



LOCAL
Over a third of employees in Kuwait link loyalty to salary **11**



Eid-al-Fitr reinforces resilience, revival

THE TIMES REPORT

Another blessed Eid-al-Fitr under the ominous shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, is just a few days away. More than a year into the health crisis, and despite the rollout of vaccination programs around the world, the virus has not shown any signs of abatement, neither becoming less virulent nor losing its potency to infect people. If anything, mutant strains of the virus have emerged that are proving even more infectious than the first wave, with infections and fatalities increasing exponentially over the past year.

Last May, when Eid-al-Fitr came around, Kuwait had reported less than 15,000 coronavirus cases; today, a year later, the numbers have gone up to nearly 283,000. In terms of deaths attributed to the pandemic,

desire in them to help those less privileged. The immutable message reinforced by the Eid celebrations is that all of humanity is one family; helping even one member helps build a stronger and more resilient society; and, causing harm to one individual leads to hurting everyone in the long-term.

Every adversity we face, every challenge we encounter, including the ongoing pandemic, reiterates and rams home this message of the need for solidarity and for assisting one another. When faced with adversity people can choose one of three potential outcomes: They can remain broken; they can attempt to get back to where they were before the calamity struck; or they can choose to thrive from the adversity and end up even further ahead than where they were before the affliction.

threatens our joint existence and progress.

Lockdowns, curfews, and border closures in response to the COVID-19 crisis; restrictions on movement and public gatherings; restraints on

all services except those deemed essential, have all combined to take a heavy toll on business activities resulting in financial and economic repercussions from which the country has yet to fully

recover. Nevertheless, people and businesses have, for the most part, learned to accept the extenuating circumstances, adapt to it and to move forward with hope.

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the numbers have gone from less than 150 in May 2020 to more than 1,600 by the first week of this May. Despite the angst caused by these frightening statistics, living for more than a year under the dark and life-threatening cloud of the virus have given people the strength to cope with the pandemic. They have shown remarkable resilience in the face of adversity and demonstrated the versatility to spring back, adapt and move on with their lives.

The month-long period of fasting from dawn-to-dusk that culminates with the Eid-al-Fitr festival, is perhaps an apt display of this buoyancy of the human spirit. Fasting daily for a month not only strengthens one's piety, it reinforces willpower and helps build endurance and ability to overcome challenges. Fasting also introduces people to what the poor and the deprived members of society experience daily in their lives. It leads people to be thankful for their blessings and invokes a

On the individual level, option three is clearly the best choice and it is available to all of us by simply using adversity as an opportunity to help others. By assisting others in their time of need, we give the misfortune that we confront a new meaning, and it endows us with the means to help vanquish it by lending a hand to those unable to help themselves. By this definition, people have on the individual level shown remarkable resilience to spring back from the adversity during the ongoing pandemic.

For more than a year of living with the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been demonstrating this resilience by supporting, assisting and inspiring each other with their individual and collective resolve to overcome the adversities they face. Collectively as a community we have also demonstrated our determination not to be cowed by a virus, and to persevere and prevail in the face of any challenge that

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Staying healthy

over the Eid holidays



Eid al-Fitr, the religious festival celebrated by Muslims worldwide, marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan and the month-long fasting ritual, and welcomes the month of Shawwal.

The event is known in some places as the 'Lesser Eid', relative to Eid-al-Adha, the religious commemoration that comes around two months after Ramadan in the Islamic calendar, and which is considered by the pious to be of greater religious significance.

Nevertheless, Eid-al-Fitr is celebrated enthusiastically and with great joy around the world with congregational prayers in mosques and maidans, with family, friends and relatives gathering to greet each other and to share in the joy of the occasion. A major highlight of Eid-al-Fitr celebration is the preparing and sharing of delicious meals and delicacies at sumptuous Eid feasts.

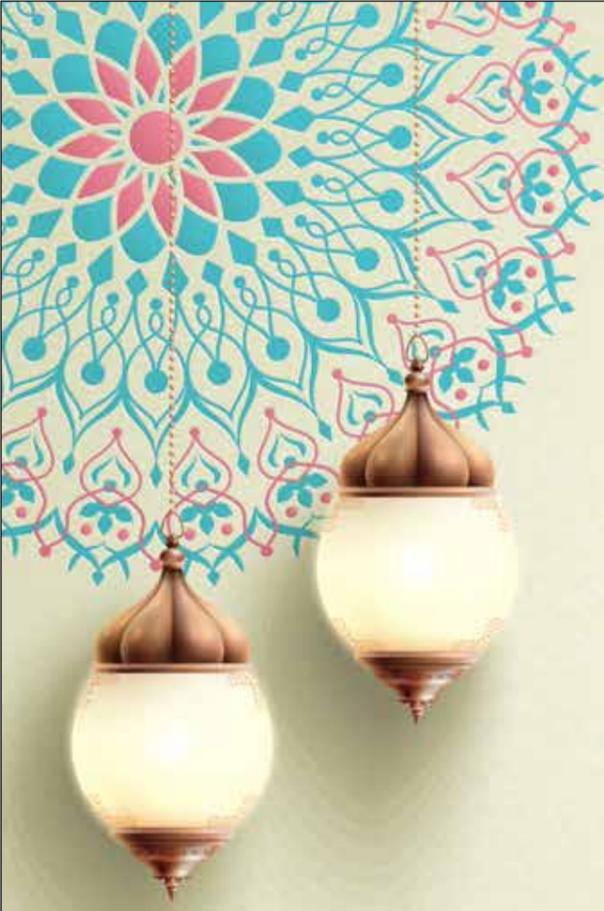
It is no wonder that in some places Eid-al-Fitr is called the 'Festival of Breaking the Fast' in reference to ending the month-long dawn to dusk fasting period that characterizes the holy month of Ramadan. However, some people tend to take the



Eid-al-Fitr definition of breaking the fast literally and overindulge in the delicious offerings made at Eid spreads.

This overeating could lead to undesirable health outcomes, including short-term bloating of the stomach and indigestion. If this excessive eating pattern is continued for longer periods it could lead to unwanted long-term weight gains and other health consequences.

While it may appear natural to overindulge after a month-long fasting period, and though there is nothing wrong in taking small bites of the delicious offerings, overindulgence and excessive consumption of food during Eid feasts can give your body a grave shock. Health experts warn that people should keep in mind that their body has been subject to





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food and water abstinence for a month-long period, and that it needs time to be eased into new eating patterns. Fasting occasionally during the month of Shawwal helps in this process.

The month of Shawwal, which follows Ramadan, is singled out for the observance of extra fasts, since this month follows immediately after the month-long fasting period during Ramadan. The pious believe that the six days of voluntary fasting are to the obligatory fast of Ramadan what the Sunnah prayers are to the obligatory prayers. In this regard it is significant that the Prophet (Peace be upon Him) said: "The fast of Ramadan is like observing 10 months of fasting. Fasting six days of Shawwal is like observing two months of

fasting. This together is like fasting throughout the year."

Unfortunately, the pitfalls of social gatherings and accompanying feasts during Eid celebrations are an integral part of the auspicious occasion and cannot be easily avoided. While these gatherings are unavoidable, you can surely implement the following tips to make sure that this Eid is a happy and healthy one.

Exercise around the block: Going for a walk or working out makes you feel refreshed, relaxed and happy. A good walk and exercise routine releases feel good hormones which positively affect your mood and help in managing your appetite. Additionally, these walks help

keep diseases at bay and make you feel more energetic.

Let veggies come first: The best way to control and reduce your appetite is to eat your veggies first. Veggies are packed with essential nutrients and fiber which would make you feel full so that you can excuse yourself by eating less high calorie and fattening delights. Start your meal with a bowl of salad or stir fry veggies.

Exercise portion control: Controlling your portions is of utmost importance when you are at a social gathering and if you wish to keep your weight in check. Piling up food on a plate just because it is a 'Breaking the Fast' occasion is no excuse to let your diet goals go. When you go on adding food to your plate, somewhere you are pressurized to eat it all so as not to waste food. Politely refuse a second helping of food, even if it is a relative who urges you towards the table. The best way you can eat less, is to strike a good chat with your close ones so that you concentrate more towards the conversation and less on the delicacies.

Avoid aerated beverages: While it may seem a great idea to have an aerated drink with your meal on the pretext of digesting the heavy food, the reality is far from what you think. Aerated beverages are loaded with sugar and do not do any good to your body. Rather than gulping down a glass of cold-drink, have a glass of buttermilk with mint leaves in it for better digestion. Buttermilk will not only improve the digestion process but will also help you in eating less.

Beat the sweet cravings: While no one wants to miss the opportunity to savor the sweet dishes and rich offerings that are mandatory

in Eid feasts, you can always minimize the consumption. Have a fruit /2 Dates /2 Pieces figs before you go ahead with the sweet dish and the natural sugar content in the fruits would satisfy your sweet tooth to an extent and a few bites of your favorite dessert would be enough for you. Remember, when temptation knocks on your door, find smart ways to tackle it and your body is going to thank you for your decision later.



Remove yourself from the table: The whole idea is to satisfy your hunger and not to go overboard after looking at the large spread of delicacies. Remember when you are full, it is a cue towards closure. When the stomach no longer ready to accommodate food, it sends signals to your brain so that you no longer stuff yourself. Pay heed to what your body is trying to tell you and gently assert that you have indeed enjoyed the meal and have eaten your share of Eid delights. Once you are done, leave the table, do not linger around.



Until
the world
is
safe again for
a friendly hug.

MAY THIS EID BRING OUR
HEARTS CLOSER.

Eid Mubarak

Celebrating Eid-al-Fitr during the pandemic

The festival of Eid-Al-Fitr is here with celebrations beginning on the day after the first sighting of the new moon that heralds the end of the holy month of Ramadan and the beginning of the month of Shawwal. But much as in the last year, this year too the celebrations will be different as the festival is once again shadowed by the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, and restrictions such as social distancing that have been introduced by the health authorities to protect the lives of people everywhere.



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The entire world is currently facing a challenging period and in keeping with local guidelines, the Muslim community has been urged to offer Eid prayers from home and avoid large gatherings during this Eid-Al-Fitr.

Nevertheless, the spirit of the Eid-Al-Fitr festival can be shared happily by family members at home. Here are a few ways that you and your family can continue to enjoy and celebrate Eid-Al-Fitr during these difficult times.

Decorate your house: Give your house a festive look and decorate it with Eid themed decorations. Put on some music to suit the occasion.

Dress-up for the occasion: Despite the celebration indoors, dress up for Eid. Organize your attire along with the accessories to look your best and enjoy the day. Be it old or new, choose the best from the wardrobe.

Pray at home: Follow the guidelines issued by governments and most leading Islamic organisations across the world that have urged people to pray at home and not congregate at mosques during this year's Eid celebrations. Your family and your own safety is very important, and given the present circumstances, it is also an act of kindness to put the safety of others before your own.

Organise your own jamaat with your family, and pray together. This will surely lift everyone's spirits.

Greet your family, friends and relatives through social media and on virtual platforms and connect with them by holding face-to-face virtual video conferences.



Virtual Iftar feast: Food being a main element in celebrations marking Eid-Al-Fitr, prepare some delicious traditional delicacies and share a display of it among friends and relatives through video calls.

Eat, but practice moderation: The aroma from your kitchen will tempt you to taste and enjoy all delicacies available throughout the day. But maintain your restraint and enjoy small quantities to avoid hurting your body and stomach.

Observe social distancing: In case you step out of your houses, wear a mask and gloves. Maintain the stipulated distance from people in the market and public places. Use sanitizer. Once back home, remember to wash your hands and face thoroughly.





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Five vegetables that keep health at optimal level

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy

Sweet potatoes: Sweet potatoes are a rich source of B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, dietary fiber, carbohydrates and carotene. The US-based Center for Science in the Public



Interest (CSPI), stated that sweet potatoes win over all other vegetables in terms of their protein, vitamin, carbohydrate content and fiber. The sweet spud has also been shown to lower the blood sugar levels of individuals suffering from type I and type II diabetes. Besides that, one sweet potato has eight times the daily RDA of vitamin A, which supports healthy vision and the immune system.



Green beans: Research published in the Journal of Nutrition has shown that regular intake of green beans and other high fiber vegetables helps in weight loss without the need for unhealthy crash diets. Those tender green beans are a good source of vitamin C, dietary fiber, folate, vitamin K and silicon, needed for healthy bones, skin, and hair. One cup of raw green beans has just 31 calories, 3g of fiber, 2g of protein and zero cholesterol.



Spinach: A number of studies have shown that green leafy vegetables including spinach drastically reduce the chances of getting type 2 diabetes. Spinach increases your immune strength, enhances vision and fights against anemia. It is also a great source of antioxidants. It is best taken either raw or lightly boiled; steaming it with a pinch of salt works quite well as well. It has all the nutrients needed for good health – Vitamin B complex, A, C, E and K and minerals like copper, manganese, calcium, iron, potassium, selenium and zinc.

Broccoli: Broccoli is a very important source of antioxidants which fight against all sorts of cancers. Research has proven that people who regularly consume broccoli can lower their chances of getting bladder cancer as compared to people who do not. A medium stalk is enough to provide your daily requirement of Vitamins K and C which are important for the maintenance of strong bones. Those vitamins are well preserved even when the broccoli is cooked.



Garlic: Cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks and strokes are the world's biggest killers. High blood pressure is one of the most important triggers of these diseases. High doses of garlic appear to improve blood pressure for those with high blood pressure, and supplements may be as effective as regular medications. Garlic also contains antioxidants that protect against cell damage and aging. It reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia, so it makes sense that it could also help you live longer.



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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

Thought for the week

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.”

- Helen Keller

RECIPE

SHEERMAL

(Semi-sweet Bread)



Try out this delicious Ramadan recipe to add variety to your Iftar platter. Sheermal, a common Persian flatbread, comes from the word 'Sheer' which in Farsi language means milk, and 'mal' which stands for applying or kneading. So Sheermal refers to a flatbread that is prepared using milk infused with aromatic saffron and a touch of cardamom from the land of Kashmir. The recipe goes well with tea or coffee.

Preparation/ cooking time: One hour and half
Serving: For 4 to 5 persons

Ingredients:

- 2 cup All purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3 tbsp sugar powder
- 1 tsp Instant yeast
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp cardamom powder
- 1/2 cup lukewarm milk infused with 1/2 tsp saffron threads
- 2 tbsp Rose water
- 3 tbsp ghee plus extra melted ghee for brushing
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds, shredded dry coconut, roughly chopped or sliced almond, pistachios or cashew nuts.

Preparation:

- In a large bowl add all dry ingredients the flour, salt, sugar, instant yeast, ghee, cardamom and mix.
- To this add the saffron milk.
- Knead well to form a soft dough.
- Cover and set aside for 1-1/2 hours to rise.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C. Line the baking tray with parchment paper.
- Punch down and divide the dough into equal sized portions.
- Roll out each portion into a circle of about 1/2 inch thickness.
- Prick the rolled dough with a fork so that it will not puff up in the oven.
- When you are ready to bake, brush them with Rose water.
- Sprinkle sesame seeds and sliced almond, pistachios or cashew shreds
- Place the baking tray on the middle rack of the oven.
- Bake at 180°C for 10 to 12 minutes or until it becomes golden yellow color.
- Once the bread is baked and out of the oven, but still warm, brush with melted ghee and serve.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Indian Chef Chhaya Thakker, who has a huge following online on WhatsApp and YouTube will be sharing her favorite recipes and cooking tips with readers of The Times Kuwait. For feedback, you can write to editortimeskuwait@gmail.com

Eid-al-Fitr is a time to indulge and celebrate; the festival is characterized by family get-togethers and the sharing of meals with relatives and friends. This year, while the ongoing pandemic has limited gatherings at home to only family members, there is no reason why you should skimp on the variety or richness of dishes on the festival table. Here are a few delicious dish recipes that you could try out to raise the level of your festival spread this year.

Haleem



This meaty lentil soup-like dish is next-to-none when it comes to comfort food for non-vegetarians. The rich mutton stew is cooked with broken wheat and made with a delicious mix of Indian spices. The dish is slow-cooked and usually served during the Eid feast.

Ingredients

- 1/2 kg lamb (boneless)
- 150 g moong dal (washed)
- 50 g chana dal
- 100 g wheat (broken)
- 500 ml desi ghee
- 10 cloves
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 g saffron
- 30 g green chilli paste

- 10 gms turmeric powder
- 6 gms mace
- 10 gms green cardamom
- 50 g garlic paste
- 50 g ginger, grated
- 150 g onion, fried
- 3-4 litre lamb stock
- Salt to taste

Directions

- Wash and soak all the lentils and broken wheat together for 2 hours.
- Take a heavy bottomed saucepan and add ghee to temper it with whole spices - cloves, bay leaf and green cardamom. When the spices start crackling, add the grated ginger and garlic paste till the color turns brown.
- Add the lamb along with all the powdered spices saffron, green chilli paste, turmeric powder and cook until it is half done and then add fried onions.
- Drain the water from the lentils and add it to the lamb along with lamb stock. Add salt at this stage.
- Let it cook until the lamb gets tender and mixes with the lentils and becomes thick in consistency. Check for the seasoning and serve with a choice of breads

The dish is rich, extra creamy, seeped with flavors and

Creamy Chicken Korma

spices. It is best enjoyed with buttered naan or tandoori roti.

Ingredients

- 8 almonds
- 8 cashew nuts
- 1 tsp chironji
- 1 tsp Khus Khus
- 2 tsp desiccated coconut
- 4 tbsp oil
- 2 onions
- 1 cup curd
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 10 cardamom
- 7 cloves
- 2 tsp garlic
- 2 tsp ginger



- 7 pieces chicken
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp red chilli powder
- 2 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp saffron
- 1/2 cup water

Directions

- Grind almonds, cashewnut, chironji and khus khus along with the desiccated coconut in an electric mixer. Take oil in a pan, add onion and sauté it until golden brown.
- Add the onions to the nut paste in the grinder and grind all the ingredients. Add curd to the paste and mix together. Take a pan and pour ghee in it. Add cardamom, cloves, garlic and ginger.
- Saute them well and add chicken pieces. Add salt, red chili powder and coriander powder to the pan. Now add the curd paste to the pan, mix it well. Add water to the pan to make a balanced consistency.
- Now put garam masala and saffron, mix thoroughly. Add more water if needed and cover the pan for a while. Let it cook for 3-4 minutes. Serve hot with garnishing of your choice.



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Special Dishes

for celebrating Eid-al-Fitr

Tangri Kebabs



A spectacular starter, tangri kebabs are very easy-to-make and are an instant favorite with everyone. The appetizer has tandoor-cooked chicken drumsticks served with onion rings, and lemon wedges.

Ingredients

- 500 g Chicken drumsticks
- 1 cup hung yogurt

- 1 tsp ginger paste
- 1 tsp garlic paste
- Salt to taste
- 1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp green chillies, chopped
- 1 tsp coriander leaves, chopped
- Lemon wedges and onion rings to serve on the side

Directions

- Prick the drumsticks with a fork or make slashes with a knife. Mix together with all the ingredients, except onion rings and lemon wedges. Leave marinated for 4-5 hours, or even overnight.
- Place an upturned saucer in a dish and arrange the drumsticks over it in a circle, with the thicker sides outwards. Cover and cook at high for 5 minutes, turning once. Cover and cook on high for another 3 minutes. Uncover and cook at high for 2 more minutes.
- Let it stand for 5 minutes before serving with onion rings and lemon wedges on the side.

Shahi Biryani

Is any feast even complete without the show-stopping biryani? The shahi biryani is a traditional recipe of a dum-style biryani. It has alternating layers of cooked, creamy mutton and saffron rice.

Ingredients

- 1/2 kg mutton (cut into small pieces)
- 1 cup onions, sliced
- Ghee (for frying the onions)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 cup clotted cream
- 2 tbsp coriander leaves (to garnish), chopped

For the marinate:

- 1 cup onions, grated
- 1 tsp garlic paste
- 1 tsp ginger paste
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp black cumin seeds and salt to taste
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 tsp garam masala

For the rice:

- 2 cups basmati rice (cleaned and soaked in water)
- 2 green cardamoms
- 2 cloves
- 1/2 tsp black cumin seeds and a piece of cinnamon-(broken into smaller pieces)
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 tsp saffron (soaked in 1/4 cup of warm milk)
- 2 tbsp ghee

Directions

- Mix together all the spices and marinate the meat in it for 4 hours: Heat enough ghee in a broad heavy-based pan. Fry the onions till brown and crisp. Strain onions from the ghee and transfer on to an absorbent paper and set aside.
- In 1/2 cup of the ghee that is left in the pan, add the cumin seeds and bay leaf, stir a few times till they change color a little and, while keeping the heat high, add in the meat mixture.
- Stir-fry meat over high heat till the pieces look opaque. Lower the heat, partially cover and simmer, stirring a few times till the meat is tender. Saute till the water dries up and fat



- separates. Add more water and cook further, in case meat has not cooked through.
 - If meat cooks through before the water dries up, uncover the pan, and let water evaporate over high heat. Remove pan from stove and add the fried onions, cream and coriander leaves and mix well. While the meat is cooking, drain the rice and set aside.
 - Heat 2 tablespoons of ghee and add the black cumin seeds, cardamom, cloves and cinnamon. Stir a few times and add the rice and the salt. Now add 2 1/2 cups of water, and bring to boil.
 - Lower heat, cover and let the rice cook for 8 minutes. Shut off heat, leaving the pan on the stove. The rice should be almost done.
 - Half an hour before serving, divide the rice and meat into halves each. Take half the meat out of the pan, leaving one layer at the bottom. Spread this layer well in the pan.
 - Now cover this with a layer of half the rice, sprinkle half the saffron flavored milk over it, and then add the second layer of meat and finally the other half of the rice. Sprinkle the rest of the milk and saffron mixture over rice.
 - Seal pan with wheat flour and place on a griddle over low flame for half an hour. Alternatively, arrange in an ovenproof dish and place in a preheated oven for about half an hour.
- Serve in the same dish or mix gently and transfer on to a serving dish.

Sheer Khurma



Sheer Khurma is an authentic version of vermicelli pudding specially prepared for Eid festivities. 'Sheer' is Persian for milk and 'khurma' is another word for dates. This Eid recipe is a traditional delicacy which is made differently in different households.

Ingredients

- 500 ml milk, full cream
- 50 g vermicelli (broken into small pieces), roasted
- 1/4 cup sugar

- 2 tbsp dates, chopped
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup almonds (cut into pieces), blanched
- 1/4 cup pistachios
- 1/4 cup ghee
- 1/2 tsp saffron
- 1/2 tsp cardamom powder

Directions

- Add ghee to a pan and saute the almonds, raisins and pistachios.
- In another pan, heat ghee and add the vermicelli. Roast well.
- In another wide pan simmer the milk till it thickens, add sugar and simmer again.
- Add the roasted vermicelli and dry fruits along with dates and saffron to the milk and simmer. Add cardamom powder and simmer for a while more.
- Serve chilled, garnished with dates.



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Gift everlasting bling from Kalyan Jewellers as Eidiya this year!

The holy month of Ramadan comes to end on auspicious Eid-al-Fitr. Mark this year's festivities with a timeless Eidiya from Kalyan Jewellers' exquisite jewellery collection.

With a curated collection of traditional and contemporary pieces to choose from, Kalyan Jewellers offers an array of new and fashionable options in its exquisite festive collection.

From show-stopper statement jewellery accessories, including shoulder dusters studded with colourful precious stones, diamond rings and studded bracelets to beautiful, dazzling neckpieces, including lightweight pendants and alluring pieces inspired by stunning Kuwaiti designs, the jewellery brand has it all!

Gearing up for the auspicious festival, Kalyan Jewellers has announced KWD 1 million worth free gift vouchers*, to add to the delights of their patrons festive jewellery purchases. The brand will be giving away vouchers worth KWD 20 on every purchase of diamond jewellery above KWD 500.

Those buying uncut or precious stone jewellery worth KWD 500 or above can claim their free gift vouchers of KWD 15. Additionally, on all gold purchases of above KWD 500, patrons will receive a free gift voucher worth KWD 10. The offer is valid until 22nd June, 2021 across all Kalyan Jewellers showrooms in Kuwait. Customers will be able to redeem these



vouchers against purchases made in the next one year.

With the growing impetus on social distancing, Kalyan Jewellers has launched the LIVE video shopping facility (<https://www.kalyanjewellers.net/livevideoshopping/>) through which consumers can browse through the Kalyan Jewellers' jewellery collections.

Whether you're looking to treat yourself or are stuck on what to buy for your partner, we have you covered at Kalyan Jewellers with our classic and authentic jewellery designs. Here are a few top jewellery picks we recommend as the perfect gift to accessorize your loved ones for the special occasion!



Flaunt with aplomb by adorning this beautiful ring studded with emerald at the centre and surrounded by tiny diamonds embedded in a leaf pattern.

The semi-ethnic jewellery design means it will compliment any look donned on the evening of Eid. Truly a classic, all-season jewellery piece to own!

Choose these exquisitely handcrafted, gorgeous dangles, studded with the most dazzling of diamonds and accentuated with a touch of crimson, to add glam and glory to your festive avatar!




The extravagant rose gold, diamond-studded necklace is truly inspired from floral designs and can be paired with pastel shades such as pink, white and gold while adding a spark to your look.

Surprise your better half and make her feel extra special this Eid with an alluring neckpiece that signifies stunning craftsmanship. This dazzling two-tone diamond neckpiece showcases a shade of Kuwaiti designed jewellery and is a modern take of authentic Islamic design surrounded by interlinked patterns in rose gold.




Trends come and go, but some designs never go out of style, just like this timeless handcrafted two-toned ring. The multiple layers with delicate filigree work gives this piece a regal look!

The fancy ring with a layering of white gold remains a must-have piece because of its simply stunning design.

IWG: Ramadan around the world

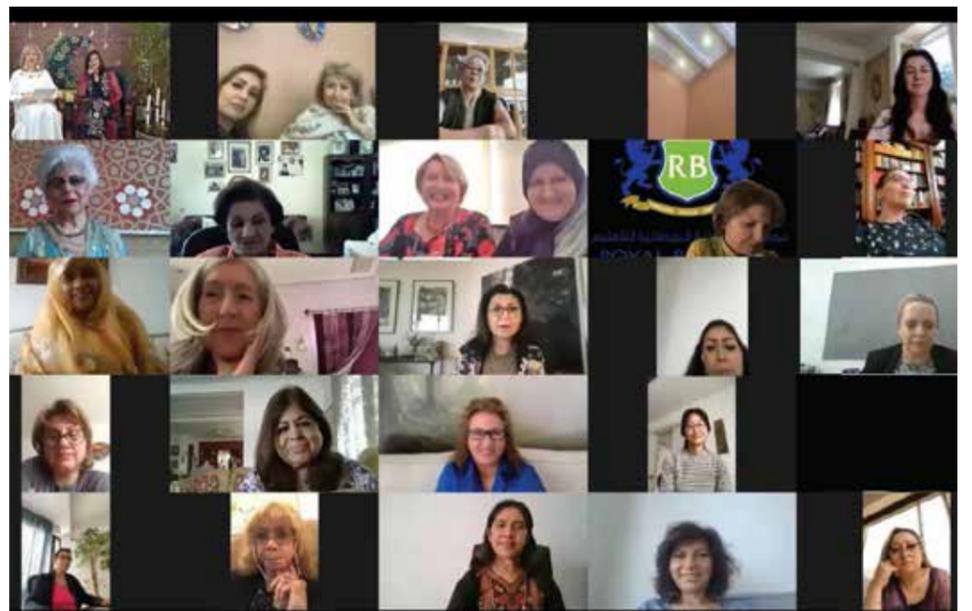
International Women's Group (IWG), under the patronage of Sheikha Hanouf Bader Al Muhamad Al Sabah, spouse of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, and Honorary President of IWG, celebrated the holy month of Ramadan in a virtual meeting that showcased the customs and traditions of Bangladesh, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine and Turkey, with presentations organized by the respective embassies.

President of IWG, Ambreen Mustafa, spouse of the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, delivered the welcome speech and Vice-president of IWG Rima Khalidi, spouse of the Ambassador of the State of Palestine introduced the honored presenters.

In a videotaped speech on the occasion,

Sheikha Hanouf said: "Ramadan teaches us valuable lessons about the importance of trying our utmost to do good and of seeking to help the less fortunate. We in this group take pride in all our women, who have taken the initiative to serve the community and to improve Kuwait and humanity." She also extended her best wishes for universal health, prosperity and peace and stressed the importance of adherence to state guidelines in the fight against the pandemic during the holy month of Ramadan and moving forward.

IWG's 'Ramadan Around the World' presentations included colorful and festive videos of the participating countries' foods and customs, all beautifully presented and narrated by the IWG Honorary member of each country, and Ramadan greetings from several



ambassadors, including from Bangladesh, Palestine, and Turkey, as well as from the spouses of the ambassadors of Jordan, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan and Palestine.

The Ramadan traditions of Kuwait were expertly presented by Sarah Al Bakar of KTV 2 who took members through a wonderful

and detailed cultural journey covering special Ramadan foods, clothing and customs such as Abu Tubaila, Zaad and Gergean. The event concluded with special thanks to the distinguished presenters, volunteers, online participants and the IWG board members for making the event a great success.

Ambassador applauds Indian community for their support

India expresses gratitude to Kuwait for supplying medical assistance



Medical supply shipments continued to flow from Kuwait to India, with the third batch of consignment departing on 6 May on board two Indian naval vessels. The Indian Naval Ship, INS Tabar was loaded with 40 MT Liquid Medical Oxygen, and 600 Oxygen Cylinders; while the INS Kochi carried 60 MT Liquid Medical Oxygen, 800 Oxygen Cylinders, and 2 Oxygen concentrators.



The medical supplies are part of the emergency medical aid sent by the Kuwait government, and also included equipment and supplies contributed by efforts of the Indian community in Kuwait, to assist India fight against the COVID-19 crisis.

Earlier on Wednesday, 5 May, a second Indian ship, this time a commercial vessel, the MV Capt Kattelman departed Al-Shuaiba Port laden with emergency medical supplies bound for India. The

consignment included oxygen cylinders, oxygen generators, ventilators and other medications urgently needed by India as it battles a second wave of a more infectious strain of the coronavirus that has recently been ravaging the country with record daily infections and fatalities being reported.

Welcoming the continued humanitarian assistance from Kuwait, the official spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Arindum Liagchi expressed sincere gratitude to the State of Kuwait for the gesture and said it would further deepen fraternal ties of friendship and strengthen cooperation between the two friendly countries in the collective fight against the global pandemic.

The cargo that left on Wednesday, followed the first consignment of medical aid to leave Kuwait port, which departed for India on Tuesday from Al-Shuwaikh Port, on board the Indian Naval Ship INS Kolkata. The shipment included two ISO cryogenic tanks of 40 MT Liquid Medical Oxygen (20MT each), oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators and other essential medical relief material.

The State of Kuwait and its people assures their full support with the Republic of India and its people in this crucial time, said Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Abdullah Issa Al-Salman, who was present at Al-Shuwaikh Port on 4 May, to see-off the first shipment of medical aid via ocean-bridge from Kuwait to India as part of joint efforts to fight the COVID-19 global crisis.

In addition to the consignments sent by ship, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS)

had on Monday dispatched a planeload of emergency aid to New Delhi, as part of the country's humanitarian assistance to ameliorate the strain on Indian hospitals facing acute shortage of essential life-saving equipment and supplies. The 40 tons of medical cargo onboard a special military cargo flight included 282 oxygen cylinders, 60 oxygen concentrators, ventilators, and other urgent medical supplies.

It is noteworthy that Kuwait, through its airlift and ocean-bridge of aid, is among the countries that are supplying the largest amount of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to meet the urgent medical needs of India, and further consolidating the fraternal ties that have linked the two countries for centuries.

In a specially convened virtual meeting, Indian Ambassador H.E. Sibi George updated the Indian Community on the COVID-19 situation in India and assistances from abroad.

Pointing out that India and Kuwait had always stood with each other in times of difficulties, and Kuwait was one of the first countries to come forward and offer support to India, he added that Foreign Minister H.E. Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, in a phone call with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar reiterated the keenness of the Government of Kuwait to provide emergency relief and support to India.

Lauding the efforts of the Indian community in Kuwait, spearheaded by Indian Community Support Group (ICSG), for mobilizing support for India, Ambassador

George noted that the first consignment of support collected from the community had already been dispatched to India. He pointed out that the ICSG had, within three hours of being notified of the crises in India, collected 600 oxygen cylinders, and within the next few days they came forward and promised 600 more cylinders. He specially applauded Indian associations, including ICSG, Indian Doctors Forum, Indian Business and Professional Council, Indian Institute of Technology & Management, and several other associations and individuals who were spearheading a campaign to mobilise oxygen cylinders and other equipment.

Ambassador George informed the community that the Embassy is coordinating all the assistance gathered to be dispatched, and has set up a crisis management group of officers in the Mission to monitor the situation in real time. "We are available 24x7 for any clarification and assistance. The Embassy is also getting requests from various State Governments and Union Territories and each request is being responded by the Embassy team. Any queries on this also was welcome," he noted.

Ambassador reiterated that it was important to ensure that all contributions made to these efforts should be done after due verification and that they adhere to the Standard Operating Procedure, which stipulates that all supplies of COVID-19 related equipment offered to be sent to India, has to be routed through Indian Red Cross Society, which would receive it on behalf of Government of India.



Over a third of employees in Kuwait link loyalty to salary

Over a third of employees (36%) taking part in a salary survey in Kuwait said their loyalty to their company was, fully or in large measure, linked to the salary they received. On the other hand, 34 percent of respondents in the same survey said that loyalty to their company was not linked to the salary they received.

The Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2021, conducted recently by Bayt.com, the Middle East's #1 job site, in partnership with YouGov, a leading market research agency, revealed a variety of other insights on employees' perceptions of salaries and benefits.

Apart from salary, the nature of daily responsibilities (31%), opportunities for career advancement (26%) and colleagues (24%) were found to be important drivers of loyalty. In addition, when asked about their career plans in the next twelve months, 54 percent of respondents in Kuwait said

they will look for a better job in the same industry, and 21 percent said they plan to look for a better job in a different industry.

The survey in Kuwait also revealed that only 27 percent of respondents claimed that their current salary package consists of basic salary and benefits, while 54 percent said that it consists of only basic salary. A further 19 percent said it consists of basic salary, benefits, and commission. Additionally, 41 percent of respondents said that their company pays for overtime.

When it came to the preferred pay structure, over half of the respondents (54%) prefer a 100 percent fixed pay structure, while 36 percent of respondents said they preferred a partially fixed pay structure with a variable pay for commissions and incentives.

Among the various benefits employees in Kuwait receive, personal medical insurance (27%), bonus (23%) and annual air ticket (21%) were found to be the top

benefits. As for end of service benefits, 63 percent of respondents said their company presently offers end of service gratuity.

In terms of quality of life, three-quarters (75%) of respondents in Kuwait believe they are better off or about the same as other people of a similar generation in their country of residence. Additionally, more than 6 in 10 respondents (62%) manage to save a portion of their personal income and 44 percent of respondents repatriate up to 50 percent of their savings back to their home country.

Among those surveyed, 30 percent of Kuwait respondents have been working in their current industry for up to six years. When it came to specific employers, 61 percent of respondents have been working with their current employer for six years or less, with 25 percent having worked for their employer for less than three years.

Ola Haddad, Director of Human Resources at Bayt.com says: "The Bayt.com Salary Survey 2021 explores current income structure and levels, salary satisfaction, perception towards cost of living and expense allocation, providing an insight to the job market and the economy. Employers need to treat compensation as an integral part of an employee's reward and monitor major factors driving the salary expectations."

Zafar Shah, Research Director at YouGov



said: "The Salary Survey illustrates the job market from employees' perspective, helping candidates gauge their worth in the current job market, and promoting employers' understanding in a way that best serves the business and employees. Smart employers will invest in opportunities for career advancement as well as training and development which are the most important drivers of loyalty besides salary."

Data for the Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2021 was collected online from 3 to 15 March 2021. Results are based on a sample of 2,524 respondents from the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates.

CSC declares 5-day holidays for Eid-al-Fitr

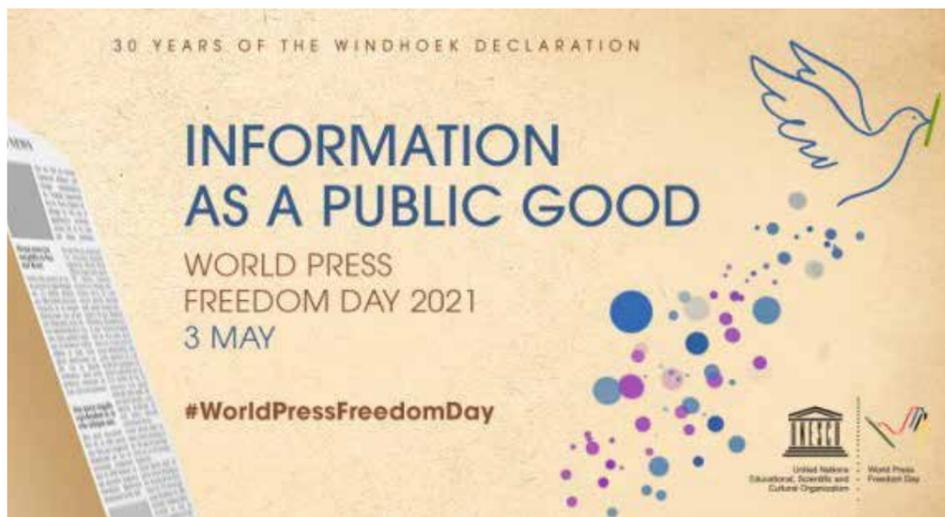
In an announcement last week, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) said that Eid-al-Fitr public holiday will start on Wednesday, 12 May, and will end on Sunday 16 May, irrespective of whether or not Wednesday marked the first day of Eid.

The CSC decision on the five-day Eid-Al-



Fitr holidays applies to all ministries, and other government entities, as well as to all public institutions. Consequently, the next regular working day following the Eid break will be on Monday, 17 May.

Over 400 new online newspapers granted license to operate



In a joint press statement by the Ministry of Information and the United Nations representative office in Kuwait on World Press Freedom Day, Munira Al-Huwaidi the deputy minister at the Information Ministry said the ministry had recently granted broadcast licenses to more than 400 online newspapers.

The new e-publications will operate alongside dozens of already-existing counterparts, physical newspapers and magazines, said the deputy minister, while emphasizing that Kuwait is committed to ensuring press freedom and preserving the rights of journalists in the country.

Noting that several privately-run TV and radio stations also exist in the country, Al-

Huwaidi added that these were considered an "essential tributary" to Kuwaiti media. She also revealed that last week, the ministry signed an agreement with the Kuwait Journalists Association to aid the development of Kuwaiti journalists. The role of the press in the country is "enriching," she said, indicating its significance in providing nationals and expatriates with accurate information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

For her part, UN Resident Coordinator ad interim, Hideko Hadzialic, praised the ministry's efforts to combat fake news, rumors and misinformation related to COVID-19 and its promotion of ethical and informed journalism.

CONDOLENCES

The Owners,
Management and Staff of



**AI-RASHED INTERNATIONAL
SHIPPING Co. K.S.C.C.**

and
EQ BOX Solutions

**extend their heartfelt condolences
on the demise of**

**ANDREZA CIPRIANA
CARVALHO D'SOUZA**

Mother of

Gabriel Falcao D'souza

(System Analyst, Resident representative EQ Box Solutions)

at her home in Goa, India.

**We pray that all of us find the strength to push
through the grief. Our prayers and heartfelt
condolences go out with the grieving family.**

May her soul Rest in Peace

More people set to depart than arrive during Eid holidays



COVID-19 may have put a dampener on celebrations for more than a year now, but this year people are apparently preparing to go abroad and

enjoy the upcoming Eid holidays.

According to available data a total of 21,000 people, comprising citizens, their first-degree relatives and the domestic workers accompanying them, are expected to travel during the five-day Eid Al-Fitr holidays.

The numbers also indicate that the number of departing passengers would exceed those arriving by over three times, with more than 16,000 planning to spend Eid abroad, while only around 5,000 are headed back home to celebrate Eid.

A total of 404 incoming and outgoing flights are scheduled to ferry these passengers with the 203 outgoing flights

and 201 incoming flights planned to arrive and depart in the days before the Eid holidays.

Kuwait International Airport has set strict limits on passenger numbers allowed to transit the airport each day and accordingly only 1,000 passengers are permitted to arrive each day. Other restrictions on health requirements for those arriving and departing Kuwait will also remain in force, including the ban on foreigners arriving to the country.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that the relevant committees in the Council of Ministers are still studying the opening of some direct flights from countries such

as London and Cairo so as to make it more convenient for citizens to reach the country without the hassle of having to transit other airports.

In a related news, the Cabinet during its regular weekly meeting last week announced a travel ban as of 22 May on Kuwaitis, and their first-degree relatives and domestic helpers, if they do not receive anti-coronavirus vaccine set by the Ministry of Health. Expatriates are already banned from entry into the country. The announcement clarified that young people who are currently excluded from the vaccination drive will be exempt from the ban.

Al Muzaini Exchange announces second week winners in ongoing promotion

Al-Muzaini Exchange has announced the daily winners and the weekly winner for the second week of its ongoing promotion, 'Send Money Online & Win Every Day', which runs from 13 April to 15 May.

Customers who send money through Al Muzaini online platforms are eligible to participate in this special promotion. A total of 105 lucky customers will be chosen, and US\$15,000 in cash prizes is up for grabs, including through daily and weekly prizes apart from a Mega Draw. The promotion is open to all customers, irrespective of any minimum limit on the transfer amount through Al Muzaini Online platforms.

Al Muzaini Digital Payment platform available in App Store, Google Play and App Gallery, provides a secure and simplified one-stop financial solution with more unique features such as New Customer Registration, Adding New Beneficiary, Setting rate alerts, Rate trends, Transaction history, Western Union Transfer and more in just few clicks, from anywhere, anytime.

Daily winners from 19 April to 25 April and the second weekly winner are:

SEND MONEY ONLINE & WIN EVERY DAY DURING RAMADAN

Promotion Period 13th April to 15th May 2021

Total 105 Winners / 15,000 USD

2nd Weekly Winner
AMAL SAAD MOHAMED

Daily Winner from 19th to 25th

AHMAD MOHAMMAD AMASHAH	THARWAT ABBAS ALMORSI
MOHAMMAD ABDUR RAHMAN	EDREES SAEED EDREES TAHA
MASTER IRFAN YOSUF BHAT	YASSER SAMIR ELTAIB AHAMED
MEDHAT FAWZI ABDULWAHAB	WALID MOHAMED ALI ABDO
LAXMAN RAJANI DHEERAJ	AHMED HUSAIN SALAMA
JATHNAN FAHAD ALAMI	KIRAN KISAN PATIL
SHAHAD OSAMAH HARB	GAMAL MOHAMMAD HASAN
JOY SAN AGUSTIN MORALES	BASEM SAMEER JALAL AHMAD
ABDULAZIZ AMER ALAJMI	MOHAMED ABO BAKER
ALAAELDIN GABER FAHMY ALI	ALI SULIMAN AL TOURAH
MASSOUR DEKHEEL ALOTAIBI	

MoH extends interval between vaccine doses

Ministry of Health (MoH) has decided to extend the interval between the two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to six weeks, in place of the earlier specified three weeks. However, this applies only to those to be newly vaccinated, while for people above the age of 60 years and those suffering from chronic diseases, the interval between the two doses would continue to remain three weeks. A statement from MoH noted that the extended interval will apply to everyone who receives the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on or after Monday, 3 May.

On the other hand, the second dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine would be administered between a period of three to four months after the first dose. This is due to the delay of the manufacturers in exporting the vaccine.

The Ministry confirmed that the extension of the period between



the two doses for both the vaccines falls within the period authorized by the manufacturers to ensure the effectiveness of the vaccination, and that it was within the approved protocols for the COVID-19 vaccine in force in several countries around the world such as United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Spain.

Meanwhile, the MoH is reported to have begun sending text messages to those who received the first dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine weeks ago, to complete the second dose of the vaccine against the virus. The second dose will be given at the Kuwait Vaccination Center in the exhibition grounds in Mishref, as well as through health centers designated for vaccination that are located in all regions of Kuwait.

Vaccination certificate not a corona passport

Director of the Information Systems Department and the Center for Technological Advancement at the Ministry of Health (MoH), Eng. Ahmed Al-Gharib, last week clarified various aspects of the new digital vaccination certificate being issued by the Immune App launched by the MoH, and specified the conditions to be met before the app issues the certificates.

The three stages at which a vaccinated person could download a digital certificate are: If the person received both doses of the vaccine; if the person received the first dose and five weeks have lapsed; and, if a person received one dose of the vaccine a minimum of three months before being infected.

However, a recent decision by the Cabinet stipulates that at least five weeks should have lapsed since

receiving the first dose, or a minimum of two weeks after receiving the second dose, before the person would be allowed to travel. This requirement has also been applied to allow entry to cinemas and other public entertainment venues in the country.

Al-Gharib added that to prevent all forms of fraud and tampering with the vaccination certificate, the vaccination batch number, the site where the person received the vaccination, and the passport number will be added to the certificate. The certificate is especially pertinent as some countries have begun asking travelers arriving in their country for a PCR test certificate, a vaccination certificate, or one of them.

In this regard, Minister of Health, Sheikh Dr. Basil Al-Sabah, had earlier stated that the vaccination certificate



being granted by the ministry is for local use to allow the holder to enter venues that request such certificates and to enable them to travel.

However, he emphasized that there is still no international consensus on a corona certificate that would allow travelers access and quarantine free

stay in all countries.

The health minister added that currently there have been no clarifications issued in this regard by the World Health Organization (WHO) or other international entities. He noted that if and when countries around the world coordinate and approve a vaccination passport, the concerned authorities in Kuwait would also issue Corona passports to those successfully vaccinated against the coronavirus.

In response to a parliamentary query by MP Ahmed Muti, the health minister also clarified that since the beginning of the vaccination campaign until 9 April, a total of 208,990 vaccination certificates had been issued by the Information Systems Department of the Ministry of Health, which has been tasked to issue the certificates.



PACI revamps Mobile ID app to include vaccination status



directives of the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Civil Information, Dr. Rana Al-Faris, and the Director General of the Authority, Musaed Al-Asousi, aims to make the app even more versatile in its use.

In a statement released on the launch of the new update, Al-Asousi said that the app works on all smart device systems (Android, IOS, and Huawei), adding that all COVID-19 vaccination data will appear directly once the application is updated.

The Mobile ID app was launched in accordance with the Cabinet decision to be used as a digital civil card, and the number of its users has so far exceeded 1,700,000.

Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has updated its popular Mobile ID application to include important details regarding the vaccination status of the individual. The initiative, launched under the

Filipino workers can report labor violations to POLO office



RICKY LAXA
STAFF WRITER

“Workers have the right to transfer or change companies so long as they have met the required years of stay with the company. In the event that companies refuse, we ask OFWs to report to Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) details of their complaints. We then speak to the sponsors and find a way to resolve the situations amicably. But in some cases, if sponsors refuse, we provide assistance to our OFWs to file cases in Shoon and put the company on the watch list, so that no contracts for recruitment will be processed until cases are resolved,” stated Atty. Llewelyn Perez, welfare officer of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration at the Philippine Embassy.

The statement was in response to several OFWs filing a series of complaints against an international food chain that refused to provide release even after three years of required work with the company. Among other complaints included are discrepancy in salary, unpaid overtime, overwork, salary deduction without proper and adequate explanations, unpaid

entitled airline tickets and more. “There have been several cases when the company refused to provide release, and instead opted to send them home, or force them to work continuously on the company’s terms,” complained one OFW who worked for the company.

“I never complained about the long hours of work because I know we do not have enough people, but the worst situation was when salary day came. There were deductions without proper explanations and my meager salary ended up almost nothing. Many of the staff have not been complaining but it’s just too much” complained another OFW who works for the same international food chain.

POLO and the Assistance to Nationals Unit (ATNU) of the Philippine Embassy have already taken active steps to tackle such abuses from different companies. An official from POLO is currently in communication with the international food chain company to resolve the situation and provide release to OFWs that have been refused earlier. “We’re just hoping they comply with what they signed in the contract and allow the staff to find better opportunities,” stated another OFW who also works for the same company.

Kuwait records highest COVID-19 death toll in April

The month of April 2021 has been especially disastrous for Kuwait, with the country recording the highest number of deaths from the coronavirus infection during the month.

A total of 14 deaths were recorded on 4 April and 12 April, the highest number of daily deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. On the other hand the lowest

number of deaths in April were recorded on 11, 14, and 17 of the month when four deaths were recorded daily on these three days.

Also, April witnessed the highest single month of infection with the total number of infected cases recorded during the month reaching 41,788, or 15.2 percent of the total number of COVID cases recorded in Kuwait, which amounted to a total of 273,991 cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

The highest number of daily cases recorded was also during April, with a total of 1,635 cases reported on 12 April and the lowest number of daily infections recorded in April was on 18 with a total of 1127 cases reported.



Al-Rashed Group ensures smooth flow of oxygen to India

The Government of Kuwait has initiated measures to send emergency medical supplies and equipment to India, which is facing a shortage in medical supplies due to the recent surge in COVID-19 infections. The government level assistance efforts are being coordinated by the Public Authority of Industries, which has already sent over 313MT of aid cargo to India.

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait, along with Al-Rashed International Shipping Co., the embassy’s logistics-partner in shipping emergency medical aid to India, have been working round-the-clock to ensure the smooth flow of assistance being shipped to India. Kuwait, stands alongside the rest of the world, in lending support to India in its time of need and in ensuring the flow of emergency medical supplies in a timely manner.

Kuwait with its centuries of social and trade ties and decades of diplomatic relations with India, is extending full support to India in its

fight against the pandemic. The medical aid from Kuwait so far includes liquid medical oxygen, oxygen cylinders and high-flow oxygen concentrators. The initial cargo was loaded from Shuaiba Port and headed to Nhava Sheva Port in Mumbai, India on 5 May, aboard the Indian commercial vessel MV Capt Kettleman.

Meanwhile, another cargo of medical supplies was loaded from Shuwaikh Port onboard Indian Naval vessels INS Kolkata, INS Kochi and INS Tabar, which are in the Middle East to procure equipment from oxygen manufacturers. INS Kolkata sailed out of Shuwaikh Port on 5 May while the latter two frigates were loaded and dispatched the following day.

Public Authority for Industries, along with support provided by the Kuwait Port Authority, Kuwait Customs, and various other government entities, have joined to ensure the smooth flow of the noble endeavor of Kuwait.

Government expresses confidence in ministers facing grilling

During its weekly meeting held at the Seif Palace and presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on 4 May, the Cabinet examined the two interpellation motions addressed to the ministers of foreign affairs and finance and affirmed unanimous support to the two executives as they “sincerely pursue fulfilling their tasks.”

Affairs and Investment, Khalifa Hamadah, and expressed its full confidence in the two ministers and its keenness on supporting them so that they may pursue their sincere efforts in fulfilling the tasks assigned to them..

While stressing that interpellations are a right for MPs guaranteed by the Constitution, the Cabinet added that based on Article 135 of the National Assembly Bylaw, the two motions would be included in the agenda of the forthcoming parliamentary session.

During the weekly session the Cabinet also listened to an update on the health situation by Minister of Health Dr. Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah. In a statement following the Cabinet meeting, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohamad Al-Sabah, said that during the meeting the health minister briefed his cabinet colleagues on the latest developments in the COVID-19 situation, both locally and globally.

The health minister also informed the ministers on the latest developments of the coronavirus in Kuwait and the preventive measures taken to monitor and ensure the prevention of entry and spread of the new mutant Indian strain of the virus into the country.



A statement read after the session said the ministers examined the two grilling motions that had been submitted by MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, and to the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic

Expatriate teachers stranded abroad allowed to return



Expatriate teachers stranded abroad are to be allowed to return to Kuwait, following approval of their return by the Supreme Committee for

Corona Emergencies set up by the Council of Ministers.

The Committee was responding to a request by the Minister of Education, Dr. Ali Al-Mudhaf for the return of all the teachers in the ministry who are currently stranded abroad.

The ministry will work during the next few days to take the necessary measures for the return of stranded people and coordinate with the Ministry of Interior to discuss a mechanism to renew the residency of teachers that expired while they were outside the country, as they were unable to enter due to the Corona crisis and the closure of the airport.

UAE Exchange Kuwait launches Mobile Application

UAE Exchange Kuwait launched its much-awaited Mobile application (UAE Exchange Kuwait) on 14 April. The application provides a complete money transfer solution for international person-to-person money transfers leveraging modern technologies and offers a convenient solution to send money to your near and dear ones.

Residents of Kuwait can download the application either from Android or IOS and register with their valid civil ID and mobile number.

Speaking about the new mobile app, General Manager, UAE Exchange Kuwait, Krishnakumar Eacharath, said "Customers will be able to send money to their loved ones with just a click using the mobile app from the comfort of their office or home. Advanced security measures have been implemented and an SMS will be delivered to the remitter, once the transaction is processed.

Asst General Manager – Administration, HR & Training, Dhari Al Muhareb, added that with a strong innovative approach, UAE Exchange strives to bring increased convenience, quality and security to its loyal customers.

The launch event was attended by Eric Engineer, the head of Operations, George Varghese, head of Business Development & Marketing, Sairam C.P. head of Branch Operations & E-Remittance, Ligin Mathew, head of IT, along with department heads staff and dignitaries.

UAE XCHANGE
Service is our Currency

Send Your MONEY...
We Made EASY...

- 1 DOWNLOAD**
UAE EXCHANGE KUWAIT Remittance App
- 2 ACTIVATE**
Visit any UAE Exchange Branch & fill KYC form
- 3 SEND MONEY**
Fast, Secure, and Reliable

Any Time. Anywhere.

Customers can now send their remittance through the application and funds will be credited to their bank accounts immediately. Cash pick-up services to major countries are also available. Other services provided by the Exchange include, Live Remit/Swift Transfers/Western Union/Instant Cash/Foreign Currency Purchase and Sale. More details are available on 1808800/97539215 (Direct / WhatsApp)

Vox Cinemas Avenues to reopen during Eid-Al-Fitr



VOX Cinemas announced that it will reopen its multiplex at The Avenues for Eid al-Fitr in compliance with government guidelines.

In adherence with the Ministry of Health guidelines, guests must be vaccinated and registered on the Immune App to gain entry. VOX Cinemas has also undertaken extensive precautionary measures and put in place an all-encompassing sanitization and physical distancing plan.

Guests are encouraged to enjoy a queueless experience by advance booking their tickets and doing top-ups online. To further minimize physical contact and exposure, contactless payment options are available. The capacity in cinema auditoriums has also been reduced by 50 percent and seats next to, in front of, and behind a guest's selection will be left vacant to allow for physical distancing.

Ali AIOqab, regional manager, Kuwait, Lebanon and Jordan, Majid Al Futtaim Cinemas and Majid Al Futtaim Leisure & Entertainment said, "After being closed for more than a year, we're extremely excited about reopening our doors at The Avenues and having the opportunity to reconnect with our valued guests.

VOX Cinemas has been reopening cinemas across the region since May last year

so cinemagoers can rest assured that we are exceeding recommended guidelines to ensure that families can enjoy the collective experience of watching their favourite films on the big screen with added peace of mind. With an impressive line-up of new releases, film fans in Kuwait have plenty to look forward to this Eid al-Fitr."

Stringent health and safety measures that exceed recommended guidelines are in place to ensure cinema goers enjoy a safe and relaxed experience at the multiplex. Surfaces will be cleaned and sanitised after every guest interaction to ensure the highest levels of safety and cleanliness. It is also now mandatory for employees and guests to wear face masks and have their temperatures checked on entry to the cinema.

There are also extensive measures in place to ensure that the highest levels of food safety are maintained. Employees will be following strict safety protocols which include sanitising of workstations and countertops every 30 minutes and washing their hands at least every 20 minutes and before handling food.

Majid Al Futtaim was awarded 'Best Innovation in Health and Safety' at the 2020 MENA Leisure Attractions Council (MENALAC) Awards for the third consecutive year.

Eid-al-Fitr reinforces resilience, revival

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For instance, many retailers have vamped up their online presence and internet shopping is now said to be a thriving new retail front. Data from Knet, the country's shared electronic banking services company, reveal that restrictions on movement of people due to the pandemic, have expedited the move towards online shopping and spending. Online spending grew by 123 percent in March, pushing the amount of online transactions to KD790 million, or 36 percent of total spending — a huge leap from the 12 percent of overall spending just two years ago.

On a similar note, despite educational institutions remaining shuttered for more than a year now, students, teachers, school management and parents have learned to cope. Learning, teaching and evaluating student performances have in large measure moved from the physical to the virtual world. In the same vein, last year's Eid, held against the backdrop of the same virus and the consequent restrictions imposed on mobility of people and gatherings, has apparently given people a precedent on how best to spend the upcoming festival and five-day holidays.

People have learned to seize any occasion that provides an opportunity to relax, and

delivers a respite from the daily foreboding coronavirus statistics. Incidentally, in a highly telling critique of the limited entertainment and leisure infrastructure in the country, more people choose to travel abroad to relax even during brief breaks, than come home to Kuwait. Latest figures from the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) show that a total of 21,000 people — mainly citizens, their first-degree relatives and the 'all-important' domestic helpers who are permitted to exit and enter the country — are planning to travel during the five-day Eid-al-Fitr holidays. Of these numbers, the overwhelming majority (76%), or more than 16,000 people, are preparing to enjoy the brief holiday abroad, while only around 5,000 are planning to come home for the Eid holidays.

For those who are constrained to the country by the bans and flight restrictions in place, some leisure venues, including VOX cinemas in The Avenues, have announced that they will be welcoming visitors during the Eid holidays, under strict health and safety guidelines.

Obviously, people have learned, or are learning, to adapt to the evolving and challenging situation, and to make the most of any event or occasion that provides an opportunity to gather and celebrate as a family or as a community. Whether through

limited direct physical contacts or via online video or audio gatherings, and meetings, people have been interacting with each other at every available opportunity.

The fact that entertainment spots are slowly beginning to open up and people are choosing to travel despite the disquiet surrounding the pandemic, is not only an indication of the glimmer of optimism in the air, following the large-scale rollout of vaccinations in the country and the region. It is also an attestation of human resilience in the face of continued adversity. Resilience has often been described as the process of positive adaptation that evokes responses to overcome adversity and which lead to positive outcomes. Experts say the key to positive adaptation that builds resilience among individuals is to take adversities that confront us and learn ways of processing them differently, so they support rather than hinder us.

However, from a socio-ecological perspective, resilience is not simply an individual's responsibility; it is a shared social responsibility that involves individuals as well as society and the larger global community, cooperating and coordinating with each other to ensure the common good of humanity. The concept of 'building back better' that is being touted around by several countries is based on this third approach. But when viewed through

this prism, our collective global resilience and response to the pandemic leaves much to be desired. For instance, when it comes to global vaccinations, everyone is aware that no one is fully safe from the virus until everyone is safe.

Yet, the ground reality of vaccinations paints a different picture. Vaccinations against the virus are currently our only bulwark against the spread of the infection, but unfortunately there exists a distinctively disproportionate distribution of vaccines worldwide. Rich developed countries have not only vaccinated a large portion of their population, but are also reported to be hoarding vaccines for future potential eventualities. At the same time many poor developing nations have barely been able to vaccinate even a small percent of their population due to the dearth in availability of vaccines.

To highlight this discrepancy in vaccination, one needs to look no further than the United States, where more than two million people are being vaccinated daily. Now compare this with South Sudan, where so far less than 1,000 people have been vaccinated in total. The vaccine disparity is not only glaring evident and morally unethical, it is also an indelible blotch on our collective conscience as humans. We need to urgently rectify this situation or continue living with this shame and the threat of a never receding pandemic.

Impact of toxic stress on students

It is only natural for students to feel a little stressed from time to time in school classrooms. Since schools and classrooms are designed around challenging students to achieve their best and to teach them new skills, some stress is to be expected, and some would say, necessary, in school life as long as it remains within healthy limits.

But there are also some students who are overly affected and more vulnerable to stress than others, and they tend to feel tense most of the time in a classroom environment. Over time this stress could build up and reach severe levels that place students at risk of developing a condition referred to as toxic stress, which can have lasting effects on their social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health that sometimes extend to their adult lives as well.

Persistent stress in students can be caused by any number of factors, both within and outside the school premises. When it comes to school-related causes of stress in students, academic pressure has been found to be near the top of the list. Students often feel so overwhelmed by academic work at school that they are known to resort to any means, including compromising their health or well-being just to get good grades. Social pressures at school, including through social media interactions, can also contribute to toxic stress in children.

Friends can act as a support system for children facing stressful situations, but if the student feels like they do not have any friends in school, they may then be more

vulnerable to toxic stress. Additionally, victims of school bullying are more likely to develop chronic stress than their peers, as well as develop depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. While support from parents is essential, stress within the classroom is ideally tackled by teachers trained to recognize this condition and provide necessary support before it begins to overwhelm the student.

In addition to stress in school, students can also be mentally upset by incidents caused by factors outside of school, such as adverse experiences or trauma during childhood, including health issues, death of a loved one, community violence, and abuse or neglect.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), in particular, mistreatment at home, poverty and societal discrimination, have also been associated with toxic stress. For parents, educators, and health care providers, it is important to watch for signs that a student is experiencing any of these in addition to school stressors to provide them with the right and timely support.

Teachers can help alleviate academic stress to an extent by focusing the goals of students on learning and growth, rather than on grades alone. Additionally, teachers should also be alert to any stressors or commitments outside of the classroom that could be impacting the student and allow extensions on assignment deadlines or opportunities to improve grades for students with extenuating circumstances.

Toxic stress can transform schools

from a stimulating environment to an overwhelming one, especially for vulnerable students. But educators can provide support through stress management activities, strategies, and referrals as needed. Some of the methods used in modern pedagogical training to monitor, support, and prevent school stress and keep students from getting burned out include:

Teachers should ensure that students realize that teachers will always be available to support and listen to them, so that they feel comfortable and confident to talk and share their problems when they are upset. Teachers can also be watchful for any signs of chronic stress in their students caused by in-school events such as bullying, and more recently cyber-bullying, or the approach of an important test.

Students can also be trained to practice effective stress busting activities such as mindfulness meditation, which teach students skills that mitigate toxic stress. If the student continues to experience toxic stress conditions, or has a history of traumatic experiences, it would be better to refer them to in-school or out-of-school specialists in stress management.

In a study related to academic stress in students, researchers set out to find the answer to an age-long question: Is it the difficulty of a problem or the effort to solve classroom assignments that causes stress among students.

To contrast the subjective perception of stress with an objective measurement method and compare the two, the biologists



used both the traditional questionnaire method as well as measured the heart rate in over 200 participants taking part in a test.

When we are relaxed, the individual heart rates differ slightly, whereas when we are stressed, they are less variable. This change in heart rate variability was used as an objective measurement of the stress level. They also had the participants fill out several questionnaires on their self-concept, their interest in biology and their perception of the tasks.

Comparing the questionnaire answers with the measured heart rates revealed that it was mainly mental engagement, i.e., the effort the students invested in solving the tasks, that correlated with the objective stress level. Contrary to expectations, more difficult tasks did not increase stress. The biologists noted that such objective measures could be used in future studies primarily to survey subjective cognitive stress dimensions among students facing other stress inducers both in school and outside.

Co-workers shape food choices

Peer-pressure rather than individual desire or taste for a particular food could determine what food people order or select when eating with coworkers in the workplace cafeteria or when ordering outside food.

Individuals are more likely to select foods that mimic the choices of others in their social circle, irrespective of whether the food choice is healthy or unhealthy. Researchers at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in the United States have linked food choices made in social networks as one of the reasons for the surge in obesity in recent years.

Latest findings by the Massachusetts team corroborates several multi-decade observational studies that have shown that the eating patterns of individuals can be shaped by their social ties, even by casual acquaintances, and that this influence is linked to weight gain, alcohol consumption and eating behavior. Previous research on social influence upon food choice had been primarily limited to highly controlled settings like studies of college students eating a single meal together, making it difficult to generalize findings to other age groups and



to real-world environments. The new study examined the cumulative social influence of food choices among approximately 6,000 MGH employees of diverse ages and socio-economic status as they ate at the hospital's cafeterias over two years. Based on cross-sectional and longitudinal assessments of three million encounters between pairs of employees making cafeteria purchases together, the researchers

found that food purchases by people who were connected to each other were consistently more alike than they were different.

A key component of the research was to determine whether social networks truly influence eating behavior, or whether people with similar lifestyles and food preferences are more likely to become friends and eat together, a phenomenon known as homophily. To determine this, the researchers controlled for characteristics that people had in common and analyzed the data from numerous perspectives, consistently finding results that supported social influence rather than homophily explanations.

Why do people who are socially connected choose similar foods? Peer pressure is one explanation. People may change their behavior to cement the relationship with someone in their social circle. Co-workers may also implicitly or explicitly give each other license to choose unhealthy foods or exert pressure to make a healthier choice.

The study's findings have several broader implications for public health interventions to prevent obesity. One option may be to target pairs of people making food choices and offer two-for-one sales on salads and other healthful foods but no discounts on cheeseburgers. Another approach might be to have an influential person in a particular social circle model more healthful food choices, which will affect others in the network. "If your eating habits shape how your co-workers eat, then changing your food choices for the better might benefit your co-workers as well," said a team member involved in the study.

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