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Who cares about polar bears in Kuwait?

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

The world's eyes are on the Scottish city of Glasgow, United Kingdom, where global leaders, delegates and representatives from around the world are gathered for the 26th iteration of the annual United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). The event is seen as a climactic opportunity for the world to implement transformational shifts in climate policies and actions, and



commit to achieving the goal of limiting global warming to below 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels.

To realize this ambitious goal the world will have to collectively halve global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 and reach 'net-zero' emissions by 2050. The importance of COP26 cannot be overemphasized; decisions taken, or not taken at this gathering will have far-reaching consequences for the planet and its people. It could well mean the

difference between a livable planet for all, or a planet barely livable on, in the future.

So what has COP26 got to do with caring for polar bears in Kuwait? The rhetorical question underlines the indifference of many people to the potentially existential threat that global warming and climate change poses to Kuwait. An arid land lying at sea-level, Kuwait is particularly susceptible to the vagaries that climate change could bring to the environment. Ironic as it may seem, Kuwait is also a leading emitter of GHGs that lead to global warming and cause climate change.

Kuwait is also a major producer and exporter of fossil fuels, the combustion of which is the largest source of GHG emissions in the world. In what could be construed as a harbinger of times to come, Kuwait recorded the highest temperature in the world this year, registering 53.2°C in Nuwaiseeb to the south of Kuwait City on 22 June, 2021. Record high temperatures have increasingly become the norm in Kuwait in recent years.

Recurring scorching temperatures, increase in number and intensity of dust storms, fall in precipitation and depleting groundwater supplies are only the more tangible aspects of global warming that people are aware of. A less perceptible indirect influence of global warming that could probably have a more devastating impact on Kuwait in future is the predicted rise in sea level. Even a small increase in sea level would put at stake the lives and livelihood of people, nearly all of whom live along the coastline in this sea-level country.

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Dr Rasha Al-Sabah was presented with the Order of the Star of Italy award with the rank of Officer, the highest Italian award for foreigners, by the Italian ambassador during an exclusive ceremony held at his residence. In her more than 40 years as an educationist she has been a role model and a compassionate human being. Her life journey has been an amazing one and her contribution in the field of education in Kuwait has been extraordinary.

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More nationals head to private sector, but employment crisis continues



A new report by the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) reveals that most of the nationals who registered with the Authority since the start of the year opted to join the private sector.

The report by the National Employment Sector of PAM shows that of the over 16,000 national applicants who registered for jobs

during the first nine months of 2021, more than half (53.2%) expressed their interest to work in the private sector.

The data from PAM also reveals that the figure of 8,347 who opted to work in the private sector this year was the highest number relative to the past nine years. Records show that on average only around 6,000 nationals per year have shown an inclination to work in the private sector over the 2010 to 2020 period.

The increase in number of nationals expressing interest to work in the private sector is a boost to government's efforts aimed at encouraging more youth to opt for work in private companies. The public sector, which is the employment area of choice for most citizens, is under increasing pressure from the number of youth seeking government jobs each year.

Salaries and subsidies for public sector

employees already constitute more than two-third of the government's annual budget expenditure. In the face of recurring budget deficits each year, the authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain this level of spending. Kuwaitization of jobs has at best replaced lower salaried expatriates with more expensive nationals, without in any way helping to reduce the number of excess employees in most government entities.

On the other hand, attempts over the past few years to encourage young nationals entering the labor pool each year to seek employment with the private sector have been less than fruitful. Many young job aspirants have opted to receive unemployment benefits and await a government job rather than seek work in private firms.

Meanwhile, achieving the ideal balance

between number of people retiring and those being newly recruited each year are unlikely to be achieved any time soon as the vast majority of citizens employed in the public sector are young and have on average at least 20 years of service ahead before reaching retirement age.

According to official labor market statistics from the Central Statistical Bureau the vast majority (91.5%) of Kuwaitis in the government sector are under the age of 50 and over two-thirds (66.5%) of them are under 40 years of age. The figures also show that the proportion of those over 50 years of age is only 8.5 percent, and of those over 60 years remains around 0.8 percent. The relatively young profile of employees in government sector means that for the next 20 years or so achieving an ideal balance between retirees and new recruits looks increasingly unlikely.

Italy annuls quarantine for visitors from Kuwait

The Italian Ministry of Health has issued the following new ordinance which allows travelers coming from Kuwait to enter Italy for tourism and are no longer subject to quarantine.

Embassy of Italy in Kuwait has announced that it will resume issuing visit visas to travelers from Kuwait from 27 October, and that it will be possible to submit applications for Schengen visa through the outsourcing company VFS Global.

The embassy announcement follows a

decision last week by the Italian ministry of health to allow travelers arriving from Kuwait to enter Italy for tourism purposes without being subject to a quarantine period.

However, the embassy notification added that for other types of visas — national, study, medical treatment, official visits — applications must be submitted to the embassy. For further details visitors are directed to the embassy's website:

https://ambalkuwait.esteri.it/Ambasciata_



AlKuwait/en/informazioni_e_servizi/visti/visti.html

Entry into Italian territory is currently restricted to only people who are vaccinated with one of the four approved vaccines: Oxford-AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson.

Other conditions for entry to Italy include the submission of a 'passenger locator form' available online or at the airport and a negative COVID-19 test (PCR) taken no more than 72 hours before landing.

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Dr. Rasha Al-Sabah honored with Order of the Star of Italy award

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Ambassador of Italy to Kuwait H.E. Carlo Baldocci presented the Order of the Star of Italy, with the rank of Officer the highest Italian award for foreigners to Sheikha Dr Rasha Al-Sabah during a prestigious ceremony held at the Italian ambassador's residence last week to honor her outstanding contribution to the relations between the two countries.

“ Welcoming the distinguished guests to his residence, the Italian Ambassador praised Dr. Rasha as an exceptional woman and a strong friend of Italy, who has greatly contributed in supporting and strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries. ”

The ceremony was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmed Nasser Al Sabah as well as dignitaries from the foreign office and Amiri Diwan.

Welcoming the distinguished guests to his residence, the Italian Ambassador praised Dr. Rasha as an exceptional woman and a strong

friend of Italy, who has greatly contributed in supporting and strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries.

He pointed out that the honoring of Dr Rasha with the Order of the Star of Italy at the rank of Officer is a reflection of her distinguished contributions in the diplomatic and academic field. He added that through her work at the university, or through her books that contributed to the dissemination of Italian literature, she will continue her enlightening role and the embassy will undertake her expertise in many events in the coming weeks.

Ambassador Baldocci, also noted the over half a century of distinguished contribution in academia by Dr. Rasha and her role model as a woman in Kuwaiti society.

Addressing the gathering Dr Rasha Al-Sabah expressed her happiness in receiving the award which is the highest decoration granted by the Italian Republic to foreigners. She added that it was a great honor to stand among the guests to receive this prestigious medal and this appreciation was an honor and a generous gesture from President Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic.

She pointed out that as much as she was proud and happy for this beautiful gesture on a personal level, I see it as another new building block to be added to the bonds of friendship and the deep-rooted friendly relations that bind my country, Kuwait, to the Italian Republic, and the two friendly peoples.

She noted that she began studying Italian at the age of thirteen when she was a student

at a boarding school in Britain, after which she decided to specialize in this beautiful language, along with French, to obtain a first university degree from the British University of Birmingham and the University of Parma in the Emilia-Romagna region.

Her passion and fondness for the Italian language, literature, culture and heritage deepened during her postgraduate studies at Yale University in the United States of America, where she began publishing a number of books and scientific research on Italian scientists, philosophers, writers and poets, such as Dante Alighieri, Boccaccio and Petrarca.

After this long journey filled with love and pure affection towards Italy, its people, its heritage and its arts, she never imagined, not ever in her mind, that Italy, that beautiful country she loved, would turn to me and give the same wonderful feeling and grant me this honor.

She reiterated her gratitude to Ambassador Baldocci for his kind nomination, to the Italian Presidency for accepting the nomination, and to His Highness, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, for the supreme approval to the bestowal of the honor.

For his part, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmed Nasser Al Sabah expressed his happiness at attending the ceremony honoring Dr Rasha Al-Sabah with the Order of the Star of Italy at the rank of officer.

Foreign Minister Dr Ahmed Nasser said Dr Rasha was not only a role model as an

educationist but also as a human being. He added, “She has touched a lot of lives, even those amongst us today by her contributions and accomplishments and her principles, and as a leader.” He added that Dr Rasha has over 40 years of contribution



in the education field, which made her a rare woman of Kuwait because she has not only travelled the world in search of knowledge but has contributed her knowledge for the benefit of her country.

The foreign minister pointed out that the distinguished honor of Order of the Star of Italy bestowed upon Dr Rasha Al Sabah also reflected the depth of Kuwait-Italian relations.

Korean Embassy to hold ‘Experiencing Korean Culture’ event in November

Embassy of the Republic of Korea is to hold an event entitled ‘Experiencing Korean Culture’ on 2-4 November to exhibit photos, video clips and art works of three cultural events it organized in September and October, as well as to provide visitors with an opportunity to experience enjoyable Korean games including ‘Dalgona’ and ‘Dakji’ that were featured in a famous Korean drama.

Only 15 persons will be admitted every 30 minutes. The maximum number of visitors will be 90 persons per day and this comes in compliance with social distancing rules.

All the information regarding reservation for and participation are provided on the Embassy's official website and official Instagram account (@koreanembassykw). The Embassy hopes that all visitors will enjoy the event and take a glimpse of Korean culture during which small gifts will be presented.

Earlier the Embassy had held a virtual celebration on the occasion of the Korean National Foundation Day on 3 October. The Embassy also organized three different cultural events; ‘Making Vlog of Hanbok in Kuwait’, ‘Taekwondo Class’, and ‘Hangeul Calligraphy Class’, aimed at enhancing understanding of Korean culture among Kuwaitis. The events held at the embassy premises in September and October, were in full compliance with safety and health regulations.

Making Vlog of Hanbok in Kuwait: This event was held on 14-20 September with the participation of 17 teams. They visited the



embassy to choose a traditional Korean Hanbok that suited each of them. They were allowed to rent the Hanbok they chose for five days to create their own Vlogs while wearing it at different locations in Kuwait.

Taekwondo Class: This class was held three times a week from 12 September through 14 October, with a professional Taekwondo instructor running two separate classes for children and adults. A special video was created by the participants featuring a song of the famous K-pop band BTS, ‘Permission to Dance’ that talks about having hope for the end of the pandemic and returning to



normal life. Hangeul Calligraphy Class: The class took place twice a week from 20 September through 14 October to celebrate the 575th ‘Hangeul Day’ commemorating the invention of the alphabets of Korean language. During this event, participants learned about Korean vowels and consonants and how to write some Korean words and sentences using brush pens. The works of the participants will be displayed at an event that the Embassy intends to hold in the first week of November.

The above events can be watched on the Embassy's official YouTube channel. (<http://youtube.com/c/koreanembassykw>)



Diwali

Celebrating the inner guiding light within us



Diwali, or the Festival of Lights is arguably the biggest and brightest of festivals celebrated in the Indian subcontinent and among the Indian diaspora spread across the four corners of the world.

Diwali, or Deepavali as it is known in some Indian states, is celebrated over five days during the Hindu lunisolar month of Kartika that corresponds to mid-October and mid-November each year. Diwali is concurrent with and analogous to various other religious, spiritual and historical celebrations marked by other communities, cultures and religions in the region, including among Hindus, Jains and Sikhs, and among Newar Buddhists in Nepal, as well as by many tribal cultures in north-easterly states of India.

While the religious aspect of Diwali is the highlight of the festival for the Hindus, to the Sikhs and Jains it is the historical and sacred as well as spiritual implications of the festival that take center-stage. To the Hindus in India, and around the world, the celebration of Diwali has religious associations that vary based on regional and local interpretations of myths and legends from the Indian epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. In Nepal it is celebrated as Tihar or as Swanti by Buddhists, especially Newar Buddhists in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal.

For adherents of the Jain faith, Diwali venerates the attainment in the 6th century of 'Moksha' — the highest and noblest objective of the soul — by Lord Mahavira, the 24th and last 'Tirthankar' or spiritual leader of Jains.



Meanwhile, the Sikh community around the world celebrate Diwali as 'Bandi Shor Divas', or Day of Liberation, in commemoration of the release from imprisonment of their sixth Guru and leader, Guru Hargobind ji, by Mughal invaders in the 17th century.

Besides its religious, cultural or historical import, to people across the vast sub-continent Diwali, or the Festival of Light, symbolizes the inner light that guides us throughout our life. The festival resonates with the message of the ultimate victory of light over darkness, of hope over despair, of good over evil, of knowledge over ignorance.

Also, contextual differences aside, the symbolism of light has been prevalent throughout the evolution of humanity. It is one of the oldest and among the most significant and enduring symbols with spiritual, mystical and metaphorical connotations for cultures and religions around the world. Throughout the eons, among gnostics as well as those with agnostic leanings, light has been seen as a symbol of life and hope, of joy and happiness, of truth, wisdom, guidance, enlightenment, and as an embodiment of divinity. In many parts of the world, light is represented with candles, lamps, fires and fireworks that represent the victory of light in its perpetual opposition to darkness.

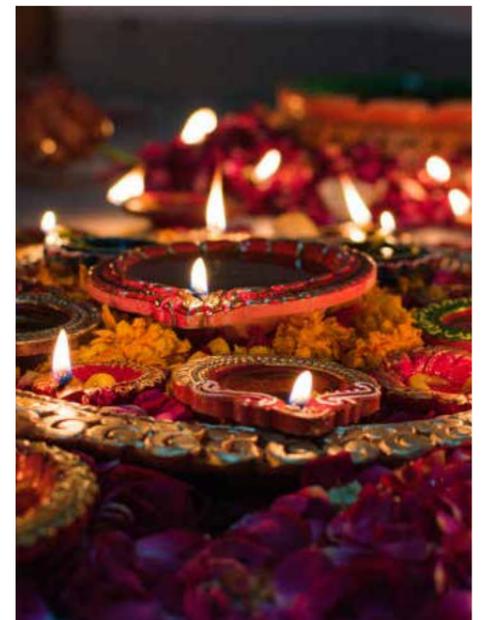
In India, the origin of Diwali can be traced back historically to the ancient period, when it was celebrated during the Hindu calendar month of Karthika as an important harvest festival. Over time, various legends and myths from the Ramayana and Mahabharata were associated and celebrated along with the early agrarian festival. While some Hindus believe Diwali to be a celebration of the birth and also marriage of the Goddess Lakshmi with Lord Vishnu, in Bengal, the festival is dedicated to the worship of Mother Kali, the Goddess of strength. Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed God, the symbol of auspiciousness and wisdom, is also worshiped in most Hindu homes on this day.

To many Hindus, Diwali also commemorates the return of Lord Rama as king of Ayodhya in Northern India, along with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman, after a 14-year-long exile and the vanquishing of demon-king Ravana. In joyous celebration of the return of their king, the people of Ayodhya, the capital of Lord Rama's kingdom, illuminated the town with earthen diyas (oil lamps) and burst fire-crackers. Today, a symbolic reenactment 'Ram Lila', or the killing by Rama of Ravana and the freeing of

Sita, takes up center-stage in the ancient town of Ayodhya and elsewhere, with effigies of the ten-headed Ravana being burned.

The word Diwali comes from a fusion of two Sanskrit words, Dipa or Deepa meaning light or lamp, and Awali meaning a row, series or line. In many parts of India, the festival is celebrated by lighting rows of small earthen- oil lamps called diyas that symbolize the driving away of darkness. In other parts of India, the Festival of Light marks the start of a new year in the Hindu calendar. In many areas, Diwali has taken on a more temporal note, with merchants, retailers and corporates using the festival to market and sell their products. Today, the five-day long Festival of Lights has become almost synonymous with shopping frenzy, of bargain offers and special discounts, as well as a time of socializing and entertaining among family and friends.

Like any major festival, preparations for Diwali begin days or weeks ahead, with the formal festival limited to five-days beginning two days before the night of Diwali, and ending two days after. Each day of Diwali has its own tale, legend and myth to tell. Sweet treats are exchanged, houses are thoroughly cleaned, homes are lit with diyas and decorated



with rangoli, the colorful designs and patterns created on the threshold to homes and on the floor during the festival using natural colors and material designs. New clothes are worn and each day of the festival is marked by different traditional rituals.

Through all this celebration and festivities, what remains true and consistent throughout the five days of Diwali, is the celebration of life, its enjoyment and goodness. This year, even if you are away from the sights and sounds of Diwali as it is celebrated in the Indian subcontinent, take a moment to light a candle or a diya, sit quietly, close your eyes, breathe deeply and concentrate on the supreme light that illuminates your inner self.



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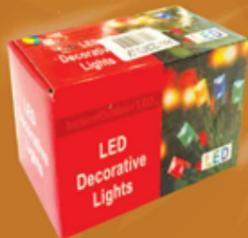
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Delicacies

to devour
during

Diwali



Diwali, the 'Festival of Lights', is one time of the year when delicacies are prepared and shared by family and friends. Rather than head to the nearest confectionary store and order oodles of sweets, why not prepare them fresh at home. Making them at home, you can be assured of

the quality of ingredients used and also control the sweetness and fat content of the sweet delights.

Here we have put together a handful of Diwali specialties that you can prepare at home without too much effort or time.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups khoya (dried whole milk)
- ¼ cup chenna (cheese curd)
- ¼ teaspoon soda bicarbonate
- 3 tablespoons refined flour (maida)
- ¼ teaspoon green cardamom powder
- 2 cups sugar
- Ghee to deep fry

Preparation:

- Grate khoya and mash chenna and set aside
- Mix the two along with soda bicarbonate, refined flour, green cardamom powder and a little water to make a soft dough
- Divide into sixteen equal portions and shape into balls
- Prepare a sugar syrup with sugar and two cups of water
- Clear the syrup by removing the scum, if any
- Heat ghee/oil in a kadai.
- Add the balls and deep fry on low heat till it turns a golden color
- Drain and soak in the sugar syrup for at least fifteen to twenty minutes before serving.

GULAB JAMUN



BOONDI LADOO

Ingredients:

- 2 cups gram flour (besan)
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 10 cashew nuts
- 20 raisins
- 15 green cardamoms
- 4 saffron (kesar) strands
- A few drops of milk
- 500g ghee

Preparation:

- Shell and powder cardamoms
- Add one fourth cup of water to sugar and heat until it melts and becomes syrupy
- To check if the sugar syrup is ready, take a drop of the solution and drop in water
- If it remains intact and does not dissolve then your syrup is ready
- (While preparing the sugar syrup, add a few drops of milk. Impurities will collect on the surface in a layer. Remove this scum)
- Add saffron and cardamom powder to the syrup
- Separately, add soda and water to gram flour and prepare a paste without lumps Heat the ghee in a deep frying pan
- Sieve the gram flour directly into the hot ghee and fry till light yellow
- Drain and set aside.
- Fry cashew nuts and raisins and along with the boondi add to the sugar syrup
- Mix well and set aside to cool
- Apply some ghee on your palms and shape the boondi mixture to form balls.

Ingredients

- ¾ cup gram flour
- 4 cups pure ghee
- 2 ½ cups desi ghee

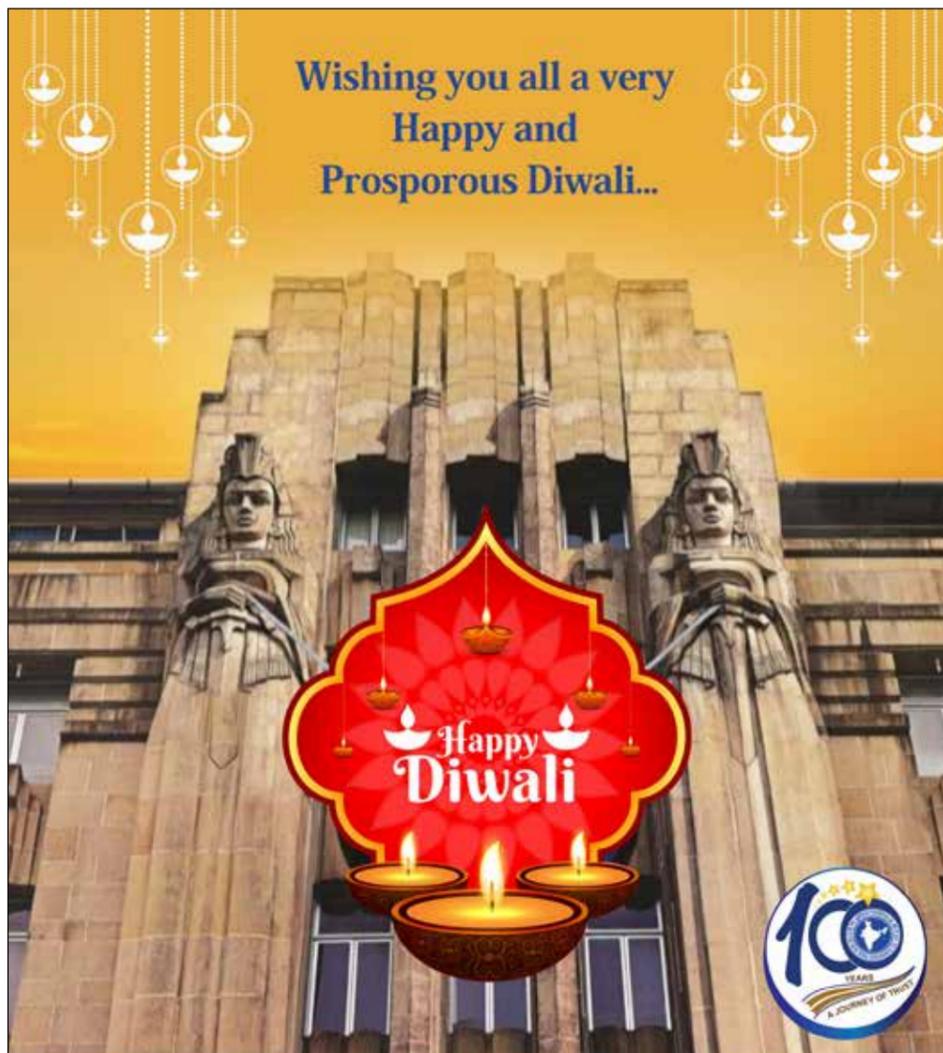
Preparation:

- Sift the gram flour twice
- Heat the ghee in a pan and keep it hot over very low heat
- Cook the sugar with two and half cups of water over medium heat, stirring continuously till it dissolves
- Increase heat and bring the syrup to a boil
- Cook without stirring for about five minutes or till it reaches a single-thread consistency
- Add half a cup of hot ghee to the syrup and stir
- Add gram flour gradually, stirring all the while to prevent lumps from forming
- Stir continuously till the mixture starts bubbling
- Pour in the remaining hot ghee, half a cup at a time
- Every time you add the ghee the mixture should sizzle and froth
- Continue this process till all the ghee is consumed and there is a pleasant sweet roasted aroma

MYSORE PAK



- Pour the mixture into a greased tray
- Cool a little and cut into squares.
- Separate the squares when completely cooled and store in an airtight container to retain its freshness and crispness.



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MALAI PEDA

Ingredients:

- One liter whole milk
- Few strands of saffron (Kesar)
- ½ cup sugar
- Two pinches of citric acid
- One teaspoon cornflour/cornstarch
- ¼ tsp green cardamom powder
- 4-5 chopped almonds
- 7-8 chopped pistachios

Preparation:

- Bring the milk to a boil in a deep non-stick pan
- Cook, stirring continuously, for about twenty minutes, till it reduces to half its original volume
- Soak the saffron in two teaspoons of warm milk and add to the boiling milk
- Add the sugar and continue to cook for four to five minutes.
- Mix the citric acid in one tablespoon of water and add gradually to the boiling milk Cook till the milk curdles slightly
- Mix the cornflour with the remaining two teaspoons of milk and add to the pan Cook, stirring continuously, for about forty-five minutes till the mixture thickens and resembles khoya
- Add the cardamom powder and mix well
- Remove from heat and set aside to cool
- Divide into sixteen equal portions and shape into round balls
- Decorate with almonds and pistachios, and serve.



JALEBI

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups refined flour
- Two cups sugar
- ¼ tsp orange color
- Two cups sugar
- One tbs milk
- ½ tsp green cardamom powder

Preparation:

- Place the refined flour in a bowl, add one and a half cups of water and bring them together to form a light smooth batter
- Cover the bowl and keep in a warm place to ferment for twenty hours
- Mix the batter again with your hands for fifteen minutes
- Add the food color and two tablespoons of refined flour
- Mix again for ten minutes

- Cook the sugar with two cups of water in a deep non-stick pan on high heat, stirring continuously, till the sugar dissolves
- Add the milk and remove the scum that forms on top
- Add the cardamom powder and cook, stirring, till the syrup attains a one-string consistency
- Let the syrup cool, but ensure that it remains lukewarm
- Heat the ghee in a non-stick frying pan on medium heat
- Pour some of the batter into a squeeze bottle
- Hold the bottle over the hot ghee and gently squeeze the batter into the ghee in spiral shapes
- Start from the outside and work inwards for better results
- Cook, gently turning the jalebi over occasionally, till golden and crisp
- Drain and soak in the sugar syrup for two to three minutes
- Drain and serve hot.

GAJAR HALWA

Ingredients:

- 8-10 grated medium carrots
- 3 tbs ghee
- ¼ tsp green cardamom
- ¾ cup sugar
- 5-6 sliced almonds
- 5-6 cashew nuts
- 2 tbs raisins
- One cup grated khoya/mawa
- 5-6 chopped pistachios



- Once done, add sugar and mix well
- Heat the mixture in microwave for two more minutes
- Remove and add almonds, cashew nuts, raisins, and nearly all khoya. Mix well
- Cook in the microwave for another two minutes
- Remove and garnish with the reserved khoya and pistachios and serve hot or cold.

Preparation:

- Place the grated carrots in a microwave proof bowl
- Add ghee and mix well
- Add green cardamom powder and mix
- Heat in the microwave on high for five minutes



COCONUT BARFI

Ingredients

- 4 cups of grated coconut
- 4 cups of sugar syrup
- 2tbsp Khoya (evaporated milk powder)
- 1tbsp almonds, blanched and shredded
- 1tbsp pistachio, blanched and shredded
- 1tsp ghee

Preparation

- For the sugar syrup: Add sugar and water in the same proportions in a pan. Start heating the mixture

over low to medium flame and keep stirring continuously to avoid caramelizing. When all the sugar dissolves and it becomes nice and thick, turn off the flame.

- For the coconut barfi: In a thick-bottomed kadai (wok), mix the coconut, khoya and the sugar syrup on low heat until it thickens and acquires a halwa-like consistency. Add the pistachio and almonds. Brush on the ghee in a tray and spread the coconut batter on it. Smoothen out the edges of the batter and cut into barfi shapes when it cools down. Serve.

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Happy Diwali!

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Diwali

among the Indian diaspora

worldwide

Celebrations marking Diwali, the Indian Festival of Light, is a high-point in the socializing and entertaining calendar of the Indian diaspora spread all over the world.



Diwali, is celebrated with fun, festivities and religious traditions by Indian communities living in far-flung countries that stretch



from West-Indians in Guyana, on South America's north-eastern Atlantic coast, to the Caribbean nations and island-states lying in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean; in south-east Asian countries and on the African continent, as well as in other countries where Indian communities have settled and over generations have called it their home. Diwali is also celebrated by the millions of migrant diaspora that have sought jobs and livelihood in countries lying in the Far-East, Middle-East, in Europe, the US and elsewhere around the world.

The five-day festival of Diwali, which has traditional, religious, social and historical connotations attached to it that differ based on the celebrants, and though it has acquired a more mercantile aspect in recent times, the spiritual relevance of Diwali has abided over the ages. The Festival of Light continues to symbolize the universal power of light to uplift, guide, and lead people along the righteous path.

The festival epitomizes the conquest of light over darkness, of good over evil, and on a more personal level the eradication of ignorance with the light of knowledge. This eternal aspect of Diwali is what makes the festival so popular and is the reason it has prevailed for nearly three millennia on the Indian subcontinent and wherever Indians have made their home.

While in India Diwali is an unfettered celebration of the joy of life and marked by a profusion of riotous colors, aromas and sounds emanating from every quarter, it tends to be observed in a more subdued manner in countries populated by Indian communities, and in places where Indian

expatriates live and work. No matter how it is commemorated, there is no denying the spirit of joie de vivre that the Festival of Lights spreads in the hearts and minds of Indians everywhere.

For the expatriate Indian community, Diwali is usually a celebration that also reflects their longing to share the occasion with their near and dear ones back home. For people of Indian origin who have settled in various countries abroad, Diwali is often a way to keep in touch with their roots, and to join friends, kith and kin in a celebration of the rich culture and heritage of India.



Generations of Indians abroad have marked Diwali with festive and religious traditions, and shared the joy of the festival with the exchange of sweets and gifts among relatives, friends and colleagues. However, in recent times, there has been a gradual but noticeable erosion of interest in Diwali as well as other traditional festivals among many young Indians overseas, engaged as they are in their own busy daily schedules. Many do not seem to share the sentiments of their parents' generation and appear to have no time for the rituals and rites associated with the festival.



Most young adolescent expats who probably were born and raised in a foreign environment, and have only made an occasional brief foray back home to India during holiday breaks, have no resonance with the cultures and traditions of a country that many find and consider alien. Many of these youngsters have only a fuzzy idea of the culture and heritage of India, and often have difficulty in balancing the culture of their forebears with prevailing norms in the urban culture they grew up in, and in the foreign land that many have come to consider their true home.

If nothing else, the global pandemic and its repercussions during the past year have driven home the fleeting nature of our lives and livelihoods, and how dependent we are on communities and social interactions. The importance of our roots and our connections have never been more poignantly driven home than during the height of the medical crisis, when parochial sentiments on the part of citizens were brought to the fore in terms of delivery of healthcare and other essentials. Back then, knowing and acknowledging that we have a country and people to fall back on in the worst case scenario, was often the only bright spot in a situation growing increasingly bleak.

Importance of the land of our ancestors which always remains open and welcome to us, should give us enough reason to grow familiar with its cultures and traditions if not for anything else then at least not to appear alien to the people back home. The Festival of Light this year could be the right time and opportunity to revive and give a restart to relations with our native land and its culture.

The festival presents us with an occasion to familiarize and immerse ourselves in the beauty and grandeur of Indian culture and heritage. It also provides us with a chance to experience the tantalizing tastes of traditional dishes and delicacies prepared during the festival period. But, most importantly, it delivers us with a golden opportunity to imbue the sense of community and friendship that is fundamental aspect of our Indian values.

So this Diwali, even if you do not like to consider yourself an 'Indian', go light up your house, don bright clothes, the brighter the better, and go have fun with Indian friends, while remembering to take along a gift of Diwali delicacies to share.



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Five days of Diwali celebration

Diwali or the Festival of Lights is celebrated around the world over a period of five days during the Hindu lunisolar calendar month of Kartik, which usually occurs between mid-October and mid-November in the Gregorian calendar.

The two days prior to the main Diwali Day and the two days following it, are of special significance, with each day of the festival having different religious connotations based on different regions of India and beliefs of people celebrating it.

Here is a look at the five days of Diwali:



Dhanteras: In many regions, Dhanteras mark the start of Diwali. This day marks the birthday of Lakshmi - the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, and the birthday of Dhanvantari - the Goddess of Health and Healing. Diyas are lit and kept burning throughout the night in honor of Lakshmi and Dhanvantari. Dhanteras is also a major shopping day, particularly for gold or silver articles. A special Lakshmi Puja is performed in the evening.

Naraka chaturdasi: The second day of the Diwali festival is Naraka Chaturdasi marking the vanquishing of the demon Naraka by Lord Krishna and his wife Satyabhama. Homes are decorated with rangoli and women embellish their hands with henna designs. Families are also busy preparing homemade sweets for the main Diwali.



Diwali: The third day of the five-day festival is usually celebrated as the main festive day of Diwali. People don their new clothes, diyas are lit and special pujas are offered to the Goddess Lakshmi. Windows and doors are left open to provide easy access for the Goddess. After the puja, people go out and celebrate by bursting fire-crackers. Visits to friends and relatives and exchange of gifts and sweets also take place on this day.

In some places, additional deities, usually Ganesha, Saraswati, and Kubera are honored on this day with offerings and pujas. Blessings are invoked from Lakshmi as she symbolizes wealth and prosperity, while Ganesha symbolizes ethical beginnings and is a fearless remover of obstacles. Saraswati symbolizes music, literature and learning and Kubera symbolizes bookkeeping, treasury and wealth management. Among some business communities, new account books for the year ahead are opened on this occasion.

Padwa: The day after Diwali celebrates the love and mutual devotion between the wife and husband. The husbands give gifts to their wives on this day. In many regions, newly married daughters with their husbands are invited to parents' home for special meals. Sometimes brothers go and pick up their sisters from their in-laws' home for this important day. The day is also a special day for the married couple, in a manner similar to anniversaries elsewhere in the world. The day after Diwali devotees perform Govardhan puja in honor of Lord Krishna.

Bhai Dooj: The last day of the festival, called Bhai dooj, celebrates the strong relationship and bonds of love between sisters and brothers. The day ritually emphasizes the love and lifelong bond

between siblings and is a day when women and girls get together, perform a puja with prayers for the well-being of their brothers and then get together with the rest of the family to share food.

In each legend, myth and story of Diwali lies the significance of the victory of good over evil. It is with each Diwali and with the lights that illuminate our homes and hearts, that the truth behind this simple message resonates and finds new reason and hope. From darkness unto light — the light that empowers us to commit ourselves to good deeds, that which brings us closer to divinity.

During Diwali, lights illuminate every corner of India against a backdrop of loud sounds from bursting fireworks and with the scent of incense sticks and smell of gunpowder hanging thick in the air. Mingled in this riot of lights, colors, sounds and odors is a festival that symbolizes joy, togetherness and hope for the future.



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Thought for the week

“ It is utterly false and cruelly arbitrary to put all the play and learning into childhood, all the work in the middle age, and all the regrets into the old age.

— Margaret Mead
American Cultural Anthropologist

Healing Power of Ginger

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Ginger is always good for digestion and circulation, it treats many diseases, and I am sure that a lot of you have used it for many purposes.

I personally love to eat it although a lot of people prefer to have it as a drink.

In Japanese restaurants, they usually offer ginger to alter the taste between different rolls, but I usually order a double portion to enjoy its taste.

Ginger has been used by Chinese herbalists for more than 2000 years for culinary and medicinal purposes.

Among the many benefits of ginger are:

It prevents motion sickness when traveling, and it is just as effective as other drugs used to treat motion sickness. So, it does not hurt to add a bit of ginger to the meal you eat before going on a plane or boat

Ginger is also known to have the ability to calm an upset stomach and to promote the flow of bile. Ginger supports a healthy cardiovascular system by making platelets less sticky which in turn reduces circulatory problems. Stomach cramps can be eased and circulation can also be improved.

Ginger can be freshly grated and used in cooking. It is also available as a supplement which can be taken on a daily basis. It is always better to take it from food rather than supplements, but Ginger pills do not interact with any other nutrients or drugs in the body. So, ginger in all forms is very safe to have.

Besides providing a lot of benefits, ginger is also low in calories and in saturated fat.

Ginger is also used to reduce pain and inflammation. Studies have shown that ginger has anti-inflammatory properties and is a powerful natural painkiller.

It is used to relieve heart burns: Ginger has long been used as a natural heartburn remedy and it is mostly taken in the form of tea (whether cold or hot) for that purpose.

Ginger is powerful in treating ovarian cancer, and research has shown that ginger gives a remarkable migraine relief. In Chinese medicine, ginger tea with brown sugar is used for the treatment of menstrual cramps.

Here is a recipe for the most common herbal ginger drink:

It serves 5 people.

Ingredients:

- 2 whole lemons
- 1 handful ginger, peeled and sliced.
- 2 liters of boiled water

Preparation:

- Place lemons and ginger in a heatproof jug
- Pour over the boiled water and wait until it cools to room temperature
- Refrigerate until cold
- To serve:
- Put plenty of ice, a few mint leaves and ½ teaspoon of honey in each glass then serve.

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

RECIPE

BESAN LADOO



Festivals are incomplete without sweets and in India festivals are incomplete without laddoos.

Ladoo, an Indian sweet can be made using various ingredients and is round in shape.

Total time :30 to 40 min.

Serving:10 to 12 laddoos.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups besan (gram flour)
- ½ cup clarified butter (add more, if required)
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. cardamom powder
- 10 to 12 Almond slice
- 10 to 12 pistachios slice

INSTRUCTION:

- Heat the ghee or clarified butter in a pan on low heat.
- Roast the besan on medium to low flame till a nutty aroma starts to come and it changes color to light brown.
- Now add a sprinkle of water in this ghee roasted
- Cook it while continuously stirring it -couple of more minutes. Switch off the heat.
- Cool down completely .
- When the mixture cool down
- add Almond pista slice and powdered sugar.
- Mix it well.
- Also add cardamom powder/saffron to flavour it.
- Now you are easily able to shape it into round laddus.
- Garnish them with Almond n pista slice ,allow them to cool completely.
- You can store these laddus for upto one month.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

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



Kadai Paneer

Ingredients

- 250 grams paneer, cut into cubes
- Three medium onions, pureed
- Three large tomatoes, pureed
- Two teaspoons ginger-garlic paste
- One teaspoon red chili powder
- One teaspoon coriander powder

- ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder
- One teaspoon garam masala
- Two bay leaves
- Three cloves
- One inch cinnamon stick
- Few coriander leaves
- Two tablespoons ghee
- Salt to taste

Preparation: Heat ghee in a kadai and saute the cottage cheese pieces till golden brown. Soak them in 5 cups water.

In the same pan add bay leaf, cloves, cinnamon sticks, onion paste and ginger garlic paste. Saute well till lightly golden. Add red chilli powder, coriander powder, turmeric powder, garam masala and little water. Mix well and allow the mixture to boil. Add tomato puree and mix again.

Cover and cook for five minutes till oil surfaces. Add salt and drained cottage cheese pieces. Garnish with coriander leaves and serve hot.



ECO FRIENDLY

DIWALI

Diwali, the Festival of Light, which is celebrated across India and in countries around the world where Indian communities live and work, is traditionally held over a five-day period. Religious rituals are undertaken and social gatherings are held, as families gather together to celebrate the Diwali festival.

The five-day festivities begin two days prior to the main Diwali day, and then continue for two more days after Diwali, with each day having its own religious and mythological significance, with special prayers and worship dedicated to various Hindu deities.



In the lead-up to Diwali, celebrants engage in cleaning, renovating and refurbishing, as well as decorating their homes and workplaces. Stacks of small earthen oil lamps are taken out of year-long storage and cleaned in preparation for lining them in front of houses and on terraces. Rangolis, or colorful designs and patterns are drawn on the floor at entrances to homes. The vibrant artwork is created using natural dyes made from rice flour, lentils, powdered bricks, chalk and flowers.

On Diwali day, in the morning worshippers solemnly visit temples to offer prayers, new clothes are donned and people go visiting neighbors, friends and relatives. Greetings are exchanged, sweets and other delicacies are gifted, and delicious meals specially cooked for the occasion are shared by Diwali celebrants.

The solemn prayers and rituals that marked the days leading up to, and on Diwali morning, takes on a fun and festive mood as the sun goes down on Diwali day. In the evening, homes get brightly lit with the traditional oil lamps lighting the interior and exterior, celebrants engage in songs and dances and the air gets rent with the sound

of crackers as the sky lights up in myriad colors from fireworks going off everywhere.

All of the simple rituals of Diwali have a religious or social significance and a mythological tale behind them. Homes are illuminated with lights as a mark of respect and adoration of the gods, and fireworks fill the skies as an expression of thanks to the heavens for all the bounties of health, wealth, knowledge, peace, and prosperity granted to the people. Fireworks are also associated with a more mundane task of driving away insects and pests such as mosquitoes that are plentiful after the rains during the season.

However, fireworks have also been linked to noise and air pollution in many places, with the air quality measurements revealing an increase in particulate matter (PM2.5) during the five-day celebrations in many cities and towns across India. At a time when the world is engaged in combating the existential threat of climate change we all have a part to play in reducing our individual carbon footprint on the planet, and this includes celebrating a greener, more eco-friendly Diwali.

Restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic last year prevented many of the traditional rituals and social gatherings, including fireworks from taking place. This had a positive impact on air quality measurements recorded last year relative to previous years. Though the curtailments have been eased in many places this year, the creativity in celebrating Diwali displayed amid the pandemic repercussions of last year, can be carried forward this year so as to ensure a softer carbon footprint on the planet. Travel by road to visit and celebrate the occasion with near and dear ones in other places can be reduced by virtual parties and meetings using online video talk apps.

Significance of good over evil and it is with each Deepawali and the lights that illuminate our homes and hearts that this simple truth finds new reason and hope.

Here are a few more ways to go green this Diwali without dimming the brilliance and glitter of the festival in any significant way.

Green alternatives to crackers: Use colored balloons in festive colors of red, yellow, green and orange, and

fill them with glitter and small bits of colored paper. Burst the balloons and dance in the glitter rain with your family and friends. It may not have the bang of traditional fireworks but it also leaves no environmental damage.

Reduce use of plastic bags: When exchanging gifts make sure not to pack them in plastic backed gift wrappings or carry them in plastic gift bags, instead use your creativity to come up with natural wrapping and present the gifts in cloth bags.

Make natural rangolis: Instead of the artificial rangoli color powders that are available in the market, make a rangoli out of fresh flowers or make the floor designs with traditional and natural ingredients, such as rice paste or dry rice flour. The ingredients can also make it to

the bin the next morning to make compost for your garden.



Make sweets at home: Spend a little extra time in the kitchen before the festivities start and make the sweets and other delicacies at home. Share them with your neighbors and friends in steel and glass plates. It may be more convenient to just buy them from the sweet shop next

door, but think about the wasteful packaging that comes with it and the artificial colors and dressings used on them.

Use oil-diyas: Substitute candles and electric diyas with the good old earthen oil-diyas, which are made from eco-friendly materials and can be reused many times over. Candle diyas can be used only once and are petroleum based. They release toxins while burning which affects air quality. Some of the harmful chemicals released include benzene, formaldehyde and lead. Stick to the traditional earthen lamps, since cheaply available colored diyas are also painted with synthetic colors. If you would rather have electric lighting anyway, opt for LED lights and CFL bulbs. They use 30 to 80 percent less energy and are available in a variety of colors in markets.

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Republic of Turkey is taking firm steps towards the future



Ayşe Hilal Sayan Koytak
Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey

On October 29, we celebrate the 98th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. I would like to thank our friends in Kuwait who did not leave us alone with their messages of celebration.

We are proud because in nearly a century since its establishment, the Republic of Turkey has been a respected country both in its region and beyond, with its democratic structure, economic and political independence.

Particularly in the last 19 years, we have made a great breakthrough in all aspects of state and national life, from education to health, from security to justice, from transportation to energy. With this breakthrough, we have established the basic infrastructure for the '2023 goals', referring to the 100th year of the Republic, as well as the 2053 and 2071 visions.

The world has been grappling with deep, devastating and transformative problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic for the past two years. Turkey is one of the few countries that has managed to stay strong during this difficult period and even increase its power.

First of all, the Covid-19 pandemic has shown how important quality and accessible health care is. The city hospitals, which we have implemented through public-private partnership, serve our own

citizens as well as our guests from abroad. I believe that our Kuwaiti friends will also benefit from the quality health services offered by Turkey.

In 2020, which was the peak of the pandemic, Turkey became the second country with the highest growth rate with 1.8 percent. This was not coincidental, as we continued with growth rates of 7.2 percent in the first quarter of 2021 and 21.7 percent in the second quarter. We expect to complete the year 2021 with 9 percent growth.

Turkey is one of the few states among OECD countries that has increased its employment too, compared to the pre-pandemic period.

While investments decreased by 35 percent globally during the pandemic period, they have hardly slowed down in Turkey. We want to increase the scale of international investments in our country even higher. For this, we will transform our investment incentive system into a much more attractive structure.

We are among the three most successful countries in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technologies. We will make our drone fleet number one in the world with the introduction of our combat unmanned aircraft system.

We are among the 10 countries in the world that can design, build and maintain

their own warships. We meet the needs of friendly and allied countries along with ourselves in land and sea vehicles. We currently have seven companies in the top 100 defense companies in the world. We plan to commission the first of our new type of submarines next year. We aim to take our own design electric vehicle off the band by the end of 2022.

Last year, we made 540 billion cubic meters of natural gas discovery in the Black Sea with our own seismic exploration and deep drilling vessels. Turkey has written a success story not only in exploration and discovery activities, but also in the widespread use of natural gas and its delivery to households.

After all, compared to the past, we see a Turkey that has increased its national income by three times, risen to 11th place in the world according to purchasing parity, and has set records in investment, production, exports, employment and growth. Despite the multidimensional challenges that we have experienced recently, the progress Turkey has made in democracy and development is promising for our future.

The world is on the eve of a new and radical transformation. We have significant advantages to capture this new revolution, where many complex elements from climate change to artificial intelligence are



combined. Turkey will not miss this new change in the global system. It will reach its targeted levels in all areas.

In this process, it is my greatest hope that relations and cooperation between Turkey and Kuwait continue to further develop and strengthen in all areas.

I avail myself of this opportunity to wish health, happiness and long life to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the friendly people and Government of Kuwait.



LuLu Hypermarket holds Rangoli competition

As part of its ongoing LuLu Wali Diwali 2021 promotion, LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, held a Rangoli competition at the LuLu Express Outlet located in Terrace Mall, Salmiya, on Saturday, 30 October.

Rangoli competitions, which involve creating colorful patterns on the floor, are an integral part of celebrations marking Diwali, or the 'Festival of Lights' in India. Following a brief inauguration ceremony by LuLu management, the Rangoli competition got underway with the participation of 10 teams from different Indian states. Throughout the colorful competition, with each of the competing teams trying to outdo the other in terms of design and artistic skills, the colorful competition was indeed a spectacular show.

At the end of what was undoubtedly a vibrant and colorful competition, marked by the creation of several superbly amazing rangolis by the competing teams, the jury had a hard time picking the three winners, for the first, second and third prizes.

The winning team was awarded KD100 in gift vouchers by LuLu management, while the team that came in as runner-up received KD 75 in gift vouchers. The third place winners were awarded gift

vouchers worth KD50. Meanwhile, the 7 teams that participated in the competition each received consolation prizes from the hypermarket's management.

The ongoing LuLu Wali Diwali 2021 promotion at all LuLu outlets in Kuwait is witnessing a large turnout of shoppers eager to avail of the special 25 percent discounts on accessories, as well as the amazing Diwali offers on sweets, clothing, traditional decoration pieces, and other Diwali-related items. An additional draw of the Diwali promotion is the special LuLu Shopping gift cards that are enclosed in special card holders imprinted with Diwali greetings, and which truly captures the sentiment of the Festival of Lights.



German Embassy warns of scamster offering visas to Germany

Following reports of a scamster offering to sell entry and study visas to Germany, the Embassy of Germany in Kuwait has clarified that work or study visas for Germany can only be applied for at the visa section of the embassy and that they never work with intermediaries.

A statement from the embassy cautioned residents and citizens not to fall victim to a scamster posing as a German citizen and offering to sell Blue Card visas to Germany for KD550, or a study grant and visa for KD350. The embassy said that it had received several complaints from people who had fallen victim to the scam, and advised anyone who was approached by an intermediary offering to process their visa, should immediately report the matter to the Kuwait Police.

The embassy requested anyone who had been cheated by the con-artist to forward the relevant information to the Embassy at: info@kuwa.diplo.de. The statement also noted that for all information regarding working and study opportunities in Germany were available on the website: www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/

The embassy urged everyone to share this information with others in order to prevent any more cheating.



Uzbek President secures second term in landslide victory

THE TIMES KUWAIT SPECIAL REPORT

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has been re-elected for a second five-year term, winning 80.1 percent of the vote in the national elections held on 24 October. President Mirziyoyev's widely expected victory will allow him to deepen his reform campaign and will likely lead to Uzbekistan opening up further to foreign trade and investment.

Results from the presidential election is a reflection of the broad support of the people of Uzbekistan for the course of reforms and transformations, the results of which are clearly felt in their lives, and an embodiment of the confidence of citizens in their future.

Over the past five years, unprecedented large-scale work has been carried out in the country under the leadership of President Mirziyoyev, with the spirit of updates reaching every sphere. In accordance with the action strategy for five priority areas of development of Uzbekistan during the 2017-2021 period, several very significant administrative, legal and economic reforms were implemented.

During this period, the country's economy grew by 24 percent, the industry by 34 percent, exports increased by 1.5 times, the volume of foreign investment by 3 times, and the average monthly salary increased 2.2 times. The country's gross domestic product has reached \$60 billion.

Large-scale opportunities have been created for the development of regions, the expansion of industry and the service sector. Hundreds of enterprises and factories have been opened, and thousands of new jobs have been created. Large-scale construction and landscaping activities were also carried out.

Practical effectiveness and human interests were put at the forefront of reforms and several socially oriented programs were implemented. Much attention was paid to the development of science, education, healthcare, culture and art, mass media and sports.

Speaking to campaign staff and reporters shortly after his reelection, President Mirziyoyev



Observers from the CIS, the SCO, OIC, the OSCE and from other foreign countries, including Kuwait attended the elections as monitors. In particular, the delegation headed by the Head of the Constitutional Court in Kuwait visited Uzbekistan and monitored the election processes.

thanked people for the trust placed in him. "The trust of our great people is a great happiness for me. I express my deep gratitude to all my fellow party members, our young people, dear mothers and fathers for the high trust and support they have shown me. This trust gives me strength. And at the same time, I feel with all my heart how much responsibility this is," said the president.

He added, "We have passed many trials in the last five years that have hardened us and brought us together in unity. Today the world has seen again what a united people are capable of." It needs to be emphasized that the presidential elections, held for the first time based on the Election Code, were organized in the spirit of democracy, openness and transparency.

The president went on to note, "Observers came from many countries, major international organizations. They were free to visit any polling station of their choice and see the conditions, and make sure that our people are not indifferent to the future. People actively participated in the

elections, and came to vote together with their families, testifying to the spirit, mood and political culture of our people. At town-hall type meetings, people make relevant proposals for each area, city or district. Criticism is also rife and welcomed. This is also the result of the fact that our lives have changed; democratic reforms are being carried out, and I want to say again: there is no way back. Now Uzbekistan will only move forward."

The President thanked all foreign and local observers, members of the Central Election Commission, district and precinct election commissions, and media representatives. He also expressed gratitude to the candidates who participated in the presidential elections from other political parties. "They also strive to develop Uzbekistan. Therefore, we will take into account their proposals in our program, which our people liked. Yesterday we were competitors, but now we need to act as a single fist. I promise to use all my strength and potential to justify the high trust of our people, to fulfill their dreams and aspirations,

to ensure a prosperous life. We will all build a New Uzbekistan together", President Mirziyoyev said.

According to preliminary results unveiled by the Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan on 25 October, Maksuda Vorisova from People's Democratic Party was placed second with 6.6 percent of the votes. Alisher Kadyrov from Milliy Tiklanish gained 5.5 percent, candidate from Ecological Party, Narzullo Oblomurodov received 4.1 percent, and the smallest ratio of vote share of 3.4 percent went to Bahrom Abdulhalimov from Adolat Social Democratic Party.

"According to the electoral law in the country, the candidate who receives more than half of the votes cast will be considered the winner," said Zayniddin Nizamhodjayev, Chairman of the Central Election Commission, while announcing the results of the presidential elections. He added that more than 16.21 million people cast their votes in the elections held on Sunday, and noted that the voter turn-out was 80.4 percent.

"The presidential election, which took place in a real competitive environment between five political parties and their candidates, is a clear indication that freedom and democracy are increasingly being consolidated in Uzbekistan," he said, noting that no complaints about irregularities in the election were reported from anywhere.

The country with a population of about 35 million people, has a total of more than 20 million registered voters. As many as 10,760 polling stations were set up across the country for the presidential election. Observers from the CIS, the SCO, OIC, the OSCE and from other foreign countries including Kuwait attended the elections. In particular, the Kuwait delegation was headed by the Head of the Constitutional Court in Kuwait who visited Uzbekistan and monitored the election processes.

Presidents of foreign countries, including Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and many others held a telephone call with President Mirziyoyev to congratulate him on his victory in the presidential elections. Central Election Commission Chairman Zayniddin Nizamkhodjaev said the vote adhered to democratic standards as he declared Mirziyoyev victorious on Monday, citing preliminary results.

Kalyan Jewellers 150th showroom launched in Delhi NCR, India

Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewellery brands, recently launched its brand new showrooms at Noida The Great India Place GIP Mall and Vegas Mall, Dwarka. Inaugurated by Kalyan Jewellers' regional ambassadors Wamiqa Gabbi (Punjab), Manju Warriar (Kerala) and Ritabhari Chakrobarty (West Bengal), these outlets usher the brand towards the milestone of 150 showrooms across India and Middle East, reflecting its wide footprint across markets.

On the occasion of the launch, Wamiqa Gabbi, Kalyan Jewellers' regional brand ambassador for Punjab said, "During my association with Kalyan Jewellers, I have been a part of many showroom inaugurations, but the ones we are launching today are especially special, as it marks the 150th showroom occasion."

Manju Warriar, regional brand ambassador for Kerala added, "I have been a part of the Kalyan Journey since 2013, and I consider it a matter of personal pride and happiness that I am here for this landmark moment."

Regional Brand ambassador for West Bengal, Ritabhari Chakrobarty added, "After visiting the Kalyan showroom in West Bengal and now in Delhi, I have to add that I really admire the vast range of the collections here, and the hyper-local designs that are specially curated according to the region. I look forward to being a part of the journey where Kalyan Jewellers reaches new heights in the years to come."

Talking about the new showrooms, Mr. TS Kalyanaraman, Chairman & Managing Director - Kalyan Jewellers said, "Today, marks a very



special moment for us - with these two new showrooms in Delhi NCR, Kalyan Jewellers is at the golden milestone of 150 showrooms across India and the Middle East. Being a customer-first brand, our priority has always been giving our patrons maximum value from their purchases, and our showrooms reflect this focus with their extensive product range as well as the safe and best-in-class shopping experience they offer to everyone who visits us. We would like to reiterate our commitment to patrons as we continue expanding our footprint across our key markets."

As part of this festive offer, customers will be able to maximise the value of their purchases with up to 25% cashback on their jewellery purchases. While up to 25% cashback can be availed on making charges of gold jewellery, up to 20% cashback offers are available on the diamond, precious stone and uncut diamond

jewellery collections. Cashback offers can be availed in the form of instantly redeemable vouchers. Customers can also opt for the Gold Rate Protection plan, by paying 10% advance on their intended purchase value. These offers are valid until Nov 30th, 2021, across all showrooms in Kuwait.

With Kalyan Jewellers' 'We Care' COVID-19 guidelines, the company has instituted the highest level of safety and precautionary measures across all showrooms to safeguard the health and safety of both customers and staff alike.

Customers will also be able to avail the benefits of Kalyan's new 4-Level Assurance Certification on gold jewellery. While jewellery retailed at Kalyan Jewellers goes through multiple purity tests, the 4-level assurance certificate promises customers payment on the value of purity mentioned in the invoice during exchange or

resale. Also, it ensures free lifetime maintenance of ornaments at any Kalyan Jewellers' showroom in the country.

Kalyan Jewellers will offer its patrons Muhurat, the bridal jewellery line curated from across India along with exclusive sections featuring Kalyan's popular house brands such as Vedha (heritage jewellery), Tejasvi (Polki jewellery), Mudhra (handcrafted antique jewellery), Nimah (Temple jewellery) and Glo (dancing diamonds). Other sections at the showroom include Ziah (Solitaire-like diamond jewellery), Anokhi (uncut diamonds), Apoorva (diamonds for special occasions), Antara (wedding diamonds), Hera (daily wear diamonds) and Rang (precious stones jewellery). Kalyan Jewellers will draw from its portfolio of over one lakh contemporary and traditional designs and will offer selections for everyday as well as bridal wear and festive occasions.



Rethinking employee engagement in post-COVID Kuwait



A recent survey among professionals in the country found that nearly two-thirds of respondents expect remote working trends that were put in place due to the COVID-19 crisis to continue in the same vein or increase in the post-pandemic environment.

The 'Remote Work in the MENA Poll 2021', conducted recently by Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading job site, and global online market research company, YouGov, revealed that only 25 percent of survey participants believed that the work situation will revert to what it was before the pandemic.

Currently, 24 percent of the respondents said they worked from home on all or some days of the week. While more than half the respondents (51%) said they would prefer a mix between working from home and returning to office, only 11 percent of the respondents said they would prefer working entirely from home.

The survey findings show that the COVID-19 pandemic may have presented

Kuwait employers the opportunity to rethink the way their offices operate and on how staff work going into the future. Shreyansi Gupta, head of marketing at Bayt.com said: "Most employees crave flexibility after working from home for months, which is likely to transform a company's culture, employee engagement, the way the work gets done and how office space is used."

Some of the positive benefits of work from home underscored by the survey participants include saving travel time (51%), working in a comfortable work area (48%), reduced office politics (45%), and more time with family/ friends (40%). However, despite 9 in 10 respondents (95%) saying that they have all or some of the resources required to do their job remotely,

only 35 percent believed that productivity and performance improved by working from home.

Some of the common challenges to work from home identified by the survey included separating work from personal life (45%), technical challenges (39%), isolation that affects mental health (39%) and frequent interruptions (36%).

For his part, Zafar Shah, research director at YouGov said, "Although the transition to remote work has been positively received by a large portion of the survey respondents, some have reported challenges. To mitigate this, managers should encourage intentional, effective and efficient communication at all levels of the organization."



Polish embassy hosts an evening of Chopin's piano magic



The Embassy of Poland hosted a select gathering of guests to an evening of musical nirvana on 25 October with a rebroadcast of the final of the 18th International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition that was held in Warsaw, Poland.

In his speech delivered on the occasion, Ambassador of Poland H.E. Pawel Lechowicz, welcomed the guests and provided them with a brief insight on the legendary Polish classical music composer and piano virtuoso, Fryderyk Chopin, and on the annual international competition named in his honor.

Introducing Fryderyk Chopin, also known as the 'Poet of the Piano', the ambassador said he was one of the world's most famous pianists of the Romantic era, and that apart from its universal and purely musical values, the message of Chopin's music also held deep patriotic contours.

"Chopin was not only a musical genius but also a staunch Polish patriot, who longed so much for his lost homeland that his dying wish was that his heart be buried in his beloved Poland. He lived during times which left deep traces in his consciousness. He was born in the Napoleonic era, which was a time of hope for the Poles. He grew up in pre-Uprising Warsaw. After the November Uprising, he settled down in Paris, however in his mind he remained faithful to Poland.

"As a composer and performer, Chopin possessed an extraordinary facility for improvising harmonious pieces and exceptional melodic inventiveness that allowed his music to cross cultural boundaries, unite people all over the world and provide inspiration for successive generations of musicians.

"The International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition, launched in 1927, is one of the oldest music competitions in the world. Though it has evolved over the years and improved its form and forged its own rich tradition, what has remained constant since the beginning is interest in the competition among critics, the media, pianists, 'culture vultures' and the public at large."

When auditions to the 18th International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition began on 2 October, Warsaw became the piano capital of the world. Twelve of the best pianists, out of 87 international participants, qualified to the Finals. The jury composed of 17 international personalities of the piano world awarded the first prize to Bruce (Xiaoyu) Liu of Canada. Poland's Jakub Kuszlik was the winner of a special prize for best performance of mazurkas, said the Polish envoy.

The ambassador concluded by inviting his guests to listen to the performances by laureates at this year's International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition.

Harvard Business Council Excellence Award honors Dr. Shabbir Qamar

Managing Director of SAAZ Technologies Kuwait and UAE, Dr. Shabbir Qamar has been honored and awarded the 'Harvard Business Council Excellence Award' for his efforts in actively supporting advancements, encouraging innovations and steering the organization's success.

He has been honored with this prestigious professional award at the Harvard Business Council International Awards 2021. The eminent award recognizes organizations on international best practices and leading continuous improvement models. The evaluation criteria covered: leadership, human resources, management, innovation, technology resource management, customer results, impact on society and corporate achievements.

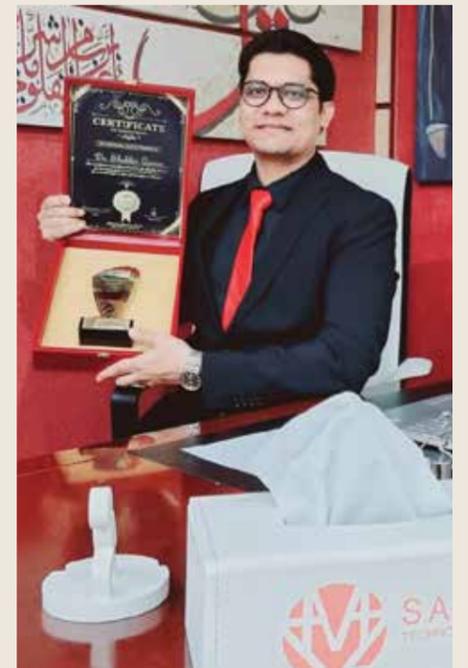
Harvard Business Council International Awards is one of the international prestigious awards, developed on the concept of total quality management to assist the organizations in achieving organizational strategies, adopting best practices, providing quality services products and meeting customer's needs and expectations.

"We are thankful to Harvard Business Council for recognizing our efforts. This recognition also goes to all my colleagues and staff working to satisfy customers and helping us become a Telecom Service & Solutions leader, reputable for its meritorious services in the field of telecommunication and technology across the Middle East," said Dr. Qamar.

Everywhere and in everything, we strive for uniqueness. The astounding global demand for customization and packaged offerings for a variety of services directed SAAZ Technologies to provide concurrent services in various segments of engineering, telecommunications, civil, electrical, security and surveillance systems.

"Our proficient technical teams and executives provide assurance of high standards and excellence of work. There is no compromise on quality. Our organizations, partners, employees and all our stakeholders are one family, believing in a joint collaboration to strive relentlessly to meet customer preferences," said Dr. Qamar.

Dr. Qamar has a vast experience of 21 years in the field of technology and management. An engineer with a MBA in Telecom



Management and a doctorate in Business Management, he has worked in different multinational organizations like Hutchison Essar India and Ooredoo Kuwait. His thesis on telecom business outsourcing has been widely appreciated on different platforms by the experts.

His wife Zeba Ibrar is the strength and support behind all his active efforts, and the couple have a daughter, Aahana, and a son, Absham.

Besides being a professional in his field, Dr. Qamar is also an active social worker. Though he is based in Kuwait for the last 16 years, he has never forgotten his Indian culture. He is currently the President of Indian Youth Society (IYS) Kuwait, which is a non-profit organization registered with the Indian Embassy of Kuwait. The association is working with the vision of honoring, encouraging, supporting and celebrating the Indian social and cultural values among people in Kuwait.

Producers bet on oil dominance for decades to come



The approximately \$471.7 billion worth of oil, gas and petrochemical projects planned across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region creates abundant opportunities for companies operating in these sectors, especially at a time that the world's focus is shifting away from dependence on fossil fuels.

A new report in MEED magazine noted that the global energy transition represents a fundamental change in business model

for oil producers in the MENA region, as the attitudes of their customers are changing, and so too must they. The report shows that the region's leading national oil companies are introducing new policies and investments in response to these transitions so as to ensure that they remain at the forefront of the global energy sector.

The focus of policies by these producers is increasingly on diversifying investments into new technologies and clean fuels, preserving their hydrocarbon reserves, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through technology. At the same time, a shift is seen from traditional clients in the West towards new markets in China, India and Southeast Asia, and as a result, acquiring new clients, suppliers and financiers to the oil and gas sector in the region has become a priority.

But even with such drastic changes taking place, oil and gas producers know that hydrocarbons will remain the world's largest energy source for decades to come even after oil demand growth slows.

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosts a webinar on 'How to do Business with the US Military'



ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosted a webinar and workshop on 'How to do Business with the U.S. Military' with speakers from the U.S. Army's Regional Contracting Center- Kuwait (RCC-KU), the U.S. Army's Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Air Force 386th Expeditionary Wing. This event was done in collaboration with AmCham Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman and Qatar; sponsored by AmCham Kuwait's Chairman's Club Member - Venice.

The event started with the opening remarks by AmCham Kuwait's Chairman- Mr. Pete Swift, followed by opening remarks from the event's sponsor, Venice represented by Mr. Tom Deren, Vice President for the Middle East.

Major Eric Forcey, Contracting Officer and Ms. Nancy Segarra, Procurement Analyst from the Regional Contracting Center -Kuwait (RCC-KU) opened the webinar by covering the following topics: why should companies do business with the U.S. Federal government, what RCC-KU does, what do they buy, how to read solicitations & contracts, which systems do companies need to register in, how to respond to opportunities, government expectations for contractors, common errors which cause rejected invoices, and how to get a positive past performance. The presenters highly encouraged vendors to do business with the U.S. Federal government and highlighted that there were several opportunities available, as they stated that during 2021, RCC-KU spent over \$41 Million. The RCC-KU spoke about routine purchases which included commodities and services, as these are something that they often seek.

Technical Sergeant Sheba-Mary Wynn, Infrastructure Flight Chief and Staff Sergeant Michael Roybal, Contracting Officer representing 386th ECONS, spoke about their role and the teams which provide the U.S. government support: construction, services, commodities, Government Purchase Card (GPC) team, as these provide numerous opportunities to local vendors. One important aspect to note is that when the purchasing team sends out direct emails to vendors, they will always come from a .mil or a .gov domain; therefore, they asked that vendors pay attention to avoid being scammed.

The presenters also highlighted that companies do not necessarily have to be registered in SAM, as there are smaller purchases done by the GPC team on the spot. These purchases must not exceed 9,800 KWD and construction purchases are limited to 600 KWD.

Ms. Yvette Walker, the Contracting Chief of the Expeditionary District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, highlighted that they are one of the world's largest public engineering design and construction management agencies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a large military construction program; however, they also support disaster relief efforts by responding to national and global disasters by providing engineering, contingency planning, and construction support



capabilities. Ms. Walker also spoke about current and upcoming opportunities with the Expeditionary District to support efforts in Kuwait and in Iraq, as they are currently soliciting for specific projects which can be found in SAM. Capabilities can be sent to her team directly.

The presentations concluded with a Q&A followed by a one-hour workshop on 'How to do Business with the U.S. Military from a Contractor's perspective' with AmCham Bahrain's speaker, Mr. Michael Sedge partner at Relyant Global Company. To conclude, the presenters ensured that vendors understood that having no previous experience does not disqualify them from doing contracts with them. They also encourage companies to collaborate in scopes in which one cannot fulfill certain capabilities.

The U.S. Military works carefully to meet the needs of its customers, while ensuring that contractors receive impartial, fair, and equitable treatment.

Al Maryah Community Bank appoints Adeeb Ahamed of LuLu Financial Holdings as an Advisor to its Board

UAE's first licensed digital-only bank - Al Maryah Community Bank LLC, has appointed Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of Abu Dhabi based LuLu Financial Holdings to the position of Advisor to the Board Members.



Adeeb, whose investments in financial services and digital payments span 11 countries in the GCC, Indian sub-continent and APAC regions, is an established and recognized industry name, known for his far-reaching contributions to the development of the global payments ecosystem.

A member of the prestigious World Economic Forum's South Asian Regional Strategy Group, Adeeb additionally sits at the helm of companies in retail, F&B and luxury hospitality.

Al Maryah Community Bank, which started operations earlier this year, is a community oriented financial services provider committed to improving the quality of life of the UAE community by operating with integrity and using innovative smart technologies.

The Board comprises leaders from diversified sectors of economy, and Mr. Adeeb's inputs as an Advisor will help improve the bank's strategic direction. Al Maryah Community Bank is also heavily invested in digital solutions and elevation of user experience for the UAE community, and Mr. Adeeb's vision for the payments ecosystem will be of much support in this regard.

Al Maryah Community Bank is UAE's first licensed digital-only bank, with an aim to build a base among individuals and small businesses. The bank allows consumers to seamlessly open accounts and experience a range of smart banking services built on AI powered technology integrated with UAE Government's Smart Services.

LuLu Financial Holdings, which operates a network of 238 branches worldwide alongside its proprietary digital financial services, is geared to improve people's lives, with a vision to innovate value and inspire experiences through its varied offerings. For more details: www.luluefin.com



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Vaccination campaign begins for children over five years

Ministry of Health (MoH) has announced the launch of registrations for children aged five years and above to receive their vaccination against the COVID-19 virus.

This move follows a decision last week by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States that the benefits of vaccinating children between the ages of five and eleven with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine outweighs any other health risks.

The FDA also simultaneously issued emergency approval for Pfizer-BioNTech

vaccine to be administered to children in that age range, with two shots three weeks apart. The decision is now awaiting final approval from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Data from the company's clinical trials found that a paediatric dose of the vaccine – one third of that given to adults and adolescents – was safe and 90 percent effective against the coronavirus.

If the CDC also approves the vaccine, 15 million doses are expected to be sent out to paediatric offices, children's hospitals



and pharmacies around the US to begin vaccinating children. Following the FDA's green light on Friday, the CDC is expected to follow suit on 2 November, meaning vaccination of five-year-olds and above could begin as soon as a day later.

The registration for the jobs in Kuwait is the first step and final approval for administering the vaccines will come from the relevant authorities in Kuwait after due medical diligence is conducted in the country, said a source at MoH.

Who cares about polar bears in Kuwait?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kuwait is also wedged in the unenviable position of having to reduce its GHG emissions to meet global goals, while having to confront the economic consequences of a fall in fossil-fuel demand as the world increases efforts to move to zero-carbon emission targets. The government acknowledges that the country is vulnerable to the impact of climate change and to the economic and social repercussions arising from climate change. The authorities have also committed to 'harmonize the country's economic growth with a low-carbon, climate-resilient development'.

Despite the latent impact of economic, social and ecological consequences of climate change to their lives, the nonchalance of many people in Kuwait to the potential cataclysm in future is unbelievable. In a recent blog report from the Middle East Center of the London School of Economics (LSE) titled 'Who cares about the polar bear in Kuwait', the authors Deen Shariff Sharp, Abrar Alshammari and Kanwal Hameed, highlight this anomaly of indifference in the face of an existential threat.

The report notes that during campaigning for the recent National Assembly elections that were held in December 2020, none of the candidates addressed issues related to impact of climate change, or tackled other environmental topics facing the country. When asked about this, one candidate replied that it was not a topic that Kuwait's electorate found important or were substantively knowledgeable about. He added, "I could go to a diwaniyya and ask the gathering, 'what do you think about global warming, and they would say who cares about the polar bear'".

But if global climate change continues unabridged, Kuwait will have to contend with more than just caring for polar bears, as reports submitted by various climate studies ahead of COP26 attest. The two-week long climate conference, which is being held at the iconic Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November, has been labeled as a defining moment for global climate action. Besides world leaders, tens of thousands of national negotiators, representatives of science and environment groups, businesses, climate activists, members of civil society organizations, observers, and media representatives, have converged on Glasgow. Heads of state, presidents and prime ministers are also attending a high-level segment of the conference, the 'World Leaders' Summit', on 1-2 November.

Co-hosted by the United Kingdom and Italy, COP26 will be the first time that the Conference of Parties (COP) — a UN term for

countries and regions that have signed on to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) — will submit and commit to enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

Following the landmark COP21 held in France in 2015, signatories to the Paris Agreement submitted NDC pledges aimed at limiting their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. They also agreed to work towards keeping global warming well below 2° C, and aiming for 1.5° C, above pre-industrial levels, and to ratchet up ambition to mitigate climate change through committing to enhanced NDCs every five years.

The Glasgow gathering of COP26 is the first time that the five-year enhanced NDCs are being submitted. Unfortunately, the enhanced NDC submitted by Kuwait on 12 October 2021 does not go far enough to make any meaningful dent in mitigating the country's relatively high ecological footprint, or in implementing realistic adaptations to climate change. In its latest NDC, Kuwait noted that based on its national economic circumstances, 'the State of Kuwait seeks to avoid emission of greenhouse gases equivalent to 7.4 percent of its total future emission in 2035 through its national efforts.

Kuwait also stated that it hopes financial, technical and technological support will be provided through mechanisms of the [UNFCCC] convention, in particular, in market and non-market mechanisms. In addition, the country sought a cooperative approach to ensure the sustainability of its future projects [designed to reduce emissions] and to achieve greater benefit for emission reduction to implement future contributions.

Among the projects that Kuwait plans to undertake to reduce GHG emissions in the years ahead is attaining 70 percent of energy production from gas and remaining 30 percent from fossil fuels by 2022; producing 240MW of combined cycle renewable power by 2024; and carbon reuse by employing carbon capture and storage technologies by 2022. Together these upcoming projects are expected to reduce around 4.2 million tons of GHG emissions, with a total reduction of around 142 million tons by 2035, which represents a reduction of 7.4 percent.

Timely submissions of climate change related ambitions are only one part of the story, ensuring they are sufficient to achieve meaningful and realistic goals is the more challenging part. According to the latest report from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), by mid-October, 148 of the 194 COP signatories had submitted their updated NDCs. A tally of their updated submissions indicate that the world is on a trajectory to warm 2.7° C by

2100, and that chances of crossing the global warming level of 1.5° C could very well happen in the next few decades.

The UNEP report on the expected gap in 2030 for the 1.5° C and 2° C temperature targets of the Paris Agreement shows that before the Paris Agreement, GHG emissions were on track to reach nearly 60 gigatons CO₂-equivalent by 2030 — more than double the 25 gigaton emission that scientists agree is critical to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C. The first round of NDCs cut around 10 percent off that gap, and preliminary estimates are that the current round of NDCs are on track to deliver another 10 percent.

Pledges from countries committing to further reduce their emissions so far add up to a total reduction of 3.6 gigatons CO₂-equivalent by 2030. To state what is quite obvious, this is too little. If we are to have a realistic chance of limiting global warming to the 1.5 degree C level, we will have to collectively commit to implementing policies and actions that deliver 7.6 percent emission reduction every year between 2020 and 2030, noted UNEP. But, even the most ambitious national climate action plans submitted are far short of this 7.6 percent reduction.

The report noted that ten years ago, if countries had acted on warnings by scientists and the science behind the warning, governments would have needed to reduce emissions only by 3.3 percent each year. And, if we do not take decisive action now, in less than four years time, by 2025 the emission cuts needed would be 15.5 percent each year. The increasingly steep emission reductions have placed us on the brink, it may soon be impossible to achieve the 1.5° C goal, warned UNEP.

However, it is not all a bleak scenario. Though the emission cuts may look too ambitious, they are achievable with collective action and support from those with the resources. We cannot afford to sit aside and take no action, for ourselves, for the planet and for future generations, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN entity responsible for advancing knowledge on human-induced climate change, noted.

In the first part of its Sixth Assessment Report, published in August this year, the IPCC — while painting a stark picture that leaves no room for ambiguity on the fact the climate is changing; and it is changing because of human activity — also said that there were several steps we could take now to avoid a catastrophic future.

Among the concrete and actionable measures and commitments that need to be made at COP26, as recommended by IPCC are to include the most vulnerable groups — rural

dwellers and indigenous peoples — in the decision-making process; invest in nature-based solutions that can promote sustainable agriculture, food production and decent livelihoods, as well as scale up funding to help developing countries adapt. The report also suggests realigning our policies and priorities so as to focus global resources, attention, and policymaking on climate adaptation, not just mitigation. The report noted that at present for every US\$18 spent on mitigation, only \$1 goes towards adaptation measures.

In Kuwait, the focus has generally been on mitigation, not adaptation or on building climate resilience. Often there seems to be confusion and conflation within Kuwaiti society between climate change and other environmental issues such as littering, said authors of the LSE blog report cited earlier, which was a prelude to their newly published report, *The Quiet Emergency: Experiences and Understandings of Climate Change in Kuwait*.

The report notes that though there are several civil society organizations and volunteer groups engaged in mitigating environmental issues in Kuwait, their focus is often not specifically on adaptation or resilience strategies. Despite there being very little scientific backing for direct and explicit links between environmental degradation and climate change, many groups in Kuwait tend to focus on issues such as littering; availability of drinking water; recycling; and pollution, and 'beach clean-ups, which are one of the most popular and visible activities through which the inhabitants of Kuwait engage with the environment', noted the authors.

The report nevertheless ends on a hopeful tone, pointing out that there is a notable generational divide in response to climate issues. The younger generation appear to be deeply concerned about climate change and say that it would negatively impact their future to a far greater extent than their elders. Previous generation did not take the issue as seriously as we do, said many youngsters. Apparently, the generation of the future do in fact 'care about the polar bear', noted the report.

[The newly published report, *The Quiet Emergency: Experiences and Understandings of Climate Change in Kuwait*, examines how Kuwaitis (both citizens and non-citizens) are grappling with the multiple challenges that climate change brings to the country. The policy paper will be officially launched at a Kuwait Programme webinar on Wednesday 4 November from 13.00 – 14.30 GMT hosted by Senior Environmental Specialist Samia Alduaij and featuring all three authors.] We wish them well.



A Bottom-Up Approach to Education Reform



MIROSLAV BEBLAVÝ AND SOŇA MUZIKÁŘOVÁ

Miroslav Beblavý, a visiting lecturer at Sciences Po, is a scientific coordinator at the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE).

Soňa Muzikářová is a chief economist at GLOBSEC Policy Institute.



COVID-19 has accelerated the digitalization of the global economy. According to OECD estimates, nearly one-third of all jobs globally are likely to be transformed by technology in the next decade. And the World Economic Forum estimates that 133 million new jobs will be created in major markets by the end of next year to meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These jobs will require workers to have knowledge and skills that educational systems are not yet providing. Preparing the workforce of the future will require a change in what students are being taught – and how.

Educational reform traditionally has been viewed as a top-down process that begins with national governments and is implemented with the goal of improving institutional results, as measured by student performance. This practice is well established. Recent examples from the European Commission include recommendations to expand the role of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in school curriculums in Belgium and Spain; proposals to increase the teaching of digital skills in schools in Bulgaria, Portugal, and the Netherlands; and plans to reduce social inequalities in accessing the education system in Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, and Romania.

More in-depth reviews of educational strategy, such as the OECD Education Policy Outlook, monitor the progress of proposed reforms and provide detailed guidance on specific aspects, including the quality of teaching and learning, professional development for teachers, pedagogical leadership, school curricula, vision, expectations, and student assessment.

But, overall, these proposed reforms

either have not materialized or have frequently been a source of disappointment. They have failed to spur systemic change and produce the desired improvements.

The metrics available for monitoring educational outcomes demonstrate this lack of progress. Results from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which measures the performance of 15-year-olds around the world in science, math, and reading, show little change in educational attainment over the past decade. And efforts to modernize

government-administered education reform as the only avenue for improving human capital. For years, national governments in the region have talked about the need to build knowledge economies but have shown little progress in doing so. But grassroots initiatives run by companies or NGOs, for example, can offer alternative ways to increase educational achievement, thereby filling the gaps left by public policy. Novel approaches and pilot programs developed by such organizations can be picked up, adapted, and expanded

skills, or critical thinking. Others provide full-fledged alternatives to the mainstream educational system. In Slovakia, for example, a billionaire real-estate developer founded a boarding school called LEAF Academy. Next door, in the Czech Republic, car manufacturer Škoda established its own university. And grassroots initiatives such as the Invendor Innovation Academy are making an important impact in Hungary.

The significance of such bottom-up innovation in education is not limited to post-communist countries. Even Finland, which is usually considered a paragon of successful national education reform, relied on grassroots experimentation and pilot programs for more than two decades before the most successful efforts were elevated to the level of official policy.

As with most government initiatives, top-down reforms in the education sector tend to be slow-moving and difficult to adapt, no matter how cleverly designed and workable they appear. Grassroots education and training programs, by contrast, usually are more agile and better targeted, allowing them to produce faster results. To be sure, the best way to modernize a national education system is still via well-considered, top-down reform. But where a lack of political capital, commitment, or competence is delaying progress, jump-starting change from the bottom can work wonders.

“Grassroots initiatives run by companies or NGOs, can offer alternative ways to increase educational achievement, which can be picked up, adapted, and expanded by governments, ultimately improving formal education systems.”

the curriculum by including digital topics also have come up short. For example, a PISA report on digital literacy revealed that even though 88 percent of students in OECD countries have access to a computer connected to the internet and are active online, only slightly more than half reported studying how to spot disinformation.

This lack of progress demonstrates the problem of relying too heavily on

by governments, ultimately improving formal education systems.

When we conducted a recent audit of such programs in Central European countries, we were surprised by the number, quality, and impact of initiatives that were developed from the bottom up. Some programs offer targeted support in specific areas where traditional educational systems are falling behind, such as languages, digital

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Clean energy wins economic race



“Clean energy transition will continue to attract capital and build its own momentum. But this process can be accelerated by policymakers who want to drive change by creating an enabling environment for the optimal flow of capital.”



JULES KORTENHORST

CEO of global sustainability consultancy firm RMI.

For decades, we at the Rocky Mountain Institute (now RMI) have argued that the transition to clean energy will cost less and proceed faster than governments, firms, and many analysts expect. In recent years, this outlook has been fully vindicated: costs of renewables have consistently fallen faster than expected, while deployment has proceeded more rapidly than predicted, thereby reducing costs even further.

Thanks to this virtuous cycle, renewables have broken through. And now, new analyses from two authoritative research institutions have added to the mountain of data showing that a rapid clean-energy transition is the least expensive path forward.

Policymakers, business leaders, and financial institutions urgently need to consider the promising implications of this development. With the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow fast approaching, it is imperative that world leaders recognize that achieving the Paris climate agreement's 1.5° Celsius warming target is not about making sacrifices; it is about seizing opportunities. The negotiation process must be reframed so that it is less about burden-sharing and more about a lucrative race to deploy

cleaner, cheaper energy technologies.

With the world already suffering from climate-driven extreme weather events, a rapid clean-energy transition also has the virtue of being the safest route ahead. If we fail at this historic task, we risk not only wasting trillions of dollars but also pushing civilization further down a dangerous and potentially catastrophic path of climate change.

One can only guess why forecasters have, for decades, underestimated the falling costs and accelerating pace of deployment for renewables. But the results are clear: bad predictions have underwritten trillions of dollars of investment in energy infrastructure that is not only more expensive but also more damaging to human society and all life on the planet.

We now face what may be our last chance to correct for decades of missed opportunities. Either we will continue to waste trillions more on a system that is killing us, or we will move rapidly to the cheaper, cleaner, more advanced energy solutions of the future.

New studies have shed light on how a rapid clean-energy transition would work. In the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) report, The Renewable Spring, lead author Kingsmill Bond shows that renewables are following the same exponential growth curve as past technology revolutions, hewing to predictable and well-understood patterns.

Accordingly, Bond notes that the energy transition will continue to attract capital and build its own momentum. But this process can and should be supported to ensure that it proceeds as quickly as possible. Policymakers who want to

drive change must create an enabling environment for the optimal flow of capital.

Examining past energy revolutions reveals several important insights. First, capital is attracted to technological disruptions, and tends to flow to the areas of growth and opportunity associated with the start of these revolutions. As a result, once a new set of technologies passes its gestation period, capital becomes widely available. Second, financial markets draw forward change. As capital moves, it speeds up the process of change by allocating new capital to growth industries, and by withdrawing it from those in decline.

The current signals from financial markets show that we are in the first phase of a predictable energy transition, with spectacular outperformance by new energy sectors and the de-rating of the fossil-fuel sector. This is the point where wise policymakers can step in to establish the necessary institutional framework to accelerate the energy transition and realize the economic benefits of building local clean-energy supply chains. As we can see from market trends highlighted in the IRENA report, the shift is already well underway.

Reinforcing the findings from the IRENA report, a recent analysis from the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET) at the Oxford Martin School shows that a rapid transition to clean energy solutions will save trillions of dollars, in addition to keeping the world aligned with the Paris agreement's 1.5°C goal. A slower deployment path would be financially costlier than a faster one and would incur significantly higher climate costs from avoidable disasters and deteriorating living

conditions.

Owing to the power of exponential growth, an accelerated path for renewables is eminently achievable. The INET Oxford report finds that if the deployment of solar, wind, batteries, and hydrogen electrolyzers continues to follow exponential growth trends for another decade, the world will be on track to achieve net-zero-emissions energy generation within 25 years.

In its own coverage of the report, Bloomberg News suggests as a "conservative estimate" that a rapid clean-energy transition would save \$26 trillion compared with continuing with today's energy system. After all, the more solar and wind power we build, the greater the price reductions for those technologies.

Moreover, in his own response to the INET Oxford study, Bill McKibben of 350.org points out that the cost of fossil fuels will not fall, and that any technological learning curve advantage for oil and gas will be offset by the fact that the world's easy-access reserves have already been exploited. Hence, he warns that precisely because solar and wind will save consumers money, the fossil-fuel industry will continue to try to slow down the transition in order to mitigate its own losses.

We must not allow any further delay. As we approach COP26, it is essential that world leaders understand that we already have cleaner, cheaper energy solutions ready to deploy now. Hitting our 1.5°C target is not about making sacrifices; it is about seizing opportunities. If we get to work now, we can save trillions of dollars and avert the climate devastation that otherwise will be visited upon our children and grandchildren.

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Gut bacteria linked to sleep apnea, hypertension

In recent years, gut bacteria or microbiome — the trillions of microorganisms that inhabit our mouth and gastrointestinal tract, and help digest some components of our food — have been identified as playing a key role in several important biological functions, as well as in diseases such as obesity, diabetes, Parkinson's disease and dementia.

New research now links the microbiome to sleep apnea and hypertension. Sleep apnea refers to a serious medical condition where an individual stops breathing for brief periods throughout the night. The two main forms of sleep apnea are Central sleep apnea (CSA) and Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). CSA is relatively rare and is caused when the brain does not send appropriate signals to the muscles engaged in breathing. The more common form of sleep apnea is OSA; this occurs when throat muscles temporarily relax and block the airways and thereby hinder breathing.

OSA affects an estimated 22 percent of men and 17 percent of women, in particular those who are overweight, older, have nasal congestion and other medical conditions. If undetected, it can increase the risk of developing heart disease and depression, as well as type 2 diabetes and epilepsy.

Sleep apnea can also increase the risk

of hypertension, a condition that needs no special introduction. Worldwide, more than 1.25 billion people between the ages of 35 and 80 suffer from this high blood pressure condition. Although treatment for hypertension is available, the drugs do not work effectively for some individuals. OSA has been found to be common in individuals with drug-resistant hypertension.

Scientists are still exploring the mechanisms involved in the link between OSA and hypertension. In the meantime, a new study by researchers at the University of Missouri in the US links gut microbiome with OSA-related hypertension. One of the key factors behind microbiomes and their link to diseases is a condition referred to as dysbiosis, which is an imbalance or reduction in microbial diversity.

Sleep apnea causes intermittent hypoxia or low levels of oxygen in the blood throughout the night. This hypoxia produces periodic decreases in the partial oxygen pressure gradient inside the tubes of the gastrointestinal system.

Consequently, bacteria that can only grow in low oxygen environments and those that can thrive with or without oxygen get a boost, at the cost of bacteria that depend on oxygen. In one study scientists induced intermittent hypoxia in mice over

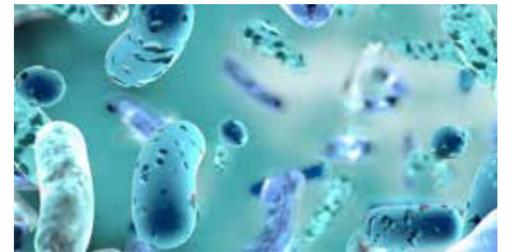
the course of six weeks. After analyzing their feces, they noted a "significant effect of intermittent hypoxia on the microbial community structure."

Specifically, the study noted that compared to control mice, the hypoxia induced mice had an abundance of Firmicutes, the so-called 'bad microbiome' that negatively influences both glucose and fat metabolism, and a reduction in Bacteroidetes, the 'good microbiome' that help produce favorable metabolites, including Short Chain Fatty Acids (SCFA), which have been correlated with reducing inflammation.

An increase in Firmicutes with a reduction in Bacteroidetes is considered a hallmark of dysbiosis. These two bacterial phyla, or types, make up around 90 percent of the bacteria in our gut, so changes to these groups are likely to impact the delicately balanced ecosystem within us.

In previous studies on animals, researchers have shown that a shift in bacterial populations can cause the degradation of mucins that help keep the gut lining or epithelium healthy. Mucin degradation disrupts junctions between epithelial cells, which leads to the epithelium becoming more permeable or 'leaky'.

Also, since good bacteria, which produce



SCFAs from dietary fiber, are in shorter supply, they cannot produce the needed SCFAs, which are a source of nutrition and energy for the epithelium. The limited production of SCFAs lead to dysfunction in the epithelium. On top of the mucin degradation and drop in SCFAs, intermittent hypoxia itself can physically damage the epithelium.

To summarize, OSA, which leads to disordered breathing at night, can cause damage to the intestinal epithelium through mucin breakdown, reduced levels of SCFAs, and physical damage through hypoxia. A damaged intestinal epithelium or 'leaky gut' allows increased traffic from the gut into the blood. Harmful compounds that the gut would normally trap and excrete from the body are now able to enter the blood and travel to distant organs and systems and cause damage to them.

Reduce salt intake by stopping 'salt creep'

Doctors, nutritionists, dietitians have for decades been emphasizing the dangers of too much salt in our diets. The persistent warnings have led to a greater awareness among the public about the harm that too much salt causes to our health. Many people also know that nearly all processed and packaged foods contain a significant dose of salt in them.

However, this awareness and knowledge have not translated into a significant decrease in salt intake among many people. One reason for this is that they are often not aware of the hidden sources from which salt finds its way into their diet. As a result, they have not been able to avoid many of the food sources from which 'salt creeps' into their foods.



A new study by researchers at New York University in the US shows that consumers are generally unaware that several foods that they regularly consume, which do not taste salty in any way, are high in sodium content. For instance, around 270 mg of sodium lurk in each sweet, glazed donut we eat; a 450ml cup of Caramel Frappuccino has around 230 mg of sodium; and a similar sized can (450ml) of

traditional chicken noodle soup has 1,510 mg of sodium hidden in it.

In addition, plenty of salt also sneaks into our diet from fast food restaurant chains that we frequent. During the study, the researchers found that a chicken avocado melt at a popular restaurant chain had 1,990 mg of sodium in it, while a five-piece order of chicken tenders at another food outlet had 3,035 mg of sodium. Even dining out in restaurants that promise healthy natural foods, may still result in these places inadvertently serving us foods loaded with sodium. For example, seemingly healthy fat-free chicken breasts are often injected with a sodium solution that helps maintain their moisture and adds weight to the final product. But this also greatly increases the amount of sodium that the consumer gets in their meal.

Cooking at home also is not a safe option to avoid or limit sodium intake, unless you painstakingly read the food value labels of individual ingredients used to prepare your meal. This is because plenty of sodium is also furtively present in canned tomatoes, salad dressings, and in the bottled sauces that are often used to make or accompany what we consider 'healthy, home-made dishes'. While it is hypothetically possible for a person to eat only organically grown whole foods that are naturally low in sodium, the reality is that most people do not have the time, money or knowledge to access such foods or cook them in a way that makes this possible, said the researchers behind the new study.

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