suit their tastes and price sensitivities. "This way we make sure the consumers enjoy a complete shopping experience," he added.

Mohammed Suneer, CEO- Kuwait region said, "Finally customers reap the maximum benefits on shopping from Costo as the group has its own sourcing centers in Europe, Turkey, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka, eliminating the middle men from the entire supply chain. This ensures that best quality products reach customers in minimum time at the lowest prices."

The promoters state that the launch of Costo in Kuwait is yet another landmark in the history of retail operations of the group.

In order to achieve their mission of reaching every customer, the promoters, Regency Group, aims to expend their retail stores in all the major areas of Kuwait and serve the Kuwait population with the right mix of products at the most competitive prices possible. Having experience in Kuwaiti market for more than eight years, the promoters were convinced that the growing population, the constant growth of the economy, the increase in the GDP, and the support from the Government of Kuwait to the business community here bode well for them to choose this market and spread their business footprint.



Kuwaiti Head lauds positive decisions that recognize women's rights

Head of Women's Institute for Development and Peace Kawthar Al-Jawaan affirmed Friday that issuing fateful decisions on Kuwaiti woman's rights is a recognition and appreciation for their struggle and achievements in all fields.

On the occasion of celebrating International Woman's Day which falls on 8 March, Al-Jawaan said in a press statement that Kuwaiti women are honored and capable, and the decision made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to grant Kuwaiti women their political rights is a source of pride.

Kuwait is proud of its women and have always believed in their struggle and sacrifices, therefore it mobilizes support for further women's rights, Al-

Jawaan added.

Women have been granted their full political rights in election, nomination and leaderships after a long journey in order to attain their constitutional and political rights, Al-Jawaan said.

On 16 May, 2005, the National Assembly approved a government proposal to amend Article one of the electoral law to allow women exercise their right to run in elections.

Many factors regarding such an achievement, especially the development of the legislative and social systems, which allowed many talented women to occupy the highest positions locally and regionally, and then came the role of "their brother, the man, who supported them to achieve their full rights.

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Samsung launches the Galaxy S10 in Kuwait



Marking a decade since the launch of the first Galaxy S, Samsung Gulf Electronics launched the Galaxy S10 range with three premium smartphones engineered to meet the distinct needs of today's smartphone market on 7 March. Each device delivers a next-generation experience in the

categories consumers care about most: groundbreaking innovations in display, camera and performance.

A testament to a decade of innovations, Galaxy S10 is designed for those who want a premium smartphone with powerful performance and sets the stage for the next generation of mobile experiences. For consumers looking for a supercharged device, Galaxy S10+ takes every spec – from display, to camera, to performance – to the next level.

Galaxy S10e is built for those who want all the premium essentials in a compact package on a flat screen. Featuring the all-new Dynamic AMOLED display, next-generation camera, and intelligent performance, the Galaxy S10 line offers consumers more choices and sets a new

standard for the smartphone.

The Dynamic AMOLED display delivers vivid digital content, and with dynamic tone mapping, you will see a wider range of color for a brilliant, realistic picture. It is also VDE-certified for vibrant bright colors and extraordinary contrast ratio for even deeper blacks and brighter whites.

The result of a groundbreaking engineering process, Galaxy S10's unique Infinity-O Display packs an array of sensors and camera technology into a hole-in display – so you can maximize your screen real estate without any distractions.

The display also includes the first-ever in-display Ultrasonic Fingerprint Scanner that reads the 3D contours of your physical thumbprint – not a 2D image of it – for improved anti-spoofing. With the world's first

FIDO Alliance Biometric Component certification, this next generation biometrics authentication offers vault-like security to keep your device safe.

Building on Samsung's camera leadership of Dual Pixel and Dual Aperture firsts, Galaxy S10 introduces new camera technology and advanced intelligence that makes it easy to take epic shots and videos. A first for the S Series, Galaxy S10 offers an Ultra Wide Lens that is perfect for impressive landscape shots, big panoramas and even fitting the entire extended family into the photo, the Ultra Wide Lens ensures that you'll always be able to capture the full scene.

Galaxy S10 also makes already smart features more accurate with a Neural Processing Unit (NPU) so you can get pro-grade shots worth sharing

without having to manually select any advanced camera settings. Scene Optimizer can now recognize and more accurately process additional scenes because of the NPU.

Galaxy S10 is built with premium hardware and machine-learning-based software that works hard. From brand new power sharing capabilities to AI-powered performance enhancement and Intelligent Wi-Fi, Galaxy S10 is Samsung's most intelligent device yet, from the inside out.

The Galaxy S10 line offers everything you have come to expect from the Galaxy S series and more—including Fast Wireless Charging 2.0, IP68 water and dust resistance, a next-generation processor and Samsung services like Bixby, Samsung Health, Samsung Pay and Samsung DeX. You will get the largest storage capacity available on a Galaxy device – the S10+ even comes with 1TB of built-in storage – and the ability to add an additional 512GB microSD card for up to 1.5TB.

Galaxy S10, Galaxy S10+ and Galaxy S10e will be available in Prism White and Prism Black. Galaxy S10+ will also be available in Prism Green and, all-new, premium Ceramic models: Ceramic Black and Ceramic White.

The Galaxy S10, Galaxy S10+ and Galaxy S10e will be available across major stores in Kuwait and online starting 15 March, 2019.



Oil price vagaries impact Kuwait economy

... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, Kuwait's ability to sustain its economic growth in the face of production cuts are dependent on continued higher oil prices on the international market, and ramping up production from the contentious divided zone that it shares with Saudi Arabia. Production from the divided zone has been in limbo for the last few years, as both countries attempt to reconcile their differences.

In a recent media interview, Kuwait's Minister of Oil and Electricity Khalid Al-Fadhil said that the relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were strong enough to withstand their differences over the divided zone. He cited Saudi Oil Minister Khalid Al-Falih's statement that all matters related to the divided region would be resolved during the current year.

On the question of what he would consider the ideal oil price for Kuwait, Al-Fadhil said that what was important was to have a balanced oil price that benefits both the consumer and the producer. "As an oil producing country, we are not worried about a specific price, but what matters to us is that there is stability in the price and that it is satisfactory to all stakeholders." He added that the a price between US\$60 to \$70 per barrel is good for both producers and consumers.

While the OPEC-mandated production cuts that came into effect since January have had a significant role in recent price increases on the global market, it is not the only reason for the rise in oil prices. Tightening of the sanctions screw by the US on recalcitrant Iran and Venezuela has led to oil production tumbling in Venezuela, and oil exports falling in Iran.

A decade ago, Venezuela's output was 2.6 million b/d, third in OPEC behind Saudi Arabia and Iran. After five years of decline, today it is the eighth largest producer. But production, which was just under 2.0 million b/d in third-quarter of 2018 has skid precipitously in the last six months. Output has plummeted by over 0.5 million b/d to reach 1.4 million b/d and is forecast to be only about 1.2 million b/d by the end of 2019 — if the government led by President Nicolas Maduro manages to hold out that long.

On a similar vein, Iran's crude oil production declined by about 1.04 million b/d in early 2018 to about 2.77 million b/d in December. Since the US began tightening its sanctions from November 2018, oil exports are likely to plunge further during the year, with the Iranian government now saying that it expected to export only 1.54 million b/d during the next financial year starting on 21 March.

Also, the US government is unlikely to extend past May 2019, the six-month exemption waiver that it had issued to eight countries—China, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, which allowed them to continue buying Iranian oil. This would further hamper the flow of Iranian oil exports and unintentionally help decrease the glut that OPEC alleges is present in the global marketplace. Despite best attempts by OPEC and market enthusiasm for higher oil prices, there are headwinds blowing that many analysts

have ignored. Oil prices still remain subject to market vagaries. Last week, crude oil ended on a weaker note as data from China revealed a fall in both exports and imports, as well as relatively poor jobs figures in the United States, and news that Norway's sovereign wealth fund had begun the process of slowly divesting from the oil sector.

China's trade surplus shrank sharply in February, as exports slumped by more than 20 percent year-on-year. Imports were also down year-on-year for the third month in a row. Meanwhile, official figures show that in the US, only 20,000 new jobs were created last month against expectations of 180,000 jobs. It is the lowest growth in non-farm payrolls since September 2017 when employment was affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Chinese trade figures, along with news that the US economy created the lowest number of jobs for a year-and-a-half in February, fueled new fears about prospects for the global economy, and consequently the price of oil for the rest of the year. Adding to future woes for oil, the increasing call for greener energy in Europe and elsewhere. Norway's Finance Minister, Siv Jensen announced last week that the country's US\$1 trillion sovereign wealth fund — the largest in the world — would begin to slowly divest from the oil and gas producers. "The ministry recommended the divestment in order to avoid the risk of volatile and low oil prices. The goal is to make our collective wealth less vulnerable to a lasting fall in oil prices," said the finance minister.

Though Norway is one of the largest oil and gas producers in Europe, and the country's sovereign wealth fund owns \$37 billion in oil and gas shares, the government's decision to gradually exclude oil producers from its investments highlights the general anxiety that global investors have on the longevity of the oil business. On a related front, it is interesting to note that even as demand for gasoline and diesel are slowing in China, crude oil imports have been steadily rising. According to Chinese customs authorities, the country's crude oil imports rose by 22 percent year-on-year in February to 10.23 million barrels per day — their third highest level ever.

This apparent anomaly could be explained when one realizes that Chinese refiners are increasingly processing crude into refined products such as gasoline and diesel and exporting them, adding to the global oversupply of gasoline and other refined products. With even more refining capacity set to open this year in China, there are very real fears that the global glut in gasoline and other refined products could drag down the entire sector.

There are also fears that China's crude oil demand could peak by 2025 as demand for electric vehicles (EV), of which the country is currently the leader, hits the roads in greater numbers and peaks by 2025. In its analysis on rising EV demand in China, Morgan Stanley, the US-based multinational investment and financial services was more bullish, saying peak demand for EV could arrive even earlier and that "refiners and petroleum stations are the largest potential losers, while the battery companies are likely to become the key winners."

Coordination Forum for Indian Organizations in Kuwait formed



A common platform for socio-cultural associations titled 'Coordination Forum for Indian Organizations, Kuwait was launched with a view to coordinating emergency medical charitable services for Indian expatriates in Kuwait in the venue of Saradhi-IndiaFest2019. Addressing a meeting of the members of the various associations, convened to form the forum, Saradhi Kuwait's Advisory board member and social activist Suresh K P who has taken this initiative, outlined the mission and goals of the forum.

The forum will be able to operate as a support system in coordinating medical assistance to the needy from the expat community by providing valuable information of medical care and assistance, Suresh K P explained. This year Pravasi Bharathiya Divas also discussed to find solutions to support the distressed Indians, this is one of the inspirations to form such a forum. The forum will have presidents as representatives from all Indian associations in Kuwait or the persons who is nominated by the associations.

The forum was officially formed at a meeting held at the India Fest venue organized by Saradhi Kuwait on the 25 February on the National Day of Kuwait. Launched in cooperation with Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) and Kuwait Organ Transplant Center, the forum has representatives from 14 states of India as its members. Many of the major Indian organizations and

individuals are doing by themselves a lot of charity works for KCC and many other hospitals for the needy in Kuwait and back in India. It is a well-known fact that India Embassy also have welfare cell to support Indians. This newly created forum expected to fulfill the gap between all welfare requests through better coordination.

Dr Jassem Al-Barak officially inaugurated the forum and congratulates every one for this unity of all Indian states together while Dr. Mustafa Al-Musawi spoke about the importance of organ donation. Renowned medical oncologist Dr Sushovana Sujith Nair lauded Saradhi Kuwait for its noble initiative in forming the forum.

Presidents from ASOM Association (ASOM), Bengali Cultural Society, Kuwait (BCS), Billava Sangha Kuwait Frontliners Association (TamilNadu), Kala Mogui Kuwait - (GOA), Maharashtra Mandal (MAHARASHTRA), Maurya Kala Samithi - (Bihar & Jharkhand), Rajasthani Darpan Association (RDA), Samarpan (Gujarat association), Telugu Kala Samithi, Telangana Jagruthi Kuwait, Blood Donors Kerala, Santhwanam, Arpan Kuwait, Kerala Association, KKMCC, Welfare Kerala Kuwait, National Forum Kuwait, Nair Service Society, Kerala Association, Nilav, Thanima and many prominent leaders were also present at the meeting along with other Major organizations from Kuwait.

Diet and healthcare



While a lot still remains to be known about the impact of our diet on minute biological mechanisms, there is no doubt that the foods we choose to eat and our dietary habits play an important role in shaping our health and well-being.

Food is essential to life and eating well helps us feel well, have more energy, and become more productive. But what does it mean to eat well? Here we look at some of the most important findings from recent nutrition research.

Existing studies suggest that intermittent fasting — in which a person fasts for a set number of hours each day but eats freely in the remaining hours — can help with losing weight and may provide other health benefits, including prolonging a person's lifespan and reducing harmful inflammation.

Essentially, fasting triggers changes in the body — such as stimulating weight loss — by acting on metabolic processes. Usually, our bodies rely on carbohydrates to produce energy, but when a person fasts and carbohydrates are no longer readily available, the body starts looking for and utilizing other resources.

Some of the metabolic changes triggered by fasting that researchers recently found are that fasting boosts levels of purine and pyrimidine, two organic compounds that act on gene expression and protein synthesis at a cellular level, and are important for the maintenance of muscle and antioxidant activity. This means that by increasing levels of purine and pyrimidine, fasting can stimulate rejuvenating processes, potentially keeping the body younger for longer.

Other research on dietary best practices have debunked a long-standing myth that eating breakfast is important when it comes to achieving weight loss. The thinking was that eating breakfast helps stimulate the metabolism so that more calories burn faster.

However, a new study shows that the total daily energy (calorie) intake tends to be higher in people who regularly eat breakfast. Moreover, researchers found that, on average, individuals who tend to go without breakfast on a daily basis actually had less body weight than breakfast-eaters.

At the same time, researchers have been identifying additional benefits of common natural foods. For example, flaxseed, which many of us use to enrich our smoothies or add some extra crunch to crackers and granola bars, has fiber that that reportedly helps balance cholesterol levels and lower blood pressure, among other benefits.

A new study also suggests that flaxseed fiber can also lower obesity markers. Flaxseed starts breaking down once it reaches the gut where the fiber starts producing changes in the gut microbiota that lead to more healthy bacterial population. These changes affect metabolic processes, accelerating the consumption of energy, and thus lowering markers associated with obesity.

In addition to this, they help boost glucose (sugar) tolerance, which may mean that they have a protective effect against features that define other metabolic conditions, such as diabetes, which is characterized by impaired glucose tolerance.

Other research shows that onions and garlic are also

important allies when it comes to safeguarding our health. Garlic is a natural antibiotic, as it has antibacterial properties, and many people traditionally use it to fight the flu or treat insect bites. Researchers now say that these two vegetables have an anti-cancer effect. Researchers found that participants who ate the largest quantities of garlic and onions had a 79 percent lower risk of colorectal cancer, compared with people who consumed low quantities of allium vegetables.

Another well-loved food item, blueberries, often hailed as a superfood because they are packed with antioxidants that help protect cellular health and fend off disease, has now been shown to lower a person's risk of cardiovascular problems. The anthocyanins — pigments with antioxidant properties — in these berries were identified as being responsible for a significant decrease in blood pressure among participants in the study.

Recent research also warn that some dietary choices may be putting our health at risk. For instance, eating ultra-processed foods could be extremely harmful to our health and well-being. Researchers say that such foods — which include ready-made meals and processed meats — have high contents of fat, sugar, and sodium (salt) while being low in natural fiber. This means that, while tasty, ultra-processed foods are not nutritious and will cheat our stomachs into feeling satisfied, while failing to offer the real sustenance that we need. Moreover, ultra-processed foods often contain artificial additives, which could increase our exposure to a range of diseases and increased mortality risk. As little as a 10 percent increase in the amount of ultra-processed food that we eat could lead to a 14 percent higher mortality risk.

Researchers also drew some bleak conclusions about the consumption of artificially sweetened diet drinks. Low-calorie soft drinks with artificial sweeteners can contribute to the risk of stroke. Studies indicate that people consuming two or more diet drinks per day had a 23 percent higher risk of stroke and a 29 percent higher risk of a heart attack or a similar event.

Hidden habits that affect your blood pressure

Lifestyle choices such as your diet, exercise routine, and sleep habits play an important role in blood pressure.

Many people know a diet high in fat, salt, and sugar along with a sedentary lifestyle can affect blood pressure rates. But there are other hidden habits that can have an impact on blood pressure readings.

People who use over-the-counter (OTC) medications to treat minor aches and pains can see spikes in their blood pressure. OTC medications, including anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen (Advil) can increase blood pressure. Many OTC decongestant medications are also known to raise blood pressure.

Prescription medications such as those used to treat mental health, oral birth control medications, immunosuppressants, cancer medications, and steroids can also raise your blood pressure. However, experts recommend that you consult your physician before discontinuing any of the prescription drugs.

Caffeine can also contribute to rising blood pressure. Limiting caffeine to less than 300 milligrams (mg), or about two to three cups of coffee per day, can help avoid high blood pressure from reaching critical levels. Green tea extract and other caffeine-related products, all increase the adrenalin surge in a patient. While these products are meant to make one



more alert, but in doing so, they also elevate blood pressures.

Certain food ingredients and supplements can also lead to elevated blood pressures. Herbal supplements and home remedies that use ingredients such as licorice can lead to hypertension. Also, foods with strong cheeses, cured meats, and even soy products can contain high levels of tyramine, which can interact with certain antidepressants and cause hypertensive episodes.

Some people experience anxiety in a medical settings that leads to high blood pressure readings and consequently unnecessary blood pressure medications. To offset this, people can take their blood pressure readings at home, and then compare those readings to measurements at their doctor's office.

Prepare for blood pressure readings by emptying your bladder, avoiding cigarettes or caffeine for 30 minutes before the measurement, and sitting quietly for a few minutes before taking a reading.

Detecting cancer from a drop of blood

An innovative tool may be able to detect cancer easily and quickly from a minuscule amount of blood. Researchers at the University of Kansas in the United States have developed an ultra-sensitive cancer-detecting device called '3-D-nanopatterned microfluidic chip' that successfully detects cancer markers in the tiniest drop of blood or in a component of the blood called plasma.

The new device identifies and diagnoses cancer by 'filtering' for exosomes, which are tiny vesicles that some cells produce. In the case of cancer



cells, exosomes contain biological information that can direct tumor growth and spread. The researchers say their device is easy to make, as well as being cheap to produce, meaning that wide distribution could be possible without increasing patient costs.

Even more importantly, the researchers argue that this innovative device is, in principle, very adaptable. They believe that in the future, doctors could use it to diagnose many different forms of cancer, as well as other diseases.



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Decade of Perspective



New well-being of nation

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan's ruling Nur Othan Party, the country's President Nursultan Nazarbayev speaking before a convention of party members thanked them for their support and for their role in the achievements that Kazakhstan had made since independence in 1991.

Highlighting the country's accomplishments, the president pointed out that the economy of the country had grown considerably and that the volume of foreign trade turnover had increased more than nine-fold. "Kazakhstan attracted approximately US\$320 billion of foreign direct investment and we have increased the country's income by 16 times. Over 141 million square meters of housing has been constructed and new infrastructure facilities of social significance have been built throughout the country, including 1,400 modern hospitals, clinics and outpatients, 2,865 new schools, colleges and kindergartens," said the president.

He added that as the country moves forward, it should consider the key trends taking place in the rest of the world. "Today, the competition of states comes down to the competition of individuals. Any economic achievements and geopolitical victories are of no great value and significance if they do not lead to an

increase in the well-being of each and every person. This is the main secret of prosperity and the formula for the sustainable development of states in the 21st century," the president elaborated.

Revealing the party's program until 2030 and titled 'The Society for Welfare: 10 Goals of the Decade', the president maintained that the Congress in considering the program had broadened the horizons of strategic vision and defined the main outlines of the development of society and the state in the coming decade, so as join the top 30 leading nations of the world.

"I am certain that each of us will make a significant contribution to the development of an even stronger and more prosperous Kazakhstan," said the president, while adding that these efforts must be guided by the national idea, the basic components of which include, national unity, competitive and strong economy, an intellectually prospering society and a country that is respected all over the world.

He stressed that the fundamentals for Kazakhstan's successful development were also dependent on the National Unity Doctrine that rested on the four pillars of common history, common values, common homeland and common future.

The president underlined that even as the country envisioned its future prospects, it should not forget the



nation's current objectives of ensuring a decent standard of living for citizens and the development of Kazakhstan as a socially-oriented state. "We fulfilled our social commitments even in the most challenging periods, and we must maintain the development spending and help those in need," said the president.

He also warned that "certain imbalances and a number of trouble spots in the social sector", needed to be rectified. "We should remember that we live in a period of great challenges and global uncertainty. The reserves we accumulated in past years may come useful in more difficult times. Social policy must be balanced and not provoke the growth of a welfare mentality," advised President Nazarbayev. He added, that the state's

main objective is to give people a job so that they can earn a living. Assistance must be provided to those who especially need it and be strictly targeted.

With the aim of addressing some of the problems facing citizens, the president called for implementing the three pillars of social policy that include raising incomes and supporting low-income groups of the population; addressing housing issues of low-income citizens and improving education and health care; and, integrated development of the regions.

He disclosed that the government had been instructed, from 1 July, 2019 to raise wages of low-paid public sector employees by 30 percent; and, to raise wages of grass-root workers of

executive bodies, who work directly with citizens at the regional and oblast levels, on average by 25 percent. He added that particular consideration must be given to low-income categories of citizens and families with multiple children.

"Each Kazakh family should feel the effects of the reforms today, and not in the distant future. In line with this, I am also instructing the government to increase by 30 percent the allowance to parents, guardians and families (persons) raising children with disabilities. This will cover more than 100,000 people."

He noted that modern realities require the development of new skills and competencies among children. The formula for success is the constant professional development of teachers, advanced facilities and resources, and relevant training programs. "Each region should have at least one advanced university and 10 modern colleges. The main criterion for the effectiveness of educational institutions is the employment of graduates."

Moreover, every citizen of our country should be not only educated, but also healthy. Accordingly, expenditures for public health services and primary health care should be increased from 40 to 60 percent of the total health budget, said the president.

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Renewing Europe

... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We have to stand firm, proud and lucid, in the face of this manipulation and say first of all what today's united Europe is. It is a historic success: the reconciliation of a devastated continent in an unprecedented project of peace, prosperity and freedom. We should never forget that. And this project continues to protect us today. What country can act on its own in the face of aggressive strategies by the major powers? Who can claim to be sovereign, on their own, in the face of the digital giants?

How would we resist the crises of financial capitalism without the euro, which is a force for the entire European Union? Europe is also those thousands of projects daily that have changed the face of our regions: the school refurbished, the road built, and the long-awaited arrival of high-speed Internet access. This struggle is a daily commitment, because Europe, like peace, can never be taken for granted. I tirelessly pursue it in the name of France to take Europe forward and defend its model. We have shown that what we were told was unattainable, the creation of a European defense capability and the protection of social rights, was in fact possible.

Yet we need to do more and sooner, because there is the other trap: the trap of the status quo and resignation. Faced with the major crises in the world, citizens so often ask us, "Where is Europe? What is Europe doing?" It has become a soulless market in their eyes.

Yet Europe is not just a market. It is a project. A market is useful, but it should not detract from the need for borders that protect and values that unite. The nationalists are misguided when they claim to defend our identity by withdrawing from Europe, because it is the European civilization that unites, frees and protects us. But those who would change nothing are also misguided, because they deny the fears felt by our peoples, the doubts that undermine our democracies. We are at a pivotal moment for our continent, a moment when together we need to politically and culturally reinvent the shape of our civilization in a changing world. It is the moment for European renewal. Hence, resisting the temptation of isolation and divisions, I propose we build this renewal together around three ambitions: freedom, protection and progress.

Freedom: The European model is based on the freedom of man and the diversity of opinions and creation. Our first freedom is democratic freedom: the freedom to choose our leaders as foreign powers seek to influence our vote at each election. I propose creating a European Agency for the Protection of Democracies, which will provide each member state with European experts to protect their election processes against cyber-attacks and manipulation. In this same spirit of independence, we should also ban the funding of European political parties by foreign powers. We should have European rules banish all incitements to hate and violence from the Internet, since respect for the individual is the bedrock of our civilization of dignity.

Protection: Founded on internal reconciliation, the EU has forgotten to look at the realities of the world. Yet no community can create a sense of belonging if it does not have bounds that it protects. The boundary is freedom in security. We therefore need to rethink the Schengen area: all those who want to be part of it should comply with obligations of responsibility (stringent border controls) and solidarity (one asylum policy with the same acceptance and refusal rules). We will need a common border force and a European asylum office, strict control obligations and European solidarity to which each country will contribute under the authority of a European Council for Internal Security. On the issue of migration, I believe in a Europe that protects both its values and its borders.

The same standards should apply to defense. Substantial progress has been made in the last two years, but we need to set a clear course: a treaty on defense and security should define our fundamental obligations in association with NATO and our European allies: increased defense spending, a truly operational mutual defense clause, and the European Security Council with the United Kingdom on board to prepare our collective decisions.

Our borders also need to guarantee fair competition. What power in the world would accept continued trade with those who respect none of their rules? We cannot suffer in silence. We need to reform our competition policy and reshape our trade policy with penalties or a ban in Europe on businesses that compromise our strategic interests and fundamental values such as environmental standards, data

protection and fair payment of taxes; and the adoption of European preference in strategic industries and our public procurement, as our American and Chinese competitors do.

Progress: Europe is not a second-rank power. Europe in its entirety is a vanguard: it has always defined the standards of progress. In this, it needs to drive forward a project of convergence rather than competition: Europe, where social security was created, needs to introduce a social shield for all workers, east to west and north to south, guaranteeing the same pay in the same workplace, and a minimum European wage appropriate to each country and discussed collectively every year.



Getting back on track with progress also concerns spearheading the ecological cause. Will we be able to look our children in the eye if we do not also clear our climate debt? The EU needs to set its target — zero carbon by 2050 and pesticides halved by 2025 — and adapt its policies accordingly with such measures as a European Climate Bank to finance the ecological transition, a European food safety force to improve our food controls and, to counter the lobby threat, independent scientific assessment of substances hazardous to the environment and health. This imperative needs to guide all our action: from the European Central Bank to the European Commission, from the European budget to the Investment Plan for Europe. All our institutions need to have the climate as their mandate.

Progress and freedom are about being able to

live from your work: Europe needs to look ahead to create jobs. This is why it needs not only to regulate the global digital giants by putting in place European supervision of the major platforms (prompt penalties for unfair competition, transparent algorithms, etc.), but also to finance innovation by giving the new European Innovation Council a budget on a par with the United States in order to spearhead new technological breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence. World-oriented Europe needs to look towards Africa, with which we should enter into a covenant for the future, taking the same road and ambitiously and non-defensively supporting African development with such measures as investment, academic partnerships and education for girls.

Freedom, protection and progress. We need to build European renewal on these pillars. We cannot let nationalists without solutions exploit the people's anger. We cannot sleepwalk through a diminished Europe. We cannot become ensconced in business as usual and wishful thinking. European humanism demands action. And everywhere, the people are standing up to be part of that change.

So, by the end of the year, let us set up, with the representatives of the European institutions and the member states, a Conference for Europe in order to propose all the changes our political project needs, with an open mind, even to amending the treaties. This conference will need to engage with citizens' panels and hear academics, business and labor representatives, and religious and spiritual leaders. It will define a roadmap for the EU that translates these key priorities into concrete actions. There will be disagreement, but is it better to have a static Europe or a Europe that advances, sometimes at different paces, and that is open to all?

In this Europe, the peoples will really take back control of their future. In this Europe, the United Kingdom, I am sure, will find its true place.

The Brexit impasse is a lesson for us all. We need to escape this trap and make the upcoming European Parliament elections and our project meaningful. It is for Europe's citizens to decide whether Europe and the values of progress that it embodies are to be more than just a passing episode in history. This is the choice I propose: to chart together the road to European renewal.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Social Solution to Automation



NICHOLAS AGAR

A New Zealand-based philosopher who has written extensively on the human consequences of technological change. His latest book is *How to Be Human in the Digital Economy*.

Nowadays, one struggles to think of any jobs that will still be available for our children when they grow up. Panicked parents are increasingly trying to anticipate the next big digital thing, so that they can give their kids a leg-up over all the other humans whose jobs will soon be automated. Accountants and radiographers are already doomed, but surely the developers perfecting driverless cars or adding new features to Facebook are safe, right?

Instead of thinking this way, we should view the emergence of fabulously efficient digital technologies as an opportunity to create new kinds of jobs that satisfy our social natures. This approach would not only solve the problem of the 'end of work'; it would also address one of modernity's greatest ills: loneliness.

Socially isolated people are sadder and sicker than those who enjoy meaningful human connections, and their numbers are growing. According



A social-digital economy would respond simultaneously to the problems posed by automation and loneliness. Machines and algorithms already rule the digital economy, and humans must accept that they have no chance of competing with them in terms of efficiency and computing power. We should expect, and welcome, a future in which machines fly our passenger jets and perform our heart surgeries. Why put up with clumsy, distracted human pilots or surgeons if we do not have to?

To be sure, some human workers will be required to manage things in the digital economy, but not nearly at the levels of the past. Meanwhile, all of the humans who would have become pilots, surgeons, or accountants in earlier times can instead perform the jobs at which machines are inherently bad.

As Sherry Turkle of MIT notes, for some activities, the involvement of a machine spoils the experience. Consider social media. Facebook and Twitter cannot reduce loneliness, because they are designed to serve up a biased sample of social experience. Like digital sugar, they can make a social interaction instantly gratifying, but they always leave an empty feeling behind. By offering merely a simulation of social experience, they ultimately make us lonelier.

In the past, the label of 'social worker' applied to a narrow cohort of professionals who cared for those who could not care for themselves. But in a social-digital economy, the meaning

of the term would be expansive. After all, the barista who makes your latte also provides a social service merely by asking how your day is going. That simple question, even if motivated by compliance with workplace rules, would have no meaning coming from a machine.

Our need for social interaction is a product of our evolution. Humans, the social neuroscientist John Cacioppo explains, are "obligatorily gregarious." A zookeeper tasked with creating a "proper enclosure for the species *Homo sapiens*," he writes, would "not house a member of the human family in isolation" for the same reason that she would not "house a member of *Aptenodytes forsteri* (emperor penguins) in hot desert sand." Put another way, if one wanted to torture an obligatorily social animal, the most cost-effective way would be to isolate it.

Throughout the industrial and post-industrial eras, our social nature has been suppressed by a cultural addiction to efficiency. But the digital revolution could help us rediscover what we have lost. Nowadays, the sole application of digital technologies in the workplace is to boost productivity. But with a socially-minded approach, we would instead focus on giving human workers freer rein to express themselves.

In a social economy, we would still care about efficiency, but we would make allowances for human fallibility. Just as we don't expect perfect efficiency from our lovers, we should not expect it from human teachers, nurses, or baristas.

In addition to efficiency, we should also be thinking about how we can socially enhance various professions, including those that don't seem especially social. Consider astronauts. A focus on efficiency would require us to phase out human space explorers more or less immediately.

Machines are already better at making course corrections and gathering data, and they don't require the extra facilities that humans need to stay satiated and sane in space.

But there is another way of thinking about space exploration, one in which the presence of humans is the entire point. Storytelling has always been a deeply enjoyable social experience for humans. And though robot rovers can stream data from atop Mars's Olympus Mons, they will never be able to tell an emotionally satisfying story about what it's like to climb it. Why explore space at all if not to contribute to the story of humankind? From a social perspective, replacing human astronauts with machines is a bit like replacing Meryl Streep with a CGI animation.

For anxious parents, the best way to predict the future of work is not to study the latest technologies, but rather our own past. Before *Homo sapiens* became farmers, we belonged to forager communities that satisfied many of the social needs that go unmet today. The future of work in the social economy will be about attending to those needs once again.

For that to happen, though, we need to change policymakers' and businesses' mindset. As matters stand, the workers who deal most directly with other humans are often the first to be displaced by automated services. But this is a choice, not an economic necessity. Nothing about the digital revolution requires us to stop valuing humans and human interactions.

Rather than channeling the automation dividend into the pockets of a few billionaires, we should start using it to restore meaningful connections between obligatorily gregarious beings. Succeeding at that would be a human story worth telling.



“Throughout the industrial and post-industrial eras, our social nature has been suppressed by a cultural addiction to efficiency. But the digital revolution could help us rediscover what we have lost.”

to a 2016 commentary in the New York Times, "Since the 1980s, the percentage of American adults who say they're lonely has doubled from 20 percent to 40 percent."

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Beyond the Traditional Family



PETER SINGER

Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne, and founder of the non-profit organization *The Life You Can Save*. His books include *Animal Liberation*, *Practical Ethics*, and *The Most Good You Can Do*. Agata Sagan is an independent researcher based in Warsaw.

Last month, Pope Francis traveled to Abu Dhabi, where he met Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar (Al-Azhar University is the leading Sunni institution for the study of Islamic law). The two religious leaders signed a "Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together," calling on their adherents, as well as world leaders, to spread tolerance and peace and to end "the moral and cultural decline that the world is presently experiencing."

One aspect of this supposed moral and cultural decline concerns the family: "To attack the institution of the family, to regard it with contempt or to doubt its important role," the Pope and the Grand Imam state, "is one of the most threatening evils of our era." The document asserts that the family is the "fundamental nucleus of society and humanity" and "is essential in bringing children into the world, raising them, educating them, and providing them with solid moral formation and domestic security." Their anxiety is understandable: in many countries today, the traditional family consisting of a heterosexual married couple with children is becoming less dominant. But is this really a bad thing?

The United Nations predicts that the world's population will exceed 11 billion by the end of the century, with the fastest growth occurring in some of the world's poorest countries. In these circumstances, if some people choose not to bring children into the world, they should not be disparaged.

The proportion of people who are legally married is declining in some



regions, for a variety of reasons. As the stigma once attached to "living in sin" fades, many couples see little reason to get married, whether or not they have children. In some countries, the legal difficulties and costs associated with divorce is a deterrent to marriage.

Such couples may, of course, establish families that are just as strong as those established by couples that have gone through a legal marriage ceremony. Similarly, "blended" or "patchwork" families that bring together children from previous relationships can provide everything that a traditional family offers. In many countries, same-sex couples may now marry and form families, although both Francis and el-Tayeb oppose such families and presumably do not regard them as providing children with "solid moral formation." The trend among single women to have children, often using artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization, no doubt also disturbs supporters of the traditional family.

Perhaps the most significant change, however, is the growing number of people who choose to be single. In the

United States, 45% of adults are either divorced, widowed, or have never been married. In some places, like New York City, the majority of people are single. Contrary to the stereotype that single people are lonely and unhappy, research shows that single people are actually more engaged in a wide network of friends and acquaintances than married people. They do more for the community and for others, and are more likely to help their parents, siblings, or neighbors, than married people.

This shouldn't really come as a surprise. Married couples are likely to put their spouse first, at least until they have children, and then the children often take priority. The tendency to care for a wider circle than one's own family is, we would argue, ethically preferable, especially in affluent societies, where other family members are likely to be far better off than more distant strangers in low-income countries. Both the Bible and the Koran recognize this more universal view as ethically superior.

We are not denying that there is great value in dividing society into small units in which adults have specific responsibility for the children living with them. This is in harmony with our evolved instinctive feelings, which we can observe in other social mammals as well. Alternative arrangements, such as the collective child-rearing in an Israeli kibbutz, have not been successful, although informal experiments in co-parenting, in which groups

of adults bring up the children of some of them together, appear to be spreading.

A well-functioning family provides a more loving and more stable environment for children than any other model devised so far, but that does not mean that it must be based on a traditional marriage. In fact, despite the apparent agreement of the Pope and the Grand Imam on the importance of the family, the Christian and Muslim traditions have different conceptions of what a family is, with the latter allowing men to have more than one wife. If, despite these differences, Francis and el-Tayeb are ready to accept each other's support for "the family," they should be able to accept other models, too, as long as there is no solid evidence that they are harmful to those involved, including the children. It is curious that a "Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" should assert that to doubt the importance of the family is one of the most threatening evils of our era.

From a global perspective, it is not helpful to limit ourselves to such small units. Travel and the Internet are enabling new friendships beyond the home and beyond the borders of our countries. If we are really concerned with "human fraternity," then maybe we should place more emphasis on building relationships that span the globe, rather than condemn those who see the traditional family as unduly constricting.

New well-being of nation

... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

"I am instructing to additionally allocate approximately 120 billion tenge for the advancement of the healthcare sector. Consequently, this will increase the quality and availability of inpatient medical care in seven regions with coverage of approximately 100,000 patients per year."

Finally, it is necessary to start implementing a regional policy aimed at improving the quality of life throughout the country. The government and akims of all levels must actually solve all social problems in a constructive way, without populism and chasing after indicators. "The highways constructed are important, but the road that leads to your home is even more importance. The expansion of the modern local road system is a key objective of the government, execution of which shall be under party's control.

"All regional transport infrastructure facilities, including airports, bus and railway stations, should be upgraded. In order to solve the issues of the large cities' suburban areas, such as Astana, Almaty and Shymkent. In addition, 10 billion tenge will be provided annually for the development of small and single-industry cities in the next three years.

The party should also be actively involved in solving everyday problems of the population. The project called 'Halykka komek' is intended to strengthen

this work. Today it is important to respond quickly to the current needs of society, focusing the attention of government agencies on them. This is the most effective strategy. In order to achieve this, it is important to establish a powerful feedback system with the population. It is necessary to enhance the work of the party's public reception offices. In fact, they should become a 'single window' of assistance for our citizens based on the 'here and now' principle. There should be no bureaucratic delays in this matter. All branches of 'Nur Otan' should be focused primarily on this work.

"I would like to emphasize once again that economic development should be aimed at increasing the well-being of the population, even as targeted efforts to eradicate corruption continue. The focus of special attention should be our youth, since they are the future! This year I declared the Year of youth. The party should seek to improve the effectiveness of the state youth policy."

"The power of the state is measured by the pace of economic development and the quality of people's life. Therefore, I would like to see that my people are happy not in the future but now. Our position is peace and calm; our motto is abundance and unity. Independent Kazakhstan's solid foundation is peace and harmony! Being the main party is not about governing but about faithful service to the country! We are the party of people's unity, concluded President Nazarbayev.



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Teaching kids to code

In this technological age, the importance of knowing to code cannot be over emphasized. Along with reading, writing and arithmetic, learning to code is increasingly becoming crucial for a child's overall literacy development.

Computer coding is a part of everything and is everywhere in the world around us.

It is not just important in technology-related fields, it is vital in manufacturing, healthcare and farming; virtually any industry you can think of has a coding component. The question that parents should be asking is not "why?" but "how?". How can I inspire my child to learn to code, when should I start, and what are the many benefits?

Children are innately curious and love to explore; they love to discover, to pick things up, examine them and to keep asking "why?" It is the parent's job to encourage children's interests and help them develop life skills by starting early and making it a fun experience.

Coding is extremely easy for children to

grasp and thus, after a brief introduction and some exploration, rudimentary skills can be mastered. This basic knowledge will help children interact with the technology around them, rather than passively consume it.

Technology is evolving at lightning speed and the set of skills a child develops from learning to code will be there for a lifetime. Coding teaches logical thinking and strengthens both written and verbal skills. Children who learn to code better also understand how to organize their thoughts better and visualize abstract concepts. Children develop creativity by experimenting and making mistakes. They learn through coding education that there is more than one way to do something. In creative environments there are no right answers and no guidebooks. Children learn through coding that knowing how to ask the right questions is sometimes more important than having the right answers.

Through the discipline of coding, children seek validation from their peers

and tend to work in groups. They learn to collaborate, to give and receive criticism in a positive way, and to incorporate feedback in what they are doing.

From coding games starring characters from Doctor Who and Frozen to after school programs, schools should encourage kids to learn how to code. It makes sense, since STEM jobs are on the rise, and nearly any job in a typical office setting in the future will involve technology.

For parents looking to increase their children's exposure to coding, there are many great programs available online and at local libraries, museums, summer camps and learning centers to supplement what children are exposed to in school. Some of the online resources to teach kids coding include:

Kids Ruby was created to teach kids actual Rub code; it is a downloadable program that will give kids hands on experience with Ruby.

Hackety Hack is the next step for kids who have graduated from Kids Ruby.

Robot Turtles is a board game alternative to computer games and apps, Robot Turtles is for ages 4 and up and brings programming to life; just get the turtle to the matching colored jewel on the board.



Made with Code by Google was released by Google to help with the gender gap that exists in STEM. Through in-person parties, a number of online resources, and summer camps, Google is inspiring young girls everywhere to tap into their inner programmer.

Code.org, a non-profit online organization brings science to more schools and encourages underrepresented students to pursue a future in technology and science. It offers a number of tools, resources, tutorials, and more to help anyone learn to code.

Password-free world gets closer with FIDO2 authentication

The Fast Identification Online (FIDO) Alliance, which includes some of the biggest names in online security, payments and IT field, announced that devices running Android 7.0 and higher will now be compatible with FIDO2, the latest version of the alliance's authentication solution. The announcement hammers yet another nail into the passwords coffin.

FIDO2 provides a Web authentication standard that combines the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Authentication specification with FIDO's Client-to-Authenticator protocol.



With it, devices gain secure access to online services in both mobile and desktop environments.

Expanding FIDO2 to the Android world allows Web and application developers to add strong authentication to their apps and websites through a simple API call, delivering passwordless, phishing-resistant, security to their users.

Since FIDO2 was introduced last year, it has gained support from all the major Web browsers, as well Microsoft, which has integrated it into Windows 10. Google has long worked with the FIDO Alliance and W3C to standardize FIDO2 protocols, which give

any application the ability to move beyond password authentication while offering protection against phishing attacks.

With more than 1 billion Android 7.0+ handsets that can be addressed by websites supporting FIDO authentication, the stage is set for developers and service providers to add standards-based FIDO2 authentication into their websites and apps.

FIDO is trying to solve the world's password problem. Passwords are often reused on multiple online accounts and the root cause of over 80 percent of data breaches. Passwords are also costly to maintain for service providers on centralized servers.

When passwords are stored on central servers, those servers become a attack target for hackers. In the past, billions of passwords have been stolen from such servers. However, with the public key cryptography approach of FIDO2, the user's authentication credentials remain with the user's device, and the server retains only the corresponding public key.

This not only helps protect the user's privacy, but also begins to de-risk the authentication process for the service provider. In the unfortunate occurrence of a data breach, they no longer need to worry about credential theft. This not only protects their customers but also helps stop the scourge of credential stuffing — where hackers use credentials stolen from one site to compromise accounts on other sites because the owners have used the same credentials on multiple sites.

Credential stuffing occurs when credentials stolen from one site are used to compromise accounts on other sites because the credentials have been used by their owner on multiple sites. A major challenge to FIDO is consumer education as many consumers are still not ready to say goodbye to their passwords. Education will be a major part of the efforts to facilitate adoption of FIDO2, including by working with the vendor community to educate the market at large on the benefits of FIDO authentication.

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