



ESSENTIALLY KUWAITI

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Kuwait at COP26

From GHG emissions to tamarisk plants

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

People around the world, especially those living in small Island-nations, low-lying areas, and in arid regions, all of whom are likely to be the earliest victims of climate change repercussions, are pinning their hopes on the COP26 gathering, currently underway in the Scottish city of Glasgow in the United Kingdom. The outcome of this UN conference will have far-reaching consequences for these people, as well as for people everywhere around the world.

In this regard, it was reassuring to find that Kuwait remains committed to lowering its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and encouraging afforestation drives, in a bid to



reduce risks and increase resilience to climate change. Speaking at the United Nations COP26 conference in Glasgow last week, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's representative His

Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, announced Kuwait's keenness to adopt a national low carbon strategy until 2050.

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Uzbekistan today is a swirl of diplomatic activity, whether it is regional diplomacy or renewed foreign policy that encourages peace and active dialogue. Bringing peace to Central Asia has been a priority for Uzbekistan, and it is already showing results as most of the countries in the region are now seeing real progress and development as a result of the peace dividend that Uzbek foreign policy has pursued.

In an exclusive interview with The Times Kuwait, the country's Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Kamilov explains about the emerging New Uzbekistan.

Interview on Page 8 & 9



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Adopting, nurturing, and uplifting

NOURAH AL-OSEIMI
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

To adopt can mean one of two things (according to Oxford Languages), it can mean to “choose to take up, follow or use”, or it can mean “legally take (another’s child) and bring it up as one’s own”. In some ways, I feel that

Zeina Bader Bin Essa



the definitions are interlinked through the issue of choice. Unlike childbearing, which can happen accidentally sometimes, there is nothing accidental about the process of adopting a child. It is a structured, meticulous, and well-thought-out process that is driven heavily by one of many key factors, including a parent’s choice to adopt.

Ironically, however, it is the child in this situation who is robbed of their choice. Children do not choose to be put up for adoption. And yet, so many beautiful stories emerge from adoptive children who grew up with an entirely different household from what they were actually born into.

Zeina Bader Bin Essa identifies herself as an “advocate of openness in adoption and an adoptive mum in Kuwait.” Zeina is also the proud founder of Roots Kuwait, a non-profit organization that aspires to spread awareness and acceptance towards adoption in our region. What stood out to me the most prior to meeting Zeina for the first time was the short but powerful statement that she has written in her Instagram biography “A family based on love & created by adoption”. And so, I had to learn more.

“I adopted Noor 16 years ago and at that time it was something new and everyone told me don’t talk about it, it’s not the right time. Three years later when I adopted Abdulwahab, things were a little different. There are some differences between adoption as a concept and what we do in Kuwait and Islamic countries overall.

“When you adopt, a child can take your family’s name and is allowed to inherit what you leave behind, however in our culture, adopted children don’t take our last names, nor are they given access to any inheritance, and this is due to religious factors.”

Zeina proceeded to explain to me the entirety of the process starting at when the child is initially found until the child is paired with his/her adoptive family. Heartbreakingly, newborn babies are sometimes abandoned outside of mosques or supermarkets until someone finds them and calls upon local authorities to rescue them. Due to this and a lack of identification in most cases, it is nearly impossible to determine where the child’s health records are (if there are any) and what issues do prospective adoptive parents need to know in relation to the child’s genetic history.

Zeina then spoke to me about the origins of Roots as an organization and the series of events that led her and her fellow adoptive peers to realize the importance of fostering a community of support, knowledge exchange and open communication. “We wanted to protect our children and learn how to cope with this new aspect of our lives. We communicate directly with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. The Ministry remains responsible for all adoptive children until they reach the adult age of 21. It is a very good system that protects our children.”

One question remains glaringly obvious... At what point in time do we speak to the child about the nature of his/her upbringing? When is it the right time to tell them they are adopted and how does an adoptive parent go about addressing such a sensitive subject?

Children are curious by nature and Zeina elaborated that the adopted child inherently senses that something is different about their upbringing and so at a certain age, they begin to ask questions. Difficult questions. Existential questions. Who am I? Where did I come from? Where are my parents? Are they coming back? Why did they leave? And the most dreaded statement of all...you’re not my real parent.

“I started reading one book after the other, you need to educate the adoptive parents, and this is a difficult process for parents because they always believe they know what’s best for their child. I took it the other way round; we need to think about how those kids feel to create awareness. Don’t hide the adoption. I depended on books and the Internet. I would even contact the authors of the books and you can find many of them on social media or on blogs. I would email them, and they helped me so much. In fact, when I asked one of the psychotherapists who specializes in this subject to provide Arabic captioning for her videos, she was happy to help in any sense.”

Zeina talked to me about the support group she created in her own home that would meet every month and during their meetings, she would talk about something that she read. According to Zeina, some mothers would break down and cry during these meetings because the process is very overwhelming. “I slowly began to educate them about the child’s feelings and what they like, and dislike and you need to acknowledge and respect the differences.”

“It’s more about the children than us as mothers, we should attune to the kids and adapt to their ways to help them feel comfortable so that they can feel a sense of belonging.”

Although Roots was initially founded as an organization called ‘Special Mothers’, Zeina came to realize that her work transcends the communities of mothers and looks at adoption as a broader concept and how it shapes the

fabric of society overall. When deciding on the new name, she included her two children in the process and her daughter happened to select the name Roots for the following reason “you need healthy soil for the child to grow and you need a shelter and a tree can be a shelter.” Zeina connected to this reasoning strongly and so she rebranded Special Mothers to Roots around one year ago.

When discussing this, and upon learning about how Zeina’s work set the tone for adoption in the Arab region as a whole and how often she is invited to speak at regional and global events on this very subject, I perceived the name ‘Roots’ in a completely new light — I imagined Zeina’s work as the foundation for a healthy attitude and outlook on adoption in our part of the world and out of this healthy foundation, branches



of a tree would grow out that represent different parts of the Arab region where the concept of adoption is embraced, celebrated and integrated within a high-functioning society.

“We started as 3 ladies, and now we’re more than 60-70 ladies in Kuwait. We also have members from the GCC joining our support group. They fly in to attend the support group meetings. Since COVID, we’ve welcomed members from Egypt, Tunis, Morocco and Djibouti and all across the Arab world.”

As our conversation was nearing its close, Zeina briefed me about the criteria for adoption in Kuwait, which stipulates that only a Kuwaiti family unit

(a married couple) would be given priority for adoption and that would be based on registering their interest with the necessary documentation at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. Single parent Kuwaiti households can register their interest however, they would be allocated a low-priority ranking. Current laws and provisions in Kuwait do not allow for expatriates to adopt.

Zeina told me a lot of wonderful things about her life, her children and how much she loves being an adoptive parent. There were moments throughout our conversation where I felt overcome with emotion because her story and the story of all adoptive parents is driven by an



innate desire to nurture, to care and to love another human being unconditionally. A human being who, like you, like me, deserves the right to be held by a loving parent, to be guided through life and to be reminded of how remarkable they are day in and day out.

To learn more about Roots and the important work they are doing, please follow @roots.kuw on Instagram

Nourah Al-Oseimi is a Kuwaiti writer who holds a Master’s degree in Business Administration. Nourah has worked in different places such as the Central Bank of Kuwait and the United Nations. She serves as a free-lance contributing journalist to The Times Kuwait. If you would like to share your thoughts or get in touch with Nourah, please email: nourah.aloseimi@gmail.com

Does it really matter if my plumber is aged over 60

Mohanlal (name changed) has been living and working in Kuwait for more than 25 years. He arrived sometime in the late nineties with no degree in hand but a lot of experience and desire to work and support his family back home, in a small village in Rajasthan, India.

It took Mohanlal, a quick learner and a hard worker, only a couple of years to venture on his own. Mohanlal left his job and began freelancing because it gave him more flexibility and money, as well as allowed him to take up small subcontracts from various contractors, who found him both dependable and cost effective.

The firm that he worked for and many others like them now outsourced work to him, as Mohanlal grew so did his small band of workers, some who were daily wagers. Mohanlal understood the plumbing business quite well, and due to his extensive experience could solve difficult plumbing jobs with ease and at a cost that was far less than what customers would otherwise have to pay. This saving was always passed on to the customer, most of whom were Kuwaitis. Mohanlal was trusted, appreciated and looked upon to always deliver. He worked sincerely and sometimes worked 7 days a week.

Muhamad as he was called by his Kuwaiti clients says he worked on more than 1,000 villas in different areas of Kuwait. He has literally seen houses rise from the desert in Kuwait during his 25 years as a plumber.

Mohanlal has done well for himself, he has educated his children, built a house for his family and even helped his relatives in their hard times. He has also looked after



An Expatriate



his ailing parents. Mohanlal reached the unlucky age of sixty this year. He knows that he still has many more years of productive work left in him and that the experience and knowledge he has gained over the past 25 years can be best put to use here in Kuwait. His small team of plumbers depend on his input to ensure the technical aspect of their work is perfect.

The recent decision to evict expats over 60 with no college degree has put a spanner in Mohanlal's plans. He is in a dilemma to stay and continue here or to return back home where he might not be able to start over again. The steep new fees for renewal of visa means he will no longer be able to work 'for cheap' as he puts it. He will have no choice but to pass on these high fees to his clients, many of whom might not be willing to pay the higher charges.

The story of Mohanlal is not isolated, but just one of the many thousands of expats without college degrees, who have crossed the age of 60, or will reach this unlucky age in the coming year or two.

These expats who have lived and worked here for decades are not the ones who will be replaced by Kuwaitis. Young Kuwaitis need to replace young expats not older ones who are part of building the economy of Kuwait.

In the coming years, Kuwait will be flush with young graduates, many of whom need to upskill to replace skilled expats. The private sector has thousands of non-graduate expats over 60 on their payroll; the owners of these businesses know the value these workers bring to the organization, and are keen on retaining them. As one employer put it, these expats are tried and tested and are not likely to go job hopping to another employer. In many organizations these workers are the ones holding the fort with their knowledge and experience.

As is the case with sickness when the diagnosis is wrong the treatment will surely be faulty. The belief that 60 year old and above expats with no college degree are detrimental to the economy and

country has confused everyone. Whoever has put this theory forward without facts and figures need to just look around neighbouring countries where several of these people are being offered Golden Visas instead of showing them the door.

There are far more urgent issues the country needs to look into than create more uncertainty in a marketplace that needs more confidence building than anything else at this time. A growing market will have more jobs and opportunities and Kuwaitis will surely benefit from this than a shrinking economy where jobs are being lost rather than being replaced.

The future of any economy should be the private sector and more regulation will create more hindrances to growth. If the government is deciding on who private sector employs then as in all other aspects the competitiveness of the private sector will diminish as we are witnessing now.

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Hotel industry invites Kuwaitis for jobs in kitchen



Private sector in Kuwait has less than enthusiastically begun calling for applications from national cadres for job vacancies in their establishments. This follows incessant prodding from government policies and regulations, and the controversial rule by the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) that links jobs to age and educational qualification, as well as a dearth in the number of experienced professional workers in many industries who hold university degrees or diplomas.

The latest industry that has opened its doors to young Kuwaitis is the hospitality and catering industry. Several five- and four-star hotels have called for applications from national to various vacancies in their facilities, including for positions of professional chefs, department head chefs, assistant cooks, restaurant

managers, assistant restaurant supervisors, service supervisors and restaurant dining hall supervisors. This happens due to the continued shortage of expatriate workers and limited number of incoming job seekers who hold university degrees and diplomas.

People knowledgeable on the hotel and catering industry say that linking professions in this industry to educational levels will result in an exodus of many highly experienced and talented workers who do not hold university degrees or diplomas.

However, many graduates among the national workforce hold degrees in science, engineering and other technical fields, including data analysis engineers in food and dairy products, which are quite unrelated to the requirements of jobs in the hotel and catering industry, inor do young nationals desire to learn these trades.

On the other hand, there are many vacancies in engineering jobs in private sector construction companies that are being made available to the national workforce by PAM working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works. The ministry has insisted on private construction companies hiring a portion of engineering staff from the national cadre in order to be eligible for government construction contracts. However, the unwillingness of many national engineers in civil, mechanical, industrial, or architectural fields willing to work in harsh outdoor environments at construction sites has hampered plans to recruit them.

Ambassador of Tajikistan, the new Dean of Diplomatic Corps



Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to Kuwait His Excellency Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda was appointed Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait, in a ceremonial meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs last month.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait Dhari Ajan Al-Ajran wished Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda every success in his role as the new Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. In turn, the Ambassador Zubaydullo thanked the leadership of the ministry for entrusting him with this noble mission, and the government of Kuwait for providing all possible support to the diplomatic corps to fulfill its obligations.

Kuwaiti woman to contest for seat on Transparency International Board

For the first time ever, a Kuwaiti woman is set to contest for elections to the Transparency International, the German-based global movement founded in 1993, and working in over 100 countries to end the injustice of corruption.

Asrar Hayat, board member of Kuwait Transparency Society will contest for a seat at the Transparency International Board of Directors. This is the first time that a Kuwaiti candidate has been nominated for the seat.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Transparency Society, Majed Al-Mutairi, said that there are four candidates contesting for the seat, and Asrar Hayat will need to garner 40 votes to be elected to the seat.

Al-Mutairi said that Kuwait's success in the election will reflect positively on the image of Kuwaiti civil society and the promotion of integrity in the country's processes. "Transparency International's board of directors plays a major role in promoting transparency and fighting corruption worldwide," said Al-Mutairi. He added that Ms. Asrar's chances of success were great, and God willing, this success will be achieved, after the effort made by the association in ensuring a good number of votes," he added.



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Delivery bikes shoed off major highways from Sunday



Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MoI) said Saturday that the decision to ban delivery bikes will be banned from using most highways and major arterial roads from Sunday, 7 November.

A new directive to this effect was issued by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), which now makes it an offense for

delivery bikes to use the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Ring Roads, in addition to Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway. Such bikes are also banned from plying along Road 30, 40, 50, 60, and 80, as well as Jamal Abdul-Nasser Road, said a statement from the security media and public relations department of MoI.

Jurists criticize controversial decision on 'sixties'

Latest proposal by the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) to link work permit renewal, for expatriates aged 60 years and over who do not hold a university, with a KD500, in addition to private health insurance, has come in for criticism by several jurists. These law professionals contend that the proposal is 'unconstitutional' and issued in violation of international treaties and covenants in the field of human rights to which Kuwait is a signatory.

For his part, Professor of Public Law at the Faculty of Law in Kuwait University, Dr. Fawaz Al-Jadaei said from a legal point of view the proposal is untenable, as it violates the country's constitution which stipulates that there should be no discrimination among people based on gender, origin, language or religion.

He noted that it is understandable

that the state seeks to recruit qualified and healthy personnel to fulfil vacancies. Having an age below 60 may be desirable in these circumstances, as people over 60 are likely to suffer from diseases which places extra burden on the employer and the health services. But the proposal by PAM discriminates between those over the age of 60 who hold a university degree and those who do not. This implies that only those who hold a university degree are immune from disease when they reach over the age of 60.

Reiterating this view, Professor of International Law and Human Rights, Dr. Khaled Al-Yaqout said if a decision is issued in this way, it explicitly violates Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "all people are equal before the law, and they are equal in enjoying the protection of

the law without discrimination." They also have the right to enjoy equal protection from any discrimination that violates this declaration and from any incitement to such discrimination," noting that Kuwait has acceded to and ratified this declaration.

Discrimination because of age is a crime in many countries, which call for honoring the elderly. The PAM proposal needs reconsideration, said the jurist, pointing out that a large number of those the decision affects do not have the ability to pay huge fees and they live with their children and grandchildren here. Some of them cannot travel to their country because of the political situation in their countries.

Moreover, he added that such a decision cannot be issued under the pretext of mitigating the health sector



or reducing the number of residents, as there are other, more effective and law-respecting, ways and methods through which the problem of the increase in the number of residents can be solved. The jurist also noted that there are a large number of residents, among whom there is a significant number of marginal workers who should be deported first, instead of those who spent long years in the country and spent their lives in its service.

Rating agency lauds Kuwait's robust monetary policies

Though the level of governance in Kuwait is weaker than other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the country's robust monetary policy management remains a source of great institutional strength. Despite recurring divergence of views on economic issues between the government and the legislative authorities, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has implemented strong monetary policies and prudent regulations



of the banking and financial system in the country.

The praise for CBK and its supervision of the financial landscape in Kuwait came from global rating agency Moody's Investors

Service. The agency went on to note that Kuwait's oil wealth, supported by having the seventh largest oil reserves in the world, and the management of these financial resources through prudent investment strategies, allowed the country to invest in high quality foreign assets that form the backbone of Kuwait sovereign wealth fund.

Moody's said that the assets of the sovereign fund, managed by the Kuwait Investment Authority, is a source of great economic strength for Kuwait. These assets far exceed the country's gross domestic product and government debt, which allowed the country a certain amount of leeway during financial and economic crises.

However, the rating agency warned

that there was an urgent need to start implementing the economic aspirations and objectives adopted by the government, especially with regard to financial and economic reforms and improving governance in various government institutions.

On the other hand, the agency said the continued delay in implementing reforms due to political pressures, in particular, those related to the impasse over the public debt law, imposition of value-added tax and the new selective tax, and reviewing the unsustainable levels of public sector salaries, harms the effectiveness of fiscal policy in Kuwait. Accordingly, the agency expects the fiscal deficit to remain wide even with oil price recovery.

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Peace in the Middle East, peace in the world



RYSZARD CZARNECKI
European Conservatives and Reformists Group
Member of European Parliament

Ignorance may be bliss, but it is definitely not valid when witnessing the humanitarian, political and economic ups and downs in the Middle East region. The more you are not aware of what is going on in this geography, the more you cannot get engaged in world politics, or establish a mechanism against the global security threat, or what we can call humanity's top urgent, common topic to tackle.

Today, there is not a single security or stability crisis that is independent from others in any corner of the world. All are linked and related. All have direct and indirect impacts on one another. Historically speaking, countless arguments can be found to explain this cross-relation between conflicts and growing tensions. However, the specific goal of this article is only to draw attention to why the international community must contribute to peace in the Middle East.

In terms of number of mini, major or proxy wars, instabilities or inhumane

attacks, the region takes the lead among its peers. From Syria to Iraq, from Palestine to Yemen, almost every state involved in a conflict or crisis is on the brink of political, economic or humanitarian collapse. This situation is further worsened by the self-interested engagements of superpowers, the presence of terror groups, and weak state mechanisms.

Just recently, world leaders met at the G20 international gathering in the heart of Italy, during which the Middle East was also among the topics. But, as expected, these discussions produced no tangible results. Frankly speaking, the problem here does not lie behind the fact that countries lack the will and intention to end regional catastrophes, but the miscalculation of diplomatic understanding regarding the regional developments.

For instance, for a long period of time, non-governmental organizations all around the world, including particularly from Turkey, have rushed to get mobilized to reach out to the needy people in the region, especially in Syria. From basic survival needs to education necessities, several different aid campaigns have been so far organized to help the suffering people. On the one hand, it is encouraging and admirable to see there are still those who embrace and work for the values humanity shares. On the other hand, unfortunately, we see an international community that does not provide the sufficient diplomatic and political support.

For example, currently, it is reported that around 13.4 million people are in need of humanitarian aid in war-ravaged



Syria. The World Food Programme (WFP) also warned that 12.4 million people, nearly 60 percent of the population, are facing food shortages. Only in northern Syria, there are around 3.5 million locals, the majority of whom are displaced, who are in dire need of basic needs. More numbers and statistics follow each other to reveal the country's facts since the war erupted back in 2011. What is happening in this country is enough to comprehend the whole region indeed.

According to the European Union, in the Middle East, "a political and economic reform in each individual country in due respect for its specific features and regional cooperation among the countries of the region themselves and with the EU" is what needs to be supported and encouraged. By reforming the region, the world can contribute to rebuild the region, the bloc believes.

For another example, in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is one of the hot topics of the region, the bloc sees the resolution as its fundamental interest while supporting "the two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors."

Or, take Iraq whose socio-economic situation has been severely damaged right after the coronavirus pandemic. According to reports, some 2.4 million Iraqi people have acute humanitarian needs while the drop in oil prices and unemployment have collapsed the country's economy. Terror presence is another great challenge at hand. The European Union is also of the opinion that "There is a need to improve access to basic services such as water, healthcare, education and legal assistance, as well as protection, psychosocial care and physical rehabilitation."

For each country in the Middle East, the bloc has prepared a detailed report, showing the realities and providing key notes on what can be done to end them. However, it also falls short, as other developed or developing countries, organizations and institutions need to develop a common understanding. Since the path to global peace crosses from the Middle East, ignorance and intolerance toward the region cannot be accepted. Taking into consideration the direct and indirect impacts of the Middle Eastern problems on the world, no one cannot stay idle. In one word, peace in the Middle East is peace in the world.

Al Muzaini Exchange wins three awards for its quality financial services

Al Muzaini Exchange recently won several prestigious awards for its financial services from Global Business Outlook, and the Global Economics Awards, in competitive award categories that encompass international organizations.

The various awards and recognitions are the direct results of continuous enhanced services to customers in foreign exchange and remittance. Global Business Outlook, a UK-based publication, which emphasizes on covering new developments in banking and finance, energy, industry and technology globally, presented Al Muzaini Exchange with two awards in Finance for 'Best Remittance Service Provider' and 'Best Foreign Exchange Company'; highlighting the essence of Al Muzaini's customer focused approach to financial transactions.

Al Muzaini Exchange was also awarded with the 'Best Money Transfer Company' by the Global Economics' Financial Awards category. The Global Economics Awards recognizes the best market players internationally, covering multiple business domains and identifies enterprises that create the best work cultures in their economies. The company consistently adapts to provide the highest quality products and services to its customers.

With more than 117 branches spread around Kuwait, Al Muzaini Exchange offers a host of remittance services to customers which include retail transactions, cash currencies and corporate transaction at the best rates and unmatched service. Through the company's state of the art technologies, adherence to quality benchmarks, secure processes and customer-oriented services, Al Muzaini strives to enrich customer experience. This includes Al Muzaini's online application, which provides a platform for customers to conduct their transactions with ease and security, from anywhere.

Al Muzaini's vision is to make financial services accessible to all. Along with its Strong Network across Kuwait, Al Muzaini's Digital Payment platform, available in App Store, Google Play & App Gallery, provides a secure and simplified one-stop financial solution to its customers. It offers unique features, including registering new customers, adding beneficiaries, setting rate alerts and trends, and reviewing transaction history. The application



also allows Western Union transfers, creating widgets to track rate fluctuations, for easier access, and live video chats for new customer onboarding and reaching Al Muzaini agents for better quality services, all without visiting a branch. Al Muzaini is the only financial exchange company in Kuwait that uses the live video chat feature for new registrations, which what makes Al Muzaini stay ahead of its competitors.

Hugh Fernandes, General Manager, said: "We are extremely honored to have received awards from such reputable publications as the Global Business Outlook, and the Global Economics Awards. These recognitions strengthen our commitment of exceeding customer expectations with the development of new processes and systems. We aim to stay ahead in our industry, and to create sustainable relationships with our customers through detailed strategies and high standards."

Al Muzaini reinforces its commitment to bringing its clients the best services every time, and establishing solid relationships based on deep-rooted, socio-economic values. Closing in on 80 years of service, the company operated with three main values: quality Service, strategically designed processes, and a customer-centric approach. The company converts every challenge into an opportunity to grow, and utilizes its 79 years of operational experience in Kuwait to the advantage of more than two million customers.

Kalyan Jewellers marks glittering sales on Dhanteras



Ramesh Kalyanaraman

registering exceptionally good sales momentum.

"On Dhanteras, we registered higher footfalls both from existing as well as new customers, resulting in robust revenue growth. While the sales momentum in the plain gold segment continued, we also witnessed a significant increase in the studded jewellery category.

"This season, we introduced new collections in both gold as well as studded jewellery categories. The all-new Sankalp line of designs introduced earlier this quarter, featured region specific traditional plain gold jewellery. We also launched Vedha, a precious-stone studded heritage jewellery collection, further bolstering our studded product portfolio.

"The Middle East markets have also been vibrant from the start of this festive season and on Dhanteras. We are expecting this trend to continue, thanks to various events like the World Cup and Expo-2020 which are being held in the region. Candere has also performed exceptionally well and delivered robust growth, recording a multifold jump in revenue on Dhanteras.

"The season so far has been upbeat and revenue growth across categories has been on target," concluded the executive director.

One of the biggest names in Indian and regional jewelry retailing, Kalyan Jewellers, said in a post-Dhanteras regulatory filing at the Bombay Stock Exchange that the company has been witnessing a strong momentum in footfalls and revenue for the past three quarters, starting from the same period during the past financial year (3Q FY 2020-21).

Speaking at a media briefing following the regulatory filing, Executive Director of Kalyan Jewellers, Ramesh Kalyanaraman said that the sales traction witnessed over the past three quarters has continued during this festive season, with October

GCC Commercial Arbitration Center launches professional program in arbitration

Gulf Cooperation Council Commercial Arbitration Center (GCCAC) is offering a pioneering initiative to qualify specialized arbitrators in adjudicating commercial disputes. The training period is from 8 November until 29 December 2021.

In a media briefing last week, the Secretary-General of the GCC Commercial Arbitration Center, Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry said that the Center is commencing a new program designed to train arbitrators and qualify them to become professionals in arbitration of commercial disputes.

He noted that the center achieved "great success this year by presenting its various programs in an innovative way using modern communication technologies, including conducting online programs through the

use of video conferencing and other means. However, we did not stop with just this, and have continued to strengthen the quality of our programs by reviewing and adding new stages in these programs."

He pointed out that the legal environment for commercial arbitration is characterized by the complexity of laws and rules related to business and commercial activities. "Through its multiple specialized programs in arbitration, the center aims to provide qualified personnel in the arbitration field, by training them in the local and international laws, agreements and regulations that govern their practice of the arbitration profession, as well as the role assigned and responsibilities expected of them upon receiving the arbitration qualification."

Al-Shumaimry added that the new program being launched is the second in a series of training programs. "In this second edition that we are holding of the engineering arbitration program this year, we have increased the content with a new stage so that it now consists of six stages, rather than the five stages that was present in the previous version.

He also revealed that the Center is seeking to present several new specialization courses in commercial arbitration in the coming year. The Secretary-General explained. "The strength of enforcement of judgments issued by the Gulf Arbitration Center in all countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council states needs to be accompanied with the presence of a qualified arbitrator to lead the



arbitration process, right from the beginning when a case is submitted until the execution judge issues the final judgement. This is what the Center seeks to achieve through the specialized courses that we offer."



Celebration of Diwali, Ayurveda Day at Indian embassy

Embassy of India held a Diwali and Ayurveda Day celebration at the embassy premises last week. Ambassador of India to Kuwait H.E. Sibi George welcomed members from Indian Diaspora, Kuwaiti guests, the media fraternity, and everyone who joined the ceremony online.

In his address, Ambassador George highlighted the crucial role played by Ayurveda in bringing balance to life and preventing many lifestyle-related diseases. He also wished everyone a very Happy Diwali.

During the event, a video address by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi at the COP26 Summit, in Glasgow was



also screened.

The ceremony also saw live yoga performances by citizens from various nationalities.

Ticket prices drop sharply as airport resumes full operations

Recent decision by the Cabinet to permit the resumption of full operations at Kuwait International Airport (KIA) has led to sharp decrease in ticket prices to and from Kuwait to all destinations.

The resumption of full operations at KIA has resulted in an increase in the number of airlines being allowed to operate more flights to and from Kuwait, which in turn has led to ticket prices falling between 30 to 40 percent, said the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Civil Aviation, Yousef Al-Fawzan.

He added that the airport will gradually begin operations of regular commercial flights for all airlines, in the near future based on the needs of travelers and link the operations to the largest global airport network. He also pointed out that DGCA has approved all the winter flight schedules submitted by airlines in order to ensure smooth flow of passenger traffic through KIA.

In other DGCA-related news, the DGCA director-general also revealed that over a dozen projects worth nearly KD3 billion are to be implemented over the next two decades, with the aim of transforming Kuwait into an active regional center for international air transport of passengers and cargo.

Elaborating on the projects, Al Fawzan said a total, 14 projects worth a total of KD2.47 billion are to be implemented at KIA over the 20-year period as part of the DGCA's vision and strategy for the period 2021 to 2041. Of



these projects, the largest is the ongoing new T2 passenger terminal, being constructed to cater to over 25 million passengers per year at a cost of around KD1.5 billion.

Other mega airport projects include the operation and management of the new terminal building T2 worth \$950 million; a third runway and control tower project worth KD200 million; a new T4 terminal building project, designed to accommodate 5.4 million passengers annually at a cost of KD56 million, and the Kuwait Cargo City project worth KD36 million. The DGCA also explained that there are 13 additional projects including for securing ground handling services, developing navigation and meteorological systems at the airport, establishing gas stations and support services, aircraft catering services and aircraft maintenance buildings, as well as security services projects worth millions of dinars more.

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Uzbekistan builds peace and prosperity



In a recent exclusive interview with the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov, The Times Kuwait Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza discussed wide ranging issues from foreign policy of Uzbekistan to regional security and relations with Kuwait. Minister Kamilov, a seasoned diplomat with nearly 50 years of experience shared his deep insights, in his first-ever interview with an English publication from Kuwait.

We began by asking the distinguished minister about the noticeable increase in interest among the world community to Uzbekistan and to the Central Asian region, where profound democratic changes are taking place. Also, since the strategic reforms initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev have influenced the foreign policy priorities of Uzbekistan, could he reveal these priorities for us?

Minister Kamilov: "First of all, I would like to say that it is a sincere pleasure for me to communicate with the Kuwaiti media and your audience. You are right, the deep structural reforms have had a serious impact on the country's foreign policy and international position."

"Today, in foreign policy, the Republic of Uzbekistan is open to the world and demonstrates clear political realism and pragmatism. We firmly intend to build friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all the states based on respect for the interests of each other, the search for common or

concurring interests.

"The desire for dialogue and the readiness for reasonable compromises in addressing any challenges are important principles of Uzbekistan's foreign policy.

First of all, these principles have positively influenced the regional policy of Tashkent. Central Asia is one of the key directions of our country's foreign policy, as Uzbekistan's security and sustainable development are directly linked to the surrounding region.

"As President Mirziyoyev puts it, 'we clearly realize that Central Asia is a single organism, which for centuries had a common geographical, economic and cultural space.' So the first priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is to strengthen relations with neighboring states to address the issues of delimitation and demarcation of state borders, rational use of water resources.

"Another priority for Uzbekistan is the progressive development of strategic relations with all major powers and a wide range of states of the world. We conduct a multi-vector foreign policy aimed at creating a stable regional

system and sustainable international relations based on universally recognized principles and norms of international law.

"We attach an important significance to the development of the mutually beneficial and multifaceted strategic partnership with Russia, the United States, China and other countries of the Asia-Pacific Region, the European Union and, certainly, with the states of the Arab-Muslim world that are close to us in history, religion and traditions.

"An important area of economic diplomacy has become the intensification of contacts with the world business community. Nowadays, the 'New Uzbekistan' expression has gained a foothold in the world community. This is a recognition that our country has entered a new stage of development by prioritizing a renewed foreign policy."

We then asked the minister about his views on the increasing regional interest in the dynamic, even cardinal changes taking place in the Central Asian region, which the Arab-Muslim world has since ancient times seen as an important aspect in the system of international development.

Minister Kamilov: "Indeed, Central Asia has undergone significant changes since 2016. The rapprochement with neighboring states, as well as a joint search for solutions to region-wide problems, has created an absolutely new positive political environment. It is characterized by the strengthening of cooperation between Uzbekistan and all Central Asian countries.

"The trade turnover and the number of joint ventures of Uzbekistan with the Central Asian States has increased. Significant changes are observed not only in the statistics of economic cooperation, but also in everyday life. The borders have been opened and visa issues have been resolved. The citizens of neighboring countries are now moving freely from one country to another, restoring previously severed ties with their neighbors and relatives. The cultural and humanitarian ties have also been restored.

"Another entirely new process is the beginning of joint interaction of the Central Asian states in the international arena. Yet another key indicator of the new situation in the region is the mechanism of Consultative Meetings of the leaders of the Central Asian States created at the initiative of Uzbekistan.

"It should be emphasized that President Mirziyoyev played a major role in the formation of a new political philosophy of cooperation and good neighborliness in Central Asia. The idea of a common history and common future of the Central Asian countries put forward by the Head of Uzbekistan may become a relevant topic for study in scientific and academic circles.

"In general, I can say that the political will and initiatives of the leaders of the region's five states became a main driving force behind the historic turnaround in our region. It is a historical fact.

"I take this opportunity to note that Tashkent will continue to strengthen the political climate of understanding and respect, good neighborliness and strategic partnership in the Central Asian region. In our opinion, the achievements of the last five years in Central Asia, no matter how important they are, are only the beginning of a difficult but vital path towards the forefront of development of our region and turning it into a single space of security, mutually beneficial cooperation and shared prosperity.

"As President Mirziyoyev has noted at the Third Consultative Meeting of the Central Asian Leaders in Turkmenistan on August 6 this year: "Only together and supporting one another can we effectively address the challenges we face, ensure the region's sustainable development and increase the well-being of our peoples. There is no alternative way."



through a renewed foreign policy

- Ensuring a peaceful settlement of the Afghan conflict, stabilizing Afghanistan, and building pragmatic relations with its southern neighbor are among the most important tasks of Uzbekistan's foreign policy.
- Uzbekistan and Kuwait regularly come out with mutual support for the initiatives of the parties as a part of the international organizations. In recent years, our relations have acquired a special dynamism. Tashkent and Kuwait maintain an active political dialogue
- The desire for dialogue and the readiness for reasonable compromises in addressing any challenges are important principles of Uzbekistan's foreign policy.

On recent happenings in neighboring Afghanistan and the special role played by Tashkent, as well as based on his own personal participation in the processes related to the Afghan settlement, we asked the minister about Uzbekistan's position on the solution to the problem of Afghanistan and his opinion on the current situation in this country.

Minister Kamilov: "Ensuring a peaceful settlement of the Afghan conflict, stabilizing Afghanistan and building pragmatic relations with its southern neighbor are among the most important tasks of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. In this process, we have accumulated a great deal of practical experience.

"We were among the first to establish working contacts with the Taliban back in the 1990s, as well as made a practical contribution to initiating the peace process in Doha. All this provided Uzbekistan with a special role in the Afghan settlement.

I will not dwell on the current situation in Afghanistan, as the entire international community knows how complex processes are taking place in this country today.

"Let me just say that our region's security and sustainable development largely depend on the situation in Afghanistan. This country has historically been an integral part of Central Asia. We have lived side by side with the Afghan people in a single vast cultural and civilizational space for centuries.

"The results of the High-Level International Conference on Connectivity between Central and South Asia, held in Tashkent on July 15-16 this year, showed to what extent all of us are interested in Afghanistan becoming not an obstacle, but a bridge between the two regions. Therefore, we cannot isolate Afghanistan and leave the Afghan people alone with their daunting challenges in this difficult time.

"In this regard, Uzbekistan draws the attention of the international community to the expediency of developing Afghanistan's post-conflict reconstruction strategy, the need to unfreeze this state's assets abroad and prevent a reduction in humanitarian aid to the Afghan people in the current difficult period. The international community must support and encourage the new government, not isolate and impose sanctions.

"For its part, Uzbekistan provides all possible humanitarian and other assistance to the Afghans. We have opened the Uzbek-Afghan border and resumed deliveries of basic foodstuffs, oil products and electricity. On October 16, the full-scale Uzbek-Afghan intergovernmental talks on the development of trade and economic relations were held in the south of Uzbekistan – city of Termez.

"The contacts that were established earlier, as well as balanced and thoughtful diplomacy, allow us to conduct a smooth and useful dialogue with the Taliban leadership. We are negotiating a gradual and full resumption of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, including on the prospects for infrastructure projects, including the construction of the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri power line.

"In addition to power lines, we are also interested in the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway with international partners. We also plan to actively develop trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties with Afghanistan in the future."

Pointing to Uzbekistan's relations with the states of the Islamic world, especially since Uzbekistan is a country with a rich history of Muslim traditions, having longstanding close ties with Arab countries, we queried the minister on his assessment of Uzbekistan's place and role in the Islamic world, as well as its current relations with the Arab states.

Minister Kamilov: "The religion of Islam came to Central Asia in the VII-VIII centuries along with the Arab campaigns. Islam is firmly embedded in the culture and mentality of the population of our region. More than 90 percent of the population of our country follows Islam. Uzbekistan is a full-fledged member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

"Uzbekistan made a significant contribution to the development of Islamic civilization. The territory of modern Uzbekistan is recognized as the cradle of science, culture and art. The great scientists and thinkers such as Imam At-Tirmidhi, Makhmud Zamakhshari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, whose works are rightfully considered the treasures of scientific thought and the heritage of mankind, lived and worked on this land.

"A native of Maverannahr - Imam al-Bukhari, who left a huge number of essential Islamic works, including Al-Jami Al-Sahih, compiled the most authoritative collection of hadiths. Millions of Muslims around the world strive to visit the Imam's homeland in sacred Bukhara and honor his grave in Samarkand.

"The immortal names of great scientists and geniuses who lived in our land, such as Ahmad Farghani, Abu Raykhan Beruni, Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna), Mirzo Ulugbek and Alisher Navoiy and many others, are inscribed in golden letters in the history of not only Islamic, but also the entire world civilization.

"In order to comprehensively study the rich and scientific heritage in Tashkent, the Center for Islamic Civilization and the International Research Center of Imam Bukhari in Samarkand were established.

"The cooperation with the OIC has intensified. In October 2016, Uzbekistan hosted the 43rd Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. On 1-4 September, 2021, the 46th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank was held in Tashkent.

"The development of relations and establishment of multifaceted cooperation with the countries of the Arab world are among the unconditional priorities of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. Since gaining independence, we have established diplomatic relations with all Arab countries. Trade, economic and investment cooperation with Arab countries is expanding. The declared portfolio of investment projects exceeds \$6 billion.

"Along with this, not only economic interests

unite us with the Arab world. The processes of globalization have brought to light a multitude of common challenges and tasks that we, the Muslim countries, must and can only solve by joint efforts.

Among such tasks are the fight against ignorance, promotion of the ideas of tolerance and education, peaceful settlement of conflicts, and the solution of pressing problems of the youth, especially in the sphere of education." Turning to Uzbek-Kuwait relations, we asked the minister on how they were developing, especially since it is well-known that he



attaches special importance to relations with Kuwait, and considering that the Uzbek embassy in Kuwait often plays the role of a regional mission.

Minister Kamilov: "In recent years, our relations have acquired a special dynamic. Tashkent and Kuwait maintain an active political dialogue. A solid foundation has been laid between the countries in order to expand the cooperation in trade, economic and investment spheres. The ties in the fields of culture and humanities are also intensively expanding.

"An important event in bilateral relations was the visit to Uzbekistan in July of a delegation of the State of Kuwait led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Nasser al-Muhammad al-Sabah to participate in the International Conference titled, 'Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity. Challenges and Opportunities'. During his stay in Tashkent, President Mirziyoyev received Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasir Al-Muhammad Al-Sabah. As a result, a 'Road Map' was adopted for the implementation of practical measures agreed upon during the summit meeting.

"In August, another Kuwaiti delegation headed by Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Relations and Investments Khalifa MUSAED HAMADA visited Tashkent, and took part in the Annual Meeting of the IDB Board of Governors.

"As you probably know, a delegation from

Kuwait visited our country, headed by the Chairman of the Constitutional and Appellate Court, Mohammad Al-Qinai, whose members arrived to participate as international observers in the recent main political event in Uzbekistan, the presidential elections.

"Uzbekistan and Kuwait regularly come out with mutual support for the initiatives of the parties as a part of the international organizations. The financial and technical cooperation of Uzbekistan with the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development is being successfully carried out.

"The regular flights of Jazeera Airways on the Kuwait - Tashkent - Kuwait route since 27 June, 2021 was a significant step in further developing the bilateral multifaceted cooperation. This will undoubtedly contribute to the deepening and expansion of trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties between our countries. I should note that in order to create favorable conditions for travels, beginning March 2021 the Uzbek side has introduced a 10-day visa-free stay in Uzbekistan for the Kuwaiti citizens.

"Taking this opportunity, I would like to invite Kuwaiti trade and economic companies and investors to more actively participate in the implementation of projects in various sectors of the economy of Uzbekistan, including in the fuel and energy, electrical, chemical, pharmaceutical, construction materials, mechanical engineering, textile and food industries, agriculture, etc."

In concluding the interview we turned to the recent presidential elections in Uzbekistan, and asked the minister to elaborate on this very successful process.

Minister Kamilov: The country took all the necessary measures to ensure the democratic and open elections in accordance with high international standards.

All candidates nominated by political parties had actively embarked upon the pre-election political contest.

"In order to ensure the transparency of the elections, we invited the international observers from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB), the Turkic Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA) and representatives from more than 50 countries.

"The observers from political parties and civil society also participated in monitoring of all activities related to the preparation and conduct of elections. The presidential elections in Uzbekistan were held in full compliance with the requirements of the legislation, in the context of deepening processes of democratization of society, increased political and public activeness."

Resumption of visas facilitate family reunions

The resumption of issuing entry visas will see the reunion of many families that had remained separated for long due to the ban on issuing visas as a result of COVID-19 crisis.

Ministry of Interior (Moi) said on Saturday that it has resumed the issuing of entry visas and that the department of residency affairs in all governorates would

begin receiving applications for entry and family visas. The ministry added that prior booking for an appointment through the Moi website was needed by all applicants.

The ministry also noted that children aged below 16 are eligible to join the family based on standard conditions that apply for granting a family visa, mainly the salary of the applicant.



Moreover, the ministry pointed out that those granted visas will also need to present proof of being vaccinated with vaccines approved by the Ministry of Health in Kuwait, which include two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca, and Moderna vaccine, or one dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

Kuwait at COP26: From GHG emissions to tamarisk plants

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Elaborating on the state's national strategy for tackling climate change, the prime minister said that it is based on developing a circular carbon economy that promotes reduction, disposal, reuse and recycling of greenhouse gases. He added that this strategy will be supported by the enactment of relevant legislation and laws to reduce emissions, and adapt to the negative effects of climate change at the national level, in line with local, regional and international environmental obligations.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaleel also noted that Kuwait, in compliance with the Paris Climate Agreement signed in 2015, updated its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) document on 12 October, 2021. He affirmed that Kuwait attaches great importance to diversifying the country's energy sources by introducing renewable energies, and replacing fossil fuels with liquefied gas in power stations to ensure the sustainability of energy supplies for future generations. The prime minister said that the package of development projects outlined in the revised NDC is based on a vision that would avoid an increase in greenhouse gases equivalent to 7.4 percent of its total emissions until 2035.

Kuwait has made enhanced climate resilience to improve community livelihood and achieve sustainability, the crux of its 'National Adaptation Plan 2019-2030', that the country submitted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2019. The long-term National Adaptation Plan (NAP), prepared and published by Kuwait's Environment Protection Authority (EPA), acknowledges that adapting to climate change is a core challenge facing Kuwait and its people.

The plan notes that being a largely arid land, Kuwait is among countries most affected by the negative impacts of climate change, and that the country is especially vulnerable to climate change related repercussions such as heat waves, rainstorms, and an increase in the number and intensity of dust storms, as well as the rise of sea level and its consequent impact on livelihoods, infrastructure projects and future long-term investment. The NAP proposed several medium and long-term strategies to increase resilience and build national capacities to address the risks and negative impacts of climate change.

The NAP, along with the initial Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) that Kuwait presented to the United Nations in 2015, form the cornerstone in the country's policy framework to reduce the risks of, and increase resilience to, climate change, on a continuous basis. These two documents are the precursor on which the revised NDA that Kuwait submitted ahead of COP26 is based. Accordingly, the assertion by His Highness the Prime Minister at the Glasgow gathering that Kuwait's revised NDA is based on a vision that would "avoid an increase in greenhouse gases equivalent to 7.4 percent of its total emissions until 2035," deserves further reading.

Available data shows that though Kuwait's share as a percentage of global emissions has remained at a relatively low 0.23 percent in recent years, its per capita annual emissions over the past five years have averaged over 23 tons per year. This is not only far higher than the per capita CO2 emissions of the top global

emitters, such as China, the US, the EU or India, but also among the highest in the world. Only neighboring GCC state of Qatar, which leads in global per capita emissions at over 37 tons, has a higher annual per capita emission rate.

Also, Kuwait's GHG emissions over the past five years, which has averaged around 96 million tons annually, places the country in the top quartile among 209 countries listed by Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR) — an independent, global database of human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollution. Projecting the above figures over the next eight years to 2030, and based on the 7.4 percent reduction that Kuwait has committed to achieve in its revised NDC, would result in Kuwait having to avoid an increase of 57 million tons of GHG over the remaining eight years, or on average around 7 million tons annually until 2030.

To put this figure in perspective, the power industry in Kuwait emits around 48 million tons of CO2 annually, which is nearly half of all emissions in the country. Other industrial sources together release another 27 million tons, transport accounts for a further 13 million tons, non-combustion sources contribute 8 million tons, and buildings add a relatively low 600,000 tons of CO2 emissions annually.

In order to gain a better understanding of these emission figures, and the role that energy production plays in the country's total CO2 emissions, we also need to differentiate between production- and consumption-based emissions. When countries set targets based on CO2 emission measurements they usually tend to focus on production-based emissions — the CO2 emitted within a country's own borders. However, this fails to capture CO2 emissions from consumption of traded goods — goods that are produced elsewhere but are imported and consumed within a country's borders.

In 2019, while Kuwait's consumption-based emissions were 89.69 million tons, its production-based CO2 emissions were 96.65 million tons. Of the total production-based emissions, over 95 million tons (98%) came from the burning of oil and gas for energy production, and from flaring of waste gases; the remaining 1.6 million tons of emission came from other industrial production facilities.

Though Kuwait's revised NDC does not go into details on which sectors or when they would begin cutting their emissions so as to meet the targeted figure by 2030, it is quite obvious that it will be quite a task. More than anything else, implementing the emission cuts needed to realize the target goal, would need per capita emissions to drop from the 26 tons emitted per person in 2019 to 17.5 tons per person by 2030, based on a projected population of 5.1 million people by then. Is this realistically achievable, or is it just another pipe-dream of our policymakers?

In his speech at COP26, His Highness the Prime Minister also highlighted Kuwait's regional and international contributions to help preserve the environment and natural resources around the world. He pointed out that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) had helped in mitigating the environmental repercussions resulting from the receding of the Aral Sea in Central Asia, and Lake Korley in Ghana, and the reduction of radiations resulting from the explosion of the

Chernobyl reactor in the former Soviet Union in 1986. More recently, KFAED helped implement a project designed to reduce cross-border dust between Kuwait and Iraq, and which aims to reduce chances of their occurrence by nearly 40 percent.

While these international environmental initiatives are no doubt laudatory, more important is what Kuwait plans to do, to reduce emissions at home. In late October, while addressing the first Middle East Green Initiative Summit that was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah provided a little more clarity on how Kuwait plans to cut its emissions.

He said that Kuwait's environmental strategy, which is integral to its vision of New Kuwait 2035 development plan, includes legislating environmental protection laws, rationalizing consumption of natural resources, reducing pollution rates, preserving integrity of the environment and protecting biodiversity, and improving waste management. In addition, the environmental sustainability plans also aim to enhance carbon-neutral pathways, establish terrestrial and marine reserves, rehabilitate oil sector facilities, improve energy efficiency, introduce renewable energies, and increase afforestation.

Elaborating on the Crown Prince's statement, the Director-General of Kuwait's Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, speaking on the sidelines of the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) Forum that opened a day earlier to the Middle East Green Initiative Summit, praised plans by Saudi Arabia to plant 10 billion trees across the kingdom in the coming decade. He added that Kuwait aims to integrate with Saudi Arabia in this regard, and work on increasing green areas in Kuwait so as to decrease the country's carbon footprint, besides pursuing other projects aimed at "capturing CO2 and storing it in the soil".

Reiterating the afforestation theme that appears to be dear to Kuwait, the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAFR) revealed in a statement that over the last few decades it has engaged in several projects aimed at spurring afforestation. PAAFR added that since the establishment of the country's first nursery, the Al-Omariya Nursery in 1955, it has launched several projects that have seen millions of trees planted across the country, including more than 40,000 tamarisk shrubs in Al-Jahra, and similar projects launched in Al-Sulaibiya, Al-Wafra, and nearly 90,000 trees in an area behind Kuwait International Airport.

Incidentally, in many parts of the world, tamarisk shrubs and trees are considered an invasive species, as it has been found to deplete underground water resources, decimate the growth of other nearby plants by starving them of water, and to increase soil salinity. In Kuwait, which does not have any rivers or lakes, and where groundwater remains the only source of natural water, planting tamarisk trees is clearly not the best option.

According to the latest report published by the World Resources Institute (WRI) in 2019, Kuwait was placed seventh among 164 countries in terms of water stress. The WRI list, which ranked countries based on the level of their baseline water stress — a measurement of

the ratio of total water withdrawals to available renewable surface and groundwater supplies — placed Kuwait along with 16 other countries in the extremely high risk category.

The recent Saudi Green Initiative conference had announced plans to plant as many as 50 billion trees across the Middle East, including 10 billion in Saudi Arabia, so as to contribute to cutting carbon emissions that result from hydrocarbon production in the region by more than 60 percent. These are undoubtedly ambitious goals, but it also needs to take into account the fact that 12 out of the 17 extremely high baseline water-stressed countries in the WRI list, are in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

One only hopes that planting tamarisk and other high water absorbing trees are not part of the Saudi Green Initiative's 50 billion afforestation drive. And that Kuwait, which is setting out on its own planting spree, will not include tamarisk and other tree species that further deplete Kuwait's scarce groundwater supplies in its afforestation plans. Afforestation and other nature-based solutions to capture CO2 emissions, as well as unproven technologies that seek to remove CO2 and store them in hypothetical facilities for an undefined period of time, appear to be a favorite and recurring theme in the emission control plans advocated by many fossil-fuel rich countries.

With very few countries, including Kuwait and other oil producers, submitting credible plans and details on meeting their CO2 emissions at COP26, afforestation and other technological gimmicks appear to be nothing more than a fig leaf to cover their continued emissions from oil and gas production. But painting emission control plans with a broad brush is not limited to oil producers, the trend is widespread among many countries, including the world's largest GHG emitters.

In the months leading to COP26, the United States and the European Union have promised to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050; China said it intends to embrace a net-zero target by 2060, and India proposes to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070. Not to be outdone, oil behemoths, and stalwarts from many other industries such as aviation, mining, finance, livestock and retail, have also joined the future net-zero bandwagon.

Many of the environmental promises by nations and multinationals are nothing more than an attempt at greenwashing — a public-relations or marketing ploy aimed at conveying the impression that an entity's products or policies are environmentally friendly, but in reality are most often not. With net-zero targets set for decades ahead, without any near-term goals in between, governments have the leeway to wiggle out of having to make significant and probably unpopular emissions cuts at present. It also allows many multinationals to continue with a 'business as usual' approach to emissions in the short and near term.

As curtains draw to COP26 draw to a close on 12 November, it is obvious that the hopes people pinned on their leaders, to show real leadership at this crucial juncture in turning around global warming, were misplaced. Sadly, no matter what tactical successes are touted at the end of COP26, the results are likely to mark a strategic defeat for the planet and for people everywhere.

Work visas only if qualification matches profession

Following its approval of the classification and qualification of professions in all sectors of the labor market, the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) has stated that it will issue work permits for expatriate workers only if their qualifications are compatible with the professions for which they are being recruited.

Elaborating on the new mechanisms that are being implemented, the Director of the Capital Governorate Labor Department, at the PAM, Fahad Al-Ajmi, said that in order to ensure the highest productivity and work efficiency, workers will not be recruited from abroad if their qualifications are not compatible with the professions they are recruited for.

He also noted that anyone recruited on a commercial entry visa will be allowed to

transfer their visa only to the same company that provided the commercial visa. The transfer will also be considered as a new work permit and not an internal transfer, and consequently this will be deducted from the estimate of the number of expatriate workers allocated to the company. Visa transfers are also conditional on the worker obtaining a police clearance certificate (PCC) and a copy of the entry visa, if any, as well as the requirements of the profession.

Al-Ajmi revealed that all procedures for obtaining or transferring visas at PAM are now fully automated and do not require the presence of the employer. He also pointed out that the automated process has to a large extent eliminated the visa trade operations, due to completing all procedures through an automated mechanism



that requires only few, if any, human interventions. In addition, the accurate and automated linkage to other government entities, allows for procedures to be completed without employers or employees having to visit multiple offices.

He added, PAM is keen to expand the use

of the automated system, and to transform all procedures from paper to online through the extensive cooperation that took place between the authority and other relevant government agencies, especially the ministries of health, interior, trade, justice, the Public Authority for Civil Information, and others.

Al-Ajmi also confirmed the authority has issued directives to bring in expatriate workers from abroad, in accordance with the administrative circular (18/2021) issued by the PAM Director. Accordingly, all companies wishing to obtain permits to bring in migrant workers from abroad must submit an application through the automated service (Ashal) and follow the steps including the approval of the vaccination certificate by the Ministry of Health.



Experience Egypt 2021 promotion at LuLu Hypermarket

LuLu Hypermarket, the regional market leader in retailing, is holding a mega 'Experience Egypt 2021' promotion from the 3 to 13 November at all its outlets in Kuwait.

The event was inaugurated on 3rd November at LuLu Hypermarket Al-Dajeej branch by the Head of the Commercial Representation Office at the Egyptian Embassy in Kuwait, Minister Plenipotentiary of Trade, Ahmed Bedewi, in the presence of top management of the hypermarket and a gathering of guests and shoppers.

Special offers and attractive discounts on all Egyptian branded products, as well as an exciting raffle are just some of the highlights during the eleven days of 'Experience Egypt 2021' promotion.

Every KD5 worth of purchase during the promotion period enters the shopper in a amazing raffle draw that could see lucky winners receive one of ten tickets for free round trip flights to Cairo. While three first prize winners will each receive a return trip ticket for a family of three (husband, wife and child), the seven second prize winners will each receive a return trip ticket to Cairo for one person.

Another highlight of the remarkable Experience Egypt 2021 promotion is a special 'Selfie' counter, where one can click themselves

against the backdrop of dramatic images of traditional Egyptian monuments. In addition, large cutouts and visuals of historic monuments and iconic places in Egypt are prominently displayed in all the hypermarket outlets. These displays aim to attract people to visit and experience Egypt in person.

Adding to the allure of the promotion, enticing Egyptian cuisine counters and sampling kiosks of Egyptian products have also been set up in all the outlets, to give shoppers a 'taste of Egypt'.

Among the Egyptian branded products available on special offer at unbelievable prices are popular household brands such as El Marwa, El Zaher, Frosty Foods, Mr. Freeze, Seastar and many more.

While the inauguration ceremony and the entire promotion is being held in adherence to all COVID-19 protocols advised by the authorities, there is no denying the excitement that abounds as customers begin to once again enjoy the freedom of shopping leisurely.

The 'Experience Egypt 2021' promotion is part of LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to provide customers with the widest choice and broadest range of high quality products from around the world at exceptionally competitive prices.



Draw your Dream Car, Express Your Creativity

The 15th Toyota Dream Car Art Contest 2021-2022



ALSAYER Invites Entries for the 15th Toyota Dream Car Art Contest 2021 one of the largest global art contests for children.

In Kuwait, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Est Co WLL, is conducting this event to profile the best talent to represent Kuwait to the global contest. National selection will be conducted by Al Sayer, and winners will be announced and awarded with attractive prizes.

Toyota Dream Car Art Contest invites children from all corners of the globe to share ideas about the future of mobility by drawing their dream cars. This activity is held to cultivate children's imagination and artistic expression through the creation of artworks.

At Toyota we believe in nurturing the creativity of the next generation of great inventors, thinkers, and dreamers. Every great idea was born in the glimmer of a dream.

The National Contest winners get an entry in to the "Toyota Middle East & Central Asia Award" to recognize the regional talents. And finally, Kuwait National Winners to enter the World Contest to select the Best Finalist from each age category and to invite winners for the Japan trip including award ceremony following Covid-19 protocols. The 15th World Contest prize money is intended to be used for the educational purposes per the terms and conditions of the contest.

For two consecutive years (2018 and 2019), ALSAYER succeeded to recognize two Kuwait contestants to reach the global competition in Japan and win two prestigious awards from Toyota Motor Corporation.

We invite all young talents to participate and draw your amazing dream car to become

a global winner.

Entry Guidelines:

Entry submission not later than 29th December 2021.

Eligibility: The contest is open to anyone in Kuwait, aged 15 years old or younger.

Age categories

Category 1: Under 8 years' old

Category 2: 8-11 years' old

Category 3: 12-15 years' old

Terms & Conditions.

What are we looking for?

Hand-drawn colorful artwork, which shows "Your Dream Car". Remember to include a brief about drawings to support your idea. Your artwork may be viewed by the world, so let's bring your best dream, creativity, and expressions.

What can I use?

Any standard drawing medium. Coloring pencils, crayons, watercolors or markers, digital & computer drawings.

We restrict one resemble the previous Toyota Dream Car Art Contest artworks, famous paintings, and that include trademarked characters.

Contact below numbers to enroll to the "Toyota Dream car Art Contest", for the forms and drawing sheets.

Contact Details: Email: dreamcar@alsayergroup.com

For Local support - Tel: 97283357

You can collect your free Drawing sheet from the following Toyota showrooms and service centers:

Jahra - Rai - Aswaq Qurain - Ahmadi - Fahaheel - Toyota Spare Parts Center in Sharq.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Net Zero Is Not Zero



MAUREEN SANTOS AND LINDA SCHNEIDER

Maureen Santos, Coordinator of the National Advisory Group of the Federation of Organizations for Social and Educational Assistance (FASE), is a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and a former program coordinator in the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Rio de Janeiro office.

Linda Schneider is Senior Program Officer for International Climate Policy at the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Berlin office.



It may seem as if the world is finally taking the climate crisis seriously, judging by the number of pledges to reach 'net-zero emissions'. Among the major emitters, both the United States and the European Union have promised to achieve this goal by 2050, while China intends to become carbon-neutral before 2060. Even oil giants Shell and BP plan to reach net-zero emissions by mid-century.

Large tech corporations appear more ambitious still. Amazon has committed to reaching net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2040. Microsoft has pledged to be 'carbon negative' by 2030, and by 2050 it aims to have removed from the air all the CO₂ the firm has emitted since it was founded in 1975. Google claims to have been carbon neutral since 2007, and aims to be 'carbon free' by 2030. In fact, net-zero pledges have come from all parts of the economy, including the meat and dairy industry, aviation, mining, finance, and retail.

But these seemingly ambitious goals in fact amount to yet another round of greenwashing and dangerous distractions that will delay and prevent the adoption of real climate solutions. That is because net zero is not really zero.

For starters, 2050 is almost three decades away. Making long-term net-zero pledges enables governments and businesses to avoid drastic emissions cuts now. From a climate-justice perspective in particular, mid-century is way too late. Wealthy, industrialized countries in the Global North, due to their historical emissions and current levels of wealth, have a responsibility to decarbonize much faster.

Compounding the problem, many net-zero plans are not backed up by corresponding short-term and interim emissions-reductions targets, such as for 2025. Instead, the majority of countries'

nationally determined contributions under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, which were recently updated or reviewed, are based on a 2030 timeframe. This disregards the five-year review cycle at the heart of the Paris accord.

Worse still, the inclusion of 'net' in climate pledges confirms that emissions will not actually decline to zero. Instead, they will supposedly be offset, to an unclear and disputable extent, by removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Many such net-zero schemes rely excessively on natural ecosystems to remove and store atmospheric CO₂. This has sparked the current hype surrounding

bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) or direct air capture (DAC) are highly risky and unproven, in particular at climate-relevant scales, and could have potentially devastating consequences for people and ecosystems. Either way, 'solutions' like BECCS and DAC risk locking in several more decades of continued fossil-fuel production and combustion.

The conversation instead needs to return to the real climate solutions that currently do not feature at high-level intergovernmental conferences. The debate should center on a comprehensive and long-overdue transformation of our exploitative and destructive economic

In addition, we need to leave fossil fuels in the ground right now. There must be no further development of these resources, and existing fossil-fuel infrastructure must be phased out as soon as possible, based on a just transition for workers and communities that depend on them.

Moving away from industrial agriculture is another high priority. Over-intensive, destructive production has exhausted the Earth's soils and ecosystems and is generating massive amounts of GHG emissions, while feeding only a fraction of the world's population. It is a major driver of deforestation, and the resulting destruction of ecological barriers and buffers probably contributed to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By contrast, agroecology offers new possibilities for socio-ecological transformation and can contribute to tackling climate change in a safe way. This approach can also help to guarantee food and nutrition security and sovereignty, and conserve biodiversity.

The Global North's overconsumption and the profit-driven exploitation of the world's resources need to stop. Instead, we must align economic activities with the goals of global social and climate justice, thereby putting well-being and care at the center of our efforts to protect our shared environment.

Recent net-zero pledges may seem ambitious, but they only promote a new set of false solutions under a guise of 50 shades of green. Governments and businesses must abandon their greenwashing strategies once and for all. At this crucial moment, we need real political will to create real change.

“The conversation needs to focus on real climate solutions that currently do not feature at high-level conferences. It should center on a comprehensive and long-overdue transformation of our exploitative and destructive economic systems.”

so-called nature-based solutions. While carefully restoring natural ecosystems is crucial in addressing both the climate and the biodiversity crises, it must not serve to prolong the lifetime of polluting industries. But nature-based solutions also include proposals that would transform agriculture into a large-scale emissions-mitigation opportunity associated with the soil carbon market.

Net-zero plans often also rely on speculative techno-fixes to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. Climate-geoengineering technologies such as

systems. Cutting global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions to real zero requires addressing the manifold global and historical injustices that caused the climate crisis and continue to shape it.

Specifically, the rights, lives, and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities must be at the core of any climate solution. That means listening to these groups, and taking their practices and proposals seriously. Strengthening and securing their land rights is one of the most effective ways to protect ecosystems, biodiversity, and the climate.



KIECO a remittance pioneer in Kuwait

KIECO Exchange (Kuwait India Intl. Exchange) is one of the first remittance exchange companies started four decades back. Built on customers' trust since 1979, the company is running a campaign which entitles our customers to win their rent (up to 100KD/Month*) for a period of 3 months.

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announced on 7th December'21. The draws will be conducted electronically and more the transactions, more the chances to win. Terms and Conditions Apply*

About KIECO (Kuwait India Intl. Exchange Co.) - The Company is initially founded by SBI (Bank) and since Inception managed by SBI/ex-SBI officials. "It gives us immense pride in letting our fellow Indians know that we are here with them and we leave no stone is unturned to keep up our promise i.e., Customer Value and Satisfaction. Also we would like to inform our customers, remit

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Facebook's Foreign Disasters



ERIC POSNER

A professor at the University of Chicago Law School, is the author of *How Antitrust Failed Workers*.



The ugly American, the title of a novel published in 1958 by Eugene Burdick and William Lederer, entered the language to refer to boorish American officials abroad who sought to improve the lives of natives without taking the trouble to learn their language, culture, or needs. A long line of ugly Americans, mostly politicians and government officials from both parties, have believed that applying simple formulas based on idealized versions of US institutions — democracy, markets, and human rights — could convert long-suffering places like Afghanistan and Iraq into Western-style consumer utopias. Inevitably, these Americans caused more harm than good.

Today, the ugliest of all Americans is not a government official but a private citizen, the CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg. Zuckerberg has received an endless stream of criticism because of Facebook's lamentable impact on American politics and culture. Less attention has been given to Facebook's impact on foreign markets, which Zuckerberg recklessly penetrated with no evident concern about the possible consequences of conducting massive social experiments in countries with weak institutions and histories of instability.

Back in 2015, Zuckerberg teamed up with the musician Bono to advocate a human right to internet access. The all-too-common belief among America's business elite that one's economic self-interest coincides with the global good appeared as a paean to cyberspace that the duo wrote for the *New York Times*:

In Ethiopia and Tanzania, for example, farmers connect to get better prices, track inventory and make mobile insurance payments in case of bad weather. In Nigeria, citizens use BudGIT, a mobile app, to assess whether governments keep their spending promises... In Guatemala, cellphones inform mothers how to have healthy pregnancies. In Kenya, women receive financial services via their cellphones thanks to the brilliant M-Pesa microfinance scheme.

Reality has turned out a bit different. In Ethiopia, Facebook posts "incite[d] mob violence, ethnic clashes, crackdowns on

independent press or outspoken voices." In Nigeria, Facebook users circulated grisly images of dead bodies, which were falsely presented to suggest that members of one ethnic group massacred members of a rival ethnic group, and sparked a wave of horrific killings. In a country with 24 million Facebook users, only four people were employed to fact-check Facebook posts.

In Myanmar, Facebook accounts were used to stir up ethnic violence against the Rohingya, tens of thousands of whom have been killed and many more driven into exile. In India, Facebook users stirred up sectarian violence, including lynchings, against Muslims. Similar accounts of

and Facebook are intertwined, both in Zuckerberg's plan and in reality. In many countries, Facebook and its properties, Instagram and WhatsApp, are the dominant social media platforms, as they are in the United States.

Both the internet and Facebook have done very well since that article was published. From 2015 to today, the percentage of the global population with internet access increased from 41% to 66%, while Facebook's monthly active user base increased from 1.49 to 2.89 billion. While the extent of Facebook's contribution to the erosion of democracy and human rights over this period is unknown, the platform has clearly

foreign policy establishment, along with Congress and the president, might consider whether America owes it to the world to rein in Facebook, to the extent possible, in countries that lack the institutional capacity to rein it in themselves.

A few possible reforms suggest themselves. The US Congress could pass a law that requires American social media companies to devote resources to monitor and fact-check content in foreign countries in proportion to the amount spent on these activities in the US. (Facebook currently devotes vastly more resources in the US.)

Another possible law would allow foreigners to bring lawsuits in US courts when American social media companies spread misinformation and hate speech, as defined under local law. While such a law would be challenged under the First Amendment, courts may give Congress more latitude to regulate speech abroad than at home, especially when doing so shows comity with foreign countries. And Congress could enact a law that imposes penalties on social media companies that are shown to have recklessly contributed to, or failed to stop, major atrocities that were facilitated by their platforms.

The title of Burdick and Lederer's novel actually referred ironically to one of the few good Americans in the story. The negative meaning stuck because the shorthand was more useful: the bad type of American greatly outnumbered the good. And now, thanks in part to Facebook's foreign policy, the ugly American is everywhere.

“ The US Congress could pass a law that requires American social media companies to devote resources to monitor and fact-check content in foreign countries in proportion to the amount spent on these activities in the US. ”

Facebook being used to inflame conflict and provoke massacres have been given for Sri Lanka, Yemen, Iraq, and Bangladesh. And in many other countries, from Vietnam to Poland, governments or their supporters have used Facebook to target, harass, and endanger dissidents, political opponents, and vulnerable minorities.

In the *Times* piece, Zuckerberg was touting internet access, not Facebook itself. But by now we know that internet access

played a role in some of the worst atrocities around the globe, and in the coarsening of political life virtually everywhere.

But while Zuckerberg's goal of 'building a global community', as he put it in 2017, resembles American foreign policy (or at least American foreign policy before it was reduced to ashes in Iraq and Afghanistan), Facebook is of course a private entity. It is subject to American jurisdiction and not the other way around. The chastened US

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Climate Change Is a Health Crisis



JULIA GILLARD

A former prime minister of Australia, is Chair of the Wellcome Trust.

The threat COVID-19 poses to human health is now well understood around the world. In contrast, the enormous health threat of global warming, with its broad array of persistent impacts on our well-being, is under-recognized and poorly understood.

Yet climate change is harming human health right now. During the 2020 monsoon season in Bangladesh, for example, water flooded a quarter of the country. More than 1.3 million homes were damaged, and hundreds of people died. Rising sea levels caused by climate change will make such events more frequent in low-lying countries like Bangladesh. It also will bring the risk of flooding on a similar scale to more communities around the world.

Severe floods do more than destroy homes. They cause raw sewage to flow into streets and contaminate drinking water, spreading infection. They also destroy crops, driving malnutrition. And rising sea levels turn drinking water saltier, which increases rates of high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, and premature births.

“Cutting emissions can have a direct, positive effect on health. For example, widespread adoption of diets rich in vegetables and low in meat will reduce greenhouse gases and decrease the risk of heart disease, cancer, and dementia.”

These are hardly the only health risks implied by climate change. Hotter temperatures lead to a higher incidence of heatstroke. And prolonged droughts, just like severe floods, reduce agricultural productivity and output.

The many ways global warming will affect our health are not yet fully understood. But its influence is becoming clearer as the changes to our environment become more dramatic.

The world urgently needs a global strategy to minimize climate-related illness and death in the coming decades. As with the COVID-19 pandemic, developing effective solutions will require governments to work with scientists. Part of any effective approach will be aimed at limiting future warming, and part will be aimed at adapting to a hotter climate. But both imperatives must be pursued in ways that protect, or even enhance, public health.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) currently underway in Glasgow is an ideal opportunity for world leaders to demonstrate that they understand that global warming is a health crisis, and that they are learning from the successes and shortcomings of the pandemic response. In less than two years, COVID-19 has caused millions of deaths and disrupted our lives. We have seen scientists, governments, and companies cooperate to develop diagnostics, therapies, and vaccines. But we have also seen how narrow national interests and socioeconomic inequality can limit access to affordable options, prolonging the crisis.

World leaders meeting at COP26 have a perfect opportunity to show that they understand climate change is not only an urgent environmental challenge, but also one of the most urgent health challenges we have ever faced.

Governments are not in this fight alone. Civil-society organizations need to support efforts in the coming decades to address the health challenges brought about by climate change. We must build a collaborative global process that generates, values, and, most importantly, uses scientific evidence to act on climate change and improve health for everyone. At the Wellcome Trust, we are committed to funding research that enables us to better understand and address the negative effects of global warming on health. We will also advocate strongly for evidence and research to be at the heart of policymaking.

As with any health threat, prevention is better than a cure. There will not be a vaccine to inoculate people against the effects of heat waves, wildfires, droughts, or severe floods, so reducing the rate at which the global temperature is rising is the best preventive measure we have. That means reducing greenhouse-gas emissions.

Fortunately, cutting emissions can have a direct, positive effect on health. For example, the global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy could increase average life expectancy globally by at least one year. Similarly, widespread adoption of diets rich in vegetables and low in meat will reduce greenhouse gases and decrease the risk of heart disease, cancer, and dementia.

But while cutting emissions will reduce future harm, it will not eliminate the health threats that are already implied by decades of global warming. We have no choice but to adapt to life on a warmer planet.

In response to the growing threat of floods, for instance, many coastal communities, including in Kenya, the United States, and Vietnam, are planting mangrove forests. Mangroves can grow in salt water, and they provide some defense against flooding. They also encourage biodiversity and can support fisheries and floating vegetable gardens.

The task now is to design a series of creative options that people around the world can use to decide how best to protect themselves and their communities. Treating the inevitable symptoms of a hotter planet and helping communities adapt is the responsibility of local governments, but we also need a level of international coordination and new knowledge generation that can be delivered only by an agreed global strategy on climate and health.

Pets and Health



SPECIAL TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

A tale as old as time, an animal makes its way across someone's life, and initially there is resistance and reluctance on keeping it. Slowly but surely the animal makes its way into the house and becomes an essential part of the family. Though the changes may not be so dramatic or obvious, these furry (and not furry) friends may provide health benefits to our lives directly and indirectly.

Physical benefits: Purely from having to take care of the needs of a pet, whether it is to fill their food bowls, throw away their waste, or just play with the pet, there is some sort of movement for humans that will always be beneficial to their health.



Of course with pets that require a higher exercise workload, the movement is compounded as it causes people to go for walks, runs, hikes, and other forms of cardio to fulfill their pet's happiness, while in the meantime fulfilling their own, without realizing it. Over the long term, this regular movement pays dividends with a gradual build up to a healthier body, with potential weight loss combined with plausible lowered cholesterol levels,

blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease risk.

Though there are individuals who are allergic to fur or other animal body parts, exposure to furred pets especially from a young age has shown to lower risk of developing allergies and asthma aka potentially having a stronger immune system. Under stressful times when blood pressure will be elevated, the action of petting an animal decreases blood pressure and leads to an overall calmer mood.

Mental benefits: The most prominent changes that pets bring are to the mood and emotional wellbeing of humans. Since there is another creature that is dependent on them, it gives people a reason and goal to protect and take care of them. An active focus around the pet's schedule also keeps the mind occupied and away from thoughts that can be negative. Seeing the pets act silly will naturally force a smile that may have not appeared for a while. Most of all, a sense of loneliness is diminished because there is a living creature that is always there to receive and give attention.

Pets tend to be a common talking point, whether it is with family or friends, there is a conversation to be had regarding them. Individuals who struggle to make friends or generally have a conversation, can have a common ground for discussion through pets and can potentially make new friends or acquaintances.

For the elderly, who generally are more at risk of feeling depression and loneliness, pets provide a companionship that may be hard to attain at that age. They also provide a huge reason for exercise which leads to an overall better cognitive function and a slowdown of the natural age-related body deterioration.

Choosing a pet: Of course, choosing a pet is not a simple task and should not be taken lightly. They are after all a big responsibility, and unless proper care and nurturing can be provided emotionally, physically, and especially financially, then it is best not to have a pet to take care of. Nor should a pet be adopted in the sole hope for health benefits, because after all they are a living creature that have their own requirements. But if these factors can be comprehensively provided for, then adopting an animal and giving them a chance is the best way to go.

Environmental effects on cardiovascular health

A new study on the impact of the environment on risk of developing CVD, conducted by researchers at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Germany, has underlined the importance for policymakers to be made aware of the risks to public health from environmental factors, and to help reduce the burden of CVDs on national and global health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of death globally. They claim the lives of around 18 million people each year. CVDs affect the blood vessels and heart. They increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, which account for 4 out of every 5 deaths due to CVDs.

The WHO also notes that a person is more likely to develop a CVD if they smoke, are not physically active, eat a diet high in salt and low in fruits and vegetables, or drink a lot of alcohol. These behaviors can lead to hypertension, high blood sugar levels, overweight, and obesity, all of which are conditions that can increase the risk of developing a serious CVD. A key way to reduce the risk of developing CVDs is by reversing or reducing these risk factors.

Besides the above traditional factors associated with CVDs, in recent years, researchers have become aware of the role that environmental factors increasingly play in the risk of developing CVDs.

The importance of the new study lies in the fact that around 70–80 percent of CVD and diabetes cases are believed to be due to environmental factors. The traditional focus on reduction of risk factors has been by behavior modification and lifestyle changes, but these approaches have been found to have only limited efficacy.

To significantly diminish the risk of these diseases, we need to first identify and understand the environmental factors that contribute to them. However, individuals by themselves cannot readily avoid exposure to many environmental factors, such as air pollution, noise, and built environments.

Therefore, a larger social effort is required to mitigate environmental risks, said the team behind the new study.

The new research is particularly urgent given that official guidance typically overlooks the effects of the environment on CVDs. Research on environmental causes of CVD could add to the body of knowledge and help policymakers in reorienting and focusing prevention efforts and in making them more effective.

The researchers explain that environmental factors typically increase the risk of CVDs by increasing stress hormone signaling, oxidative stress, and inflammation. They identified four key environmental factors that contribute to CVDs — noise, air and light pollution, as well as climate change.

Noise pollution: The researchers note that a comprehensive meta-analysis has demonstrated that for every 10 decibels of increased road noise, the risk of developing ischemic heart disease increases by a factor of 1.08. The development of technologies to reduce noise pollution and improve traffic management may help mitigate these effects.

Air pollution: Previous studies have found that in the European Union, there are approximately 592,000 excess deaths each year due to fine particulate matter and ozone pollution. Around 41 percent of these deaths are attributable to ischemic heart disease and stroke. A key way to reduce air pollution is to lower the legally allowed emissions levels.

Light pollution: The researchers note that light pollution can disrupt circadian rhythms, which can, in turn, increase the risk of CVDs. They suggest that lighting at nighttime is turned off whenever and wherever it is not essential.

Climate change: Finally, the researchers highlight the effect that climate change and global warming can have on the risk of CVDs. For example, they point out that increased global temperatures increase the likelihood of wildfires, which contribute to air pollution. Other research has suggested that both high and low temperatures due to climate change may increase the risk of CVD mortality. Reducing carbon emissions and introducing carbon emission fines may help mitigate the effects of climate change.

The researchers highlight the need for policymakers to be made aware of the significant risks posed by the environment on risk of developing CVDs, so that they can understand and appreciate the



urban planners need to implement evidence-based strategies to diminish environmental risks,

Individuals also need to increase their awareness of the potential impact of environmental exposures — what chemicals and conditions in their communities and homes can increase their risk — then try and avoid such exposures.

A more comprehensive and holistic assessment of environmental conditions and exposures is needed both to understand and to minimize the environmental threat to CVD, said the study team. They added that in particular we need to understand and modify how climate change is affecting the environment and how these changes are impacting human health.

magnitude of the problem.

They suggested that the medical community and public health investigators need to

identify the most important environmental contributors and then provide clear, actionable approaches to governments. And

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