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Food waste impairs Kuwait's sustainable goals



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

The food you choose and the way you consume it affect our health and that of our planet. It has an impact on the way agri-food systems work. So you need to be part of the change, says a statement by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) ahead of World Food Day, which each year falls on October 16.

In Kuwait, the humongous amount of food that ends up in landfills may be socially acceptable to many, but it is morally and ethically reprehensible. The food waste generated each day also runs counter to the country's stated aim of adhering to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that Kuwait signed on to at the United Nations in 2015.

Goal 12.3 of the SDG aims to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses, by 2030. But with more than 1.3 billion tonnes of food,



or nearly a third of global food production, wasted worldwide each year, and with only eight more years until the SDG deadline, neither Kuwait nor the world appears anywhere close to achieving

this target. To place the amount of food wasted globally in perspective, imagine going to your local supermarket or cooperative store and buying three bags full of food, and then nonchalantly tossing

one bag into the nearby dumpster. Inconceivable, right? Well, statistically this is the equivalent of what happens to global food production — one-third of all food produced for human consumption ends up wasted.

If tossing one out of three bags of food in the trash appears unimaginable to you, then we suggest taking a walk down any residential area in Kuwait at night. If not the stench, then the sound of bawling cats ferreting for food will lead you to the sight of trash bins overflowing with enormous amounts of food waste. Entire cartons of fresh fruits and vegetables, to unopened cans and packets of food items, to take-out trays with uneaten portions of pizzas and other fast foods will be seen to spill out from the bins and trash skips placed by pavements.

Even more sadly, if you happen to look out of your window in the early morning hours when dumpsters come to pick up trash, you may be staggered by the sight of people rummaging through trash, picking up edible items from

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Human rights chief calls for abolishing sponsor system

Abolishing the sponsorship (kafeel) system would help rectify the distorted image of Kuwait on the international stage, and put an end to the trade in visas, said Ambassador Jassem Al-Mubarakhi who heads the National Bureau of Human Rights (NBHR).

Drawing a distinction between visa trade and human trafficking, the ambassador stressed that there is no human trade in the conventional sense in Kuwait. Explaining the difference, he noted, "Visa trade also does not serve Kuwait's interest nor its development, but has distorted the country's image abroad because globally visa trade is considered as a form of human

trafficking. According to international standards, any work relationship in which the two elements of coercion and exploitation are combined falls under human trafficking."

Ambassador Al-Mubarakhi, a former diplomat with Kuwait's Foreign Ministry, was speaking on the sidelines of the founding session held by the bureau in coordination with the Arab Network of National Human Rights institutions. He revealed that "the Bureau is in the process of joining the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions and the Permanent Committee for Human Rights in the Arab League states."

Regarding the recent Universal Periodic



Review conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council on Kuwait, the ambassador said, "The NBHR did not participate in preparing the response submitted by the government to the report

by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), as we were not invited to do so, despite it being an obligation outlined in the law that led to the establishment of NBHR." The government response is being submitted to the 70th session of CESCR that was held between 27 September and 15 October in Geneva.

"Through previous reports by the CESCR had focused on topics such as employment, the death penalty and the issue of homosexuals, we had responded to those issues at that time, by noting that 'we in Kuwait cannot accept the imposition of other cultures on us,' said the ambassador in conclusion.

NCCAL to investigate disappearance of ancient artefacts

Following media reports that a number of ancient artefacts from the Kuwait National Museum have disappeared, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) is said to have opened investigations into the matter.

A statement attributed to NCCAL notes that the Council is keen to protect and preserve the antiquities and collectibles in Kuwait, and refers to such items as 'an invaluable national heritage and record of human history that represents Kuwait's civilization throughout the ages'.

Spokesperson for NCCAL, Assistant Secretary-General for the Culture Sector, Dr. Issa Al-Ansari said based on similar reports that surfaced earlier, the Council under the directive of the Minister of Information and Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and the NCCAL Chairman Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, had formed an investigation committee last



June and the committee was still continuing the investigating and evaluating process.

He noted that several sub-committees had been formed and they have branched out to make a complete inventory of all the artefacts held at the museum, and the committee is expected to announce its findings in total transparency in the immediate future.

Cutting-edge equipment at DDI Diagnosis Center



Diagnostic Imaging Center at Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) is equipped with cutting-edge instruments and the highest quality standards to ensure the best level of care, said Consultant and Head of the Center, Dr. Abdulmohsen Bennakhi. He added that the Diagnostic Imaging Center (DIC) also obtained the 'diamond' level of accreditation, the highest level of approval, by the Canadian Center for Accreditation.

The Imaging Center at DDI offers quality radiology investigations to all people in Kuwait and maintains the highest quality of patient care in performing radiology tests in accordance with global accreditation standards so as to ensure quality of treatment and safety of patients. DIC also actively participates in research by providing dedicated radiological investigations to support various research studies. These research collaborations have been instituted at national and international levels. Our highly experienced team assures excellent quality of procedures and reports through highly experienced and competent staff, said Dr. Bennakhi.

He added that the Center currently has



highly advanced MRI 3T and 1.5T (wide-bore) machines that allow for MRI examinations with high speed and image resolution applications. The center also has the latest high-definition computerized tomography (CT) devices with innovative low-radiation technology performance for full-body imaging and accurate imaging of blood vessels in the

body, including evaluation of the coronary arteries. In addition, the DIC offers ultrasound examinations, as well as many other services and tests, including Bone Mineral Densitometry (BMD) and body composition, Digital X-ray and Orthopantomogram (OPG) and an integrated Diagnostic Vascular Laboratory.

He noted that the DDI is a non-profit organization that aims at scientific research, therefore, the services provided in DIC are at competitive prices and accessible to everyone. In conclusion, Dr. Bennakhi said that DIC has launched a new service to communicate with the public through WhatsApp on the number 65055011, for various patients from different medical specialties to inquire about the services provided and prices, and to book appointments and other related matters.



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Kuwaiti youth believe, 'Best is yet to be'

Young Kuwaitis are the most optimistic among Arab youth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with regard to their future prospects, believing that the 'best is yet to be'.

The optimistic outlook, which was revealed in the 13th iteration of the annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey, was shared by 92 percent of respondents in Kuwait, the highest in the region. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts and record economic decline, most young Arabs in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) also believe their best days lie ahead of them, but they look up to their governments to tackle nepotism and corruption, and provide more support in starting their own businesses.

The annual survey by ASDA'A BCW, the leading public relations consultancy in MENA, also revealed the astonishing resilience and hopefulness of young Arab men and women across the region, but also their growing frustrations about increasing unemployment, access to quality higher education and rising living expenses.

The survey, which polled 3,400 Arab

citizens aged between 18 and 24 in 50 cities and territories in 17 countries from 6 to 30 June of this year, was conducted for ASDA'A BCW by PSB Insights, the global strategic research and analytics specialist, amongst a cohort equally split between men and women.

Though the pandemic cost MENA economies an estimated US\$227 billion last year, and pushed some countries to the brink of bankruptcy, an astonishing 60 percent of young Arabs, expressed optimism in the future, which also was the highest level of positivity in five years.

Another key optimistic finding from the survey was that 48 percent of young Arabs also said they 'will be able to lead a better life than their parents. In addition, half of the respondents believed that their country's economy was heading in the right direction and most expected a full recovery by 2022.

The optimistic outlook among youth in the region did not diminish the scale of challenge confronting policy makers in the area, as nearly 90 percent of young Arabs said they were very concerned about the

rising cost of living. More than eight in 10 were also concerned about unemployment and the quality of higher education, while over a third (37%) said they were struggling to meet their expenses. Another one-third (33%) said either they or a family member had lost their job due to COVID-19.

Young Arabs identify three strategies to boost job creation, saying their top priorities include: tackling corruption and nepotism, providing more information on the job opportunities available, and education reform. They also say they expect governments to help them start their own businesses by providing more access to affordable financing and reducing red tape.

Other key findings from the survey noted that Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were the region's strongest allies; China and Russia are the region's fourth and fifth strongest allies, while the UK and the US ranked eighth and ninth respectively.

This year's survey observed a notable shift in sentiment on gender equality. Last year, 64 percent of female respondents said they had the same rights as men. However, this year, just over half (51%) believe that



to be the case. Female progress within the workplace also appears to have stalled, with only 46 percent of young Arab women saying they have the same professional opportunities as men, compared to 52 percent last year.

Though a third of young Arabs (33%) said they were either considering or had tried to leave their home country, this was a substantial drop from the 42 percent of Arab youth who expressed a similar sentiment last year. The desire to emigrate was lowest among Kuwaiti youth with just 8 percent saying they have considered moving out of their home-country.

Citizens prefer standalone houses than apartments

Rather than own an apartment outright, most Kuwaiti citizens prefer to wait in the housing queue for years in order to receive a standalone house. One reason attributed to this reluctance to buy apartments is the relatively small size of investment apartments, which usually do not exceed 200 square meters.

Many Kuwaitis are accustomed to living in spacious individual houses that in many

cases measure between 400 to 1,000 square meters, and it is not easy to get them to buy an apartment, said one real estate agent. Nevertheless, apartments remain the only available choice for some Kuwaitis as they do not have the resources to invest in a large house. Apartments are also a choice for many small investors with access to capitals ranging between KD60,000 and KD 80,000 and for those



looking for a safe investment that generates good returns.

Interest in owning or investing in apartment buildings among Kuwaitis began only from 2000 when the first ownership buildings began to emerge in Mahboula and Hawally. This trend then spread to other areas, including the Capital, Bneid Al-Qar, Khaitan, Farwaniya and other investment areas. For its part, the government also encouraged citizens to buy apartments and even announced that it would bear part of the cost of buying an apartment by citizens. But the response from citizens has been less than enthusiastic, with longer queues for owning individual homes than for apartments.



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GARLIC A Health Boosting Food

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Everyone has heard about the benefits of garlic. Garlic does more than make our food taste better, it can help in the prevention of several medical conditions.

Garlic clove is considered a pure treatment for diabetes, both types: Type 1 also called insulin-dependent diabetes that affects young children, and Type 2 diabetes, also called non-insulin-dependent diabetes that affects older people and will appear at later stages.



In fact, a British study conducted in February proved that a garlic clove was able to minimize insulin blood levels when mice ingested it orally. Moreover, it is regarded as a miracle by naturopaths and herbalists. This is mainly due to a compound called allicin present in garlic that has natural antibiotic properties, as well as the presence of sulphur, which is also the cause for its pungent smell.

Below are several more medical benefits of garlic:

Fresh or cooked garlic helps in lowering blood pressure and cardiovascular problems. It increases the levels of high-density lipoproteins and reduces harmful cholesterol in the blood which protect our arteries and heart.

- Garlic stimulates the body's immune system and helps in the fight against various immune or auto-immune diseases.

- Garlic offers some benefits during pregnancy as well. According to a study conducted by doctors in a London hospital, garlic supplementation promoted the weight-gain for babies that were at risk of low birth weight.
- Garlic helps improve iron metabolism, as the sulfides in garlic increase the production of a protein called ferroportin. This protein present in the cell membrane helps form a passageway that allows stored iron to leave those cells and be used whenever it is needed.
- But remember, although garlic is potentially beneficial, some people cannot tolerate its strong smell. You can then switch to garlic food supplements that offer the same benefits.
- Also, some people have colon problems, reflux, ulcer or are allergic to garlic. So always consult your doctor regarding any health or medical condition.

My personal advice in cooking with garlic is to add it at the end of cooking, so it does not lose too many of its beneficial properties, including its sulphur compounds that are super beneficial. Also, if you cannot tolerate raw garlic, you can add chopped garlic to your food while cooking it to retain a maximum amount of flavor and good nutrition.

Eat like Mira
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

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

RECIPE

Vegetable Spring Roll



Total Time: 45 to 50 minutes
Serving: 12

Crispy, fried vegetable spring rolls are generally served as a starter or appetiser to a meal, and are filled with vegetables of your choice or noodles. It also goes perfectly with tea or coffee, or can be served for dinner alongside a bowl of delicious soup.

Ingredients:

- For the stuffing:
- 1tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp finely chopped ginger garlic
- 1 tsp white pepper powder
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp green chilli paste
- 2 tbsp spring onion (chopped)
- 1 carrot (julienne)
- 2 cup cabbage (chopped)
- ½ capsicum (chopped)
- 1tsp vinegar
- ½ tbsp soy sauce
- Salt as per taste
- 1 tsp corn flour
- 2 tbsp all purpose flour (maida)
- Other ingredients:
- 1/4cup maida paste
- Oil (for frying)
- 12 Spring roll sheets



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Preparation:

- In a large wok, heat 2 tbsp oil
- Add grated ginger and chopped garlic and sauté it for a few seconds till the raw aroma is gone
- Now add chopped veggies and sauté it on high flame for few minutes till it become soft but not mushy; it needs to have a bite to it
- Stir fry on high flame without losing the crunchiness of vegetables.
- Add vinegar, soya sauce, chilli paste, pepper powder, sugar, corn flour. Stir well
- Switch off the flame and add spring onions, corn flour, and salt to taste. Mix it well Set aside to cool for a while

To make flour paste:

- Make a medium thick paste by adding water to maida little by little
- Place spring roll sheets on a flat surface
- Spread a spoonful of stuffing at the one end of the sheet
- Gently roll the wrapper and seal it tight by applying the maida paste on the edges.
- Deep fry in hot oil at low flame
- Fry until the roll turns golden brown and crisp. Remove the excess oil by placing them on a napkin
- Take them out and serve them hot
- Serve these crisp rolls with any dip and sauce



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

Thousands drive around with illegal licenses

With no end in sight to the country's persistent traffic jams at peak hours, the General Traffic Department (GTD) at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) is said to be auditing the tens of thousands of licenses that have been legally issued but the purpose for which they were granted has expired. Though these licenses have technically expired they have not been withdrawn.

For instance, more than 40,000 such licenses were issued to expatriates who arrived in the country to work as drivers for a Kuwaiti sponsor or company, but later changed their profession to one that made them ineligible for a driving license.

There are also over 20,000 driving licences granted to university students

that have technically expired when they completed their studies, but most of them have not surrendered their student licenses and they continue to drive vehicles.

Though illegal to use, many former household drivers and former students continue to drive around using these licenses, as they are aware that the maximum fine they could face if caught for driving with an expired license is only five dinars.

Previously, all that the GTD could do was not to renew such licenses when their validity dates expired. But now, the GTD is reported to be coordinating with the MoI to consider treating expatriates found driving around with such licenses as illegal drivers and summarily deport the offenders.

The department is also said to be in talks with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and the Residence Affairs Authority at MoI, so that expatriate will be able to renew their residence permit only after ascertaining that there are no 'blocks' issued against their name in the GTD system, for holding an expired license. And, if there is such a 'block', the person will be able to renew their residence only after surrendering the expired license to GTD and getting the residence 'block' removed.

In an additional step, the GTD is also in the process of issuing a circular that will prohibit driving any vehicle with a license issued for a different purpose, even if the date on it is still valid, thereby compelling the holder to surrender the old license and



replace it with the new one.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf, had recently requested a study to stop issuing or legalizing the issuance of driving licenses to residents, until and after a new mechanism for granting licenses can be put in place.

Depleting revenues force MoF to review finances

Ministry of Finance (MoF) has requested relevant state agencies to evaluate the revenues they expect to realize by increasing fees for the services they deliver to the public. The request is part of finding solutions to depleting revenues and liquidity in the General Reserve Fund (GRF) that serves as the state treasury.

The new measure by the MoF comes within the framework of Cabinet Resolution No. (956) for the year 2021 regarding the depletion of liquidity and the need to find radical solutions to confront the deficit in the state's general budget and assign government



agencies to reconsider their service fees and raise their value.

The ministry has asked state entities to provide it with full studies on the expected growth in revenues, and the time frame for its completion and implementation. Based on the outcome of studies by government agencies on increasing service fees, the MoF is expected to prepare a visualization of the expected state revenues, and accordingly target future spending, as well as predict a better picture of the state's financial situation in the future.

New office to speed up deportation process

In a bid to reduce overcrowding at the deportation centers due to a large number of deportee files that had not been finalized, the Deportation Prison Administration affiliated to the Correctional Institutions Sector and Sentence Execution Department in cooperation with the Residence Affairs Sector of the General Administration of Residence Investigations, is to open a new office near the Al-Azham Roundabout to speedup the process of evaluating files of law violators and deport them to their respective countries.

Director-General of the General Administration of Correctional Institutions, Major General Ali Al-Ma'ili, and the Director of the Deportation Prison Administration, Colonel Walid Al-Ali, have begun translating the instructions of the



Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali, who visited Deportation Center last weekend and called for the need to reduce overcrowding at the Center.

Reports also indicate that there are plans to open a deportation

facility at Kuwait International Airport, so that any violator who wants to leave the country can go directly to the airport and initiate all deportation measures and board a flight out of the country if there are no cases pending against them.

New drug proves potent against coronavirus

Since the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic researchers, scientists, and antivirus specialists have worked around the clock to find a treatment for the infection. While vaccinations being administered around the world can help a person from getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19, and also keep a person from getting seriously ill in case they do get infected with the virus, there are no approved drugs for treatment of the disease.

A new drug Codivir, from the Netherlands-based global pharmaceutical company, Code Pharma, now appears to have the potential to revolutionize the fight against the virus. In a successful phase 1 clinical trial, conducted in Brazil, affected patients tested with the drug were back on their feet within 48 hours without side effects.



In a statement from Dubai, where he was looking for partners in the region to do local production and distribution, the Founder and CEO of Code Pharma, Zyon Ayni, said that Codivir, which has applied for emergency approval of the drug from several countries, showed great success in phase 1 clinical trials on coronavirus patients. "Our team at Code Pharma is now initiating a multi-country phase 2 study with a larger cohort and has submitted additional emergency approval requests to several affected countries," said the CEO.

Codivir, which was originally found in studies to combat the HIV virus, has now been found to have a potent antiviral activity against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other RNA viruses such as influenza. "In view of the submitted emergency approval requests and to meet the expected demand, the company is preparing for mass production of Codivir in different sites worldwide, starting in parallel with the phase 2 trial," added Mr. Zyon.

"We are in contact with governments all over the world and expect to get emergency approvals from a substantial number of them by the end of a successful phase II study. We are currently in Dubai and looking for local partners in the UAE and other countries to do local production and distribution," concluded Zyon.



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Minister Chang Tzi-chin
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As the COVID-19 pandemic ravages the world, carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere keep setting record highs. A report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in August 2021 strongly confirmed that human activity has furthered the warming of the atmosphere, oceans, and land. The atmosphere, oceans, cryosphere, and biosphere have all undergone broad and rapid changes. The weather in 2021 has also been unstable, as can be seen by the winter storm in the US state of Texas that severely damaged the energy system and the record-setting temperatures of nearly 50 degrees Celsius on the North American west coast. By the same token, Western Europe and China have suffered from heavy rains. In addition, Taiwan experienced its worst drought in more than 50 years, which was followed by abnormally heavy rainfall. One can clearly see how climate change has profoundly affected the whole world.

With extreme weather events challeng-

ing the entire globe today, the United Nations calls on all countries to implement the Paris Agreement and take more proactive steps. As a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan strives to integrate with global efforts to mitigate climate change.

President Tsai Ing-wen declared on this year's Earth Day (April 22) that realizing net-zero emissions by 2050 is the goal of the world, including Taiwan. She also unveiled clear greenhouse gas emission targets for Taiwan. At the 33rd meeting of the National Council for Sustainable Development, Premier Su Tseng-chang announced the inclusion of the 2050 net-zero emission target in the amendment bill for the Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Management Act, demonstrating Taiwan's determination to actively reduce carbon emissions. More and stronger management mechanisms and incentive systems will be introduced with other vital amendments so as to enhance governance efficiency, introduce carbon pricing mechanisms, and adapt strategies for climate change. Such measures aim to encourage private investment in research and development, as well as public participation in the sustainable development of Taiwan.

Taiwan has established long-term reduction targets and is planning a practical path to attain 2050 net-zero emissions. The Executive Yuan has coordinated relevant ministries and agencies, convened a working group on paths to net-zero emissions, and sought professional consultation from Academia Sinica and the Industrial Technology Research Institute.

Four working groups have been formed to focus on the areas of decarbonized energy, industry and energy efficiency, green transportation and vehicle

electrification, and carbon-negative technology so as to carry out interministerial technical assessments. In addition, the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) and other relevant ministries and agencies have launched a public consultation on visions for 2050 to facilitate social dialogue on critical issues such as agricultural and forestry carbon sinks, net-zero buildings, green transportation, low-carbon industries, economic instruments,



and just transformation. With diverse participation from all sectors and research and development investment in innovative technology, Taiwan will seek the most suitable climate governance path for its sustainable development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that Taiwan's industries are an extremely reliable and significant partner in the global supply chain. Countries worldwide have successively proposed new goals on net-zero emissions to bring about a net-zero economy. The Taiwan government aims to formulate a clear and comprehensive carbon reduction path and green growth strategy. Cooperation with private enterprises plays a critical role in these efforts. The Taiwan Climate Alliance, formed by eight ICT companies, has set

the goal of using renewable energy in 100 percent of their manufacturing processes by 2050 and will lead other manufacturers in the supply chain to jointly reach this target. In addition, the Taiwan Alliance for Net Zero Emission, formed by traditional manufacturing, technology, finance, and service industries, seeks to attain net-zero carbon emissions at office sites by 2030 and at production sites by 2050. To support the climate actions of enterprises and other actors in the private sector, the Taiwan government has implemented financial mechanisms such as green financing and green bonds, thus creating a virtuous circle in the investment and industrial pursuit of sustainable development.

Taiwan, situated in a region highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, has long been actively engaged in policy formulation, the establishment of related legal systems, energy transformation, technological research and development, industrial innovation, social transformation, and environmental sustainability in response to climate change. It hopes to actively construct a sustainable green homeland from the facets of supply, manufacturing, demand, and environmental protection. Furthermore, Taiwan will continue to share its experiences and capabilities with the international community to overcome this crisis.

The spirit of cooperating and working together remains key to accelerating and extending global efforts. Although Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, it will always seek to be a model citizen for the international community. We will continue to work with all other countries to foster a global net-zero emissions future and a more resilient living environment for coming generations and to realize intergenerational justice.

ALSAYER is winner of 14th Arabia CSR Awards

ALSAYER achieved the First place in the 14th prestigious cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards organized by Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) on 4th October 2021 in Dubai. Regarded as the 'Green Oscars of the Middle East,' the awards recognised the corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles and implementation strategies of 40 green champions from across the region. The winners were representing both the public and private sectors from 9 Arab countries and under 13 diverse categories. They were adjudged based on international benchmarks such as the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) Principles, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model and the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Awarding Ceremony was attended by ALSAYER representatives: Eng. Ibrahim Al-Fouzan, Senior Business Director, Toyota Service & Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager, Corporate Excellence. Eng. Fouzan said that "ALSAYER continuous participation in Arabia CSR award is an affirmation of our commitment to the ongoing improvements on all our daily practices covering the four main pillars of Economy, Society, Nature & Wellbeing. We thank Arabia CSR Network for this event which recognize entities and organizations for their efforts towards enhancing sustainability measures."

ALSAYER was announced as the winner of



14th Arabia CSR Awards in the Middle East in Automotive business category

According to Mr. Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, Executive Board Member & Chairman of Sustainability Committee: "we are proud to be among the 40 'green champions' in the Middle East winners who were adjudged based on international benchmarks such as the UN Global Compact principles, Global Reporting Initiative Standards, the European Foundation for Quality Management model and the UN Sustainable Development Goals based on ALSAYER Sustainability Report and our commitment to encourage and dare our stakeholders to embrace sustainability in all elements of their day-to-day lives by working together and to create lasting, positive change

for everyone today and in the future".

Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, President & CEO of ACSRN in her opening speech said, "We are at a point in time when we truly have the most important choice to make - to continue living and operating our businesses in an unsustainable way - or to embrace the sustainable development goals and create a better and more resilient world for ourselves and our children and their children. There is a real risk today that because of COVID-19, the existing inequalities in our societies will be further exposed and will increase significantly. We cannot and should not let this happen. Long-term and sustainable recovery requires concerted efforts, comprehensive strategies and both public and private investment".



Construction costs soar as import costs rise

Although the epidemiological situation in the country has improved immensely, the economic repercussions from the COVID-19 crisis continues to fester. Shortage and disruptions in global supply chains continue to hamper imports, increase in freight and insurance costs have led to significant increase in prices of most products in Kuwait, even as the low pace in opening up visas for workers from abroad has resulted in an acute shortage of qualified laborers in the market.

Contracting, construction and real estate sectors have in particular been impacted by the rise in sea freight due to heavier and bulkier nature of material they import, and the shortage of experienced laborers. Building costs have soared far beyond contract estimates leading to many contractors abandoning projects, or stalling work until the return of a more favorable situation.

According to industry experts in the contracting and construction sector quoted by local media, the cost of building a house on an area of 400 square meters jumped by almost 30 percent and the cost of structure shot up to nearly KD10,000 from the earlier price of around KD75,000.

Etoile eyes overseas expansion with top skincare, cosmetics brands

Etoile is a Kuwaiti company, established in 2016 with its own line of perfumes as well as partnering with international suppliers to include high end skincare, cosmetics and hair care products from countries such as South Korea, Italy, France, Singapore and Spain.

In a recent interview, Founder and CEO of Etoile, Nasser Boresli said, "In recent meetings with many commercial offices at embassies in Kuwait, we focused on establishing new partnerships with distinguished brands in cosmetics from those countries. The meetings



Etoile Company
For Perfumes & Cosmetics

also addressed how to expand the scale of cooperation based on a regional business expansion plan to cover more areas." He added that Etoile had taken great strides to expand its business beyond the Gulf, and to introduce new distinguished brands to their clients.

He went on to explain the genesis of Etoile: "We are a Kuwaiti based company established in 2016 focused on the beauty sector. In light of our successful strategy we are working towards expanding our partnership with new brands and suppliers to satisfy our trusting

customer base in the GCC."

With regard to the products and customers that Etoile was focusing on, the CEO said, "Since the beauty market is growing rapidly, we are working to expand our portfolio of products in skin care, hair care, makeup and perfume brands from many countries. Also, we are planning to acquire more brands from North America and Australia alongside our current partners.

Speaking on market appetite and potential growth of the sector in Kuwait, the company founder noted: "We had a strategy to work in all the GCC countries as a single entity and our operations are focused on reaching as many clients there as possible since we are the exclusive distributors for many of the international brands. Since we started back in 2016 and with the help of E-Commerce we saw a steady but gradual increase in sales. However after COVID-19 hit the global economy, and with lockdowns affecting physical store sales, we saw a huge and unprecedented leap in online sales that continues till today.

Elaborating on the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on their business, Mr. Boresli said, "Though the global pandemic had a negative impact on many industries, we in Etoile had, as I mentioned earlier, a positive effect since more customers started shifting



to e-commerce platforms which generated a higher revenue per sale than at our physical stores. Also, the abundance of cash at the disposal of many people, due to the lack of travel, shopping malls and other spending venues, made more people buy more than before. And, if they liked the product as well as the service they will continue. I do believe that you have to have a great product and a great quality customer service to match. You need them both to continue your success."



Nasser with Hong Chang Seok, Director General at Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency



Nasser with Antonio Candela Royo, International Trade Advisor at the Spanish Embassy

LuLu Hypermarket launches Ikon e-scooter at exclusive promotion



LuLu Hypermarket, the regional retail heavyweight, has launched an exclusive promotion for digital products from the lifestyle brand Ikon, at all its outlets from 14 to 31 October.

The 18-day long promotion features amazing discounts on all Ikon branded digital items, including white goods, kitchen and household equipment, electronic items, information technology products, and much more.

Adding an extra quotient of excitement to the promotion, the hypermarket, in association with local e-scooter club, Ka-Bateria E-Scooter Kuwait, held a ceremony at the Al-Rai outlet of LuLu Hypermarket on 14 October, to launch the Ikon e-scooter model, IK-TSEGO9 in Kuwait.

Management officials from LuLu Hypermarket and scooter riders from Ka-Bateria E-Scooter Kuwait were on hand to launch the new scooter. A highlight of the event was the superb riding skills demonstrated by club members, which left customers and onlookers thrilled and amazed.

Exclusive promotions that add excitement and enthusiasm to the shopping experience has been a hallmark of LuLu Hypermarket; the latest Ikon digital deals promotion is yet another affirmation of this promise to make shopping at LuLu Hypermarket an alluring event for the entire family.



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Gout de France/Good France using food diplomacy to promote



FRENCH GASTRONOMY

BY REAVEN D'SOUZA
MANAGING EDITOR

Good France/Gout de France, the eagerly awaited event in the French Gastronomy calendar is back with its 6th edition after the unforeseen health crises of 2020 forced the event to be cancelled last year.



In the 6th edition of Gout de France/Good France, the international initiative, is back with the aim of helping the profession in its sustainable transition and supporting chefs in their new role as ambassadors for more eco-friendly gastronomy, both from a human standpoint, as well as regarding health, the environment and taste education.

This year, more than ever, over the next few months the event will aim to highlight the expertise and convictions of these women and men, who are passing on their tastes and values, and who each day are shaping gastronomy of the future. It is a sensitive, environmentally-aware and powerful gastronomy, with a universal message for future generations to preserve the earth and its wealth of resources.

The Embassy of France in Kuwait held a series of initiatives that will involve well known French Gourmet chefs in the country to showcase, promote and perform their culinary skills that will celebrate French gastronomy.

In an exclusive chat with Fanny Fonquerone, the deputy head of mission at the French embassy, The Times Kuwait had the opportunity to understand the concept and the activities of the Good France event.

The deputy head of mission began by explaining the significance of the event.

"Gout de France/Good France is an international event that was launched by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and chef Alain Ducasse in 2015, it celebrates the 'Gastronomic meal of the French' in 156 countries across five continents by organizing in a single evening thousands of dinners in restaurants around the world and in French embassies abroad. In five editions, Goût de/Good France has become one of the world's foremost gastronomic events, and its success is growing each year. This year, in its 6th edition, Goût de/Good France 2021 is taking place from 14 to 22 October, the campaign aims to support chefs in their new role of ambassador of a more responsible gastronomy, both on a human level as well as on that of health, the environment or education in taste. This event intends to shine in the know-how and convictions of chefs around the world who

write the gastronomy of tomorrow every day, carrying a universal message to future generations, that of safeguarding the earth and its riches.

Elaborating on how the event reflects various culture heritages, she added, "This year the Gout de France campaign will particularly celebrate the Centre-Loire Valley Region, its local products and its traditional know-how. The event intends to promote the heritage of the region to the international scale, both in its uniqueness and its diversity. The Center-Val de Loire Region is considered the 'Garden of France', and well known for its fertile soils, its forests, its rivers and its vast landscapes, but also for its gastronomy, which dates back to the time of the ancient kings of the Renaissance. This region has for centuries shaped an exceptional art of living, which is still the pride and joy of its tourist industry today."

She then went on to introduce the four French gastronomy ambassadors here in Kuwait, respectively as, Chef David HARNOIS, Marie Claude LEBEVRE (Culinary advisor), Daniel HALABI, Executive Chef Thierry Papillier and Ahmed ZAMEL.

Explaining why the event was called Good France and why France was endorsing this international event, the deputy head of mission said: "This international event, the first of which took place in 2015, began shortly after the addition of the 'Gastronomic meal of the French' to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Its objective is to promote French gastronomy internationally, to promote the tourist attractiveness of territories and cities through events linked to gastronomy. And also promote the culinary traditions, the terroirs and the know-how of all chefs, men and women who are passionate about their profession.

Highlighting the initiatives by the French



Embassy as part of Good France, she narrated several, including Recipe shooting: Of French chef at the Radisson, Chef David HARNOIS, who will be honored during a video shot by KTV2 teams (tarte tatin, crème brûlée, etc.) that will be broadcast on national TV, during the broadcast 'Sunshine program' due on 20 October. The press (The Times Kuwait) will also be invited and will conduct an interview with the person concerned.



Kuwaiti video influencer, Ahmed Zamel, a young Kuwaiti who is passionate about food and cooking, at his home. He will be producing a 'ratatouille' recipe video that he will subsequently broadcast on his networks of 4.5 million followers, to present the Goût de France initiative and by mentioning his partnership with the Embassy. He will also conduct an interview with KTV.

Chef Daniel Halabi, of Lebanese origin, will make a 'Paris Brest' in his kitchens. KTV2 will send a crew to record the footage and the Embassy communications team will also provide media coverage of the event.

Cooking workshop 'gourmet coffee' on 20 October from 4:30pm to 8:30pm when Marie Claude Lefebvre (culinary advisor) will organize a cooking workshop on the occasion of Operation Goût de France. She will also be interviewed by TV and media coverage will be provided by IFK.

Kuwaiti video influencer Abdelkarim Abdelmomen will do a presentation video on Operation Goût de France.

Executive Chef Thierry Papillier of Four Seasons Hotel will be broadcast on national TV.

French cuisine is all about enjoying food

Staff Report

David Harnois from France is a renowned chef heading the kitchen at Radisson Blu Hotel, which is known for having some of the finest fine dining restaurants in the country. Chef Harnois is charismatic and passionate about food, he speaks to The Times Kuwait about French Gourmet food and its popularity.

He began by explaining the unique features of French Gourmet food: "In France, food isn't just for flavor and function; it's fun, a tradition, part of a greater mentality.

And whilst French cooking techniques, such as sautéing and poaching, and dishes, à la cassoulet and bouillabaisse, are undoubtedly inimitable, it's the French food culture and traditions surrounding these that truly make this cuisine one of a kind.

"It's taking your time to sit down and really enjoy the food. Lunch is the main meal of the day for the French and the tradition is that lunch takes at least two hours. It's time to connect with your family and loved ones.

Commenting on popular food and eating trends in Kuwait, Chef Harnois noted, "The trends in Kuwait change fast. I see now that more and more people are interested in eating simple, wholesome, good quality food

made from local and fresh ingredients. Healthy, vegetarian and vegan food is also on the rise."

Revealing the variety of food he planned to introduce this year based on local trends, he said, "Fresh local



produce! A lot of people in Kuwait are not aware what amazing stuff is being produced here in Kuwait. I am working with a friend whose name is Salman. He has a farm here in Kuwait and is very keen on experimenting. So the plan is to introduce more local produce. And we'll develop from there.



Recipe by David Harnois



Creme Brulee

Ingredients

5 Serving

- 10 egg yolks
- 160gr tablespoons white sugar, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract or pod (orange zest if needed)
- 750ml heavy cream
- .250ml milk
- 01 tablespoons brown sugar
- Fresh strawberry's

Preheat the oven to 170 degrees c

Place the cream, milk, vanilla bean and its pulp into a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, cover and allow to sit for 15 minutes. Remove the vanilla bean and reserve for another use.

In a medium bowl, whisk together 100gr sugar and the egg yolks until well blended and it just starts to lighten in colour. Add the cream a little at a time, stirring continually. Pour the liquid into ramekins. Place the ramekins into a large cake try or roasting pan. Pour enough hot water into the pan to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake just until the crème brulee is set, but still trembling in the centre, approximately 40 to 45 minutes.

Remove the ramekins from the roasting pan and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 3 days. Remove the crème brulee from the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes prior to browning the sugar on top. Divide the remaining 60gr vanilla sugar equally among the 6 dishes and spread evenly on top. Using a torch, melt the sugar and form a crispy top. Allow the crème brulee to sit for at least 5 minutes before serving.

Tarte Tatin



Ingredients

for 5 servings

- 1 sheet puff pastry,
- 750gr apple (1.5 kg), Granny Smith
- 20ml water
- 150gr sugar
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter cream, for serving

Preparation

1. Using a 23 cm flat-sided cake pan as a template, cut a circle out from the puff pastry. Using a fork, poke holes all over to provide ventilation. Set aside.
2. Peel and quarter the apples, using a spoon or melon baller to remove the cores.
3. Preheat oven to 190°C.
4. In a large saucepan over medium heat, distribute the water and sugar evenly and cook until light amber in colour, stirring to help melt any lumps, 5-7 minutes. Add the butter, stirring constantly until the colour is a creamy light brown. Add the apples, stirring until they are coated in a thick layer of caramel.
5. Cook for about 10 minutes, turning the apples constantly so that they bathe in the caramel. Remove from the heat when the caramel has reduced and little remains in the bottom of the pan. Be careful not to burn the caramel, tasting it from time to time to ensure it does not taste bitter.
6. Arrange the apple slices on the bottom of the cake pan. Press the apples tightly against each other, then pour the remaining caramel over the top.
7. Lay the circle of puff pastry on top. Tuck the puff pastry down the sides of the pan.
8. Bake for 45-50 minutes, until the pastry is golden brown and firm. Cool for 10mins, then invert onto a plate.
9. serve with cream.

MoH aims to stabilize, not eradicate, coronavirus infections

A statement attributed to the Ministry of Health (MoH), while noting that the epidemiological situation in the country had vastly improved, also acknowledged that achieving 'zero-infections' with SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 disease is not a realistic aim. The statement added that the aim now was to stabilize infections at the current rate of 30 cases per day, which on its own could be considered a significant achievement.

Revealing that with more than 80 percent of the population receiving the vaccination 'lockdowns' and complete closure of borders were a thing of the past, and moreover they have on hindsight proven to be less than effective in stemming the spread of infections.

In a separate context, the ministry statement noted that those who received the Oxford-AstraZeneca

vaccine could safely receive a third booster dose with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. The mixing of vaccine doses has proven to be safe, reliable, and in fact desirable, in tests conducted in several European countries.

The ministry indicated that those who received the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine more than six months ago were now eligible to receive the booster dose in November or December.

Meanwhile, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Health, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad opened the door for registration to receive winter vaccinations (influenza and pneumococcal bacteria) for the age group 50 years and above, and then for registration from the remaining age groups.

He also revealed that the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Center for the COVID-19 vaccination has been opened for those unable to receive the vaccine for



whatever reason to receive the vaccine, without prior appointments, in any age group covered by the vaccination drive. At the same time, the comprehensive field-vaccination campaign continued to provide vaccinations in a number of suburbs, including Bneid Al-Qar, Hawally and Mahboula,

Eram Group joins hands with Italy's DMI Wibes

A new partnership between Eram Group and Italian company DMI Wibes, experts in predictive maintenance solutions, augurs well for the Saudi market.

This collaboration is in accordance with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 with special emphasis on digital transformation, self-sufficiency and localization in the industrial sector.

The new entity will be known as Wibes Eram and will be dedicated to developing IIoT solutions and predictive maintenance platforms; manufacturing sensors and IIoT devices and will also provide services for installation along with monitoring of industrial machineries and infrastructures. The company will be based in the Eastern province and will play a central role in the global expansion of WIBES solutions.

With this stake, Eram Group is strongly positioned to expand its existing network and offer the WIBES solutions to the GCC market by providing it with advanced predictive maintenance solutions. These will enhance visibility on the actual condition of the assets, thereby minimizing possible unscheduled downtimes and allowing for a smooth transition from traditional reactive maintenance.

During his visit to Eram Group office in Al-Khobar, the Chairman of DMI Wibes, Tommaso Rocca reiterated his commitment to expand services in GCC & India, in partnership with Eram Group.

Mr. Tommaso Rocca is also the shareholder of Techint Group (Tenaris, Ternium, Tenova, Humanitas Hospital) and Chairman of Versilfood, a company operating in the food industry, which is a leader in the European Union for processing and distribution of truffles, mushrooms, berries and vegetables.

Expressing his delight over the new partnership he said, "Working with the Eram Group gives us a decided edge in the market where DMI technology is concerned and its transfer to the Saudi market promises to fast track the dissemination of WIBES solutions from our facility being set up in the



Eastern Province." Digital Media Industries S.r.l. (DMI), had been in the forefront of developing IIOT, digital transformation solutions since 2004 with special attention given to Predictive Maintenance solutions, specifically aiming to upgrade old machines by equipping them with sensors and transducers so they are modernized and get a fresh lease of life.

Commenting on this development, Eram Group Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Siddeek Ahmed said, "As a progressive, forward thinking company we are always open to any initiatives that contribute positively to the Saudi market and we believe this venture will be of great value and lead to significant cost savings and increased revenue for business enterprises that manage large installations."

"From the introduction of advanced solutions including predictive maintenance platforms, manufacturing sensors, IoT devices to the planned R&D and the establishment of a manufacturing value chain which will enable job creation in the region, this is a tangible step in the right direction."

Eram Group has a strong footprint in the Kingdom when it comes to manufacturing and services. Some

of the established entities include a newly constructed production facility of Arabian Power Electronics Company, the Hydrofit Arabian Maintenance Company, and a state-of-the-art clinic Qemat as Sihha medical center in Al Khobar, which was inaugurated earlier this year.

With this partnership, Tommaso Rocca and Dr. Siddeek Ahmed made a joint statement, "This is indeed the perfect time for expansion in the region and both entities intend to collaborate by extending the services, explore investment and acquisition opportunities in areas of Industrial 4.0, Digital transformation, Advanced and emerging technologies, Energy storage solutions, Health care technology & Infrastructure services".

DMI Wibes developed their integrated predictive maintenance platform called WIBES, based on edge computing concept allowing for relevant reduction of data transfer and storage. This encourages condition-based maintenance possible and sustainable. WIBES enables the implementation of efficient, cost effective and diffused sensors networks, with hundreds of monitoring points, including vibrations, thermographs, gas and chemical agents.

CSC begins end-of-service payments to retrenched expatriates

Expatriate employees whose services in government institutions have been terminated are to receive their end-of-service payments with immediate effect, following the receipt by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) of necessary funds from the Ministry of Finance.

An official at CSC said that the money allocated earlier for disbursement of end-of-service benefits to retrenched expatriates was not sufficient to pay the large number of employees who were terminated recently

as part of the Kuwaitization drive. Hence the CSC had requested the finance ministry for additional funds. She thanked the Ministry of Finance for its cooperation in helping to expedite the disbursement to all employees who completed all procedures related to their entitlements.

Meanwhile, though the Kuwaitization drive was gathering pace in the public sector resulting in termination of expat employees, the private sector was hiring even more expats and holding on to current



expat employees. According to the Deputy Director-General of the Public Authority for Manpower for the Labor Affairs Sector, Abdullah Al-Mutatah, a total of 666,000 work permits were renewed during the period from mid-January to end September of this year.

He also revealed that during the same period, 146,000 workers sought transfer from one company to another, while around 50,000 expat workers left the labor market voluntarily

Food waste impairs Kuwait's sustainable goals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the previous day's food waste. While the notion of individuals scavenging for food in a prosperous country like Kuwait may seem preposterous, it only underlines the wide disparity that exists in the country between the haves and have-nots. Even if the food collected from waste bins is not for the collector's consumption, some of it could end up in illegal open food markets in suburbs, where there are buyers for these items among the large expatriate worker population that live there. Either way, it is a sobering thought to ponder on World Food Day.

Food waste in Kuwait is nothing new; it has been a socially acceptable phenomena probably starting from the time that oil wealth began seeping into the country. Many people waste food out of ignorance about quality and safety issues, throwing out unopened containers of food because it is past its 'Best before date', or because of discoloration, or over ripeness of fresh fruits and vegetables. While this form of food waste can be easily curbed through better awareness programs, there are also a handful of snobs who consider the amount of food wasted, especially after a party or religious festival, to be an indication of their wealth and social status.

Access to food products from around

the world at prices that are negligible relative to income that result in food costs forming only a small portion of monthly household budgets, is probably another reason why there is so much food wastage in the country. In addition, the prodigious food subsidies granted to citizens by the state, including for many basic food items such as rice, chicken, lentils, milk powder and sugar, as well as heavily subsidized items from the government-owned Kuwait Flour Mills, leads to very little appreciation for the value of food.

Understanding the true scale of food waste is essential to target solutions and to drive policy and process interventions by the authorities. But unfortunately, there is a significant dearth of accurate data on the amount of food waste generated in the country. Although there are a few peer-reviewed studies on the subject, the latest dates back to 2012. Perhaps the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) or the Department of Sociology and Social Work at Kuwait University will undertake a more accurate and detailed study on the amount of food waste in Kuwait.

In the meantime, the government periodically presents its reports on the topic to international entities, such as the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with most of the

data being based on estimates and guesstimates. Nevertheless, relying on these government reports and its own approximations, the annual UNEP report, 'Global Food Waste Index 2021' estimates that almost 400,000 tonnes, which is equivalent to around 95kg per capita of food waste, is generated each year at the household level in Kuwait.

The food waste index for 2021 also reveals that annual household food waste in Bahrain topped the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, at 132kg/capita. This phenomenal waste in tiny Bahrain also placed the country among the top ten worst waste generators in the world. At 105kg/capita Saudi Arabia came in second spot, while Oman, Qatar, the UAE and Kuwait, each respectively wasting 95kg/capita were jointly in third position in the GCC. However, even the UNEP expressed skepticism on these results and said it accorded only a low level of confidence in the data provided.

With the possible exception of Saudi Arabia, where the UN organization was provided with greater detail by the authorities, the index ranking of other states should at best be considered tentative. Moreover, the per capita wastage only tells part of the story, as the figure can be skewed in favor of countries with larger populations. On the other hand, a figure expressed in total tonnes of waste generated would, in general, favor countries with smaller populations.

Irrespective of per capita waste figures or total tonnage of waste generated annually, the amount of waste generated places tremendous pressure on limited natural resources, the environment and climate of the region. In order to measure the amount of food that goes to waste and to understand where the waste is happening in the food supply chain, analysts distinguish between 'food loss' and 'food waste'. Food loss refers to any food that is discarded, incinerated or otherwise disposed of in the production, storage and transportation process of food. On the other hand, food waste refers to food that is discarded at the level of retailers, food service providers such as restaurants, and at the consumer household level.

Both food loss and food waste undermines the sustainability of our food systems, as all resources used to produce the food, including water, land, energy, labor and capital, go to waste. In addition, the disposal of food loss and waste in landfills, leads to greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change. Estimates suggest that 8 to 10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed. Food loss and waste can also negatively impact food security and food availability, and contribute to

increasing cost of available food.

Figures from United Nations entities such as UNEP and FAO reveal that around 14 percent of food produced globally is lost at the production stage due to inadequate harvesting, storage and inefficient packing and transport. A further 17 percent is wasted at the retail, food service and consumer level. Data from 2019 also show that while food available for consumption was around 5.4 billion tonnes, food waste accounted for around 931 million tonnes (17%). Of this waste, retail accounted for 13 percent, food services for 26 percent and households for the remaining 61 percent.

Breaking this down further, reports show that of the total 121kg per capita food waste per year globally, retail accounted for 15kg per capita, food services for 32kg per capita, and households were responsible for 74kg per capita. Clearly, households are responsible for the largest portion of waste generated globally and we, as individuals, need and should act urgently to reduce our household footprint on the planet.

Increasing awareness programs, promoting sustainable lifestyles and empowering the younger generation are effective strategies that could be pursued by the authorities here to positively impact food waste at the consumer level. Stricter laws against food waste could also be contemplated at the retail level, such as the one prevailing in France, where the law requires retailers and food service providers to redistribute edible food to food banks and charities, or face heavy fines and possibly jail terms for the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, in what is certainly a praiseworthy development in Kuwait, civil society appears to be waking up to the reality of the enormous food wasted at the retail, food service and household level. More importantly, some people are actually doing something about it. Non-Government Organizations (NGO) such as the Kuwait Food Bank and youth ventures such as ReFood-Kuwait have launched initiatives aimed at tackling the issue of food waste in the country.

ReFood, a local non-profit company founded in 2014, is confronting food waste at the retail level in Kuwait by coordinating with other stakeholders, volunteers and beneficiary communities. They aim to bridge the gap between excess food in the industry with the lack of food among beneficiary communities. ReFood receives food from suppliers, who are about to discard the product due to it being close to 'best-before date' or other reasons, and then distributes this to beneficiary communities that have subscribed to their model of food supply.

ReFood assures suppliers of a quality-controlled system to handle all excess

products, and beneficiaries are ensured food that is perfectly safe to consume. Initiatives such as ReFood will hopefully encourage others, including the government, civil society organizations and individuals, to help reduce food waste at the retail and household level and prevent huge amounts of waste food filling landfills at an alarmingly rapid rate.

Creating more landfills to meet the increase in food waste is certainly not a sustainable solution. Health authorities, the municipality, social activists and residents in areas bordering landfills in Kuwait have long pointed to the deleterious health aspects and environmental impact of landfills. Besides the stench, potential fires and a breeding ground for pests and diseases, landfills also contaminate groundwater supplies, and the toxic gases released from these sites include methane, a far more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide in harming the atmosphere. However, with limited land, the prospect of shifting waste dumping sites to even further locations is becoming increasingly unrealistic in Kuwait.

On a related note, there have been frequent calls for the country to attain self-sufficiency in food. While this could indirectly cut food loss sustained in transportation, and reduce the cost of importing foods, attempting self-sufficiency in food is not a practical prospect in arid places like Kuwait. Currently, local agriculture production in Kuwait is nowhere close to helping the country achieve self-sufficiency. In most cases, agriculture farms are hobbyist ventures by affluent Kuwaitis who hold on to subsidized land by producing a nominal amount of food items for sale at assured prices to local cooperatives. Meanwhile, the few farmers who actually engage in food production barely produce enough food to sustain their business, let alone help the country achieve self-sufficiency.

Underlining this inability to achieve self-sufficiency, the Central Bank of Kuwait in a presentation to the Council of Ministers earlier this year, revealed that when it came to food self-sufficiency, or the ability of the country to maintain food consumption in times of crisis, Kuwait and the region in general ranked very low on the global index. The low ranking is largely the result of the region's overwhelming dependence on food imports to ensure the nation's food stability and security. Importing food products at a heavy cost and then subsidizing it, often to below cost levels, in order to pamper citizens, who then promptly toss a large amount of it into the trash, is not a viable or sustainable option for Kuwait or for individual households.



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Kuwait Investment Authority eyes new investments in Oman



H.E. the Ambassador and Bader Al-Ajeel



Adnan Al-Bahar and H.E. the Ambassador



Muhammad AlNaqi and Abdulla Al-Mulla

- **Ambassador Al Kharousi: Oman has many unique elements that make it an attractive environment for investment**
 - **Al-Ajeel: The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) is interested in stimulating Kuwaiti investments in Oman**
 - **Al-Anjeri: Our role is to provide an effective platform for dialogue and build more bridges of communication**

Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Kuwait, H.E. Dr. Saleh Al Kharousi, in cooperation with Reconnaissance Research, held the second discussion session in a series of special sessions to assess the reality of commercial relations between Oman and Kuwait, and to discuss ways to develop them.

Commenting on the meeting, Ambassador Al Kharousi said: "I was pleased with the high level and caliber of the attendees, as my second meeting with a group of businessmen and financial experts in Kuwait from different sectors was a good opportunity to exchange views, in order to improve the current rates of trade exchange. I am happy with the high level of transparency that was characteristic of this discussion which enabled a clearer understanding."

He added, "This meeting comes as part of a series of ongoing meetings, in coordination with Reconnaissance Research, from which we aim to:

Discuss the advantages and investment opportunities in Oman.

Listen to the challenges facing Kuwaiti investors from all aspects. And discuss the appropriate solutions to overcome these challenges and avoid them in the future.

Achieve a better understanding of their



perception and suggestions on ways to enhance economic relations between the two countries."

"Oman has many unique elements that make it an attractive environment for investment in several sectors, perhaps the most prominent of which are the tourism sector, food industries, in addition to logistics services, as well as the energy and mining sector, medium and light industries and crafts. We also seek to form a joint working team. An Omani-Kuwaiti group that includes a group of experts in the public and private sectors to create sustainable support for Kuwaiti investments."

For his part, and speaking on the role of

the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the Acting Managing Director and executive director of the General Reserve at KIA, Bader Al-Ajeel said: "Kuwait has a great interest in exploring the new investment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman, and searching for opportunities that contribute to the Authority's interest in attractive returns."

He added: "We appreciate the serious efforts made by Ambassador Al Kharousi to discuss ways to attract Kuwaiti capital, and we thank him for this kind invitation, and encourage him to continue this important step by reaching out to know the ways to create an attractive environment for Kuwaitis in Oman. We are also keen to cooperate with

the ambassador to provide him with the required expertise and professional advice to help stimulate and revitalize new Kuwaiti investments in Oman in terms of quantity and quality. We attach great importance to our GCC partnerships, with the aim of creating a system of strategic security cooperation in important and vital sectors such as logistics and food security."

Regarding the role of Reconnaissance Research, the founder and CEO of the center, Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, said: "Our role as a think-tank is to provide an effective platform for dialogue and build more bridges of communication with diplomatic missions. His Excellency the Omani ambassador has a keenness and sincere interest in maximizing commercial cooperation between the two countries, and the meeting today comes within the framework of activating the tools of in-depth and honest discussions with experts and seasoned businessmen, to help the ambassador achieve the set goals, which are mostly common goals for the two brotherly countries."

The meeting was attended by: Bader Al-Ajeel, Adnan Al-Bahar, Muhammad Al Naqi, Abdulla Al-Mulla, Hossam Marafi, Hisham Al-Oumi, Ali Al-Zalzal, Abdul Rahman Al-Yassin, Abdullah bin Nasser, Youssef Al-Ghusain, Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

Cabinet calls for speedy implementation of coastline projects

In its weekly meeting on Wednesday, the Council of Ministers directed its Public Services Committee to urgently coordinate with the relevant government entities to ensure all obstacles impeding the execution of Sulaibikhat and Jahra coastline development projects were removed.

During the meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, heard from the head of Kuwait Municipality, Eng. Ahmad Al-Manfouhi, who briefed the cabinet on the master-plans for the 38-kilometers-long Sulaibikhat coastline project, and the 7.3 kilometers-long Jahra Corniche project.

In his presentation, Al-Manfouhi revealed that the Sulaibikhat project comprises a sports area and creativity center, while the Jahra project incorporates shopping centers, entertainment and sports facilities, an environment village and a plants garden.

NCCAL, Indian Embassy to coordinate in holding cultural programs

National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) and the Indian Embassy in Kuwait signed last week a cultural coordination program to mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and India.

Secretary-General of NCCAL Kamel Al-Abduljaleel stated in a speech during the signing of the cultural program protocol that India holds a special place in Kuwait and shares a long-established connection with Kuwait represented by international sea-trade routes and exchange of commodities. Stressing that NCCAL is keen on implementing the program and ensuring its success, the secretary-general added that signing the program is a clear indicator of the desire to boost cultural, artistic and

historical relations between the two countries.

He also clarified that the schedule of activities marking the 60th anniversary of forging bilateral relations is filled with riveting cultural and artistic activities, lasting up until the middle of June 2022. He noted that the program will attract significant interest among citizens and Indians, considering that Indians constitute the largest expatriate community in Kuwait.

For his part, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Sibi George said on the occasion that the cultural program will include various cultural collaborations with NCCAL to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Kuwaiti-Indian relations, while also showcasing the events of the program. Expressing his gratitude to council's secretary-



general and its employees for their role in advancing cultural and artistic cooperation between the two countries, Ambassador George said that the 60th anniversary marks an important occasion in terms of the friendship and cooperation between the two countries. Following the signing

of the program, the secretary-general and Ambassador George exchanged gifts and mementos. A documentary depicting life in India was played and books revolving around the Kuwaiti-Indian relations issued by the council in Arabic and English were distributed among the audience.

AUTUMN IN KASHMIR

BY SAREHA SHAH
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

It is that time of the year when I miss my home even more. Kashmir is preparing to bid an adieu to summer and welcome harsh cold winter. In between there is autumn, 'Harod' as it is famously called back home.

Autumn is an interesting season in Kashmir valley. It is neither too hot nor too cold. There is a nip in the air during mornings and evenings. Days are pleasant and warm which makes it the most beautiful season for long drives and picnics. People seek comfort in warm weather, overnight camping at hill-resorts are common throughout autumn. Long walks are rejuvenating; enjoying 'Noon-chai' (Kashmiri tea) in the parks and Mughal gardens in the evening is a common sight in the course of autumn.

Autumn is often called the 'Golden' season in Kashmir. Trees shed leaves during this season everywhere in the world, but in Kashmir it is even more special. The reason being chinar trees. The fallen maple-shaped chinar leaves turn almost every inch of barren land golden. It is spectacular to watch golden leaves cover the vast ground as if one is looking at a golden land.

Chinar trees, or 'Booyen' as it is called in Kashmir, is an integral part of Kashmir's landscape. This majestic tree is believed to have been brought from Persia to Kashmir in 1374 AD and is often called 'Royal tree' of Kashmir. It is illegal to cut down chinar trees

over there; such is the importance of this tree. Overall, all hues of yellow, golden, crimson and orange are visible throughout autumn in Kashmir. The rustling of crisp chinar leaves adds music to the scene; it is a beauty beyond words. My soul is wedded to this season when it comes to spending autumn at my place in Kashmir.

People often say that autumn is a preparation for winter and rightly so. Long forgotten woolens, blankets, phirans (traditional winter dress of Kashmir) come out of closets. People shop for clothes, shoes, shawls, coats and jackets for the coming

winter. Kangris (an earthen fire-pot covered with willow wicker around) and charcoal are stocked for winter. 'Hokh-suen' — dried vegetables are prepared in anticipation of winter. Not just people, nature also prepares. It is just enchanting to witness mountains changing color; streams and rivers lowering their water flow; gardens turning yellow — all in preparation for winter.

Kashmir sees a huge footfall of tourists during winters, but people who cannot bear extreme cold weather visit Kashmir during autumn. Due to pleasant weather and golden chinar leaves, many tourists prefer this season

over winter and spring. People prefer to stay in houseboats and long shikara (Flat-bottomed boat) rides are more common during autumn.

This season is not just picturesque, natives are also usually busy in this season with harvesting, as the world famous Kashmiri saffron is harvested during this period.

Saffron crops reach their zenith in autumn and are harvested in late October and early December. This purple gold is regarded as one of the finest quality saffrons in the world and is in huge demand in the international market.

Another important harvesting which marks the beginning of autumn in the valley is paddy harvesting. People in rural areas harvest paddy during this season.

This makes storage of food grains for the winter season easy. The sight of purple saffron fields and vast golden ripe paddy fields at the onset of autumn is incredibly charming. With the progress of autumn these crops are harvested and fields present a busy look. By the end of autumn fields are barren as if the season took away its gorgeousness with it.

Overall, autumn in Kashmir is a wonderful experience. It is like living a dream. Colorful, pleasant, enjoyable; it is a mix of sunshine and cold. Spending autumn in Kashmir is the best way to end a year and the scenic season never fails to leave you amazed. Experiencing autumn in Kashmir changes the usual definition of autumn as a dead and dull season; as they say, one autumn in Kashmir valley is a lifetime experience.



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Pandora Papers and Threat to Democracy



KATHARINA PISTOR

Professor of Comparative Law at Columbia Law School, is the author of The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality.

The 'Pandora Papers', a new investigation led by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, has fueled outrage around the world. Politicians, businesspeople, sports stars, and cultural icons have been caught in the act of hiding their wealth and lying about it. But how likely is a reckoning for the lawyers and accountants who helped them?

There is nothing new about the practices the ICIJ's investigation uncovered. True, the sheer scale, sophistication, and legal fire power deployed to allow today's ultra-rich and powerful to game the law may be newsworthy. But the only truly shocking revelation is that it took more than 600 journalists from around the world to expose these practices, often risking their own safety and professional futures. The difficulty of that task attests to how well lawyers, legislatures, and courts have tilted the law in favor of elites.

To hide their wealth, today's rich and powerful have availed themselves of centuries-old legal coding strategies. In 1535, King Henry VIII of England cracked down on a legal device known as 'the use', because it threatened to undermine existing (feudal) property relations and served as a tax-avoidance vehicle. But thanks to clever legal arbitrage, it was soon replaced by an even more powerful device: 'the trust'.

Legally encoded by solicitors and recognized by courts of equity, the trust remains one of the most ingenious legal tools ever invented for the creation and preservation of private wealth. In the old days, it allowed the wealthy to circumvent inheritance rules. Today, it is the go-to vehicle for tax avoidance and for structuring financial assets, including asset-backed securities and their derivatives.

Functionally, a trust alters the rights and obligations to an asset without observing the formal rules of property law;



it thus creates a shadow property right. Establishing a trust requires an asset — such as land, shares, or bonds — and three personas: an owner (settlor), a manager (trustee), and a beneficiary. The owner transfers legal title (though not necessarily actual possession) over the asset to the trustee, who promises to manage it on behalf of the beneficiary in accordance with the owner's instructions.

Nobody else needs to know about

by purposeful legal design. Attorneys pushed existing legal boundaries, courts recognized and enforced their innovations, and then lawmakers (many of them presumably beholden to wealthy donors) codified those practices into statutory legislation. As previous restrictions were stripped away, trust law expanded its remit.

These legal changes ensured that an ever-greater array of assets could be held in trust, and that the role of the trustee

“ In the age of globalization, most legislatures have been effectively stripped of control over the law practised in their jurisdiction, because law has become portable. If one country does not have the 'right' law, another one might. ”

this arrangement, because there is no requirement to register the title or disclose the identities of the parties. This lack of transparency makes the trust the perfect vehicle for playing hide and seek with creditors and tax authorities. And because legal title and economic benefits are split among the three personas, nobody willingly assumes the obligations that come with ownership.

The trust became a favored legal device for global elites not through some invisible hand of the market, but rather

could be delegated to legal persons rather than honorable individuals like judges. Moreover, fiduciary duties were curtailed, the trustees' liability was limited, and the lifespan of the trust became increasingly elastic. Together, these legal adaptations made the trust fit for global finance.

Countries that lacked this device were encouraged to emulate it. An international treaty, the 1985 Hague Convention on Trusts, was adopted with this goal in mind. In countries where lawmakers have resisted the pressure to sanction trusts,

attorneys have fashioned equivalent devices from the laws governing foundations, associations, or corporations, betting (often correctly) that courts would vindicate their innovations.

While some jurisdictions have gone out of their way to be legally hospitable to private wealth creation, others have tried to crack down on tax and legal arbitrage. But legal restrictions work only if the legislature controls which law is practiced within its jurisdiction.

In the age of globalization, most legislatures have been effectively stripped of such control, because law has become portable. If one country does not have the 'right' law, another one might. As long as the place of business recognizes and enforces foreign law, the legal and accounting paperwork can be channeled to the friendliest foreign jurisdiction, and the deed is done.

National legal systems thus have become items on an international menu of options from which asset holders choose the laws by which they wish to be governed. They do not need a passport or a visa; all they need is a legal shell. Assuming a new legal identity in this way, the privileged few can decide how much to pay in taxes, and which regulations to endure. And if legal obstacles cannot be overcome quite that easily, lawyers from leading global law firms will draft legislation to make a country compliant with the 'best practices' of global finance. Here, tax and trust havens such as South Dakota and the British Virgin Islands offer the gold standard.

The costs of these practices are borne by the least mobile and the insufficiently wealthy. But turning law into a gold mine for the rich and powerful causes harm well beyond the immediate inequities it generates. By potentially undermining the legitimacy of the law, it threatens the very foundation of democratic governance.

The more that wealthy elites and their lawyers insist that everything they do is legal, the less the public will trust the law. Today's global elites might be able to continue to conjure private wealth from law. But no resource can be mined forever. Once lost, trust in the law will be difficult to regain. The wealthy will have lost their most valuable asset of all.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

A New Global Economic Consensus



MARIANA MAZZUCATO

Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value at University College London, is Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose. She is the author of, among others, *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths*, and, most recently, *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism*.

The Washington Consensus is on its way out. In a report released this week, the G7 Economic Resilience Panel (where I represent Italy) demands a radically different relationship between the public and private sectors to create a sustainable, equitable, and resilient economy. When G20 leaders gather on October 30-31 to discuss how to 'overcome the great challenges of today', including the pandemic, climate change, rising inequality, and economic fragility, they must avoid falling back on the outdated assumptions that landed us in our current mess.

The Washington Consensus defined the rules of the game for the global economy for almost a half-century. The term came into vogue in 1989 — the year that Western-style capitalism consolidated its global reach — to describe the battery of fiscal, tax, and trade policies being promoted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It became a catchphrase for neoliberal globalization, and thus came under fire, even from leading lights of its core institutions, for exacerbating inequalities and perpetuating the Global South's subordination to the North.

Having narrowly avoided a global economic collapse twice — first in 2008 and then in 2020, when the coronavirus crisis nearly brought down the financial system — the world now confronts a future of unprecedented risk, uncertainty, turmoil, and climate breakdown. World leaders have a simple choice: continue supporting a failed economic system, or jettison the Washington Consensus for a new international social contract.

The alternative is the recently proposed 'Cornwall Consensus'. Whereas the Washington Consensus minimized the state's role in the economy and pushed an aggressive free-market agenda of deregulation, privatization, and trade liberalization, the Cornwall Consensus (reflecting commitments voiced at the G7 summit in Cornwall last June) would invert these imperatives. By revitalizing the state's economic role, it would allow us to pursue societal goals, build international solidarity, and reform global governance in the interest of the common good.

This means that grants and investments from state and multilateral organizations would require recipients to pursue rapid decarbonization (rather than rapid market liberalization, as required by IMF lending for structural adjustment programs). It means that governments would pivot from repairing — intervening only after the damage is done — to preparing: taking



steps in advance to protect us from future risks and shocks.

The Cornwall Consensus also would have us move from reactively fixing market failures to proactively shaping and making the kinds of markets we need to nurture in a green economy. It would have us replace redistribution with pre-distribution. The state would coordinate mission-oriented public-private partnerships aimed at creating a resilient, sustainable, and equitable economy.

Why is a new consensus needed? The most obvious answer is that the old model is no longer producing widely distributed benefits, if it ever did. It has proven to be disastrously incapable of responding effectively to massive economic, ecological, and epidemiological shocks.

Achieving the United Nations

climate agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.

Our report highlights the urgent need to strengthen the global economy's resilience against future risks and shocks, whether acute (such as pandemics) or chronic (like extreme wealth and income polarization). We argue for a radical reorientation in how we think about economic development — moving from measuring growth in terms of GDP, GVA (gross value added), or financial returns to assessing success on the basis of whether we achieve ambitious common goals.

Three of the report's most salient recommendations concern COVID-19, the post-pandemic economic recovery, and climate breakdown. First, we call on the G7 to ensure vaccine equity globally,

the recommendation by the economist Nicholas Stern that this spending be increased to 2 percent of GDP per year, thereby raising \$1 trillion annually from now until 2030. But marshaling more money is not enough; how that money is spent is equally important. Public investment must be channeled through new contractual and institutional mechanisms that measure and incentivize the creation of long-term public value rather than short-term private profit.

And in response to the biggest challenge of all, the climate crisis, we call for a "CERN for climate technology." Inspired by CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, a mission-oriented research center focused on decarbonizing the economy would pool public and private investment into ambitious projects, including removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and creating zero-carbon solutions for 'hard-to-abate' industries like shipping, aviation, steel, and cement. This new multilateral and interdisciplinary institution would act as a catalyst for making and shaping new markets in renewable energy and circular production.

These are just three of seven recommendations we have made for the years ahead. Together, they provide the scaffolding for building a new global consensus — a policy agenda for governing the new economic paradigm that already is beginning to take shape.

Whether the Cornwall Consensus sticks remains to be seen. But something must replace the Washington Consensus if we are to flourish, rather than simply survive, on this planet. COVID-19 provides a glimpse of the momentous collective-action problems confronting us. Only renewed international cooperation and coordination of enhanced state capacities — a new social contract underwritten by a new global consensus — can prepare us for tackling the escalating, interlocking crises ahead.

“Public investment must be channeled through new contractual and institutional mechanisms that measure and incentivize the creation of long-term public value rather than short-term private profit.”

Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015, was always going to be difficult under the prevailing global governance arrangements. But now, in the wake of a pandemic that pushed state and market capacities beyond the breaking point, the task has become impossible. Today's crisis conditions make a new global consensus essential for humanity's survival on this planet.

We are on the cusp of a long-overdue paradigm shift. But this progress could easily be reversed. Most economic institutions are still governed by outdated rules that render them unable to marshal the responses needed to end the pandemic, let alone achieve the Paris

and to invest substantially in pandemic preparedness and mission-oriented health financing. We must make equitable access, particularly to innovations that benefit from large public investments and advance purchase commitments, a top priority.

We recognize that this will require a new approach to governing intellectual-property rights. Similarly, the World Health Organization's Council on the Economics of Health for All (which I chair) stresses that IP governance should be reformed to recognize that knowledge is the result of a collective value-creation process.

Second, we argue for increased state investment in the post-pandemic economic recovery, and we endorse



Excessive free time diminishes happiness

In today's busy world of 24x7 activities many people complain of not having enough time, while there are also people who say they have nothing to do with all their time. In this context, a new study reports that while work overload and constantly trying to catch up with pending work is not healthy, the alternative, having too much free time is equally detrimental to health. Both conditions drained people of their sense of well-being.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States found that while the stress caused by work overload can take a toll on well-being, at the other end of the spectrum, excessive free time diminishes well-being because people feel they are not being productive.

'Productive' means more than simply being busy, said the researchers; feeling productive is related to our sense of purpose in life, and that seems to be lacking when people have too much time on their hands. The researchers used previous national surveys conducted in the US, where participants were asked about their time use and subjective well-being or life satisfaction. One study of 13,600 participants noted that those with the least free time — those having a maximum of less than an hour each day — gave lower ratings to their life satisfaction.



The second survey of 21,700 Americans found the same, but also suggested that an abundance of free time is no better.

While a dearth of free time was related to poorer well-being, the benefits of extra time seemed to plateau at two hours per day: Having more free time than that did not make people happier. And well-being started to decrease significantly when people had more than five hours of free time.

For the study, 'free time' was defined

as time spent doing what you want, not in obligatory activities like work, household chores and other appointments. The team found that the lesser well-being among people with lots of free time was not explained by unemployment or retirement, or by being unmarried or childless.

To understand whether free time spent productively was different from idleness, the researchers conducted an experiment in which participants imagined having a moderate amount of free time

each day (3.5 hours) or lots of it (7 hours). They also envisioned spending that time either productively (hobbies, exercising or playing with their kids, for example) or unproductively (watching TV, for instance).

Overall, participants felt their well-being would take a dive if they had lots of free time — but only if it was unproductive time. But the results of this experiment are difficult to translate in real life, as past research has shown that people are bad at predicting what makes them happy.

Nevertheless, it does make sense that productive free time would be different from directionless time. Previous studies have shown that people tended to be in a better mood at work where they were absorbed in the task at hand, compared to their more aimless days off.

Another shortcoming of the study is that there is no universal definition of 'productive'. For instance, reading a good book might seem idle to some, while others appreciate the mental stimulation.

The study concluded that though there is no prescription for how much free time anyone should have, nonetheless, if people stop for a moment to consider what they do with their time and why they do it, then the research would have been worth the effort, said a team member.

Take steps for a longer life



Walk your way to longevity, is the mantra being propounded by a new study that found taking just 7,000 steps each day, which translates to 30 minutes of brisk walking, could help you enjoy a longer and healthier life.

According to the study by researchers at Ohio State University in the United States, people who took about 7,000 steps per day had a 50 to 70 percent lower risk of dying from all causes after 11 years of follow-up, when compared with people who took fewer steps each day.

The study, which analyzed data from 2,210 participants, also found that it did not seem to matter how quickly you took those steps, nor what your gender, race, income level, weight, diet, or smoking habits are. More than half the participants were women, 42 percent were non-white, and their average age was 45 in the 20th year of the examination. Participants were also grouped as low, moderate and high, based on the number of steps they achieved per day.

The study found that participants in the low number of steps group, relative to those in the moderate and high step group had higher Body Mass Index (BMI), lower self-rated health, and higher prevalence of type2 diabetes and hypertension.

The study conforms with many public health guidelines that recommend getting at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (such as walking). Alternatively, you could get 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity (such as running or uphill hiking, rowing).

You could further enhance health benefits by adding moderate- to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity (such as resistance or weights) to aerobic exercises on at least two days per week. More importantly, spend less time sitting, as even light-intensity activity can offset some of the risks of being sedentary, just increase the amount and intensity of exercises gradually over time.

Also, do not be discouraged if you cannot walk 30 minutes or 7,000 steps a day, start with a 5- to 10-minute walk. Remember, any activity is a start, and before you know it, it becomes part of your daily routine.

Moderate-intensity activities include, brisk walking at a speed of around 4km per hour; biking slower than 15km per hour; engaging in water aerobics; or active gardening work. When you are ready for higher intensity exercise, you can choose activities such as hiking uphill, running, swimming laps, cycling at over 15km per hour or faster, or jumping rope.

No matter what level of exercise you choose, the overall message is to move more, with more intensity, and to sit less.



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Global North's Great Test



GORDON BROWN

A former prime minister and chancellor of the exchequer of the United Kingdom, is United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity.

With low-income countries in Africa and elsewhere still imploring rich countries to stop stockpiling millions of unused COVID-19 vaccines, there are still real doubts as to whether the United States and Europe will honor the promise made at this year's G7 summit to vaccinate the world by the end of 2022.

US President Joe Biden's administration has said that the Global North can deliver enough doses for everyone by next September's United Nations General Assembly. But the gulf between the vaccine-rich and vaccine-poor has grown so vast that under 2 percent of adults in low-income countries are fully vaccinated, compared to over 50 percent of adults in most high-income countries. Worse, millions of doses in high-income countries are now being wasted because they are not being used in time.



For many months earlier this year, Western governments could at least say that there was not enough vaccine supply to meet global demand. But, we are now producing 1.5 billion vaccines every month. As I write this, around 300 million doses of vaccines are lying unused, hoarded in

warehouses or on their way to fulfill delivery contracts that have been monopolized by Western countries. As a result, the World Health Organization's September 2021 goal of vaccinating at least 10 percent of the population in every low-income country — the basic level needed to cover health workers and the elderly — remains unrealized.

According to a major study by the research firm Airfinity, the number of unused doses will reach one billion by this December. To put that staggering figure into perspective, it is enough to meet our year-end goal of vaccinating 40 percent of the African population.

Making matters worse, Airfinity shows that if we do not act, 100 million unused vaccine doses will have passed their expiration dates by the end of this year. And if we cannot airlift surpluses to where they are needed on a schedule that preserves a two-month shelf life, this figure could rise to 241 million. Either way, that is near-criminal wastage. Exaggeration comes easily to politicians. But it is no overstatement to say that unless more vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments are made available to the Global South, there could be at least one million more COVID-induced deaths over the next year.

We know that more than 100,000 lives have been saved in Britain, owing to the administration of fewer than 100 million vaccine doses. Allowing 200 million or more doses to be wasted is thus tantamount to condemning hundreds of thousands of unvaccinated people in low-income countries to unnecessary suffering or death.

The upshot is that at Biden's vaccine summit — Global COVID-19 Summit held virtually on 22 September — more lives hanged in the balance than at any other peacetime gathering that I can recall. Failing to transfer millions of surplus doses to those in desperate need would be a grotesque failure of the most basic test of human solidarity and decency.

And so for world leaders convening at the UN this month, the stakes could not be higher. We are at a make-or-break moment to mitigate the monstrous, unforgivable vaccine inequality that has prevailed so far.

The data compiled by Airfinity suggests that 200 million doses

can be transferred immediately to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility and the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust for distribution across Africa and other low-income countries. That would be enough to meet the WHO's 10 percent target for every country. Moreover, Western countries can send the same amount of additional doses, around 200 million, to COVAX each month thereafter. That would be enough to address Africa's deficit of nearly 500 million doses, ensuring that some 40 percent of the continent's population is vaccinated by the end of the year, in line with the WHO's goal.

We have seen how vaccine nationalism leads to inequality, wastage, and far too many avoidable deaths. Not only is this approach self-serving; it is self-defeating. The longer the disease is allowed to spread in low-income countries, the greater the likelihood that it will develop new variants that will come back to haunt even the fully vaccinated. This basic truth lies at the heart of pleas that have been building this week from African leaders, former heads of state and

“

But what is missing today is a bold, human-centered narrative that abandons outdated free-market tropes and instead connects shared global policy challenges to improvements in the everyday lives of people.

”

government, the Pandemic Action Network, and groups like The Elders. NGOs and faith leaders in the Global South have issued statements calling for immediate action to prevent an epic moral catastrophe.

In a global health crisis born of a highly infectious and communicable disease, there is no alternative to collective global action. The vaccine summit represented the rich world's best chance to show that it means what it says.

[At the Global Summit: Ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better, which was hosted by the United States, representatives from more than 100 governments and other partners participated virtually and called for all parties to work together to: Vaccinate the World, Save Lives Now, and Build Back Better Global Health Security over the months ahead. They aligned around the World Health Organization (WHO) target of vaccinating at least 70 percent of the global population in every country before the start of the next UN General Assembly in 2022 and expressed shared urgency to do more, to act now, to enhance accountability, and to monitor progress.]

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