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Amnesty, cabinet resignation, appeasements order of the day

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

The return of lawmakers to parliament on 25 October for the second-session of the 16th legislative-term has once again heated up the political environment in Kuwait.

An extraordinary session of parliament held on 7 November Sunday, witnessed the announcement by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad-Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had decided to use his constitutional prerogative under Article 75, which states that the 'Amir may, by decree, grant a pardon or commute a sentence...' to grant amnesty to several political dissidents. Shortly after this announcement, the government tendered its resignation to His Highness the Amir, in what is seen as an apparent move to facilitate the parliamentary reconciliation process urged by the Amir.



Among the political dissidents who reportedly were granted amnesty under the Amiri pardon are former opposition lawmaker

Musallam Al-Barrak, as well as other former parliamentarians and their supporters, who had been sentenced to various jail terms for

their role in storming the parliament nearly nine years ago in 2011. Many of those granted amnesty had left the country before the court verdict against them was issued and are said to be in self-imposed exile in Turkey and other neighboring states.

Media reports also indicate that as many as 67 people convicted of various offenses are to benefit from the two Amiri pardons announced on Sunday. Among the beneficiaries are people who have been convicted and are currently serving jail sentences for their part in the Abdali Cell case, who will now have their sentences commuted, and other jailed political dissidents who will have their sentences now reduced by half. A month earlier, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad-Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had urged the executive and legislative authorities in parliament to open a dialogue to facilitate effective cooperation to overcome obstacles that hinder growth and development of the country.

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Kuwait dumps veteran 'sixties', UAE provides retirement visas



The last many months have been a harrowing experience for many people in their 'sixties' due to the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) denying work permits to anyone aged 60 and over if they do not hold a graduate degree or diploma.



The PAM rule was later reportedly amended, so that the work permit became available only if the concerned expatriate was willing to pay an exorbitant fee of KD2,000 per year. In addition, the 'aged' expatriate also needed to arrange private

medical insurance coverage for the duration of their stay in Kuwait.

Though the rule was recently struck down by the Cabinet's Fatwa and Legislation department, this came too late for many expats who had to leave the country, and the fickleness of rules and uncertainty about who can impose them at their will provides little reassurance to expats on the 'stability of their stay' in Kuwait.

In the meantime, neighboring United Arab Emirates last week approved a new retirement visa scheme, under which expatriates can opt to stay on in the Emirates after they retire. The scheme, approved in a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is said to be in line with UAE's efforts to achieve even more flexibility in terms of laws and visa requirements.

However, as with many other things in UAE, the proposition remains open to only those who can afford it. As per the new scheme, retirees fulfilling one of the following criteria will be eligible for retirement residency:

- Property worth Dh1 million, as evaluated by a relevant entity in each Emirate
- A bank deposit of no less than Dh1 million
- Or, an active income of no less than Dh180,000 per annum.

Announcing the new visa scheme, His Highness the Prime Minister said on his Twitter handle: "We welcome everyone to our country."



Real estate sector witnesses partial 'rebound'

Real estate analysts and experts state that the real estate market in the country witnessed a "noticeable rebound" in the third-quarter of this year, following a precipitous fall during the height of the pandemic period in 2020 and in the early months of the first half of 2021.

The real-estate revival was especially marked in the investment and residential sectors, as well as for seaside chalets that witnessed an increased demand. Nevertheless, the commercial and industrial sectors, and agricultural land continued to suffer stagnation, largely due to high prevailing prices on lease contracts and on utilities and other services.

Most experts also concur in the view that the real estate sector could witness further

improvements and is expected to fully recover in the first-quarter of 2022, especially if the package of incentives and stimuluses to revive the various economic sectors, including real estate sector, which is currently on the discussion agenda of the National Assembly comes to pass.

For his part, Secretary General of the Kuwait Real Estate Union, Ahmad Al-Duwaihees, said that though the residential sector witnessed a rise in supply but sales were minimal. He expected prices to recover only in 2022. On the investment real estate sector, he said its recovery would depend on the introduction of economic incentives being planned by the government, as this sector was severely impacted by the pandemic when operation costs continued despite low or nil occupancy rates.

Meanwhile, the owner of a real estate agency said that prevailing prices in the commercial sector were "highly inflated and overrated in most areas". Abdulaziz Al-Dughaisheem, of Al-Dughaisheem Real Estate Agency, said that prices remained high despite supply out-numbering demand on seaside chalets in the Al-Khairan area and elsewhere along the sea coast.

Providing some numbers to back the opinion of experts and other stakeholders in the real-estate sector, the Kuwait Finance House said in a recent report that real estate transactions in the second quarter of 2021 amounted to KD1.1 billion, which was 15 percent higher than during previous quarter when a total of KD929 million transactions were registered.

Indian national Nilofer Shaikh won KD 10,000 in Oncost monthly draw



Indian national Nilofer Shaikh won KD 10,000 in the monthly draw at Oncost Supermarket. In the presence of Chief Executive Officer Saleh Al Tunaib, the cheque for the prize-money was handed over to the winner by Chief Operating Officer Remesh Anandadas, Marketing Manager Reham Nassar, Import and Private-label Manager Ali

Ismail and Area Manager Umesh Pujari at a function held at Oncost Abbasiya branch.

Nilofer who is working in sales department in Avenues, expressed her joy of getting 10,000 KD from Oncost, where she do her regular shopping. "I am very happy to get this prize," she said

Oncost launched this monthly draw for their

members who have the Oncost membership card. Any purchase will entitle you to their monthly draw, in which the winner will get 10,000 KD as the cash prize.

With the Oncost membership card, members can also take advantage of up to 4 percent cashback on their purchases made during their membership period.

The Membership Program seeks to reward members for their loyalty to the brand, in addition to providing them with a large range of products at very cost-effective prices.

Oncost officials thanked all the valued customers for their valuable support and urged everyone to join their membership program to get various benefits.

GCCAC registers record-breaking arbitration, membership rates in 2021

The Gulf Cooperation Council Commercial Arbitration Center (GCCAC) registered a record number of trade, real estate, and financial and investment portfolio disputes, as well as witnessed an increase in memberships to the center, during the first-ten months of 2021, between 1 January and 31 October.

These figures and other data related to arbitration cases were revealed by Secretary-General of the CAC for GCC countries, Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry, who stated that the year 2019 was "one of the most successful years for the center since its establishment, in terms of the number of cases that were registered and the number of renewals by arbitrators. The year was successful by all standards."

He added, "In 2020, which saw the outbreak of the Corona pandemic that negatively affected the world economy and impacted everyone, the center witnessed an expected decrease in the number of cases and renewal of memberships in 2020 compared to 2019."

"Regardless of the influencing factors, CAC continued to receive cases in 2020 and to resolve them using the electronic arbitration session system taking all precautionary measures. Thus the center was able to issue several judgments during this critical period

**Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry,
CAC Secretary-General for GCC countries**



globally, and to emerge with the least damage, but with great benefits and gained experiences," said Al-Shumaimry. He went on to note, "In 2021, the center

witnessed a boom in the number of cases that were registered, including those filed by Bahrainis, Kuwaitis, Saudis and Malaysians, as well as an increase in the renewal of memberships, during the first-ten months of the year from 1 January to 31 October. In terms of the number, not value wise, the cases registered in 2021 exceeded the number of cases in 2020 by 167 percent, and was also more by 60 percent than the number of cases registered in 2019, which was until now the most successful year since the center was established."

Al-Shumaimry indicated that the boom did not include only the number of cases, but even included the rate of renewal of memberships, where 2021 exceeded 2020 by 118 percent and topped 2019 by 114 percent. He pointed out that this increase was due to several factors, the most important of which was an increase in the global trend to resort to arbitration as an alternative means of settling disputes. In addition, the confidence that the center has enjoyed in legal and commercial circles and the spread of the culture of arbitration through the programs, training courses, forums and conferences arranged by the center, and widely published in the media have been contributing factors.



POLO, OWWA holds seminar on services offered to OFWs

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

Team of officers from Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) held a three-hour seminar on various services available for Overseas Filipina Workers (OFWs), who are active OWWA members in Kuwait, and for their families back home in the Philippines. The event was held at the premises of the International Culinary Arts in Salmiya on 8 November.

Members of the Guardians International Auxiliary Group for Fraternal Brotherhood Incorporated (GIAGFBI), attended a three-hour reintegration program presented by the Romanito Frias on behalf of the OWWA department in Kuwait. Among those present were Assistant Labor Attaché Cathy Duladul, Welfare Officers Genevieve Ardiente, Emmuel Diaz and Louella Marie Calanza with Daylene Ala.

The three-hour seminar discussed topics on: benefits and services of OWWA available for the Overseas Filipina Workers (OFWs). These services included death and medical privileges for the families of OFWs, educational short and full courses scholarship programs for children and families as well as for the OFWs, repatriation assistance and importantly loans for business purposes for OFWs who opt

to go home for good.

Chef Eden Costinar, organizing team leader of the event, raised several questions regarding group loans to start small corporations for their members in Kuwait and back home in the Philippines. Land development, business loans procedures and scholarships for children were among the most relevant and often asked questions from the attendees. Frias mentioned that promoting the safety and welfare of OFWs and their families was the main reason for the establishment of the OWWA. Welfare Officer Ardiente also assisted in providing detailed information regarding some queries from the attendees.

"I'm glad I came to the seminar, as it gave me so much information that I can now share with my family, and also made me aware of services I never knew I was entitled to. I just hope these programs reach out to more OFWs in Kuwait so they can be aware of their privileges too. The OWWA has remained true to their motto 'OWWA Cares,'" commented Jennifer Abad.

The event was organized in collaboration with the International Culinary Arts (ICA), which will also be hosting the upcoming seminars of POLO and OWWA organized by other community groups for their members. ICA is located in the mezzanine floor of Al Salam mall in Salmiya.

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Thought [“] for the week

I want to see a man proud
of the place in which he lives;
I like to see a man live in it
so his place will be proud of him.

- Abraham Lincoln



5 steps
to better

Crab Cakes

Crab cakes are a lot like meatballs: both come together with the help of an egg, breadcrumbs, and a few common minced vegetables and herbs; both are hand-patted and pan-fried; and both have a sidekick sauce - marinara for meatballs, tartar for crab cakes.

The two dishes part ways when it comes to protein. Ground meat is as low-maintenance as it gets - just dump it in the bowl and start piling on the other ingredients. Even the kind of crab meat you buy in tubs at the store that is already been hand-picked - requires another once-over.

Meticulously picking over the crab meat is the single most important step in making crab cakes. Nothing ruins a meal like biting into a shell fragment. Here listed are the five steps to preparing crab cakes:

5 Steps to preparing crab cakes:

- Pick that crab. Designate one little bowl for shell fragments and another bigger bowl for catching the clean crab. Try to keep the lumps intact as best you can.
- For every ¼ kilogram of crab meat, add in a small handful of minced shallot, another of chopped fresh parsley, a bigger handful of diced red pepper, and another of diced green pepper. You will use about half of each pepper.
- Also add an egg, three to four heaping spoonful of mayo, a heaping handful of dry

breadcrumbs (or toasted fresh crumbs that have been pulsed till fine), and a squirt each of Dijon and Worcestershire sauce. A few shakes of Tabasco, Crystal, or your favorite thin hot sauce are welcome now, too. Mix everything up gently to avoid breaking up the lumps of crab. If the mixture is too wet, you can add in some more breadcrumbs, and if it is too dry then go for the mayo.

- Form the patties.
- Thoroughly dredge each patty in all-purpose flour and fry them in clarified butter for the best browning. Flip only once. Drain on paper towels, and serve hot with tartar sauce.

Now, for that sidekick sauce. To make a killer tartar, mix together the following: mayo, relish (or minced pickles/gherkins), capers, dill (preferably fresh), fresh chives, Dijon, and fresh lemon juice. The order dictates the general proportion, with mayo being the main ingredient and fresh lemon juice coming in at just a dribble. The sauce can be made ahead of time so you are not frantically mixing while your cakes cool.

If you do forget, you can also make a quick tartar sauce with just mayo and relish. Or, just sprinkle them with lemon juice.

If you still need a recipe, here is one to go with:

Crab cakes with fennel, scallions and green apple.



Aioli



Ingredients:

Egg yolk, at room temperature, as fresh as possible
2 cloves garlic, minced
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
1 cup canola oil, or other neutral oil
2 tbsp. lemon juice
1 pinch cayenne pepper
Sea salt

Preparation:

Empty the egg yolk into a small bowl and mix with the minced garlic. Add 1 tbsp. of Dijon mustard and a few generous turns of the pepper mill.

Slowly incorporate the oil in a thin stream, while constantly beating with a fork or mini whisk. Continue whisking for about five minutes, until the mayonnaise has risen in the bowl, turned a very pale yellow and has a consistency firm enough to stick handily to the back of a spoon. Mix in the lemon juice and the cayenne. Add sea salt to taste. Let the mayonnaise rest in the fridge, covered, for at least one hour before use.

Ingredients:

1 fennel bulb
1 tbsp. olive oil
6 scallions
½ one green apple
¼ kilogram lump of crab meat
½ cup panko bread crumbs
Canola oil and unsalted butter, for cooking

Crab Cakes

Preparation:

Remove the stems from your fennel, and then peel the top layer of the bulb. Halve the bulb, and lay each half flat side down on your cutting board. Thinly slice. Sauté the slices over medium-low heat with 1 tbsp. of olive oil until soft. Let the fennel cool slightly, and then roughly chop it.

Wash and trim your scallions, then thinly slice the white parts only.

RECIPE

Rice-Rawa Chakri/Murukku



A deep fried snack that is popular in the Indian state of Gujarat, rice-rawa chakri is a favorite during festive seasons. You can serve it as an evening tea-snack. Though it looks similar to the south-Indian snack called murukku, the taste is totally different.

Deep fried, perfectly crisp and crunchy this spirally twisted circular shaped snack is simply delicious.

Total time: 30 minutes

Yield : 15 to 18 pieces

Ingredients:

- 1 cup rice flour
- 1/2 cup suji (Semolina)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 1/4 cup water
- 1 tsp butter
- 1 tsp red chili powder
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 1/4 tsp asafoetida
- Salt to taste
- Oil for deep frying.

Preparation:

- Boil water in a kadai (wok), add ghee and sesame seeds
- Add semolina to the boiling water and mix well
- Keep stirring to ensure no lumps are formed until the mixture forms a dough
- Turn off the flame and set the dough aside to cool
- Add rice flour, cumin seeds, chili powder, and asafoetida to the dough.
- Mix well and form a firm dough with warm water
- The dough should be soft and smooth.
- Take a small portion of dough in a murukku /chakli maker and press down while swirling the maker over a plate to form concentric circles
- Heat oil for deep frying.
- Carefully drop the chaklis and deep fry them on a medium flame.
- Follow the same procedure with remaining dough
- Remove and place them on a tissue paper. Let them cool completely
- Store airtight at room temperature for 3 to 4 weeks.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

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



Halve and core your apple. Lay the flat sides on your cutting board, and thinly slice crosswise and then lengthwise—you are aiming for small batons of apple.

In a large bowl, gently mix the crab with 3/4 cup of the aioli, a few tablespoons at a time. Incorporate the panko breadcrumbs, and then fold in

the fennel, scallions and apple.

Form the crab into patties, and then move them to a plate. Cover with plastic and refrigerate for about two hours—you want them to solidify slightly, so they do not fall apart during cooking, and you want to give the flavors a chance to marry.

In a wide sauté pan or shallow Dutch oven, heat some canola oil and butter. Cook the crab cakes a few at a time, making sure not to crowd the pan. Cook them for a few minutes on each side, or until they are golden brown.

Serve with the extra aioli, lemon wedges, a sprinkling of cayenne and/or hot sauce.

Kuwait on a path of steady economic recovery



Kuwait is evidently on a path to recovery and growth following significant improvements in the COVID-19 epidemiological situation and the gradual easing of restrictions. This assessment of the economy by the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) follows the high vaccination rate among the populace and the boost to consumer sentiment, which added to the recovery momentum and boosted the non-oil based economy.

The latest report by NBK on the economic outlook in Kuwait shows growth has accelerated to new highs from the realization of pent-up demand, and support rendered by the government in giving citizens a new

deadline to repay their loan installments.

The report noted that the real estate sector is also witnessing a rebound with residential real estate demonstrating the strongest growth this year. Meanwhile, Boursa Kuwait, the local stock market, continued the momentum that began in the second quarter of the year and took off to achieve even more gains in the third quarter. Boursa Kuwait has been ranked among the best performers at the level of emerging markets so far this year.

Despite the strong signs of recovery, the bank noted that public finances continue to be under pressure, with the absence of meaningful reforms creating a heavy burden on government finances. The bank warned of the the urgent need to exercise control in this area and implement long-due reforms

On the oil-based economy, the bank indicated that the average production of Kuwaiti crude oil was 2.47 million barrels per day (bpd) in September, and this is expected to increase by 27,000 bpd until May 2022, after which the country baseline production will rise by 150,000 bpd to reach 2.96 million bpd.

On the other hand, project activity in the country took a hit in the third quarter of 2021, as the value of the awarded contracts decreased significantly to 152 million dinars, compared to 482 million dinars in the second quarter of the year, a decrease of 57 percent on an annual basis. According to the Middle-

East Economic Digest (MEED) magazine, by the end of the third quarter the total value of contracts awarded were worth KD916 million. The magazine expects total value of contracts awarded this year to reach KD2.4 billion, from the awarding of KD1.5 billion worth of contracts in the fourth quarter.

Kuwait Towers lights up with Kuwait, India flags

Kuwait Towers was recently bedecked with projections of the national flags of Kuwait and India on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the signing of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Indian Ambassador H.E. Sibi George highlighted the significance of the ongoing milestone year 2021, and the excellent relations between the two countries during the last six decades. He also expressed his commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries based on mutual trust, understanding, and cooperation.



Kalyan Jewelers records broad-based revenue growth in second-quarter

Kalyan Jewellers India Limited's consolidated revenue grew by 61 percent in Q2FY22 compared to Q2FY21. The revenue growth was broad-based across geographies with both India and international markets growing at the same pace.

Total revenue for the quarter was Rs 2889 crore, compared to a total revenue of Rs1798 crore for the same period during the last financial year. The company recorded Earnings Before Interest, and Tax, Depreciation & Amortization (EBITDA) of Rs228 crore for the quarter compared to Rs18 crore in the same quarter of the previous year. Consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) for the quarter was Rs69 crore as against a loss of Rs136 crore in Q2FY21.



The revenue growth in India was approximately 61percent during the recently concluded quarter as compared to the same period in the previous year. This was despite the fact that there were lockdown related disruptions in showroom operations during the recently concluded quarter in one of our key markets, Kerala. Showrooms in Kerala resumed full operations only by the second week of August.

Total standalone revenue for the company in India, for the recently concluded quarter was Rs2,503 crore, as against Rs1,556 crore for the same period in the previous year.

The Same Store Sales Growth (SSSG) in Non-South markets was 72 percent compared to the Southern markets, which had an SSSG of 44 percent. This differential was predominantly due to COVID-19 related closures of showrooms in Kerala during the recently concluded quarter. The overall SSSG in India during the quarter was 52 percent.

The India operations recorded Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation & Amortization (EBITDA) of Rs201 crore for the quarter compared to Rs147 crore in the same quarter of the previous year. PAT for the quarter was Rs68 crore as against Rs29 crore in Q2FY21.

In the Middle East, we witnessed a significant improvement in customer sentiment during the quarter, resulting in a revenue growth of 61 percent as compared to the same quarter during the prior year. This, despite the continuing travel restrictions between India and the region, for most parts of the recently concluded quarter. Total revenue from the Middle East operations for the recently concluded quarter was Rs360 crore as against Rs224 crore for the same period in the previous year.

The growth was largely same store sales driven since we did not add any new showrooms in the region during the last 12 months. The Middle East region contributed approximately 12 percent to the overall consolidated revenue of the company. The Middle East operations recorded Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation & Amortization (EBITDA) of Rs26 crore for the quarter compared to a loss of Rs132 crore in the same quarter of the previous year. PAT for the quarter was Rs35 lakhs as against a loss of Rs165 crore in Q2FY21.

The e-commerce division Candere has continued its growth momentum. The revenue for the recently concluded quarter was Rs32 crore versus Rs22 crore in Q2-FY21, a growth of 47 percent. The company recorded a PAT of Rs54 lakhs compared to a PAT of Rs1 crore for the same period of the last financial year.

Presently, the Company's retail footprint is spread across 150 stores in 21 Indian states and four countries in the Middle East.

Executive Director, Kalyan Jewellers India Limited, Ramesh Kalyanaraman, said: "The Company's performance during the recently concluded quarter has been very strong and we remain confident of the current quarter given the continued easing of COVID-19 related restrictions as well as the return of buoyancy in consumer sentiments across markets. We are witnessing a continuation in revenue momentum that had started around the same time last year and are encouraged by the trends that we are seeing in our operating performance."

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Kuwait Foreign Minister receives British House of Commons group on relationship with Kuwait

Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister hosts Canadian counterpart



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Majdi Al-Dhafiri hosted on Thursday his Canadian counterpart Ambassador Marta Morgan and her accompanying delegation, holding talks over the friendly relations between the State of Kuwait and Canada, means

of boosting these ties and regional as well as international issues. Ambassador Morgan praised the State of Kuwait role with respect of bolstering the world security and stability and also expressed gratitude for its help when Canada evacuated its citizens from Afghanistan.

Dean of Diplomatic Corps bids farewell to Chad Ambassador



On Tuesday, 9 November, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the State of Kuwait Zubaydzoda met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Chad to the State of Kuwait Zakira Albatoul on the occasion of the completion of her diplomatic mission.

On behalf of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Zubaydzoda sincerely wished Her Excellency success in her future.

Kuwaitis to be exempted from entry visa to Tajikistan from 2022

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassador of Tajikistan to Kuwait, Dr. Zabidullah Zabidov, said a decision has been issued to exempt Kuwaitis from entry visas to Tajikistan. The decision will come into force at the beginning of next year.

Dr. Zabidov explained that exempting Kuwaitis from visa reflects the depth of bilateral relations between the two countries, and the extent of their



keenness to strengthen joint relations in various fields for the benefit of the two friendly countries and peoples.

He added that the decision includes granting the visitor a temporary residence for a month. "This will significantly revitalize Kuwaiti tourism to my country, especially since Tajikistan enjoys a unique tourist and cultural diversity, as well as being a suitable environment for investments."

Brazilian Music in Kuwait

By H.E. Francisco Mauro Brasil de Holanda
Ambassador of Brazil

It gives me great pleasure to invite all those who love music to attend the public and free performance of the prestigious band 'Choro Livre', at Yarmouk Cultural Center, on 18 November, at 7:00 PM.

Choro Livre is a jewel of Brazilian music. It will visit Kuwait as part of the celebrations of the 200 years of the Independence of my country on 7 September 1822.

The band was born in Brasilia in 1993, and has since established itself as a legend. It regularly performs at a vintage building projected by the famous architect Oscar Niemeyer in Brasilia, that hosts today the 'Clube do Choro', Choro Livre's mother cell. Choro Livre's members play an important role in the training of 1,200 young musicians who attend Clube do Choro's school music.

Choro Livre's virtuosity has shined at the gardens of the United Nations headquarter, in New York City, and in many countries - Argentina, Austria, Canada, China, Check Republic, France, Kuwait (2019), Peru, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Uruguay and United States, to mention just a few.

As in its birth certificate, Choro Livre plays a Brazilian rhythm called 'choro', or 'chorinho'. Considered as one of the pillars of Brazil's popular music, its rich array of rhythms gave rise to various sub-genres, such as samba-choro and polka-choro.

Like ragtime in the United States, tango in Argentina and habanera in Cuba, choro results from musical styles and rhythms coming from Europe and Africa.

Choro is usually played by a trio of flute, guitar and cavaquinho (a small chordophone, sort of ukulele with four strings). Other instruments commonly played are the mandolin, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet and trombone. These instruments are usually backed by a rhythm section composed of 6-string guitar, 7-string guitar (playing bass lines) and light percussion, such as a tambourine. The group that will perform in Kuwait is composed by five musicians: Pablo Fagundes (harmonica); Márcio de Souza (cavaquinho - sort of ukulele); Henrique neto (7 strings guitar); Valério Xavier (percussion); and George Costa (6 strings guitar).

In compliance with the applicable social distance and health protocols, a vaccination proof by Immune or Kuwait Mobile ID and face mask are required to the attendants.

Due to the seats limitation, please confirm your attendance on:
<https://chorolive2021.rsvpify.com/>

I cannot finish without a special note of gratitude to Sheikha Hussah Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and to Sabah Al Hayes, who welcomed Choro Livre's visit from the first moment I approached them. I also thank the Kuwait's Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Information, that guided us to meet the consular and administrative requirements involved.

See you at Yarmouk Cultural Center.



Indian Ambassador met Ambassador Hamad Rashed Al-Marri, Assistant Foreign Minister for Gulf Cooperation Council Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait last week. They discussed all aspects of India- GCC cooperation, Kuwait's vision for GCC and developments in the region.

Average savings among Kuwaitis in single digits

Though Kuwaiti families have a discretionary income ranging from 38 percent to 66 percent of their average annual income, their savings are only in single digits in most cases, and average around 8 percent of their disposable income.

The findings on savings came to light following a recent study commissioned by the government and conducted by global consultants, McKinsey Consulting Company.

Other details that emerged from the study include that housing expenditures account for about 28 percent of the total per capita income, and is nearly 85 percent of the total cost of living in Kuwait. Among the factors behind the high spending on housing, was the exponential rise in cost of residential land in recent years in most areas of the country, with prices nearly doubling in some of the governorates.

In addition, the maximum limit set on residential loans to Kuwaitis by the state's

public lender, Housing Credit Bank, is KD70,000, which is sufficient to cover only a small part of purchasing residential land in the country, with the cost of constructing the house still needing financing.

In the meantime, the average annual inflation rate for consumer goods has grown significantly, with the compounded inflation rate for the period between 2004 and 2017 being around 67 percent. Average price of a basket of consumer goods, which cost around KD15,000 in 2004, was up over KD25,000 in 2017.

The McKinsey report found that the rise in rate of consumer goods prompted the Central Bank of Kuwait to order, in late 2018, a hike in the upper limit for loans and Islamic financing options for consumer purposes. The revised rate of consumer loans is now set at 25 times the customer's net monthly salary, subject to a maximum of KD25,000, which is up from the KD15,000 maximum previous limit.

The McKinsey study relies on data from

the Household Income and Expenditure Survey conducted by the Central Statistical Bureau, which found and classified expenses under four major categories:

Basic expenses: Constituting around 34 percent of total per capita income in Kuwait, this includes basic essentials such as food, beverages, utility prices, health care, education, transportation, communications, furniture and clothing.

Residential expenses: Representing about 28 percent of total income, this segment comprises monthly rents on residences.

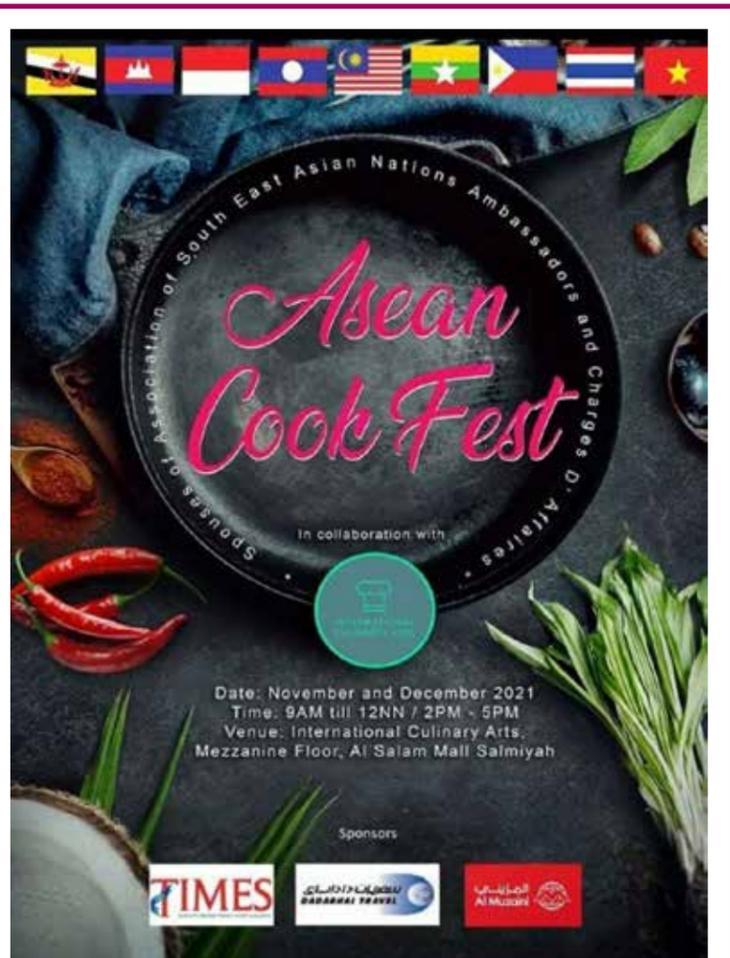
Non-essential expenses: Accounting for 20 percent of total per capita income, this includes entertainment, culture, and dining out at restaurants and hotels.

Miscellaneous expenses: Constituting about 10 percent of a person's total income, this comprises personal goods and services, social protection, and insurance.

McKinsey is also said to be working on a study that includes submitting



the necessary proposals and studies to stimulate various economic sectors, including small and medium enterprises, private sector companies, and the financial and banking sectors. The consulting firm is also reported to be preparing a study on implementing various stimulus measures aimed at overcoming the repercussions caused by the COVID-19 crisis on the economy.



Spouses of ASEAN Ambassadors promote ASEAN cuisines

Spouses of ASEAN Ambassadors and Charges D' Affaires in Kuwait will hold a 'Saturday Cook Fest' at International Culinary Arts (ICA) in Salmiya, to promote popular cuisines of their countries, which will be spearheaded by their own native master chefs. The two month long event will be held every Saturday morning and is expected to be attended by nationals from different countries.

A recent meeting, held at ICA and attended by spouses of ambassadors and charges D'affaires from Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines and Thailand, discussed details of the event. Each embassy will provide a chef to lead the class and two dishes from respective countries will be presented. Twelve participants are expected to attend each class. No fees are required and ingredients of the dishes to be prepared in classes are given free.

"ASEAN cuisines are rich in flavors, aroma and most ingredients are available in Kuwait. This is our way of promoting our cuisines to the public," stated Chef Noor Jarifah Lomondot, wife of Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait.

Philippines Embassy will kick off the event with a Filipino master chef Ramil de La Cruz, a Sous Chef at the Ministry of Defense, preparing two popular dishes of the Philippines, 'Adobo' and 'Kare Kare'. Demonstration classes will be held every Saturday from nine in the morning till twelve noon. Interested participants may register and call at 99138775 (Ricky).

Al Muzaini Exchange Company and Dadabhai Travels are among the sponsors of the event and The Times Kuwait is the official media partner.

PWC proposal under fire by women's groups, NGOs

Recent proposal by the Parliamentary Women's Committee (PWC) to allocate a monthly salary to non-working Kuwaiti women, is a conniving scheme aimed at stopping women from entering the job-market, and an attempt to keep them away from involvement in the decision-making processes, said several women's rights groups and civil society organizations.

In a joint statement, the Women's Cultural and Social Society, the Kuwaiti Soroptimist Society for Community Development, the Kuwait Lawyers Association and the National Association for Family Security (Rawasi) said: "We deplore the decision of the Parliamentary Women's Committee to allocate a monthly salary to non-working women." The statement added: "We categorically reject such decisions that attempt to keep women away from the labor market and decision-making process and deprive them of performing their duty towards their society and country, while they are an essential partner in development, and the Kuwaiti constitution guarantees them equality and justice.

"Article 26 of the constitution stipulates that public jobs are a national service entrusted to those in charge of them, and state employees, in performing their jobs, aim for the public interest," read the statement by the women's groups.

Although on the face of it, the proposal appears to be in the interest of women, is in fact a beguiling attempt to marginalize women and keep them away from employment opportunities and from participating in the decision-making centers. The proposal is also illegal



in that it contravenes the constitution that grants equal rights to all, and is contrary to the state's policies and objectives for economic development of the country.

Moreover, such a monthly salary will provide a stimulus for indolence among young women, and a total waste of already scarce public resources, especially at a time when the state budget is witnessing repeated deficits. It needs to be pointed out that the state already provides financial assistance to needy widows, divorced women, and the elderly in accordance with the conditions and controls, and in line with the actual needs of the individuals.

The women's groups concluded their joint statement by noting: "We are confident that there are many more important and urgent social issues concerning women that have been neglected by the PWC, such as housing welfare laws and university admissions, among others, which discriminate between genders, and many other urgent civil rights issues related to women's rights, which the committee has so far failed to discuss or resolve."

Amghara scrapyards poses health, environment risks

Just as the Environment Public Authority (EPA) were resting on the laurels from successfully accomplishing the herculean task of shifting hundreds of tons of waste tires from Erhiya scrapyards, which was located in close proximity to a residential area, a new area has sprung up for waste tire dumping in the Amghara scrapyards.

Hundreds of waste tires are ending up each week at the Amghara scrapyards, discarded in bulk by clearing companies and individuals. Unless the problem is tackled now, it could lead to a rerun of the festering Erhiya scrapyards that had posed a serious threat to the health and lives of people, and to the environment.

In a recent mega operation involving the Kuwait municipality and working in close coordination with health and security authorities, as well as other relevant government entities, the EPA had successfully shifted the festering scrapyards at Erhiya, located close to South Saad Al-Abdullah Housing Project, to the more distant



and unpopulated Al-Salmi area. A total of more than 42 million old tires that had accumulated since 2004 in the Erhiya scrapyards were shifted to Al-Salmi.

This followed a decision by the Council of Ministers authorizing the EPA to clear the scrapyards within six months, which the authority succeeded in doing by transferring more than 507 tons of tires from Erhiya to Salmi with the help of government and private agencies.

Visa renewal for 'sixties' awaits decision on health insurance

Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) said the decision for renewal of work permits for those 60 years above who hold only high school certificates is linked to the private health insurance mechanism, which is still to be decided on by the relevant authorities.

Media reports indicate that the decision on health insurance is likely to be taken this week, once it is approved by the Chairman of the PAM board of directors and Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Abdullah Al-Salman, and work permit renewals could begin as early as next week.

The health insurance decision is likely to include three categories and each category will have a specific fee in accordance with the controls and conditions approved in special insurance cases. Once this decision comes through, PAM is expected to open

the window for renewal or work permits through the authority's e-services for automatic renewal.

There are also unconfirmed reports that the authorities are considering applying the revised health insurance fees on all expatriates aged 60 and over irrespective of their educational qualifications. However, for the moment the decision is likely to apply only to those in this category without a university degree or diploma.

In other PAM related news this week, the official spokesperson and Director of Public Relations and Media Department at PAM, Aseel Al-Mazyed, said PAM has administratively suspended the file of one of the companies and referred the company to the Public Prosecution to take legal measures for not paying the wages of its employees.

Commenting on a video clip circulating in the social media, which shows a cleaning company workers demonstrating in front of the Labor Relations Department in the Abu Fatira area, Al-Mazyed said that PAM investigated the labor strike and discovered the cause was non payment of salaries by the concerned cleaning company and that the demonstration at the end of last week was not the first.

She indicated that further investigation revealed gross violations of labor laws by the company, and accordingly the authority had decided to suspend its file and refer the company to the public prosecution. The concerned company was also notified of the action taken by PAM and that legal procedures in this regard have been initiated.

She added that the workers will get their



material rights in coordination with the parties with which the employment contract is registered, while the company file will be referred to the Public Prosecution, especially since suspected criminal activities related to work contracts, non-payment of salaries and other violations are crystal clear.

Toyota Electrified Vehicle Global Sales Cross 17 million Units

- *Be a Part of the Change, Be a Part of Hybrid Revolution*
- *Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Announces Test Drive a Hybrid*



Celebrating a spectacular milestone of 17 million units of electrified vehicles Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons has launched an exclusive test drive campaign, for its promising range of Toyota Hybrid Electric vehicles across all showrooms in Kuwait.

Over the years Toyota has successfully launched a variety of HEVs, leading the way to a steady growth in the adoption of its environmentally friendly vehicles. The company's original vision has allowed Toyota to be the leader in meeting increasingly stringent emissions regulations around the world. Hybrid is the practical way towards green motoring, and it delivers a more relaxed and rewarding drive than a conventional car.

We are HYBRID

According to Martin Aherne Business Director Toyota Kuwait "Toyota Hybrid Electric cars act like normal petrol cars, you drive them like normal cars, you service them like normal cars, and you refuel them like normal cars. However, they have the added advantage of a 2nd power source. This 2nd power source is self-charging with NO plug-in. This 2nd power source makes them quieter and more responsive; the performance must be experienced to be believed. They are also much more fuel efficient which is better for the environment. The world is changing, and these cars are built for a better world."

Total cumulative sales of electrified vehicles have crossed 17 million units during the period 1997-February 2021. Total accumulative reductions in CO2 emissions as a result of electrified vehicles is around 140

million tons. (1997-2020)

Bader Faisal Al Sayer Head of Marketing Toyota Kuwait said "With Toyota Hybrid I can see today future connectivity, progressive technology, unique style and performance with the highest ever fuel efficiency. A main advantage of this totally different and exciting experience includes technology that can make a great connection with the younger ..generation."



Filipino dental technician allegedly jumps to death

BY RICKY LAXA
STAFF WRITER

A 26-year old Filipino dental technician is alleged to have jumped to his death from the 17th floor of a residential apartment in Fahaheel on the night of 10 November. Reports from sources at the scene, as well as accounts from people who knew the victim, point to a case of harassment and bullying by colleagues at work that resulted in the victim suffering from deep depression, which possibly led to his decision to take his own life.

In a brief interview, a reliable source who knew the victim well, stated that the victim had been the target of constant and sustained bullying by colleagues at his workplace and, at times, even by the company management. On Tuesday night, prior to allegedly jumping to his death from the residential building, the victim reportedly spoke to his cousin and asked him to retrieve all his belongings from the place where he lived. The cousin said that he comforted, coaxed and apparently convinced the victim to remain calm and not resort to any escalation of the situation.

People living in the same building as the victim are said to have witnessed the deceased in a state of extreme restlessness and shivering on Wednesday. In the afternoon the victim reportedly attacked a colleague and hit him on the head thrice with a dental hammer that caused the colleague to be admitted to hospital. The person then broke open a window on the 17th floor of the building and jumped to his death.

Relatives and friends of the victim say they are seeking a full investigation into the incident



and justice for the deceased by prosecuting all those responsible for causing depression to the victim, which eventually led to the drastic step of taking his own life. Reports indicate that the person the victim hit on the head was one of his main tormentors and had mistreated him since he started working for the company. "He often complained about this coworker who never stopped bullying him and maybe it was too unbearable for him that caused such ire," said one source at the accident site. Incriminating photo and video evidence has also reportedly emerged of the victim being intoxicated by his colleagues and compelled to perform indecent sexual acts that were filmed and apparently used to torment him further.

The victim's family has already reported the case to the embassy and the case is currently under investigations. Photos and pictures have been submitted as evidence to the investigators. Family members also raise doubt on whether the victim jumped to his death or was pushed down from the 17th floor. Family is now said to be relying their hopes on the Philippine embassy in Kuwait to attend to the case and bring to justice all those behind the incident that tragically led to the death of the Filipino national.

Entry ban on Sudanese linked to turmoil in Khartoum

The residence affairs departments in the six governorates have received verbal orders from the concerned authority to stop all related transactions to the Sudanese until further notice.

With this the number of nationalities prohibited from entering Kuwait without security approvals raises to 8 - the Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi, Pakistani, Iranian, Afghani, Yemeni and the Sudanese.

Senior security sources said the visas have been suspended because on 'internal turmoil' in the Sudan.

The sources indicated Kuwait follows similar



procedures when countries are afflicted by internal unrest to prevent persons wanted by law may infiltrate along with others into Kuwait.

The sources confirmed that those Sudanese who have valid residence permit of the country are not affected by the decision; they have the right to return to the country and have the right to renew their residence permits.

Kuwait ranks low in women's, children's rights

The periodic compilation WeWorld Index, which monitors and indexes the living condition of women and children in about 170 countries around the world, and considers their inclusion from multiple points of view: social, economic, political, environmental, found that the COVID-19 crisis worsened the condition of women and children around the world.

The index for 2021 also found that the pandemic exacerbated inequalities within countries, particularly affecting women and children, categories that already lived at a disadvantage compared to men. The WeWorld Index highlights that to achieve

the ultimate goal of the 2030 Agenda 'No one Left Behind' it is now more necessary than ever before to adopt a gender and generational approach in public policies and interventions.

In this year's WeWorld Index, Kuwait ranked 91 out of 172 countries indexed in 2020. The report ranks countries according to five inclusion categories, starting from 'good inclusion' and going all the way down to 'severe exclusion'. Kuwait came within the category of 'insufficient inclusion' along with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Among GCC states, only the UAE,

which ranked 48 globally, ranked in the 'sufficient inclusion' category.

The report stated that, in general, in every country, if there is economic growth without broad and deep social reforms, there is a conflict between 'male' power and 'female' power, as is the case in Kuwait. In the political representation of women, Kuwait ranked 'very low', as it was among the lowest five countries in the world in terms of the percentage of women in parliament (number of seats for women).

The index added that despite the high per capita GDP in Kuwait of \$32,000, the country also lags behind in the women and children



index in social progress. On the other hand, Kuwait came among the most polluted countries, as it ranked second globally in per capita carbon dioxide emissions after Qatar.

Historical sites in danger of obliteration

Historical landmarks and antiquities are an integral part of the civilizations of nations and more often than not have sentimental values. However, what we are witnessing in Kuwait today can be termed an egregious neglect of historical monuments that depict the ancient history of Kuwait, in which previous generations struggled, worked and made sacrifices to protect the homeland in spite of harsh conditions and shortcomings.

Realizing the importance of historical sites and antiquities to the history and culture of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, who led the country to independence and is considered the architect of modern Kuwait, promulgated an Amiri decree to record and preserve these historic landmarks and

antiquities. The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) was formed to promote, preserve and protect Kuwait's cultural and historical assets.

Kuwait is also a signatory to the 'Cooperation Agreement in the Field of Antiquities Protection, Detection, Conservation, Restoration and Preservation between Member States of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States', which the country ratified in 1989.

In addition, the Council of Ministers through a ministerial decision in 1995 made it mandatory on all government agencies to cooperate and coordinate with the NCCAL to protect Kuwait's heritage.

Moreover, in 2002 Kuwait ratified the Convention for the Protection of the World



Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was approved by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Despite having rules and laws, and ratifying international covenants, as well as having a

dedicated entity entrusted to protect and preserve Kuwait's heritage, the country has irredeemably lost much of its archeological treasures, historical buildings, monuments and venues.

Pressures from growing population and expanding urban areas has meant that many of these sites have been obliterated to make room for urban sprawls.

Experts and concerned citizens have called for a major national historical project to transform all the remaining sites and monuments into protected national museums and for the development of all these heritage, archaeological and historical sites through a strategic plan, which will be a great legacy for present and future generations.

Municipality reveals fourth development masterplan up to 2040

Kuwait's fourth master plan for the years leading up to 2040 is considered as a catalyst for growth and development for the country and forms an integral part of one of the seven main pillars of the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP), which is to build and modernize Kuwait's infrastructure to improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Revealing details of the fourth master plan, Kuwait Municipality Engineer Sulieman Al-Rashed said the plan divides the country into four regions based on their geographic location. The four areas are North, South, West and East, with the eastern area being the biggest and comprising all the urban areas that constitute the current six governorates of the county.

Eng. Al-Rashed was speaking while participating in a workshop for GCC master plans, which was held on the sidelines of the 57th World Planning Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) held in Qatar's capital Doha from 8 to 11 November.

Pointing out that his area of focus was the southern area bordering Saudi Arabia, Eng. Al-Rashed added that the area will include residential developments while supporting industrial expansion. Projecting that the southern border area development will be in three economic sectors — advanced manufacturing, agriculture, and coastal tourism, he indicated that this will provide adequate job opportunities for residents, as it is expected that their numbers in the area will surpass 500,000 by 2040.

He clarified that industrial investment will mark a huge economic jump within the next two decades, as well as investments in oil, gas and added-value chain, adding that industrialization will comprise around 35 percent of expected rise in employment.

Al-Rashed stated that agricultural activities will have a strong presence in the area especially



with increased investment in food security, however, the expected rise in employment opportunities in this sector will be relatively low, only around 1,500 jobs, which is less than two percent of total employment growth.

As for coastal tourism, Eng. Al-Rashed expected that it would increase employment, and wholesale and retail trade as the sectors of hospitality and tourism would comprise 30 percent of expected rise in employment within the next two decades.

In related news, Kuwait Municipality had commissioned Dar Al-Handasah Consultants, a leading Lebanon-headquartered international multidisciplinary consulting organisation, to produce the 4th Kuwait Master Plan, the country's strategic visioning and development plan up to 2040.

The master plan designed by Dar Al-Handasah provides integrated policies and land use planning directions for all elements of the state's physical development and land uses for the upcoming planning period ending in 2040. It covers transportation and civil infrastructure networks, coastal marine areas, biodiversity and cultural heritage, and natural resources. Smart technologies featured prominently in various sectors and disciplines from energy and utilities, transport, sustainability, industry, and agriculture to coastal development, heritage, and tourism.

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Asian linked to international ransomware network arrested

Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced in a statement last week the arrest of an Asian on charges of hacking and having affiliations to an international network involved in cyber-criminal activities, including ransomware attacks.

The ministry announcement noted that the arrest was the culmination of a four-year long international operation spanning five continents, code-named 'Gold-Dust'. The operations that targeted an international cybercrime gang included identifying and monitoring their activities on a regular basis, which resulted in the arrest of seven

suspects from various places around the world who are believed to be behind the global malware crime operations.

The MoI indicated in the statement that it had been tipped off about the suspected hacker by the international police, the INTERPOL. The 21-year-old suspect is a college student, accused of carrying out ransomware attacks using the GandGrab ransomware.

The cyber-crime department, cooperating with involved countries, set an exact timing for arresting all the seven suspected criminals on 4 November. The surprise and

timed swoop-down on all members of the online group simultaneously on 4 November, ensured that evidence of their activities and their involvement in these criminal procedures could not be erased.

Following an inspection warrant from Kuwaiti Public Prosecution, several computer devices have been found at the suspect's residence — with fake emails and private accounts. "Ransomware has become too large of a threat for any entity or sector to address alone; the magnitude of this challenge urgently demands united global action by INTERPOL, which can uniquely



facilitate action as a neutral and trusted global partner," said INTERPOL Secretary General Jurgen Stock, following the arrests

Amnesty, cabinet resignation, appeasements order of the day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Also, a week ahead of parliament's reconvening, His Highness the Amir had instructed heads of the three government authorities — the executive, the legislative and the judiciary — to propose regulations and conditions of amnesty for some political dissidents.

The amnesty for political dissidents comes in the wake of incessant demands by some opposition lawmakers for a pardon to those sentenced to jail for their role in 'storming the parliament'. These lawmakers have been holding up parliamentary proceedings since January under various pretexts, and have threatened to continue doing so unless an amnesty was granted.

The measures initiated by His Highness the Amir evidently stems from his keen desire to see the executive and legislative arms of the government come together and work cohesively for the benefit of the people and the country. The amnesty is also seen as a step to create a climate conducive to rapprochement and reconciliation in parliament, and to appease those lawmakers who have been hampering the smooth functioning of parliament so far during the 16th legislative term.

In his announcement on the Amiri pardon in parliament, the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim said the amnesty will pave the way for the country to turn a "new page" and for the parliament to focus on "important pending matters". Included in the pending matters are said to be, balancing the national budget, boosting state finances and tapping global debt markets. However, going by factual evidence from past attempts to placate opponents, we would say this is, at best, wishful thinking on the part of the Speaker.

Previous attempts at conciliation have clearly shown the futility of the process, no matter in what form it was implemented. Appeasements have not worked before, and there is no reason to believe that it will work this time around. Attempts in this regard will invariably lead only to a more invigorated and emboldened opposition who are likely to raise the bars on their demands. In the future, they will once again hold the functioning of parliament to ransom until their dictates are conceded to by a further weakened government, no matter what it costs to the country in terms of finances or in the path of progress.

This has been evident to all those who deeply care for the country and its continued prosperity, and to those who can read between the lines and impartially study the evolving political situation in Kuwait. The best outcome that the government can hope from the current amiri amnesty and cabinet resignation is a temporary truce with the opposition lawmakers in parliament. Hopefully, this will allow the authorities enough leeway to push through several urgently required financial reforms, including perhaps, the long-delayed public debt

bill, or at least a watered-down version of it.

Media reports emerging since the announcement of the amiri amnesty indicate that the opposition is likely to withdraw, if only slightly, from its confrontational path in parliament. And, in a token gesture, it could end the current impasse by not persisting with their demand to question the premier in parliament on various issues, or stipulating that the parliamentary motion granting His Highness the Prime Minister immunity from questioning until the end of 2022, be rescinded.

The temporary truce is also likely to see a toning down of rhetoric on other contentious issues and an end to the parliamentary paralysis that has crippled legislative work since the start of the year. It is also possible that a consensus could be arrived at on topics ranging from boosting state finances, to enacting limited fiscal and economic reforms, and perhaps even passing the long-overdue debt law needed to tap global markets.

The current amnesty and cabinet resignations notwithstanding, there is no doubt that soon enough the opposition will revert to its true self and once again thwart any meaningful reforms, scuttle vital project implementations, and continue to raise frivolous objections to policies and procedures proposed by the government, despite its importance to the country's growth and progress.

The political writing on the proverbial wall is clear for all willing to read it. Political appeasements never work, and have never worked before, because they only tend to address superficial symptoms, without tackling the deep and long-festering underlying causes of the malaise.

However, addressing these deep-rooted political shortcomings requires acute awareness and understanding of the problem, and a willingness to rectify these challenges. But pursuing such a course of action involves spending time and effort on becoming fully cognizant on the various aspects of the real problems underpinning political and social disquiet in the country. It also demands painful concessions and compromises from all sides, and a willingness to reach a mid-way point acceptable to all stakeholders.

The high level of commitment to finding lasting solutions to political and social challenges also requires hard and diligent work on the part of both the appointed government and the elected parliament. But, despite this apparent need, the general consensus among parliamentarians is why exert the extra effort, when it is far more facile to shout about corruption and call for 'grilling' of ministers, or to repeatedly hamper parliamentary proceedings under one pretext or another.

Similarly, it is much easier for the government to react to situations and problems with assuaging short-term remedies, than to take proactive and long-term consequential measures focused on the greater good of the

nation, even if they prove to be unpopular and painful to citizens and their pockets. The government has also often found it more expedient to resign, realign ministerial portfolios, and reappear in a new avatar, than to address the real issues facing the country.

Analysts and experts in the country and abroad concur that the country urgently needs to get its act together to prevent an economic, and probably social, meltdown in the not too distant future. Everyone also agrees on the urgency of implementing essential fiscal, economic and administrative reforms, and the need for the country to balance its budget. In addition, the government, the opposition and most thinking people on the street acknowledge that the 'nanny state' that has characterized the country and its relationship with citizens since the time of independence cannot continue forever.

Most people also realize that the day of reckoning when international demand for oil, which forms the economic lifeline of the country, begins to falter, dwindle and eventually dry up completely, is not too distant in the future. The need for various reforms, however painful they may be to individuals and families, is widely recognized even by its most die-hard opponents. And, even if there is no uniform consensus on this score, there is a strong undercurrent of thought that holds the view that the government needs to balance the budget and prevent recurring deficits.

Despite the widespread unanimity on the challenges facing the country and the painful reforms and solutions needed to counter it, there is also a strong undercurrent that counterbalances this in the form of unwillingness to forgo the prodigious handouts and subsidies, or the cradle-to-grave welfare provided by the state. Catering to this deep down sentiment among the public, the government is also now less than keen to pursue unpopular fiscal and economic reforms that could impact the pockets of citizens, or rattle the delicate political balance that the executive has managed to foster among sections of the public.

Moreover, the government is now in a firmer driving position than it was a couple of months ago — with international oil prices above \$80 per barrel in recent weeks, nearly double of what it was during the height of the pandemic in 2020, and the state treasury, the GRF which was on the verge of depletion, is once again beginning to fill up, so the authorities can afford to wind down its reform initiatives.

This situation is nothing new; it has been a perennial problem of governance in Kuwait. Every time oil prices fall and revenue shrinks the government begins to cry hoarsely about the need for economic reforms, and starts to eagerly pursue various austerity measures. But the moment oil prices turn around and head in the opposite direction, all pleas for austerity and reforms are forgotten, and the mood swings to "happy days are here again", so forget

unwelcome reforms and let us loosen the purse-strings and spend like there is no tomorrow.

Oil prices that have in recent years fluctuated between highs and lows at the slightest international turbulence, invariably cause a major impact on Kuwait's revenues and its economy, and hampers the ability of policymakers to balance income and expenditure. For instance, at the height of the pandemic in 2020, when oil prices fell precipitously, the state treasury, the General Reserve Fund (GRF), faced a severe liquidity crunch that even threatened the government's day to day operations.

Attempts by the authorities to borrow on the international debt market by attempting to pass a public debt bill in parliament, did not make any headway despite the dire financial situation. The contentious public debt law that would allow the country to approach global debt markets has remained stalled in parliament due to political opposition to it since October 2017, after the previous bill elapsed.

Eventually, the government was compelled to hock valuable state assets in the GRF to the cash corpulent Future Generations Fund (FGF) in exchange for cash to run government operations. Although this was only an internal adjustment by two public entities, the fact that the government had to resort to these dire economic measures point to the substantial impact that a sustained low oil price scenario has on the country, and the crucial need for the government and parliament to work together to resolve the political impasse in parliament.

The latest moves by the government to submit its resignation to His Highness the Amir, and the steps taken to grant amnesty to political dissidents, may bring about an informal truce between the executive and legislative. But the real question is, how long will this respite prevail before the next round of disruptions erupt, and the government responds with its tried and tested formula of resignation, cabinet reshuffle, and eventually a dissolution of parliament and new elections.

This scenario has played out multiple times in the past at the expense of Kuwait's growth and development on all fronts. Political instability has affected the country's ability to lure in investments, find employment opportunities for its youth, increase private sector participation in the market, and to gradually disassociate the overwhelming dependence of the economy on its hydrocarbon resources.

It is quite obvious that the time is long overdue for everyone to sit together and hold purposeful discussions, and to think along the lines of whether the country can afford yet another political standoff that has already caused severe repercussions to the country's finances, economy and social welfare of citizens. It is also time to think of the impact that the political instability is having on the country's reputation and relevance among countries in the region and on the international stage.

Strict rules govern issuing of family, visit visas

Despite the Cabinet decision granting permission for the issuance of new family entry visas and visit visas for commercial, tourist and official government purposes, its implementation at residence affairs departments in all governorates is moving ahead only at a snail's pace.

Except for those employed in the medical or teaching field, family and visit visas are still in limbo for most other expatriates. This follows explicit orders from senior Ministry of Interior officials to

exert utmost due diligence before issuing entry visas to expatriates and "not to open the doors wide for everyone to enter the country," as one head of the department put it.

Residency affairs department directors have been instructed to strictly implement the rules and regulations regarding the granting of family entry visas, including ensuring that those wishing to bring their wives or children under the age of 16 must have a monthly salary of not less than KD500.



In addition, those seeking visas will need to submit copies of the mandated vaccination certificates for their family members, as well as all other required

document proofs. Moreover, those arriving on a family visit visa will be able to stay in the country only for a maximum of three months, after which the sponsor, in this case the husband, must send his wife and children back to their country.

Available records show that since the Cabinet decision a total of only around 7,000 entry visas of different types have been sanctioned by the residency departments in all six governorates combined; nearly half of these are commercial visit visas.

Tajikistan celebrates Constitution Day

For the people of Tajikistan, 6 November, 1994 is one of the most important and fateful dates in its history, as it was on this day that through a national referendum the people of Tajikistan adopted the national constitution. This year marks the 27th anniversary of the adoption of the constitution, which embodies the present and future destiny of the nation.



Constitution in Tajikistan is a fundamental document that defines the foundations of the state structure, the procedure for the formation and functioning of the main state bodies of legislative, executive and judicial power, local self-government bodies, the procedure for election, as well as the powers of the head of state, fundamental rights, freedoms and responsibilities of citizens, the procedure for amending the Constitution and the possibility of its revision.

procedure for election, as well as the powers of the head of state, fundamental rights, freedoms and responsibilities of citizens, the procedure for amending the Constitution and the possibility of its revision.

On 6 November 2021, the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Kuwait held a festive event dedicated to the 27th Anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan with participation of members of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait.

During the celebration, Ambassador of Tajikistan His Excellency Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda highlighted some of the main points of the speech given by President Rahmon on the occasion of the country's Constitution Day. He also briefed the gathering on the main achievements of Tajikistan in various spheres of public life, which were exhibited at the event.

The Ambassador Zubaydzoda also received congratulations from the ambassadors of various countries accredited in the State of Kuwait on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In one of his speeches, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, had noted: "The Constitution as the supreme law will lay the legal basis for the development of society through the adoption of new laws and regulate various social relations."

The greatest achievement in recent history of Tajikistan was the acquisition of state independence on 9 September, 1991. It was thanks to becoming an independent state that Tajikistan was recognized as an integral part of the world community.

After the gaining of sovereignty, a new document had to be developed and adopted to determine the structure, governance and stability of statehood. This new document was the Constitution which was adopted by national referendum on 6 November 1994.

Constitution of Tajikistan is an important factor in the consolidation of society, the preservation of civil accord and the stability of Tajikistan. As in any other state, the

MoI to launch security campaigns to nab residence law violators

Ministry of Interior (MoI) has announced that the amnesty for residence law violators to leave the country without paying fines has ended and there will be no more extension to this amnesty. The ministry added that it would soon launch non-stop security campaigns to arrest and deport any residence law violators.

The ministry noted that humanitarian considerations by the authorities during the COVID-19 crisis had extended the amnesty a number of times and that ample time has now been given to the violators to voluntarily leave the country without paying fines or to rectify their illegal status, but only a few took advantage of these provisions in the law.

The number of residence law violators

in the country is estimated to be around 160,000, including those who entered Kuwait on visit visas and did not leave within the stipulated time and during the amnesty period.

The ministry warned that since these people have not taken advantage of amnesty periods they will be arrested and expelled, if they do not come forward voluntarily, pay the fines and leave the country. Those who do so will still be able to return to the country on a new visa.

However, if an illegal resident is arrested by the security authorities, they will be fingerprinted and deported, in which case they will not be able to enter any GCC country for a period of five years.

Al Ahli Bank announces winner of first Alfouz draw

The winner of Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait's (ABK) first Alfouz Weekly draw for KD10,000 is Mohammad Abdulsamad Waheedi. The draw, which was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, was announced live on Q8 Pulse Station FM88.8 on 8 November.

Congratulating the winner, the CEO of ABK Loai Muqames, said, "On behalf of ABK, I would like to extend our congratulations to Mr. Mohammad Abdulsamad Waheedi on being the very first winner of our Alfouz draw. Alfouz was launched as part of our commitment to helping customers achieve their financial

goals, while simultaneously offering enriching rewards and incentives. We are happy to be able to make a difference through encouraging our clients to save, while at the same time giving them a chance to win with Alfouz."

To start the Alfouz savings journey, existing ABK customers can open an Alfouz Draw Account online, and new customers can open their accounts by visiting any ABK branch. Every KD100 saved is equivalent to one entry into the draw. Therefore the more customers save the bigger their chances of winning the weekly prize of KD10,000, or the ultimate grand prize of a 10-year salary of KD5,000 per month paid by ABK. Both new and existing ABK customers can benefit from this opportunity with a small minimum account balance of KD100 needed to enter the draw. The next draw date will be on Sunday 14 November 2021. For more information about ABK, please visit eahli.com or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.

News on security affairs promotes social awareness

Ministry of Interior presented two working papers on security at a workshop organized as part of activities by the General Secretariat of the GCC, at its pavilion in the ongoing Expo 2020 in Dubai.

The first paper on the role of security media was presented by Director of Security Media in the Interior Ministry Colonel Nasser Abu Sulaib. Presenting the paper, Col. Abu Sulaib said that security affairs news has become an essential part of raising social awareness and in helping combat crime, fight illegal substances and prevent accidents.

The paper titled 'Experience of the General Administration of Public Relations and Security Media in the fight against drugs) highlighted the qualitative and technical shift witnessed by the Kuwait Security Media Department, which formed a prominent informative media window and a main source for obtaining correct and documented information.

Abu Sulaib pointed out that the security media strategy in Kuwait is based on



intensifying efforts to raise social awareness about illegal drugs, through extensive and systematic media campaigns spread to all media and social media platforms.

Presenting the second paper, titled 'Role of the General Administration of Public Relations and Security Media during COVID-19, the Assistant Director of the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Interior Colonel Yousif Marshad, described the success of the security establishment's experience in addressing the coronavirus pandemic, which was and still is appreciated and praised.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Ending the Permanent Respiratory Disease Pandemic



LEITH GREENSLADE

Leith Greenslade is Coordinator of Every Breath Counts, a coalition of more than 50 organizations helping governments reduce deaths from pneumonia.

COVID-19 has exposed the limited ability of health systems around the world to cope with a pandemic of respiratory infection. With the official death count from COVID-19 now over five million, and the unofficial count estimated at up to five times higher, the struggles of health systems everywhere have been evident to all.

What is less clear is how the world could have been so blindsided by COVID-19. Respiratory diseases have long been the leading infectious cause of death globally. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 2.5 million adults and children died from pneumonia each year. No other infection causes anywhere near this number of fatalities.

And pneumonia deaths occur in all countries. In high-income countries, deaths are concentrated among older adults, while in low-income countries, children are the primary victims. Many middle-income countries struggle with large numbers of deaths among both groups.

Given these data, respiratory infections have been the most consequential "missing piece" of the global health agenda. Prior to the pandemic, there had never been a global health campaign focused on reducing pneumonia deaths or a global health agency responsible for supporting countries to prevent, diagnose, and treat pneumonia.

Even Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which has a mandate to vaccinate the world's most vulnerable children, has not been able to protect more than half of them with one of the most powerful weapons against pneumonia – the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV). This leaves a lot of children – more than 350 million under the age of five – dangerously exposed.

Not even the wake-up calls provided by two respiratory infection outbreaks – severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV) in 2002 and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV) in 2014 – were enough to persuade national governments and global health agencies to emphasize pneumonia control.

As a result, health systems on every continent were unprepared when SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, emerged and quickly became a pandemic. National health authorities were ill-equipped to deal with waves of people needing rapid diagnosis and treatment – especially the massive amounts of medical oxygen required by COVID-19 patients.

Tragic stories of deaths due to lack of access to care began emerging from Latin America in the early summer of 2020 and soon spread to Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. It is impossible to forget the suffering of patients struggling to breathe or the plight of family members and health professionals desperately searching for oxygen.

We do not know how many COVID-19 deaths resulted from the unavailability of diagnosis and treatment, but many of the



countries with the highest COVID-19 death rates have reported low testing rates and oxygen shortages. Now, more than 18 months into the pandemic and despite the availability of effective vaccines, governments are still scrambling to reduce the death toll. Of the 50,000 COVID-19 deaths that continue to occur each week, 70% are in low- and middle-income countries.

This is unacceptable. The COVID-19

not continue to die from non-COVID-related pneumonia year after year.

But they will, unless national governments turn their reactive pandemic-response plans into proactive pneumonia-control strategies. Putting into place a permanent, effective way to respond to pneumonia would reduce respiratory deaths from all kinds of infections and decrease the risk of another respiratory pandemic.

action to reduce the leading risk factors for pneumonia death, including air pollution, child wasting, and smoking.

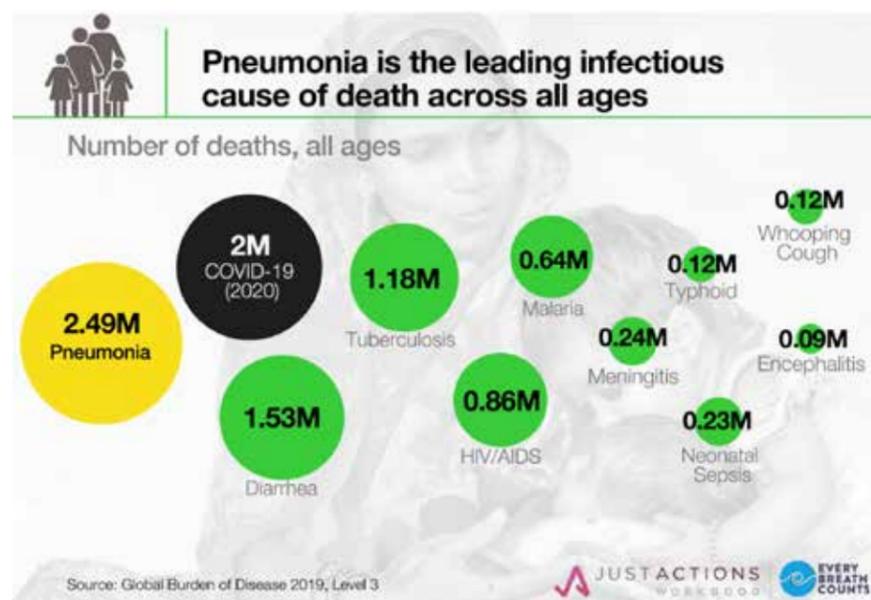
Global health and development agencies like the Global Fund, the World Bank, Unitaid, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Children's Fund should turn the COVID-19 support they have been providing to low- and middle-income countries into long-term pneumonia control programs. The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) Oxygen Emergency Taskforce alone has provided more than \$600 million in oxygen supplies to countries in need and should be funded by the G20 to do more. And private philanthropies should continue supporting efforts by NGOs to strengthen respiratory care services beyond the pandemic.

Without this continued support, the world will remain exposed to the possibility of another respiratory infection pandemic. And we will risk failing to achieve many of the Sustainable Development Goals for health, especially the targets for reducing maternal, newborn, and child deaths and lowering communicable and non-communicable disease burdens.

Although COVID-19 has exposed some critical flaws in the global health architecture, it has also revealed how much national governments, global health and development agencies, and donors can accomplish when pressed to invest in the fight against respiratory infections. And there is much left to do.

After all, our world is changing in ways that will accelerate the risk of another respiratory pandemic. Airborne infections spread by breathing, talking, laughing, and singing will thrive in a warmer, highly urbanized, and mobile environment where poor diets, chronic conditions, and longer life spans increase vulnerability to illness and death. The cost of not investing the resources needed to fight pneumonia will be measured in millions of lives lost every year and millions more every time a new pandemic strikes.

“ Now, more than 18 months into the pandemic and despite the availability of effective vaccines, governments are still scrambling to reduce the death toll. Of the 50,000 COVID-19 deaths that continue to occur each week, 70% are in low and middle-income countries. ”



pandemic must become a turning point for pneumonia control everywhere. Countries should never again suffer mass fatalities as a result of a respiratory infection pandemic. And such large numbers of people should

Achieving this goal will require full coverage of powerful pneumonia-fighting vaccines, better diagnostic tools at all levels of health-care systems, and improved access to treatments. It will also require

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

PPE for Planetary Health



RENZO GUINTO

Chief Planetary Health Scientist at the Sunway Centre for Planetary Health in Malaysia, is Inaugural Director of the Planetary and Global Health Program at the St. Luke's Medical Center College of Medicine in the Philippines.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, analysts and pundits spun visions of how the crisis would reshape the global economy. Many heralded the opportunity to transform our financial systems, supply chains, and ways of working. The overall message was that the post-pandemic future would be greener, healthier, and more just.

Now, almost two years after the pandemic started, excitement about 'building back better' and creating an economic 'new normal' has mostly dissipated. Apart from occasional lockdowns and mask wearing, the world has largely returned to business as usual. The fight against the pandemic repeatedly has been described as a 'war', but there have been no radical changes akin to a wartime mobilization. On the contrary, the global pandemic response has operated under pre-pandemic economic norms. Despite urgent appeals for a 'people's vaccine' and repeated calls for vaccine equity, the rules of the market dominated vaccine distribution, and the pharmaceutical industry has marched on, unreformed.

Likewise, policymakers continue to act as if, to paraphrase Greta Thunberg, the world is not on fire. UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a "code red for humanity." Yet countries' current Nationally Determined Contributions under the framework established by the 2015 Paris climate agreement are inadequate to achieve the Paris accord's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius, relative to preindustrial levels.

The ongoing United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow is the most immediate policy lever available. But the international climate regime needs to go beyond voluntary commitments to reduce emissions and make good on rich countries' promise to provide financial assistance to the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

I am not an economist. I am a physician who specializes in the new field of 'planetary health', which focuses on the links between human and planetary well-being. Its core premise is straightforward: protecting and improving our health requires tackling the underlying causes of human disease and ecosystem damage simultaneously.

The economy we have today is destroying our well-being. It unleashed human ingenuity, created financial wealth, and lifted billions of people from poverty. But it also damaged ecosystems and exacerbated social inequality. During the first year of the COVID-19 crisis, more than 114 million jobs were lost, while the



world's wealthiest became \$5 trillion richer than they had been before the pandemic began. And by accelerating climate change and biodiversity loss, our current economy imperils future generations' ability to survive and thrive. As a planetary health physician, I

“ During this pandemic, we witnessed the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) — face masks and shields, gloves, and gowns. But to truly recover, we also need a different kind of PPE — a people-planet-centered economy. ”

believe that the treatment for this disease is economic, not medical.

During this pandemic, we have witnessed a dramatic surge in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) — face masks and shields, gloves, and gowns that look like astronaut suits. But to truly recover, we also need a different kind of PPE — a people- and planet-centered economy.



Because climate change and other forms of ecological damage increase the likelihood of future pandemics, this PPE would not just liberate us from the current crisis. The goal established by the World Health Organization's Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response — to make COVID-19 the last pandemic of its kind — depends on it.

A people- and planet-centered economy is one that advances the well-being of the entire Earth. It is an economy that has deep respect for the planet's boundaries, such as the temperature limit enshrined in the

An example of this PPE has already been proposed by Kate Raworth [a senior Associate at the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, and a member of the Club of Rome]. Unlike the current economic model, with its limitless supply and demand curves, Raworth's Doughnut Economy visualizes a narrow 'safe and just space for humanity' that neither overshoots the planet's boundaries nor falls short in meeting society's basic needs.

Early in the pandemic, the city of Amsterdam committed to adopting the doughnut as its post-pandemic economic model. Since then, the city has implemented projects and policies ranging from the circular use of materials in building construction to reforms in the local fashion industry. The next challenge is to apply this model to low- and middle-income countries to ensure they fulfill their society's needs without breaching planetary limits.

We have entered the 'decisive decade'. Only nine years remain before we reach the deadlines set by the Paris agreement and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. We must use this critical period to design a true people- and planet-centered economy. The growing planetary health community has an important role to play in creating an alternative that will help us overcome the pandemic and ultimately meet the goals we have set for ourselves as a civilization.

Paris agreement. And it ensures that the basic daily needs of all people are met — for example, through universal health-care systems and redistributive social policies. The metrics of success for this PPE are not gross domestic product or per capita income, but the ability of children to grow up to reach their full potential or the restoration of species threatened with extinction.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Finance Must Combat Climate Change



BEVIS LONGSTRETH AND CONNOR CHUNG

Bevis Longstreth, a former member of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (1981-84), is a former partner at Debevoise & Plimpton and taught financial law at Columbia Law School.

Connor Chung is a member of the Fossil Fuel Divest Harvard campaign.



This summer, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its latest report, and the scariest part is just how unsurprising its contents were. Avoiding the worst, the report made clear, is still possible, but only if humanity moves to a carbon-neutral economy as quickly as possible. "This report," said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, "must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet."

And yet, with the planet on fire, institutional finance is fanning the flames. Many of the world's most powerful financial actors continue to invest in the fossil-fuel industry, even as its actions predictably lead to massive economic disruption, ecological catastrophe, and social injustice. Until now, they have gotten away with it. But a new trend in the law is forcing institutional investors to decarbonize their portfolios – or be held legally accountable.

Harvard University is a case in point. For a decade, Harvard's leaders had ignored calls from students, faculty, and alumni to divest the university's \$53 billion endowment from the fossil-fuel industry. But, recognizing scientific and financial reality, in September Harvard finally pledged to divest from companies whose business models, by relying on sustained carbon extraction, are incompatible with a livable future. "Given the need to decarbonize the economy and our responsibility as fiduciaries to make long-term investment decisions that support our teaching and research mission," wrote university President Larry Bacow, "we do not believe such investments are prudent".

Prudence, in the statute governing Harvard's endowment and many other institutional funds, is a fundamental legal concept that establishes the care, skill, and caution with which a fund's investments must be administered. Prudence guides how a fund must be managed in order to serve its beneficiaries' interests, and there are significant penalties for violating it.

Harvard's statement acknowledges the impossibility of complying with such a duty while investing in fossil fuels.

There are plenty of reasons why this might be the case. For starters, fossil-fuel companies face existential uncertainty. A tide of market shifts, regulations, and litigation poses fundamental risks to the industry's interests, while many of the carbon assets from which it derives its value will be rendered unburnable and stranded to meet international climate goals. In addition, the idea of seeking to profit from businesses whose dependence on carbon dioxide emissions serves to hasten

these companies (or, more broadly, on the sort of businesses that materially depend on CO2 emissions) is not just misguided. It is negligently wrong as a matter of law. Moreover, the concept of prudence applies in similar form to any investor subject to the fiduciary standard, thus binding essentially every academic endowment, charitable fund, and public and private pension fund. That means trillions of dollars stand to be affected by Harvard's recent divestment precedent.

In fact, Harvard's decision is already having ripple effects. In the weeks since the announcement, a number of other

over \$39 trillion — many of whom, evidence from markets suggests, are already reaping financial gains from shedding fossil-fuel stocks.

By basing Harvard's decision on prudence, Bacow may well have intended to generate the sweeping impact that the university's divestment from fossil fuels predictably will achieve. Or perhaps it was a timely defensive move. When Bacow announced the decision, the Massachusetts attorney general was weighing whether to act on a legal complaint filed by students and other members of the Harvard community, along with the nonprofit Climate Defense Project, asserting that the university's fossil-fuel investments represented a breach of its charitable obligations.

Whatever the reason, Harvard has given voice to a doctrine that, befitting the urgency of the climate crisis, should spread swiftly around the world and hasten similar decarbonization decisions by fiduciaries everywhere. It took a decade of struggle to get Harvard to this point. But now that it is finally taking steps toward living up to its global reputation as a leader, other institutional investors must take notice. In an age of climate crisis, these actors' mandate is to stand with the future, or else risk ending up not just on the wrong side of history, but also on the wrong side of the law.

“ Fossil-fuel industry's business model is so misaligned with scientific and financial reality that betting on these companies, or on businesses that materially depend on CO2 emissions, is not just misguided, it is wrong as a matter of law. ”

climate change is repugnant to the notions of public purpose and social duty that responsible investors claim to uphold, and would seem reason enough to seek broad decarbonization.

In other words, the fossil-fuel industry's business model is now so misaligned with scientific and financial reality that betting on

influential investors — ranging from the endowments of Boston University, the University of Minnesota, and the MacArthur Foundation to the ABP public pension fund in the Netherlands (Europe's largest) — have likewise acted to align their money with the demands of prudence and climate action. In doing so, they join investors worth

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Obesity linked to what we eat, not how much

The advice of doctors, nutritionists and public health warnings on the need to eat less and exercise more has failed to stem rising rates of obesity and obesity-related diseases worldwide. A new study now questions the long-held 'energy balance model', based on which doctors have been recommending more physical activity to reduce weight.

The energy balance model, which has been the prevailing scientific opinion for over a century, states that people gain weight because of an imbalance between energy they consume and what they expend. However, providing a new perspective to this traditional view, a team of 17 internationally recognized scientists, clinical researchers, and public health experts, led by doctors at Harvard Medical School in the United States, argue that their 'Carbohydrate-insulin model', which states that obesity is a factor of metabolic disorders driven by what we eat, rather than how much.

The researchers point out that conceptualizing obesity as a disorder of energy balance only restates a principle of physics without considering the biological mechanisms underlying weight gain. They posit that the current obesity

epidemic worldwide is due, at least in part, to hormonal responses to changes in food quality: in particular, high-glycemic load foods, which fundamentally change metabolism. They call for a greater focus on what we eat rather than how much we eat, as a better strategy for long-term weight management.

In today's world, surrounded by highly palatable, heavily marketed, cheap processed foods, it's easy for people to eat more calories than they need, an imbalance that is further exacerbated by today's sedentary lifestyles. By this thinking, overeating, coupled with insufficient physical activity, is driving the obesity epidemic. On the other hand, despite decades of public health messaging exhorting people to eat less and exercise more, rates of obesity and obesity-related diseases have steadily risen.

To validate their theory, the researchers cite the growth spurt witnessed in children. Adolescents may increase food intake by 1,000 calories a day during their growth spurt period. But does their overeating cause the growth spurt or does the growth spurt cause the adolescent to get hungry and overeat? asked the team.

The carbohydrate-insulin model lays

much of the blame for the current obesity epidemic on modern dietary patterns characterized by excessive consumption of foods with a high glycemic load: in particular, processed, rapidly digestible carbohydrates. These foods cause hormonal responses that fundamentally change our metabolism, driving fat storage, weight gain, and obesity.

To lend credence to their carbohydrate-insulin model, the researchers explain that when we eat highly processed carbohydrates, the body increases insulin secretion and suppresses glucagon secretion. This causes fat cells to store more calories, leaving fewer calories available to fuel muscles and other metabolically active tissues. In turn, the lower calories available signals the brain that the body is not receiving enough energy, which then leads to feelings of hunger, and more eating. In addition, metabolism may slow down in the body's attempt to conserve fuel. Thus, we tend to remain hungry, even as we continue to gain excess fat.

Adoption of the carbohydrate-insulin model over the energy-balance model has radical implications for weight management and obesity treatment. Rather than urge people to eat less, a



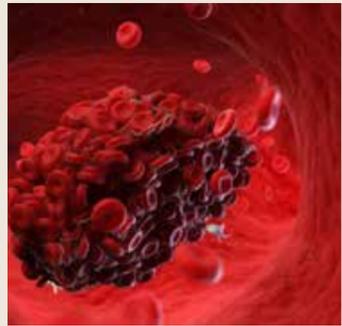
strategy which usually does not work in the long run, the carbohydrate-insulin model suggests reducing consumption of the rapidly digestible carbohydrates lessens the underlying drive to store body fat. As a result, people may lose weight with less hunger and struggle.

The researchers acknowledge that further research is needed to conclusively test both models and, perhaps, to generate new models that better fit the evidence. Toward this end, they call for constructive discourse and "collaborations among scientists with diverse viewpoints to test predictions in rigorous and unbiased research."

Non-invasive imaging technique to reveal blood clots

Atrial fibrillation (A-fib) is a form of arrhythmia — an irregular and often very rapid heart rhythm. During atrial fibrillation, the heart's upper chambers (the atria) beat chaotically and irregularly, out of sync with the lower chambers (the ventricles) of the heart. The out of sync heartbeats cause blood to be pumped improperly, resulting in pooling or clotting of blood.

Symptoms of A-fib could include a fast, pounding heartbeat (palpitations), chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness or weakness. For many people, A-fib may have no symptoms. Episodes of atrial fibrillation may come and go, or they may be persistent. Although A-fib itself usually is not life-threatening, clots that may form during the event can dislodge and flow to the brain, potentially leading to stroke, heart failure and other heart-related serious medical conditions that require proper treatment.



Detecting these clots in a timely manner requires the patient to be sedated and have a relatively large tube inserted down the throat and esophagus for what doctors term a transesophageal ultrasound. This invasive process can be quite discomforting and painful for some patients. Researchers at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in Boston, United States,

have now developed and tested a 'targeted contrast agent' to detect and image these clots noninvasively. The agent has a strong affinity for fibrin, a component of blood clots, and is detected with a radioactive copper tag. The concept behind this new medical technique is that the agent can find and bind to blood clots anywhere in the body, not just in the heart.

The agent is first injected into a small peripheral vein and it circulates throughout the human body in its search for clots. If it does not find any clots, then it is rapidly excreted from the body; however, if it finds a clot it binds to it and clinicians can detect it using an imaging technique known as positron emission tomography (PET scan), which helps visualize biochemical changes taking place within body tissues.

As the researchers put it: "In some ways this is analogous to doing a smart search with a search engine such as Google, where the search terms one uses guide the search."

The research team first examined how the agent reacts, especially its metabolism in tissues, among eight healthy volunteers. After injection, the agent was initially stable within the body and then was cleared from tissues within several hours, suggesting that it was safe. Next, the team administered the agent to patients with atrial fibrillation, some with clots in the heart and some without. Imaging tests of the heart revealed bright signals within the clots that were not seen in patients without clots.

However, much more work and many more studies will need to be done before this becomes routine in clinical practice. Nevertheless, this first-in-human study provides proof of concept and points to its future potential, as the smart 'targeted agent' can be used to detect clots anywhere in the body.



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New COP26 draft deal urges coal curbs, faster climate action

Last minute huddles among groups of country representatives to iron-out differences and find consensus on a deal at COP26 appear to be going on as the conference enters the last stage, and we go to press on Saturday.

A plenary session of the conference, which has now been extended by a day, is set to begin on Saturday afternoon in Glasgow. Representatives have been trying to work around entrenched opinions of countries on climate, and on a range of holdups, including phasing out coal, tougher carbon cutting measures, presented in a third draft proposal that is doing the rounds among member states.

Developing country representatives are understandably angry over the lack of any agreement on commitments by developed nations on money for the damage climate change has already caused.

Snippets from the third draft deal circulated among representative are said to include among others:

A watering down of the original commitment to double funding going to

developing countries to help them adapt to climate change, which has now been changed to "the urgency of scaling up action and support" for vulnerable and poorer nations.

Countries are still being asked to update their 2030 carbon-cutting targets by next year. In another proposal, countries are "encouraged" to submit new targets for emissions reduction for 2035 by 2025, and for 2040 by 2030, establishing a five-year cycle. Previously, developing countries were expected to do so only every 10 years.

Calls to phase out "unabated coal power", [which is coal produced without the use of carbon capture technology] "and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies" remain in the draft

It emphasises the need to "significantly increase support" for developing countries beyond \$100 billion a year

It would establish a dialogue to look at the issue of money for the damage climate change has already caused

In a new addition, the text says nations will recognise "the need for support towards a just transition" — an obvious reference to calls from those working in the fossil fuel

industry for financial support as they wind down jobs and businesses.

Giving his view on the new draft proposal, New Zealand's Climate Change Minister James Shaw gave it a cautious welcome. He said the proposals set out have struck a fair balance. "Recognising the fact that it is still only a draft, and that language can, and almost certainly will change before we get the final draft this afternoon, it looks to us like a balanced package, which is code language for saying it's more likely to get agreement than not," he said.

"You know you've got a process here in which essentially any one country can, at least theoretically, veto the entire deal, so therefore kind of errs towards the lowest common denominator." But he added that as there was a reference to phasing out coal for the first time, it's "pretty remarkable progress on where we were not that long ago".

However, Tracy Carty, the head of Oxfam's COP26 delegation, said in a statement that the draft deal was "still not good enough". She added, "We need the strongest possible outcome to ensure governments come



back next year with strengthened emission reduction targets that will keep 1.5 degrees alive. And decisive progress on finance to help countries adapt and for the loss and damage endured."

"It is of deep concern that developing countries' proposal for a loss and damage finance facility has not been included in this new draft," she added. Juan Pablo Osornio, the head of Greenpeace's COP26 delegation, also said he was concerned that the draft deal was insufficient to tackle the scale of the climate crisis.

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- Sr. Field Operation Engineers
- Sr. Panel Operation Engineers
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- Sr. Planning Engineers
- Sr. Lab Analyst

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- Crude Distillation / Merox / Saturated Gas Plant
- Naptha Hydro Treater
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- Alkylation
- Mild Hydro Cracker
- RFCC / Scanfining / Unsaturated Gas Plant
- Polypropylene
- Sulphur Recovery
- Hydrogen
- Platformer & CCR
- Tankages
- Effluent Treatment Plant
- Supply & Distribution
- Gantry
- Central Power Plant - Power & Steam Generation
- Utilities

2. TECH SERVICES-PROCESS & ENGINEERING

- Plant Performance Monitoring
- Process Trouble Shooting
- Performance Improvement & Optimisation
- Simulation
- Energy & Emissions Monitoring
- Tech Software Management
- Root Cause Analysis (RCA)
- Design & Engineering
- De-bottlenecking Projects
- Process Improvement Projects
- Field Change Orders (FCO)

3. MAINTENANCE

- Turnaround Planning & Execution
- Breakdown Maintenance
- Instrumentation
- Electrical
- Mechanical
- Static Equipment
- Predictive & Preventive Maintenance
- Workshop
- Contracting Strategy, Selection and Execution
- Condition Monitoring
- Maintenance Management System
- Maintenance of Utilities Equipment
- Maintenance Training
- SAP - PM & MM Base Maintenance
- Plant Maintenance (PM)
- Material Management (MM)

4. ELECTRICAL

- Energy Planning, Monitoring and Improvement
- Power Generation, Distribution and ECS - Electrical Control System
- Equipment Monitoring
- Power Plant Interface
- Condition Monitoring with OE Suppliers on Standards and Improvement
- Electrical Safety Planning & Monitoring

5. INSTRUMENTATION & CONTROL

- Real-time plant wide DCS systems
- Online F&G (Fire & Gas Detection System)
- QMS; On Line Quality Management System
- APC (Advance Process Controllers)

6. INSPECTION

- Metallurgical Condition Monitoring
- Corrosion & Technical Integrity Monitoring
- Inspection Software Management
- Non-Destructive Testing (NDT)

7. LABORATORY

- Testing for Crude, Raw Materials, Catalyst and Chemicals
- Testing of Intermediate Products
- Testing of Petroleum Products & Polypropylene
- Additives Testing
- Testing of Emissions (Liquids & Gases)

8. HEALTH, SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT & FIRE (HSEF)

- Refinery HSEF Management
- HSEF Audit
- HSEF Training
- HSEF Monitoring
- Plant Start-Up Safety Review (PSSR)
- Emergency Response
- Onsite
- Offsite

9. ECONOMICS PLANNING & SCHEDULING

- Short-Term Planning
- Long-Term Planning
- Crude Valuation
- Rolling Plans
- Margin Improvement
- Product Slate Planning

10. POLYPROPYLENE

- Applications Development
- Technical Services (Customer)
- Sales & Business Development

11. MARINE & PORT OPERATIONS

- Boarding / SBM Maintenance / Operations

12. REFINERY TECHNICAL TRAINING & BLENDED LEARNING

Last date to apply
24th Nov., 2021



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